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HOW NICARAGUAN MASSES ARE BEING ORGANIZED

**Kurds Deal
Setback to
Repressive
Drive in
Iran**



**Bernadette Devlin McAliskey
On Irish Freedom Movement**

**Washington Arms Morocco
for War Against Saharans**

NEWS ANALYSIS

Kampuchea—Lies in Press Cover Up Denial of Aid

By Fred Feldman

The headline in the October 28 *New York Times* read, "Cambodia, Barring Aid, Calls It an Imperialist Trick." Similar headlines have appeared internationally.

They are lies.

Far from "barring aid" to feed 2.5 million Kampuchean people threatened with starvation, the Heng Samrin government appealed three months ago for food and medicines from the United States and other countries—with little result.

"We don't hide the fact that we need help," stated Defense Minister Pen Sovan October 12.

The Kampuchean leader charged that "aid" programs operated by the U.S. government, its allies, the United Nations, and supposedly independent relief agencies are primarily helping Pol Pot's troops.

The ousted tyrant controls tiny enclaves along the Thai border, where his Khmer Rouge troops hold about 300,000 people captive. On-the-scene reports have revealed that food aid reaching these zones is used to support Pol Pot's troops—described as "heavily armed and . . . well fed" in an eyewitness report in the October 26 *Washington Post*—while the great majority are starving.

On the other hand, the Heng Samrin regime, which governs about four million people, is getting virtually no help.

"In the month of September," Pen Sovan stated, "the republic received 41 tons of supplies from international organizations, but through Bangkok [capital of Thailand], according to the international press, more than a thousand tons of products were delivered to surviving counterrevolutionaries and 'refugees.'"

The same *New York Times* article that falsely claimed Heng Samrin rejected aid also reported his government's complaint that the aid the Kampuchean people are getting from relief agencies and capitalist governments was "minimal compared to assistance from Vietnam, the Soviet Union and other Communist countries."

Carter is still looking for gimmicks that will block aid to the Kampuchean people and provide it to Pol Pot's troops—while preserving a humanitarian image for Carter as the 1980 presidential primary elections approach.

Carter's Latest Ploy

The latest ploy was Carter's October 24 announcement that the U.S. government would send \$70 million in aid to Kampuchea. The catch was that the Pnompenh government would have to accept the organization of a truck convoy from Thai-

land into western Kampuchea, where Pol Pot's forces are holed up. Otherwise, no aid.

This was exactly what the Pnompenh government called it: a transparent effort to divert the aid to Pol Pot while pretending to help Kampuchea.

Three U.S. senators went to Pnompenh October 24 to press Heng Samrin to accept the offer. They proposed that the U.S. government should "try to assure the security of the convoys," according to a report by Graham Hovey in the October 27 *New York Times*.

Acceptance of that proposal would be an open invitation for the Thai army, the United Nations, or the Carter administration to move troops into western Kampuchea to rescue Pol Pot's beleaguered forces.

Pnompenh officials considered for three days before rejecting this booby-trapped "offer," an indication of the intensity of their need for more help from the rest of the world.

U.S. officials are claiming that aid can be delivered only through a convoy from Thailand because the Kampuchean government doesn't have trucks to distribute food. But Carter and U.S.-dominated relief agencies refuse to use *Vietnamese* trucks for this purpose, holding that collaboration with Hanoi in feeding Kampuchean is politically unacceptable.

Lame Excuses

Similar lame excuses are being used to bar aid from being shipped directly to Kampuchea's port of Kompong Som.

Hovey reported October 27 that "even the ships that will carry \$25 million worth of food for Cambodians under the Food for Peace program will not go directly to the Cambodian port of Kompong Som in the near future, but this is due to inadequate facilities there.

"The ships instead will go to Singapore." And the right-wing government of Singapore will no doubt make sure that the aid ends up in the "right hands"—that is, Pol Pot's.

The Pnompenh government insists, according to the October 28 *New York Times*, that "its airport at the capital and the port of Kompong Som could handle more aid than they have been receiving and that the Government was capable of distributing food throughout the country."

Since the government has been receiving Soviet food and equipment and distributing them throughout the country, there is no reason to doubt its claims. According to the November 1 *New York Times*, five

freighters—including three from the USSR said to be carrying food—docked in the "impossible" port of Kampong Som in recent days.

Relief agencies that mean business about helping Kampuchea—such as Britain's Oxfam—have reported no insuperable difficulties in using the port, airstrips, and transportation facilities.

The facts are plain: Carter remains determined to starve millions of Kampuchean because the U.S. rulers oppose their government and want to impose one that Washington can more easily control.

Instead of helping Kampuchean fend off starvation, Carter is stepping up military support to Pol Pot.

Arms for Pol Pot

Washington has increased its arms shipments to Thailand's military dictatorship fourfold over last year. And new U.S. military advisers are being assigned to the Thai army.

Much of the military hardware ends up in Pol Pot's hands. "Thailand, or at least the Thai military, is allowing arms and supplies across the border not only to Pol Pot's men but to several other non-communist Khmer resistance groups," wrote Mark Frankland in the October 27 U.S. liberal magazine *New Republic*.

CBS correspondent Ed Bradley, reporting October 26 from one of Pol Pot's camps on the Thai side of the Kampuchean border, interviewed a U.S. army lieutenant he found there. The lieutenant claimed to be part of a military delegation "observing" the border.

We've heard such cover stories from U.S. "advisers" before.

The U.S. government has 400,000 tons of rice in storage—more than twice what Kampuchea requires to survive. Working people in this country should demand that Carter stop all military aid to Pol Pot, halt the threats and military moves against Kampuchea, and end the food crisis in that country *now* by sending Kampuchea what it needs—without ifs, ands, or buts. □

Correction

On last week's cover we inadvertently reversed the photographs of Vaclav Benda and Jiri Dienstbier. The photograph of Benda on p. 1066 was, however, correctly identified.

Halt U.S. Arms to Morocco!

By Ernest Harsch

In face of the Carter administration's decision to openly sell counterinsurgency equipment to Moroccan King Hassan, the Polisario Front, which is fighting for the independence of the Western Sahara from Moroccan rule, issued an appeal "to all peoples—including Americans—and countries of the world to support our just national liberation struggle."

Washington has tried to present its more direct backing of Hassan's war efforts as a step toward "peace" in the region, claiming that the arms would encourage Hassan's "willingness to negotiate." This claim is almost as ridiculous as the contention that Hassan would be using the arms in the Western Sahara for purposes of "self-defense."

The decision to sell OV-10 armed reconnaissance planes, Cobra helicopter gunships, armored personnel carriers, and trucks to the Moroccan monarchy represents nothing less than a blatant imperialist military intervention against the people of the Western Sahara.

Although American arms were already being used by Hassan in the Western Sahara with unofficial White House approval, the October 22 announcement of the decision to sell new equipment—explicitly earmarked for the war—signifies a major escalation of U.S. involvement in the war.

Washington fears that the struggle of the Sahraoui people for their self-determination could threaten imperialist interests in the region. With the backing of the Sahraoui population, Polisario has made significant gains in recent months, forcing the Mauritanian regime (which formerly occupied part of the Western Sahara) to withdraw from the war, winning wide international backing, and throwing the Moroccan army onto the defensive.

The Carter administration is particularly worried that Hassan's losing war could lead to the overthrow of the monarchy itself, which serves as a proimperialist bastion in northwest Africa.

The White House has coupled its arms sales to Hassan with efforts to get the Algerian government to reduce its backing to the Polisario fighters. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser, went to Algeria October 31 for that purpose.

While there, Brzezinski also placed the arms sales in the context of American global policy, comparing it to Washington's firm support for such proimperialist regimes as those in Thailand, South Korea, and Israel. □

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Pretoria's Finger on the Nuclear Trigger

By Ernest Harsch

At 3:00 a.m. on September 22, an American nuclear detection satellite recorded two bursts of intense light originating in an area of the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic around South Africa. The flashes, a short one immediately followed by a longer burst, are an unmistakable sign of a nuclear explosion.

Had the white supremacist regime in South Africa finally detonated a nuclear bomb? The evidence points in that direction.

Pretoria is known to have the capability of producing nuclear weapons—a capability given to it by its imperialist allies in Washington, Bonn, Paris, and London. At times, it has publicly declared its interest in doing so.

The possession of a nuclear arsenal by this bastion of colonialism and reaction would represent a profound threat to all the peoples of Africa—and the rest of the world. In its desperate battle to maintain the racist colonial settler state against the struggles of the Black masses for self-determination and majority rule, Pretoria could plunge the world into a nuclear conflagration.

That ominous possibility now appears to have been brought one step closer.

The reaction of the White House, however, has been to minimize the danger. Although President Carter was informed of the satellite's sighting within two hours of the blast, Washington remained totally silent about it for nearly five weeks. An official acknowledgement of the detection was made by the State Department on October 25—only after it had already been reported in a television news broadcast.

Even then, the White House continued to try to downplay its significance, maintaining that the evidence was inconclusive and offering alternative explanations for the origin of the light flashes.

There are two basic reasons why Carter is trying to avoid openly linking the nuclear blast with Pretoria's nuclear program.

First of all, he would like to soften the African and international outcry against Pretoria, which would lead to even greater demands that Washington cut off all assistance to the apartheid regime. The African National Congress of South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia have already responded by calling for more stringent economic and military sanctions against the white minority regime. Cuba, which chairs the Nonaligned movement, called a meeting of the ninety-two member states October 29 to denounce the South African nuclear test.

Secondly, Carter would prefer to avoid drawing attention to Washington's own role in supplying the South African regime with the basis for its nuclear capability.

Many top South African nuclear engineers and scientists were trained in the United States. For many years, South African officials had access to the facilities of the former Atomic Energy Commission. Pretoria bought its first research reactor from the United States in 1961, and Wash-

Cuban Mission Bombed in New York

By Gus Horowitz

[The following article appeared in the November 9 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

NEW YORK—Counterrevolutionary Cubans claimed responsibility for setting off a bomb at the Cuban Mission to the United Nations on October 27.

The bomb had a force equivalent to several sticks of dynamite, according to police officials. It demolished a heavy metal door at the mission and had sufficient force to break windows in about thirty nearby buildings, some of them almost two blocks away. Four persons received minor injuries—two passersby and two police on guard duty.

No arrests were made. A man who had created a diversionary ruse just prior to the explosion was held briefly by police, but the cops claim to have lost him in the confusion following the explosion.

Persons identifying themselves as representatives of a group called Omega 7 called United Press International and Associated Press, saying the bombs "were part of the explosives we had reserved for Fidel Castro when he visited New York."

Omega 7 is that same group that bombed the Cuban Mission in 1976 and 1978, and that planted bombs at Lincoln Center and Madison Square Garden at the time of visits by Cuban artists and athletes.

Authorities told the *New York Times* that Omega 7 is a pseudonym used by the Cuban Nationalist Movement, which is also "believed to be responsible for the assassination last April of Carlos Muñoz Varela," a Cuban living in Puerto Rico who was well known for his activity in organizing visits to Cuba and as a leader

ington provided it with enriched uranium fuel, which can be used for weapons production.

Although Washington has been compelled under international pressure to reduce its nuclear assistance to South Africa in recent years, it has repeatedly resisted demands for a complete break in nuclear relations.

Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly October 27, B. Akporode Clark, the Nigerian ambassador to the UN, criticized the U.S. government for delaying disclosure of the nuclear test. He also accused Washington—as well as London, Paris, Bonn, and Tel Aviv—of cooperating with Pretoria's nuclear program and declared that they must share the blame for "this grave and unprecedented threat to the security of Africa." □

of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. The brigade is an organization of young Cubans who favor restoration of U.S. diplomatic relations with Cuba and an end to the blockade.

Although the Cuban Nationalist Movement maintains public offices and is known to the government authorities, no arrests were made in any of the above cases either.

Three leaders of the Cuban Nationalist Movement were convicted of murdering Orlando Letelier in 1976; Letelier had been the Chilean ambassador to the United States at the time of the Allende government.

Media coverage of the bombing attempted to divert attention from police inaction by focusing instead on inconvenience caused to neighbors of the Cuban Mission. The aim was to create the impression that the bomb blast was somehow the fault of the Cubans rather than the New York authorities, who have allowed the right-wing terrorists to act with impunity.

The Socialist Workers Party 1980 presidential candidates Andrew Pulley and Matilde Zimmermann condemned the bombing in an October 29 letter to Mayor Edward Koch, and called for "an immediate crackdown on these terrorists."

"The identity of the criminals is known to the government," Pulley and Zimmermann said, adding that "there is no conceivable pretext" for the police not to arrest them immediately.

The violent anti-Cuba groups, they said, "do not speak for the majority of the American people. The majority favor an end to the economic blockade of Cuba, the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, and an end to the cowardly crimes of the terrorists." □

Workers and Peasants Committees Advance in Nicaragua

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—The Sandinista-led government of Nicaragua announced here October 22 that convocation of the Council of State would be postponed until May 4, 1980, and that its composition would be shifted to better represent the "motor forces" of the Nicaraguan revolution—that is, the workers and the peasants.

According to the provisional constitution or "Fundamental Statute" promulgated by the Junta of National Reconstruction on July 20, the Council of State is to "share legislative powers" with the junta. It is empowered to veto, with a two-thirds vote, measures taken by the junta as well as to draft a new constitution and an electoral law.

The council's original composition was the product of agreements reached between the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces before the dictator's fall. It was disproportionately weighted toward the most conservative sectors of the anti-Somoza front.

Out of thirty-three representatives on the council, the FSLN would have had only six or perhaps a few more.

The other delegates were to represent various parties that, as it turns out, have virtually no support. These include reformist-dominated union federations that are rapidly losing ground to the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), and organs of the bourgeoisie such as the Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Indus-

tries, and Union of Agricultural Producers (the landlord's association).

In the period immediately following the July victory, it was widely thought that the Council of State would soon be convoked to assume its legislative function. The September 4 issue of the FSLN daily *Barricada* even carried a front page item announcing probable convocation of the council for September 15.

But the council did not meet. Instead, the Sandinista leaders of the revolution, to the displeasure of the bourgeoisie, moved forward with a series of deepgoing social measures that have the support of the masses of workers and peasants. The immediate convocation of a non-representative and bourgeois-dominated Council of State—with its veto powers—would have been an obstacle to these moves. So the Sandinistas, with the concurrence of the non-FSLN members of the junta, chose to hold off convoking the council.

Meanwhile, other revolutionary institutions far more representative of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants began to come into existence. None of these were foreseen in the "Fundamental Statute."

Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) arose in the neighborhoods and began taking on governmental functions.

Workers set up democratically elected committees in the plants and formed unions affiliated to the Sandinista Workers Federation. *Barricada* has stressed the need for the unions "to be the

controller of production" and to "prepare themselves to administer the production that is so necessary for our country."

Peasants and farm laborers began joining the Agricultural Workers Association (ATC) and participating in the administration of the communes and state farms set up by the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

Other important organizations that had led a clandestine existence at best before the insurrection now took on a mass character—the Association of Nicaraguan Women, the July 19 Sandinista Youth, and the teachers union (ANDEN).

Increasingly anxious to slow down the revolutionary process that is being carried forward by the new FSLN-led government relying on these mass organizations, the bourgeois forces began in late September to agitate for immediate convocation of the Council of State, with its original composition.

An October 22 announcement by junta member Sergio Ramírez made clear that the revolutionary authorities were rejecting the demands of those who are "frightened now that our people have direct participation in power."

The Council of State "must reflect the political reality of the country," Ramírez declared. "We cannot decree the laws prior to the facts that the revolution creates and above all, revolutionary processes involve change."

Comandante Daniél Ortega—one of the nine FSLN "commanders of the revolu-



Fred Murphy/IP-1

Sandinista Workers Committee from Managua power plant. "At last we can provide light after 45 years of darkness. We are organized."

tion" and a member of the junta—took on the bourgeois parties directly, attacking the remnants of the landholding oligarchy's old Conservative Party, which is now split among the so-called Social Democrats, Democratic Conservatives, and other groups.

"We want to make it clear," Ortega said, "that in this country the Conservatives have been the ones who have sold out the nation—who always forced our people to 'volunteer' for their wars of ambition against the Liberals."

Now, Ortega continued, the Conservatives "are terrorized by the fact that the same people they humiliated and used as tools for their own interests have a voice and a say in the government."

The "restructuring" of the Council of State is to be aimed at providing real representation for forces such as the Sandinista Workers Federation, which with its more than 180,000 members and 343 affiliated unions is now by far the largest workers organization in the country; the Agricultural Workers Association, which is rapidly organizing tens of thousands of farm laborers who make up the largest sector of Nicaragua's proletariat; and the Sandinista Defense Committees.

Further modifications of Nicaragua's governmental institutions can be expected as the revolution unfolds. Already, the CDSs—unforeseen in the junta's program or in the "Fundamental Statute"—are more and more taking on the tasks of government. For example, Nicaraguans wishing to leave the country or obtain a driver's license must get approval from their CDS. In some smaller towns—particularly in Carazo Province—the CDSs are playing a direct role in municipal administration, and *Barricada* has projected coordination of the CDSs on a

municipal level as an important next step in the organization of the masses.

Mass assemblies organized by the CDSs in some cities have ratified the appointments of municipal authorities made by the national junta. In some of these gatherings residents have voted to alter the composition of the local government juntas.

Current plans for the Council of State still include representation for those sectors of "private enterprise that are actively participating in national reconstruction," junta member Alfonso Robelo said October 22.

But the statements by FSLN leaders about the need to "restructure" the council are widely interpreted by the workers and peasants to mean that decisive representa-

tion will be in their hands through the CDSs, CST, ATC, and other mass organizations.

In the period leading up to convocation of the Council of State, Nicaragua's big economic problems, especially in agriculture, will sharpen. The class polarization will deepen, testing the capacity of the FSLN leadership to meet these challenges and drive forward the revolutionary process.

Together with continuing inroads against the economic power of the exploiters, the convocation of a nationwide body decisively based on the mass organizations would mark an important advance toward the establishment of a workers state ruled through democratic councils of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. □

Editorial in 'Barricada'

Role of Unions in Nicaragua Today

[The following editorial appeared in the October 19 edition of the Managua daily *Barricada*, official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

In class societies social classes organize themselves in accordance with their interests.

In our Nicaraguan society the social classes also organized themselves, despite the cruel Somocista repression. They organized above all to overthrow the Somocista military dictatorship.

Each social class forms organs or organizations that enable it to reach its objectives as a class. Among such organizations the trade unions stand out as effective weapons of the workers for fighting to the death against repression and exploitation.

Somocismo, which was characterized above all by its high level of repression, put its most faithful and corrupt elements in the workplaces to keep the workers down. The relations between the owners of the factories and the workers were thus relations of exploitation and repression.

These workplaces had their so-called grievance secretaries, who tried to defend the interests of the workers—a task that in the majority of cases was fruitless owing to the Somocista mechanisms, which did not allow such a thing.

Despite this situation, our industrial and agricultural proletariat went about organizing itself in such a way as to not only make it possible for it to achieve liberation from the brutal Somocista dictatorship, but also to do so jointly with our entire people.

The workers' struggle could only be

carried out through the workers' own organizations, among which the clandestine trade unions played a role of great importance.

Today those same workers are at the head of the factories that they themselves tore away from Somocismo. The role of the union now is not the same as before; it is now to be the controller of production in these workplaces.

Administration of the factories, workplaces, and agricultural units that are under state control require the creation of Production Councils to supervise the functioning of the factories, workplaces, and agricultural units.

These should be concerned with organizing the political education, social well-being, and other needs of the workers.

This means that in those workplaces where the workers are carrying out tasks that the bosses once exercised, new labor relations exist—fraternal relations that were not possible before.

It also means that the great majority of the people are to be the principal beneficiaries in this country, and that the workers are to be truly incorporated into the exercise of power.

Thus workers should understand this new situation that is presented to them and *prepare themselves to administer* the production that is so necessary for our country and our heroic Sandinista people.

Production must be directed toward the reconstruction of the new homeland of the Nicaraguans—not for the enrichment of a few, but for the benefit of the country. This is the *social content* of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

Increased production—smash the counterrevolution!

Insurance Companies Nationalized

Nationalization of the insurance industry was decreed here by the government October 16. A National Insurance Institute will be established to take over and guarantee all insurance policies held by Nicaragua-based companies.

Foreign concerns are now prohibited from selling insurance in Nicaragua although they are required to fulfill the terms of all the insurance policies they currently hold.

These measures cut off what has been a source of imperialist and capitalist exploitation in Nicaragua. And they bring under state control an important block of capital. They also open they way for further measures to protect the homes and property of workers, small businessmen and farmers.

—F.M.

How to Answer Ultraleft Sectarianism in Nicaragua

By Pedro Camejo and Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—Since the fall of the Somoza dictatorship July 19 to the Sandinista-led popular insurrection and military offensive, a series of radical social measures has been taken to benefit the workers and peasants, striking blows at the native capitalist class and at imperialism. The bourgeois forces, greatly weakened by the revolutionary victory, have begun to organize themselves and are putting up growing resistance.

Within this framework, various views have arisen inside the revolutionary camp of the workers and peasants on how best to carry the struggle forward and defeat the counterrevolution.

Among those putting forward proposals, and seeking to demonstrate their validity in action, have been several radical groups whose policies could best be described as ultraleft and sectarian, a stance that also leads them to adopt opportunist positions.

These organizations fall into two categories:—those of Maoist origin; and those who consider themselves Trotskyist despite the fact that their political positions run directly counter to those of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization.

Sectarian Positions

The group of most significance is the Movimiento de Acción Popular (MAP—People's Action Movement), which leads a trade-union current known as the Frente Obrero (FO—Workers Front). The MAP originated in a 1971-72 split from the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). It held pro-Peking positions until around 1977, when it became disillusioned with the Chinese Stalinists' ever more openly pro-U.S. imperialist position.

Today the MAP considers both the Soviet Union and China to be state capitalist societies. It holds that Cuba has had a socialist revolution but suffers gravely from the negative influence of the Soviet Union.

In Nicaragua, the MAP expresses its views mainly through the pages of the Managua daily *El Pueblo*, where it has preponderant influence on the editorial staff.

The other component of the ultraleft sectarian forces includes three small groups that call themselves Trotskyist—the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR—Revolutionary Marxist League); the Nicaraguan supporters of the Organización Socialista de los Trabajadores (OST—Socialist Workers Organization) of Costa Rica; and the Nicaraguan supporters of

the Colombia-based Bolshevik Faction (BF) led by Nahuel Moreno.

Moreno's Nicaraguan followers are the remnants of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, which was organized in June by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party) of Colombia. The brigade publicly presented itself as an armed unit of the FSLN but in fact rejected the FSLN's military discipline. When the brigade's non-Nicaraguan leaders refused to call a halt to this criminal policy, the FSLN expelled them from Nicaragua (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, September 3, 1979, p. 804).

All the ultraleft sectarians reject the stance that, given the FSLN's record up to now, no a priori limits should be placed on how far decisive sectors of the FSLN can go as the revolution unfolds. Instead, the sectarians act on the assumption that the FSLN cannot lead the revolution forward to the establishment of a workers state. They charge that the Sandinistas are committing serious errors in the pace of anticapitalist actions and thus making unwarranted concessions to the capitalists.

The sectarians tend to view the process of socialist revolution as resulting from administrative decisions by a determined leadership, rather than the conscious mobilization of the toiling masses in anticapitalist struggle by a revolutionary leadership. As a result, they cannot understand why the FSLN doesn't simply proclaim socialist decrees that "set up" a workers state.

The LMR, OST, and BF go further, presenting the view that the Sandinistas are consciously following a course of class collaboration and seeking to reconsolidate bourgeois rule in Nicaragua.¹ Thus, the Costa Rican OST's newspaper, *Qué Hacer*, explained that the banks were nationalized to deepen the exploitation of the workers, and the Moreno-inspired *El Socialista* in Colombia even slandered FSLN militias in the Atlantic port of Bluefields as "the watchdogs of Somozaism."

When the revolutionary government on August 25 ordered the withdrawal from circulation of all 500 and 1,000 cordoba (US \$50 and \$100) banknotes, and declared that their equivalent value would be

turned back at the end of six months, the MAP's *El Pueblo* carried a front-page story criticizing the measure and creating the impression that the masses were against it.

In fact, it was aimed at the capitalists who were hoarding funds and at Somozaists in Honduras, El Salvador, and Miami who were selling their large banknotes for dollars to Nicaraguans.

The workers and peasants supported the measure overwhelmingly. Whatever uneasiness there was dissipated immediately with the announcement that all who had turned in 3,000 cordobas or less would have their funds returned within three days—a provision that obviously could not have been made known beforehand without allowing the hoarders a means of sidestepping the measure's intent.

But *El Pueblo's* editors could not even wait to check out the facts since they thought they had an opportunity to discredit the FSLN. Once the criticisms were proven to be groundless *El Pueblo* lamely explained that the masses had forced the refund.

El Pueblo has tried to partially camouflage its basically anti-FSLN stance, while heavily criticizing all the real or imagined errors of the Sandinistas. It tends to portray the regime's progressive measures as concessions granted solely because of mass pressure. It doesn't recognize the dynamic relationship between the masses and the FSLN leadership, who have shown themselves capable of learning from and responding to mass initiatives that go beyond the immediate plans of the FSLN as it leads the class struggle forward. The insurrection itself was an example of this.

A Bourgeois Government?

The sectarians' political stance has led them to press the revolutionary government for concessions as though it represented the bourgeoisie. In their desire to appear to the left of the FSLN, these groups tend to automatically "up the ante" on any FSLN proposals, without regard for the real needs and interests of the peasants and workers and the stage of the class struggle.

For example, the ultralefts have encouraged *campesinos* on expropriated land to view the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA)—which administers the land expropriated from the Somozaists and is planning further steps against the landholding capitalists—as just another landlord. This is at a time when INRA is

1. The world Trotskyist movement, the Fourth International, rejects these sectarian views and defends the Nicaraguan revolution. For example, see the statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International published in *IP/I* October 22, 1979, p. 1023.

pressing forward with plans to establish democratic organizations on the small peasant communes and workers' administration on the big state farms, while providing technical and financial aid to small farmers.

In general, the ultraleft sectarians play on the objective problems facing the revolution, seeking to place the blame for them on the Sandinistas abstracted from the framework of the massive destruction left by Somoza and the failure of the imperialist countries to provide adequate reconstruction aid.

Their sectarian stance has also led these groups into opportunist positions. For example, they opposed the reorganization of the revolutionary armed forces, a measure that involved centralizing all arms seized during the insurrection under the control of the army, police, and militia.

The Bolshevik Faction's supporters even opposed the building of a well-trained, professional army. Given the ongoing threat of imperialist intervention, which will grow as the class struggle deepens, such an error runs against the elementary need to defend the revolution.

At times, the sectarian stance of these groups even leads them into political blocs with sectors of the bourgeoisie that are seeking to hold back the revolution.

A striking example of this reactionary logic was the Frente Obrero's participation in several meetings called by the Chamber of Commerce to press for immediate convocation of the Council of State, a legislative body whose original composition was heavily weighted toward the most conservative bourgeois sectors of the anti-Somoza front. The FSLN-led Junta of National Reconstruction has recently postponed convoking the Council of State to May 1980 and has announced that it will be "restructured" to reflect changes subsequent to Somoza's fall—generally interpreted to mean alterations that will give predominant representation to mass organizations of workers, peasants, women, and youth that took part in the insurrection and have been expanding under the FSLN's leadership since then.

By supporting the call for the immediate convocation of the Council of State in its original form, the FO helped the bourgeoisie counterpose an unrepresentative, capitalist-dominated parliamentary body to the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) and other mass-based organizations. The bourgeoisie's aim was to gain a means of slowing down or blocking the revolution's progress and begin placing in question the legitimacy and sovereignty of the revolutionary government.

The sectarians fell into this trap.

The LMR has presented itself as "consistent revolutionary democrats," fighting for the immediate "convocation of a constituent assembly." This is similar to the MAP/FO's backing for the Council of State. In the current situation in Nicara-

gua, a constituent assembly would mean a step back from the process in which the existing mass organizations can move toward broader organizations and begin taking on increasing characteristics of organs of workers and peasants power.

Campaign Against Ultralefts

Impatience with the ultralefts' sectarian blindness toward the real prospects and problems of the revolution, and irritation at their often adventurist actions in the countryside and the nationalized workplaces, led the Sandinistas to launch a campaign against the ultralefts in mid-September.

In speeches by FSLN leaders and articles in *Barricada*, the FSLN's daily newspaper, the ultralefts were lumped together with the counterrevolutionary Somozaists. Under the slogan "Control Somocismo—Defend the Revolution," the CDSs were mobilized to be vigilant not only against right-wing terrorism and the exploiters' sabotage but also against the sectarian groups.

An editorial in the October 2 *Barricada* vowed to "smash" those "who play with the interests of our workers, take advantage of the freedoms offered by the state and of the generosity of this revolution. . . ."

The Milicias Populares Antisomocista (MILPAS—Anti-Somoza People's Militias)—the MAP's armed wing under the dictatorship—was accused by the FSLN of participating in bank robberies and harassment of Sandinista army and militia patrols. The MAP has repeatedly asserted that the MILPAS were disarmed and disbanded after July 19.

On October 9, army commander Humberto Ortega announced the arrest of several Frente Obrero activists and *El Pueblo* staff members on suspicion of illegal possession of arms. In subsequent days, some seventy FO members were detained throughout the country. FSLN security chiefs would say only that "investigations" were under way; no charges were brought.

In the city of Granada several LMR members were arrested. LMR leader Fernando Bárzenas was detained twice in Managua, held briefly, and released. Carlos Petroni, an Argentine supporter of the Bolshevik Faction, was also arrested during this period.

The FSLN's repressive moves against the ultralefts were combined with efforts to explain what was wrong with their policies.

The fundamentally correct political arguments the Sandinista leadership presented against what they termed the ultralefts' "economism" "infantile radicalism," and "opportunism" were weakened and obscured by charges that these groups were "neo-Somozaists" or "the same thing as the counterrevolutionaries." One effect of this was to further weaken the FSLN's

standing in the population where the Frente Obrero or other groups already had a certain influence, since many of the militants who to some degree followed the sectarian leaders were known as fighters against the dictatorship.

MAP/FO Responds

As the only ultraleft sectarian group with a certain base among the masses, MAP/FO was the central target of the FSLN's campaign. It began to respond to the campaign in two ways.

First, it asserted its right to exist and to present its ideas. *El Pueblo* began to carry articles explaining the need for workers democracy (thus implicitly casting aside some of its Stalinist conceptions). For example, Pablo Ruiz wrote in the October 25 issue:

Differences inside the workers and peoples movement are the problems of the working masses. The state has no business using force and coercion to impose a "solution" or decide disagreements. This can only harm the people's movement and the course of the revolution. The working classes have the right to listen to the various alternatives that different currents present so as to choose the one they consider most appropriate to their interest.

Letters of protest against the arrest of FO members began to appear in *El Pueblo*. A few came from CDSs or union locals in neighborhoods or workplaces where the jailed activists were known. On October 23, some 300 highway maintenance workers held a peaceful demonstration at Managua police headquarters to press for the release of the FO prisoners or for verification of the charges against them. The same day, a delegation of mothers of the detainees carried out a brief sit-in at the Red Cross headquarters.

The second aspect of the MAP/FO's response to the FSLN campaign was to issue a call on October 10 in the name of the FO's Central Committee for a "dialogue" with the Sandinistas, with the aim of "publicly clarifying . . . a whole series of falsehoods and misinterpretations arising from the development of our political line and organized activities."

Along with this came certain modifications of the MAP/FO's political stance. The Frente Obrero declared October 19, for example, that

in view of the fact that there are those who want to speak out from the tribune of the Council of State against the revolution and against the working class . . . we share the opinion that so long as each organization has not clearly defined its intentions we will not support the demand for its installation.

Evolution of FSLN Approach

By the last week of October, the public campaign against the MAP/FO and other sectarian groups had greatly diminished, although dozens of their members were still detained.

An evolution in the FSLN's thinking

was also becoming evident. On several occasions Comandante Tomás Borge stated his belief that there were "honest people" among the ultraleft groups and that the FSLN was open to having political discussions with them. "We think that jail is not the best place for a dialogue," Borge said October 22.

The FSLN's Secretariat of Mass Organizations on October 23 disavowed and condemned a leaflet that had been circulated among many CDSs.² The leaflet had called on neighborhood residents to denounce and keep under surveillance all "counterrevolutionary individuals (Somozaists, MILPAS, Frente Obrero, Trotskyists)."

A major article on "Revolution and Counterrevolution" that appeared in the first issue (dated October 18) of *Poder Sandinista*, the weekly paper of the FSLN Secretariat of Propaganda and Political Education, explained that "we need a conception that allows us to unite the efforts of all the truly revolutionary tendencies." It urged the "impatient left" to "demonstrate to the people the guidelines of social participation in a country with the conjunctural and structural characteristics such as ours. . . ."

The article continued:

. . . it is necessary to be clear in the sense that the best way to fight the counterrevolution is by making the revolution and the best way to combat ultraleftism is by taking positions that are truly leftist. And all this has only one road: showing the people the contradictions of their own revolution and making all means available for their participation. In this way we will be, in passing, fighting against the counterrevolution of the right.

In explaining the source of the counterrevolution, *Poder Sandinista* stated the following:

Expropriating the Somozaists meant expropriating the biggest sector of the bourgeoisie and thus mutilating the bourgeoisie as a whole and weakening it as a class. But the bourgeoisie has no borders—the North American bourgeoisie is also part of it. If this bourgeoisie is going to strengthen the interests of anyone in Nicaragua it will not be those of the workers and peasants. If U.S. imperialism could not defend its class interest in Nicaragua with arms it will now try to do so with its economic and financial might.

No reference was made in the article to the ultraleft sectarians being part of the counterrevolution.

The *Poder Sandinista* article drew a favorable response from *El Pueblo's* editors who quoted it at length October 27 and expressed hope that it would be "translated into practice as a general, everyday means of handling problems or differences with the other progressive forces of this country. . . ."

Readiness for Dialogue

These developments were followed by a series of statements by FSLN leaders indicating a willingness to deal in a fraternal way with other organizations on the Nicaraguan left. In an October 28 speech, Tomás Borge reiterated a readiness for a dialogue with "the sectors identified by their dogmas."

The following day, Comandante Daniel Ortega told thousands of university students that "today we make a fraternal call for unity" around the CDSs and other mass organizations to the groups that "continue speaking as the vanguard of the proletariat as if the FSLN has not been the vanguard of the proletarians, of the workers and peasants of this country."

And on October 31, Comandante Wheelock publicly acknowledged that the MILPAS, the MAP's former armed wing, had not been involved in any attacks on the army. Confusion on this score, he said, had been due to counterrevolutionary Somozaists trying to pass themselves off as the MILPAS. Wheelock affirmed that the MILPAS was a legitimate organization that had participated in the armed struggle against Somoza.

On November 2, Frente Obrero leader Marvin Ortega expressed optimism to *Perspectiva Mundial* that all members of his group still detained would be immediately released. He said that a dialogue between the Frente Obrero and the FSLN on the tasks and perspectives of the revolution had already begun and was moving forward.

No word was available as of November 3 on the situation of four LMR members who were still being held in Granada, or on the Argentine, Carlos Petroni.

Need for Workers Democracy

The FSLN's moves toward correcting its initial errors in the handling of differences with the sectarian groups are to be welcomed.

Combating capitalist sabotage and reconstructing the country will require an ever-widening exchange of viewpoints within the camp of the workers and peasants over how best to move forward or solve problems.

The greatest possible democracy and the cultivation of an atmosphere encouraging the free and frank expression of ideas can only strengthen the revolution, the commitment of the masses to it, and the fullest expression and utilization of the creativity and untapped talents of the workers and peasants. It is also one of the best ways for the leadership to judge the correctness of its course and tempo and to spot new tasks. It will be the source of thousands and thousands of political cadres who will come out of the working-class movement itself, tempered in struggle and educated in debate.

The pro-Moscow Stalinists in Nicaragua, who had always attacked the FSLN

itself for being "ultraleft," will continue to push in the direction of stifling workers democracy. Their attacks are in reality aimed at the toiling masses and at all revolutionists—including the FSLN—since their objective is to arrest the revolution at the "bourgeois democratic stage." Any policy of repression within the workers movement would play into their hands.

Equating Somozaism and counterrevolution with those under the influence of petty-bourgeois pressures and ideas could also lead to an underestimation of the dangers posed by the real class enemy—both among the capitalists who backed Somoza, those who opposed him for whatever reason, and their powerful allies centered in the United States. As the class polarization deepens, it will be the bourgeoisie that spearheads the counterrevolution, as *Poder Sandinista* pointed out.

The revolutionary leadership must be able to distinguish between those in the radical movement who operate within the framework of the revolution and those who—and there will be some—desert to the camp of the class enemy and carry out crimes against the revolution. This distinction was drawn by Tomás Borge in the October 28 speech cited earlier. While expressing openness to a discussion with the sectarians, he ruled out any such dialogue with "the sellout bourgeoisie, the Somozaists, and other traitors to this process."

The problems the Nicaraguan revolution faces are real. It is sometimes necessary to make tactical concessions to the capitalists to avert economic reverses and premature confrontations.

The sectarian groups are wrong in their tendency to view such necessary concessions as incorrect in principle. They are a vital necessity in Nicaragua. At the same time, however, these organizations can sometimes reflect in a distorted way moods of sections of the masses. In order to effectively lead the masses, the revolutionary vanguard should openly explain its considerations to the workers and peasants when it believes concessions are necessary.

An important part of this process of interaction between the masses and their vanguard is politically confronting the ultraleft sectarians, and explaining what is wrong with their infantile proposals. Repression cuts across this political clarification, and makes it more difficult to win these cadres to a genuinely revolutionary course.

Furthermore, the workers and peasants will take initiatives that go beyond the leadership's immediate plans. This is one of the keys to all revolutionary uprisings and victories. Such initiatives might well coincide with some position or other of the ultralefts. But the leadership's capacity to respond positively to such initiatives to drive the process forward will be a key element in the victory of the revolution. □

2. An article in our October 15 issue, p. 975, inadvertently attributed this leaflet to the CDSs.

Where Does Sexism on the Job Come From?

[The following three items are reprinted from *Socialist Challenge*, the newsweekly sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.

Women Miners Can Dig Too!

Ilona Gersh took advantage of affirmative action when she started work as a labourer on the Iron Range in Minnesota, USA, eighteen months ago.

She is now an electrical apprentice, an active member of the National Organisation for Women and of her union—the United Steelworkers of America.

Liz Lawrence interviewed her at the 30th convention of the Socialist Workers Party and found out what life is like for women miners in the states.

* * *

Affirmative action has increased opportunities for women in industry.

For instance, where I work in US Steel iron ore mine the number of women is now about 10 per cent—450 out of 4,500—and it's more than tripled in the last year and a half.

The company certainly hasn't complied with the 20 per cent regulation yet though and this is one thing that women in industry are fighting for today.

Women are concentrated in the labour crews at the bottom of the pay scales. They work as janitors, as sweepers, they hose mud, they shovel rocks, they drive service trucks, they work in the warehouse . . . but in the last year larger numbers of women have become apprentices in the skilled crafts.

There are quite a few women electrical apprentices and some are becoming mechanics and welders.

Entering non-traditional areas of female employment has had a tremendous impact on women. For one thing, for the first time they're economically independent because of the large incomes they receive. They can support themselves and their families. So many women don't feel as tied to marriage as they did before. Plus it's given women a tremendous sense of confidence and that's why a large number of women in basic industry are becoming interested in all kinds of political ideas—because for the first time they have some control over their lives and want to move forward.

Male attitudes to women are changing. Five years ago, when women first came into the mines, it wasn't established that it was a place for women. But today there are so many of us that men generally accept

[The first is an interview which appeared in the September 13 issue, followed by a letter to the editor taken from the September 27 issue and a rejoinder from the October 18 issue.]

that we can do the same jobs as men do.

Men have generally been supportive in showing us the ropes. There are some exceptions and those are usually the right wingers who are opposed to women's rights and those who think that women should be barefoot and pregnant.

The company bears a lot of responsibility for male hostility. The company doesn't like women moving into the mines.

When women are on probation, a period when they can be fired for any reason at all, the foremen usually give women the hardest jobs and use the excuse that they think the women want to prove that they can do as good a job as the men.

This tends to discourage women. Women have also been strongly discouraged by foremen from entering the skilled crafts and are told that they won't be able to get through the technical schooling or that men in the craft won't accept them.

Women who do enter the crafts and become electricians or welders find that the workers are supportive and that they can make it through.

We've found that in every department in the mines where women have been harassed by their male co-workers it can be traced directly to the foremen's attitude

A Rosy Image of Women at Work

It was good to read about women's fight for equality in the United States and the progress they have made. But Ilona Gersh, the iron ore miner, seems to have some odd experiences with male workers.

She says that each time "women have been harassed by their male co-workers it can be traced directly to the foremen's attitude towards women and their discussion with male workers."

This view—that it is management who are the women bashers, while male workers are supportive—runs through the article, and is in complete contrast to reports of the shop-floor position in Britain.

Your article about a woman electrician at work, for example, described horrendous behaviour and attitudes on the part of

towards women and their discussions with male workers.

In my union local the number of women participating in union activities has increased tremendously. When I started there were maybe two or three women attending union meetings.

We've taken up feminist issues within the union. We've got union backing for the Equal Rights Amendment, for abortion rights, for childcare, for affirmative action—which the union had abstained from until then, although union members were very interested in these issues.

The National Organisation for Women has had quite an impact on American unions. Quite a few miners are members of NOW. In fact it was primarily women miners who helped to establish a chapter of NOW on the iron range, with other women on the range.

They see NOW as a real ally in bringing issues to the union because they recognise that NOW, with over 100,000 members across the country, is extremely powerful, has authority and that people in the union are going to listen to that kind of organisation.

A move by women into basic industry is important in the struggle for women's liberation. In fact I think the new rise of women's liberation today around questions like affirmative action is due to more women getting into industry and gaining independence.

They feel that they have power as working people who run the country to change things. And that they have allies backing them up—the unions.

male apprentices.

On the face of it, since management is interested in only one thing—profit—it is quite possible that they would be keener to have women doing traditional men's work than male workers are, since the latter fear for their job security, status, and the rest.

Unless American male workers are programmed quite differently (and if so, how?), one is drawn to the conclusion that Ilona Gersh's rosy picture has something to do with the view that the working class is worthless.

So goodbye to women's, blacks' and gays' caucuses—the oppressed have got nothing to fight but the capitalists themselves. Wonderful!

Ken Pritchard
Bristol

Workers Are Sexist— But Not Out of Self-Interest

The letter by Ken Pritchard completely misinterprets the views expressed by Ilona Gersh in the interviews published in *Socialist Challenge* No 113 and the views of the American Socialist Workers Party.

In an evening meeting on women in industry at the SWP Convention, which several IMG members attended, there was a full discussion about the problems of sexist harassment at work, including problems with fellow workers. The SWP does not take the view that there is no problem of opposition to affirmative action from male (and white) workers.

Their position, however, is that sexism on the part of workers has a different basis than that of supervisors and employers. In the former case it is an expression of false consciousness, in the latter of class interest. Male workers have no class or material interest in the oppression of women.

This is where Ken Pritchard goes completely wrong when he writes:

"On the face of it, since management is interested in only one thing—profit—it is quite possible that they would be keener to have women doing traditional men's work than male workers are, since the latter fear for their job security, status and the rest."

On the contrary, affirmative action is in the interests of workers, male and female, because it strengthens the working class as a whole against capitalism, whereas the ruling class benefits from keeping workers divided.

Ken Pritchard's approach does not provide any strategy for working class unity. Condemnations of the prejudices of male workers *on their own* are insufficient to win them from sexism. Explaining that it is in their class interest to fight for women's liberation does.

The widespread acceptance by the American working class of affirmative action is an important step toward women's liberation. This does not make independent organisation of women redundant. In the article Ilona explained how the SWP had encouraged women steelworkers to set up a chapter of the National Organisation for Women on the Iron Range.

The acceptance of the American working class of affirmative action indicates that it is increasingly the working class, rather than other social layers, who are the best allies of the women's movements and the supporters of progressive positions on social issues.

Ken Pritchard's approach goes in the opposite direction because it implies that the working class is generally more backward on social questions than other layers of society. This is a very dangerous position for socialists to take and cuts across a strategy of winning male workers to support for women's liberation.

Liz Lawrence
Sheffield

Setback to Repressive Drive in Iran

Rebels Retake Main Kurdish City

By Gerry Foley

The Khomeini-Bazargan government's drive to beat the Kurdish people into submission has apparently collapsed. On October 31, Reuters reported that Kurdish forces had retaken Mahabad, the historic capital and political center of the Kurdish region. This city had been the target of the concluding phase of the government's military offensive in August and September.

When the government troops occupied Mahabad, it was portrayed in the international capitalist press as a decisive defeat for the Kurds. However, when Kurdish fighters retook the city, this was noted in the *New York Times* only in a "news brief," which described it as a "mountain town," suggesting that the reoccupation was a relatively minor incident.

There are only two all-Kurdish cities, Mahabad and Sanandaj, both of which have populations of about 100,000. Almost the entire area is mountainous. But Mahabad is in one of the least mountainous zones. It lies in the foothills bordering on the Azerbaijani-inhabited plains.

If the government were capable of keeping its military forces in the field, it would be impossible for the Kurdish fighters to hold Mahabad. So, the army's abandonment of the city represents a stunning defeat for the Khomeini-Bazargan regime. According to Reuters, the military units remaining in the local barracks are now being supplied by helicopter.

In the week before the retaking of Mahabad, the Tehran press carried reports of mass ferment in a whole number of Kurdish towns, suggesting that the offensive of the Kurdish guerrillas went hand in

hand with an insurrectionary wave.

There are already signs that the government's defeat in Kurdistan has shifted the political relationship of forces in Iran to the benefit of the workers and oppressed nationalities. In the first place, the regime has been forced to negotiate with Kurdish leaders that Khomeini previously anathematized as "enemies of God."

In fact, according to the October 17 issue of the Tehran daily *Baamdad*, a delegation headed by Interior Minister Dariush Forouhar met with a group of Kurdish leaders, including Jelol Telebani, one of the leaders of the guerrillas in Iraqi Kurdistan. Thus Forouhar was forced to implicitly recognize the unity of the Kurdish people of both Iran and Iraq.

Moreover, a government commission of inquiry has produced a report that largely puts the blame for the fighting in Kurdistan on the Imam's Committees and on the minister of defense, Chamran.

In a news conference reported in the October 25 issue of *Baamdad*, Ayatollah Shariatmadari, the recognized leader of the Azerbaijani people and the representative of a wing of the Iranian bourgeoisie, renewed the criticism he made of the government's policy at the beginning of the Kurdish war. He said that now "a solution of the Kurdish problem becomes more difficult every day."

During the government offensive, Shariatmadari had more or less rallied behind the regime. Now apparently the split between him and Khomeini is reopening, probably along with other divisions in the ruling circles.

New York Rally Demands Freedom for Iran 14

Farhad Nouri, a leader of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party, addressed an October 26 New York rally to defend imprisoned HKS members in Iran. On August 26 twelve HKS members were sentenced to death and two were sentenced to life imprisonment by an Islamic Court.

A worldwide defense campaign has blocked the execution of the HKS members. The breadth of that campaign was reflected by the speakers at the rally.

Joining Nouri on the platform were Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, the Irish civil-rights activist; Ali Mahmoud, foreign relations secretary for the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad; William Kunstler of the Center for Constitutional Rights; Duma Ndlovu of the steering committee of the Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa, U.S. region; and

Palestinian activist Elias Ayoub.

A message was read from Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee national chairperson Michael Harrington, and Laurie Roberts brought official greetings from the New York chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

McAliskey focused on the importance of international solidarity. "There could have been little more joy in Iran the day the shah fell than there was in the streets of Belfast, because we knew it was our victory," she stated.

"While our hearts are with the people in Iran, our hearts are even more with the people of Kurdistan, because we know that their right to autonomy is something that has to be settled. And that is why our hearts are also with the women of Iran." □

'Our Greatest Hopes for Future Lay With Cuban Revolution'

[The four Puerto Rican independence fighters released from U.S. prisons September 10 after more than twenty-five years behind bars were recently interviewed on Cuban television. The following excerpts from the interview were published in the October 14 issue of the weekly English-language edition of *Granma*.]

* * *

Journalist: This is a special interview with the four recently released Puerto Rican patriots—Rafael Cancel Miranda, Irving Flores, Lolita Lebrón and Oscar Collazo—here in the town of Lares, Puerto Rico.

Rafael, how did your political awareness come about?

Rafael Cancel Miranda: I started at a very early age. I wasn't yet seven when my parents went to a peaceful rally in Ponce, Puerto Rico, on March 21, 1937. The Puerto Ricans there, who didn't have so much as a penknife, were driven into a corner by forces under the command of Blanton Winship—who was later decorated by Franklin D. Roosevelt. They were driven into a corner and slaughtered. Twenty-one people were killed and 200 wounded. My mother had gone dressed in white and she returned dressed in red, covered in the blood of the dead; because in order to save herself she had to crawl over the bodies, while bullets whistled overhead.

That was the first time I realized we had a mortal enemy that threatened first my parents and then the parents of other Puerto Rican children. I remember that my first act of rebellion came a few days later in elementary school when they wanted me to stand and pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States. Loyalty to the flag of the United States!

I respect that flag just as I respect all flags, but in this case it was an imperialist imposition. The same ones who tried to kill my people wanted me to pledge allegiance to them the next day. You don't have to be fullgrown to realize that this is absurd.

I was a child, but I refused to do it, and I have refused all my life. I refused to pledge allegiance and was expelled from school. That was my first confrontation with imperialism.

From then on, I gradually became aware of things until I decided that what I had to do was to struggle for my people or live in humiliation. It is a very difficult path, but it is the one that has to be traveled.

Journalist: What about you, Irving Flores?

Irving Flores: During that period I

joined the youth wing of the Puerto Rican independence movement. I was about 16 years old. I remember an incident when I was a student at the vocational school in Mayagüez. I was crossing Columbus Square in that city when I noticed a group of students talking about the independence of Puerto Rico.

At that time I had no political direction at all; I knew nothing about politics. But the subject aroused my interest and I stopped to listen.

One of the speakers was Comrade Rafael Cancel Miranda. He was a student at the time. When they noticed that I was interested, they invited me to a meeting scheduled for the following evening at a workers' club, and I went as an observer. That was how I started in the struggle.

Journalist: What about Albizu Campos?*

Rafael Cancel Miranda: For me he was a teacher who gave me a better understanding of things I already knew about. I heard him speak at many rallies when he returned to Puerto Rico in 1947 or thereabouts.

I went to welcome him when he came back to Puerto Rico. Sometimes he would stay at our house when he went west, and once he made a speech from the balcony of our house. I was quite close to him.

But my most pleasant memory of him—there are many, but the one I will never forget is the first time I saw him after he returned from prison in the United States, when he lived at the Normandia Hotel and my father and a group of comrades and friends and I went to see him for the first time following his release.

When we left, the last thing he did was give me a rose. I said to myself: This is the man they say is a tough guy when, in fact, he is filled with love for his people and with hatred for the enemies of his people! Those who do not hate the enemies of their people, the exploiters of their people, are incapable of feeling anything.

That is what Don Pedro was: a man who loved his country and freedom.

Journalist: I think you all know that your release has meant a lot to the Cuban people. Even the little children in Cuba know your names. The news of your release got banner headlines in all the newspapers and the people in the streets talked

*Pedro Albizu Campos was president of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and the central leader of the 1950 rebellion on the island. Having spent much of his life in U.S. prisons, he was released shortly before his death in April 1965.—*IP 1*

about it.

My question is, while you were in jail, what were your thoughts about the peoples of Latin America and how were you able to keep your morale so high for so many years?

Rafael Cancel Miranda: Yes, we can answer that. We were aware of the situation in Latin America. In all those countries with exploitative governments and systems, we didn't expect much from the governments. But we did have hopes where the peoples were concerned, because we know that they understand what we are fighting for.

It was after the victory of the Cuban Revolution that we learned what had happened in Guatemala in 1954. That was a bitter blow. We also had hopes when Brazil was ruled by that other regime which seemed as if it was going to be stabilized, but then there was the military coup. But our greatest hopes for the future of Latin America lay with the Cuban Revolution.

Journalist: How did you learn of the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959?

Rafael Cancel Miranda: I was in Alcatraz prison in January 1959 when the Cuban Revolution triumphed. But we already knew about what had happened on July 26 with the attack on the Moncada garrison. We were aware of the existence of Fidel and the other revolutionaries involved in the struggle.

In time it became clear that the pro-imperialist Batista regime would be overthrown. Batista jailed me in Cuba, too. I was charged with conspiracy in 1952. I was in Cuba on March 10, 1952. I had to leave Puerto Rico and I went to Cuba and lived there for 14 months. On March 10, 1952, when Batista took power, when the people said that "they went to bed with Prío and woke up with Batista," I was working on the Almendares tunnel, which links Marianao and Havana.

That's where I learned of the March 10 coup, and in time I offered to fight, but I made the offer to a politician who proved to be an opportunist. I didn't know of Fidel's existence at that time. What happened was that my wife and I were duly visited by the Cuban FBI, the Cuban police working on the FBI's behalf.

I was jailed. My wife wasn't; I sent her to New York. But I was jailed at the Tiscornia camp near Havana. Five days later I was deported; Batista handed me over to the U.S. officials in Puerto Rico.

Journalist: What about you, Lolita Le-

brón, what are your feelings about the Cuban people and the Cuban Revolution?

Lolita Lebrón: I am very proud of the Cuban Revolution. It has been a great inspiration and a breakthrough for the liberation of Latin America and Puerto Rico.

I was in Alderson prison when I heard about the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. My mother died on New Year's Eve, and the Cuban Revolution triumphed on New Year's Day 1959.

I was so happy, it was almost as if it had been Puerto Rico that had been liberated.

Journalist: Comrade Collazo, have you all known what you have meant to the Cuban Revolution over all these years?

Oscar Collazo: On this we must turn to history. The fraternity between Cuba and Puerto Rico is a matter of history, dating back to the years of Spanish colonial rule. We were always two sister countries, we always fought side by side, we always had a common policy of independence for both our countries.

But the difference between those struggles and the struggles of the '50s, when the real Cuban Revolution started, was that this was a social revolution that for the first time would bring about radical change in a Latin American country.

Journalist: What comparison can you make between Cuba and Puerto Rico?

Lolita Lebrón: Cuba is a free country, a democratic country. It is not subject to any form of colonialism; it is not bound to U.S. capitalism.

That's the big difference between the people of Cuba and the people of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico is subject to the Government of the United States, and Cuba is a free and sovereign nation. It is the first free country in Latin America. That is the big difference.

Rafael Cancel Miranda: In line with what Lolita is saying, which is true, we can give examples. In Cuba all children are guaranteed an education as far as their abilities go. But in Puerto Rico only a few are guaranteed an education, if they have the money. Most young people must drop out of school to go to work because they are poor and their parents do not have the means to support them. And unfortunately they end up on drugs, in prostitution and in prison.

Journalist: Why do you think the U.S. Government decided to release you, why now?

Oscar Collazo: There are different factors involved in this case. One of them is, the first is, that the capitalist, imperialist system of the United States is being weakened, it is becoming decadent. Now the

United States needs the friendship of all peoples whose friendship they can get, which will prove to be very few.

Another thing is that while there was talk of our release, at the same time an international conference was being held in Havana, Cuba, where solidarity with Puerto Rico was to be discussed and a motion calling for the release of the political prisoners was to be presented.

And the United States felt, among other things, that it would be a good step for them to take, an astute measure to kill the initiative of the delegates to the conference. In other words, if they released us, the resolution would have no value.

Something else involved here is that President Carter is a man without a future. Right now President Carter only has the support of 36 percent of the people of the United States. In other words: a minority of the people of the United States support President Carter. President Carter needed the votes of all delegates that will be attending the Democratic Convention to support his candidacy. And they were counting on the votes of Puerto Rico. A big delegation will be going from here and they may be the deciding factor as to who will get the nomination.

Journalist: How were you treated in jail?

Rafael Cancel Miranda: The cruelest thing that happened in prison, in my opinion, that they did to us, was what they did to Comrade Andrés Figueroa Cordero.

They threw him in the hole at Leavenworth, the prison where he was being held. He was bleeding from the anus. I had a friend who was an orderly there who would bring him new underwear every day because he was bleeding a great deal.

The doctor was told; first the doctor said it was hemorrhoids, and then he was given headache pills. He was bleeding all the time in the dungeons. They didn't want to treat him. I remember I wrote a letter to Comrade Juan Mari Bras and told other prisoners, "Call such and such a number and say that this is happening to Comrade Andrés." They got in touch with Leavenworth and so there was some pressure to get him treated. Otherwise he would have died right there.

I also witnessed cruel treatment of other prisoners. The guards would collect bottles filled with urine and would throw the urine over those of us in the hole.

That's U.S. civilization in the prisons for you!

My mouth was kicked to bits in the prison where Andrés and I were held. I have proof of this.

Now I am speaking for the prisoners I left behind, whom I love dearly because they were my family for nearly 26 years, and I'm alive today thanks to the prisoners, not the police or prison authorities.

They had some big gassing machines called Big Bertha and when they wanted

to throw you in the hole they'd give you Big Bertha, gas you and handcuff you and bring in 20 of those brutes, because that's the only way you can describe them.

They'd put you against the wall and beat you after you had been gassed. And that's when you were in your cell and weren't a threat to anybody because you couldn't touch anybody. That happened in prison; it's still happening today.

When my wife went to visit me she was forced to strip completely so as to be able to visit me; otherwise they wouldn't have let her in. Simply to humiliate her.

I also had to do a striptease for them. In order to go to the visitors room I had to take off all my clothes, raise my testicles, show them my ears, head and many other things so they could see I didn't have anything, otherwise they didn't let you go to the visit. If you wanted the visit you had to go through all that.

I witnessed so much abuse of prisoners that we could spend the whole night talking about this; and you could confirm it all!

Journalist: In view of all that how could you stand firm?

Oscar Collazo: The main thing is that if a person has ideals they help him stand firm 100 years, if need be. If a man doesn't have ideals, if he doesn't have anything to look forward to in the future, he can be destroyed in no time.

Journalist: What is your view of Puerto Rico's future?

Irving Flores: It will be a future of struggle.

Journalist: What is the path of struggle for Puerto Rico?

Lolita Lebrón: Unity. We want to unite the patriotic forces in Puerto Rico around one goal, the independence of Puerto Rico.

Oscar Collazo: We will work on two fronts: a domestic front, that is, national, where we will work for the unification of the forces for independence. But we will also be active on the international scene. We will obtain all possible aid from sister nations that are willing to help us.

What we aim to do is put the U.S. empire in the dock, on trial. And when we are united, we can go forward with the struggle and carry it through to its logical consequences.

Those consequences won't depend on us. They will depend on the empire. If the empire wants to settle Puerto Rico's political status with us peacefully, we are willing to do so. But if they repeat what they did in the '50s, if they want to destroy us by force, we will defend ourselves as the case may be.

Journalist: Could each of you say something to the people of Cuba?

Oscar Collazo: Among the organizations and peoples who stood at our side during the last few years struggling for the independence of Puerto Rico and for our release, the Cuban people were always there. A noble and heroic people whom we have always loved, because we have always been two sister nations, we have always struggled together and we have always been ready and willing to cooperate with each other.

Of course, it was a great source of satisfaction for us to see that the noble Cuban people were in the vanguard of that struggle, stretching out their hand and giving us encouragement, sending their delegates to the UN to speak on our behalf, on behalf of the people of Puerto Rico, to demand that the case of Puerto Rico be discussed at the UN. These are things we are grateful for.

Lolita Lebrón: I endorse what Comrade Oscar has said. We are very grateful to the Cuban people and especially to Comrade

Fidel Castro for his support for the Puerto Rican case at the UN. We feel it was his support for us that paved the way for the successes and victories in the case of Puerto Rico and that meant that, in the Committee of 24, it was recognized that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States.

We thank Cuba for this support, because it was the one who gave us this international backing.

Irving Flores: We are aware of the Cuban people's struggle, both past and present, on behalf of Puerto Rico's independence. The Cuban Government has distinguished itself internationally at all conferences, both at the UN and the Non-Aligned. It has been the leading voice in the campaign for Puerto Rico's freedom and independence and for the release of political prisoners.

My message is this: "Cuba and Puerto Rico united will win."

Rafael Cancel Miranda: For a moment I

thought he was going to say: "Cuba and Puerto Rico are the two wings of a bird, they receive flowers and bullets in the same heart." Do you remember that? There is a poem by Lola Rodríguez de Tió to that effect.

In our history there are many years of cooperation among our peoples. I want to see today's Cuba; I want to see the difference between the Cuba of yesterday and today. Because only "hustlers" survived in yesterday's Cuba. I want to see the big difference in the Cuba of today.

I also want to thank the Cuban people for their help to the people of Angola, Ethiopia and other nations of Africa and the Caribbean and other parts of the world. Because they are showing that their solidarity is not words; it is solidarity in blood and deeds. And I know that they have demonstrated as much solidarity as they can and will continue to do so as far as the Puerto Rican people are concerned.

The struggle goes on.

Thank you. □

Castro's Meeting With Puerto Rican Nationalists in New York

[The following account of Fidel Castro's visit with three of the released Puerto Rican nationalists during his visit to New York in October has been excerpted from a longer article on the visit by *Granma* special correspondents Elio E. Constantín and Julio García. We have taken the text from the October 21 issue of the weekly English-language edition of *Granma*.]

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From midnight on Saturday, October 13, until after four in the morning on Sunday Fidel met with Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel and Irving Flores, three of the four recently released Puerto Rican patriots, in the Cuban mission in New York. They had traveled from Puerto Rico specially for the meeting.

We had so often heard Fidel put their case to the world, and over the years had grown accustomed to the idea that their unshakable determination would inexorably lead them to their death, one by one, in prison. So much so that now, seeing these determined, modest people arrive and embrace our commander in chief with undisguised happiness and tears, it's difficult to put one's feelings into words.

It occurs to us that there must have been scenes like this a century ago with Martí, Sotero Figueroa and countless other fighters of our two countries; it must have been like this when the Revolutionary Party decided that we had to either sink or swim together.

Martí certainly knew how to describe the warmth and energy that emanated from the unity of Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

Lolita—a strong and expressive person, bright-eyed and evidently moved—was the

first to speak while they were still standing in the living room of the small apartment occupied by Fidel. Next to her was Rafael Cancel: over 27 years in jail have failed to kill the resolute young man handcuffed and surrounded by FBI agents, as we remember him in the photos of a quarter of a century ago. And Irving Flores, a small quiet man, who hadn't taken his eyes off Fidel.

"You stood steadfast," said Fidel, "I understand the moral stand you took. It's correct, quite correct! I would have done the same in your place. And yet, we were really eager to have you out . . . !"

They spoke about Vieques Island, given that Carlos Zenón, leader of the Vieques fishermen, was among those accompanying the former prisoners. Fidel asked them about the campaign to release Juan Mari Bras and remarked that, ironically, it was now they who were struggling to get him released.

Fidel looked at Lolita for a moment and, ruffling her hair, now turned gray, very quietly asked:

"How many years did you spend in jail?"

"Twenty-five and a half," she replied.

"You beat me. . . let's see," he stopped to reflect a moment, "by more than 12 times. I spent two years in prison. . ."

"But you came out, and look what you did," she said.

"It's been said that Batista made an awful mistake," said Fidel. "But there was no mistake. It was pressure from the people that prompted the tyranny to make a demagogic move and set us free. But I know what it's like to be in jail, and I know that what you have done was a real

feat."

Lolita reminded him that one of her comrades, Oscar Collazo, had endured 29 years in jail. He couldn't come to New York because his feet are swollen from doing too much walking in recent demonstrations. He's an example of how the former prisoners have come out of jail, not to gather tribute—though they well deserve it—but to continue the struggle for independence without letup.

"Tell me, weren't you really moved the day you came out?" Fidel asked at one point of the conversation.

"Of course," they replied. "It was a victory. . ."

"It was a victory you got out," added Fidel, "but I think there's an even greater victory; that you came out with such a spirit, that you kept up your cause to the very end. You have come out with tremendous prestige; you have become a symbol of the independence struggle."

Rafael Cancel then spoke of how in their country he is approached by people everywhere he goes: of how wherever he goes he is greeted, embraced and kissed.

"I say to my wife, 'Don't get mad, they're not kissing me, Rafael, but the Puerto Ricans they see in us, what's embodied in our persons. . .'"

"They're kissing independence,"—concluded Fidel.

The commander in chief then emphasized how they had become powerful tools in the struggle for independence and outlined, among other things, their role in the unity of all independence forces as well as the need for them to write their ideas and experiences in struggle and in jail. The greatest danger right now, remarked Fidel,

What Iran Can Learn From Cuba

[The following article by Fariborz Kooshan appeared in the September 16 issue of the *Tehran Times*, an English-language daily published in the Iranian capital.]

* * *

TEHRAN—Iran's prompt recognition of the new revolutionary government in Nicaragua and the recent visit to Cuba by Foreign Minister Ebrahim Yazdi, accompanied on the other hand by cutting of all relations with the Zionist and apartheid states of Israel and South Africa respectively, mark the end of our country's long U.S.-dictated foreign policy.

On his return from the non-aligned nations' conference held in Havana, Dr. Yazdi summed up Iran's new foreign policy by stating that no longer would we tolerate America's "Big Brother" attitude. He went on to say that the present Iran-U.S. relations are "very cold," a fact most pointedly expressed by the prolonged absence of an acceptable U.S. ambassador to Iran.

Revealed also by the foreign minister upon his return from the Caribbean Island was the fact that, among other heads of state, Cuba's Fidel Castro has been invited to visit this country soon. This, indeed, is a dramatic change from the previous regime's unhidden hostility toward the Cuban government.

In a total subordination to the demands of U.S. imperialism, the ex-shah's attitude toward Castro was almost a carbon copy of the "Big Brother's" itself. Fearing the inspiring impact Cuba's liberation would have on its own native Black and Latin population, the American government has not altered its 20-year-long economic blockade of that tiny island. On the political level, the U.S. rulers have resorted to numerous unsuccessful attempts, including invasions and assassination plots, in an effort to roll back the gains of the Cuban revolution.

And of course regimes such as the ex-shah's, who are at the Pentagon's beck and call, are also expected to show a similar hostility toward Cuba and its leaders.

However, Iran's deposed tyrant had his own good reasons to hate the Cubans. Of all the so-called socialist countries, Cuba was the only one who really supported the Iranian Revolution its early stages. In a sharp contrast to the mass media in the Eastern Block, the Cuban press hailed our Revolution and in an unambiguous way called for the shah's overthrow. By their

very own experience 20 years earlier, the Cubans knew that not compromise but a relentless struggle against a U.S.-backed dictator would open the road of social progress in Iran. And they themselves were inspired by the fact that "no compromise" was also the Iranian way.

Now, in the wake of the shah's downfall, the establishment of the long overdue diplomatic relation with Cuba is a victory for both countries' revolutions. Dr. Yazdi's visit to the island has paved the way for what could become an expanded fraternal relationship between Iran and Cuba on all levels.

The most important as well as urgent aspect of this bilateral cooperation should be the launching of a massive trade program. Cuba is an exporter of sugar and other agricultural products much needed in our country. On the other hand, what better and more effective way for Iran to help ease the American blockage of Cuba than by selling the Cubans our oil, an item they could certainly use.

On the political-cultural level, the two countries surely have a lot to learn from each other. One topic of interest pointed out by Dr. Yazdi was the enthusiasm of the Cuban leaders to learn from our Revolution and the Islamic values. Undoubtedly, there are many things about the Cuban revolution that we could also benefit from learning. How the Cubans were able to eradicate their country's unemployment problem? How was racial discrimination eliminated there? And how have they managed to stand up against the colossal force of the North?

Although Cuba is smaller and in many ways different from Iran, what the Cubans inherited from their U.S.-dominated past following their revolution was in many ways similar to our country's present plight. Their illiteracy rate was as high as ours. Their agriculture was devastated with a poor peasantry rushing to urban centers to avoid starvation. And as we do today, the Cubans also had to confront the massive flight of their middle class disoriented by a deep-going revolution.

Today the proud stand of Cuba on the world arena testifies to the fact it has been able to solve much of its past social problem and radically rebuild the ruin inherited from the era of Batista dictatorship.

A comprehensive study of the Cuban experience would be a tremendous help in tackling the similar problems we are confronted with today. With Iran's new independent foreign policy, we can now get down to the business. □

lies in annexation, which must be resolutely opposed. No plebiscite is legally or morally valid if it comes before independence.

Fidel also chatted with José Rivera Sotomayor, vice-president of the Nationalist Party, comrade of the late Pedro Albizu Campos and who spent 17 years in prison; Nelson Canales, president of the Committee for the Release of Puerto Rican Political Prisoners; and Providencia Nazario and José Fortuño, treasurer and Committee member, respectively, all of whom were accompanying the released prisoners.

An invitation was extended for them to come to Cuba, and Fidel told them of how the entire Cuban people were looking forward to having the pleasure and honor of welcoming them.

Once again, our commander in chief reiterated Cuba's principled policy concerning Puerto Rico's independence. "As long as there is one Puerto Rican who defends the idea of independence, we'll be morally bound to support him. Even if a million years go by. . . what's more if the day comes when there's not a single one—and that will never happen—we would continue alone to defend the independence of that people."

Fidel broadly outlined his thoughts as to how the long and difficult struggle for Puerto Rico's independence has been gaining strength and now has the backing of the international community, as evidenced all over the Caribbean and in the Non-Aligned Movement.

"They haven't been able to absorb Puerto Rico," underlined Fidel.

"And they never will!" said Lolita.

Four hours of recollections of prison life and struggles fought; jokes and laughter about many things; analyses and comments on important political problems, all served to seal a friendship that already existed even before the protagonists had met.

"Now, then," said Fidel at one point in the conversation, "the fact that you've come all the way to New York, how is that to be valued? It's not proof of solidarity that I'm giving you. It's proof of your solidarity toward us. This has tremendous symbolic value! Castro came to New York, despite everything. You won your battle for freedom. And here we are together, in the heart of the Asphalt Jungle; here we've come to meet. What an honor, what satisfaction, what a pleasure!"

It was time for leaving. Fidel had to get ready to return to Cuba. Then came the goodbyes and again the fervent embraces.

It must have been the same that night when Martí said: "The soul of Lares and the soul of Yara will be one and the same in the future, as they were in the past."*

*In 1868 republics were proclaimed at Lares, Puerto Rico, on September 23 and at Yara, Cuba, on October 10, marking the beginning of armed struggle against Spanish colonial domination on those islands.—IP/I

How the Mass Movement Is Being Rebuilt in Northern Ireland

[Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, the Irish revolutionary leader, conducted a national speaking tour in the United States in mid-October. She gave the following interview to Gerry Foley in New York on October 29.]

* * *

Question. The last time I talked to you was just after the first all-Northern Ireland conference of the new broad committees in defense of republican political prisoners, the Relatives Action Committees (RACs). The conference was in February 1978. How has the new resistance to repression developed since that time?

Answer. Preceding the conference, which was held in Coalisland, a town in County Tyrone, the RACs began spreading outside Belfast, where they were initially formed. The first RAC set up outside Belfast was established in Coalisland. It drew strength from the fact that this is a traditionally solid rural republican area. Those active in it were not members of any organization. It combined youth with veterans of the struggle who had the experience of working through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.



After the Coalisland conference, the local RAC continued to play a leading role. It took the conference resolutions and moved towards organizing practically all of County Tyrone. And from there it extended its work to Derry and north Antrim. It developed a fairly good communications system. And it also helped to widen the program of the RACs from just the call for the release of the prisoners to include demands for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. It helped to bring about a recognition of the fact that the British presence was basically of an imperialist nature, and that eliminating it was a precondition for peace.

This development led the RACs to the point where they could undertake building a mass demonstration for the anniversary of the first civil rights march in Northern Ireland (which took place on August 4, 1968). So, on August 24, 1978, over thirty thousand persons marched from Dunganon to Coalisland. Since the Newry march of defiance after the Bloody Sunday massacre of January 1972, no demonstration had come anywhere near that size.

Q. What were the political effects of the march?

A. This march had two effects. The first was that it created a great confidence that it was possible to mobilize masses of people and that the upturn in the struggle that many of us had been talking about was a real thing. This march drew in the broadest layers since the first phase of the struggle and remobilized many people who had dropped away from activity.

The march also apparently aroused certain apprehensions on the part of the Provisional republican leadership. It began to display an ambivalent attitude toward the reviving mass movement. They seemed to see the developing movement as a threat to their leadership. And since I had worked in the Coalisland RAC and been instrumental in extending the RACs outside Belfast and had also played a role in the Coalisland conference and in the August 24 march, they focused these fears around me personally.

The implication was that I was up to something that meant political danger for the Provisional leadership. There was no basis for this. They could not point to any evidence that a new leadership was developing that would divert the struggle from its true course.

I think that the basic problem was that they feared loosening the exclusive organizational control that they had held over the struggle for a long time. For a period, this attitude made it very difficult to get the Provisionals to work with us. This problem came to a head when I ran as a candidate in the European parliament elections in June 1979.

Q. On what basis did you contest this election?

A. There was a whole development leading up to my campaign. The first stage came in the British parliamentary elections in May. For the first time there was a challenge to the acceptance of British rule in Northern Ireland by the biggest Catholic party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). It came from the Irish Independence Party (IIP).

The IIP has no social or economic program. It basically presents itself as a "presolution" party, that is a party to prepare the way for a solution but which cannot offer one. But what was important was its challenge to the SDLP on the constitutional question. Where the IIP candidates took a strong position on the question of opposing partition of Ireland and British rule, they got a lot of support. Where they equivocated, as in the case of Fergus McAteer, the vote they got did not reflect the level of hostility to the SDLP. In these cases a lot of people just didn't vote.

One particularly important test was in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone district. The sitting member of parliament for this district was Frank Maguire. Now, Maguire is not the most astute parliamentary operator or a great orator. But he's very clearly on the side of the struggle.

As they had done against me and Frank McManus, the SDLP ran a candidate against Maguire in an attempt to split the anti-imperialist vote and get him defeated, at the expense of letting a Unionist [proimperialist] in.

So, a lot of people who had been working for the prisoners got together to mount a major campaign to make sure that Maguire was returned. They wanted to prevent the setback that his defeat would represent. It was not that they had any illusions about what an MP at Westminster could accomplish. But if Maguire had been defeated, it would have given the SDLP a basis for claiming that there really was no upturn in the struggle against repression and imperialism.

We won the fight to ensure the return of Maguire. This took us up to the European elections. The RAC activists and supporters, particularly in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone area, were flush with success. They'd done the conference. They'd done the march. And they'd got Maguire elected. This represented a major development for them. And so they wanted to take on the European elections. They did not have any great illusions in the European parliament. But the elections did offer some special opportunities.

The whole of Northern Ireland was one constituency for the European elections. So, with one candidate you could put forward a united program including the three basic points of the movement—the demand for the release of the prisoners and an amnesty, for the immediate withdrawal of the British troops, and for exposing the British presence in Northern Ireland as imperialist in character and demanding that it be ended.

The election offered us a chance to demonstrate the support that existed for these positions and to build the movement at the same time. It also allowed us to put the SDLP to the test, since they had one candidate across the north. And it gave us a chance to put a lot of pressure on the SDLP, because the rank and file of the party had considerable sympathy for the prisoners and for the demand for withdrawal of British troops.

So, all the people who had been involved since 1976 in the campaign to get back political status for the republican prisoners and to rebuild the confidence of the masses and revitalize the mass movement had to

consider very carefully what position to take on the European elections.

Q. What position did the Provisionals take toward the elections?

A. The Provisionals took their standard position and called for a boycott. However, they could not avoid certain contradictions. They had come out formally for a boycott during the British parliamentary elections but in fact had worked with the rest of the resistance movement to ensure the return of Frank Maguire. With the rest of the resistance movement, they had supported Pat Fahy in mid-Ulster against Pat Duffy, the SDLP candidate. Where the IIP candidates took strong positions on the constitutional question, they supported them.

When I was first asked to consider calling a meeting to discuss contesting the election, I recognized that things had reached the point that there was going to be a showdown with the Provos. That was the way it developed. The Provisionals came down very hard and said that there was going to be no support for raising the question of the prisoners in the European elections.

The only reason I could see for their attitude was a fear on their part of a political threat to their leadership and control of the resistance movement. Since they didn't have a clear political basis for taking this attitude and because they were tactically wrong, they found it very hard to argue their position to Provisional supporters.

I had been perfectly frank when the idea of contesting the election was first discussed. I explained that the Provisionals would not like it, and that it was going to create a problem in the resistance movement between the IRA and the developing independent Relatives Action Committees. I explained that there was a danger that this problem could weaken the resistance movement as a whole and so it had to be seriously discussed.

The people who had worked for the prisoners since 1976 saw the tactical advantage that could be gained from the tactic of contesting the election. Roy Mason, the British secretary of state for Northern Ireland, had been saying that the prisoners had no support. John Hume and the SDLP had been saying that the prisoners were not an issue. Moreover, the election offered us an unusual opportunity to reassert the position taken by the overwhelming majority of the people in Ireland as a whole in the 1918 election. This was the first time since 1918 that the entire Irish people were voting in one election. So, we had a chance to assert the fact that we still wanted an independent and united Ireland. That was what our forefathers voted for, and we could show that given the opportunity that's what we'd vote for again.

The election campaign also gave us a

chance to strengthen and build up the mass movement. And in fact in the course of the election, we did draw into activity people who had not been active since 1968-69. We drew in new layers of youth. And we drew in areas, particularly the rural areas, that had become isolated from the struggle. The results of the campaign proved that we were right about deciding to wage a campaign.

However, lacking any coherent political argument to defend their tactic of boycott, the Provisionals became politically very sectarian. Charges of political opportunism were directed against me personally. There was talk about parliamentarians who wanted to make it to power on the backs of the suffering people. But the people that I had worked with for the past ten years, and particularly for the past four, were simply not prepared to buy this.

These people did not see any evidence that I was acting out of political opportunism. I had explained to them that I was not prepared to take on the job of being the candidate unless I was assured through the conference that had been called that I was not running as an individual but could stand on a very clearly defined minimum platform.

Q. Were you able to overcome the opposition from the Provisionals?

A. The period of the campaign was a very difficult one. The Provisionals became increasingly bitter. Election day on the Falls Road was a tragedy. Mother and daughter, brother and sister argued furiously with each other. They all agreed on the principles. They just disagreed about the tactic.

But nonetheless we felt that the decision to contest was correct. It was necessary tactically in order to strengthen the movement. The campaign also represented a demand from the developing mass movement, given the attitude of the Provisionals, for the right to independent action, for the right to disagree with the IRA on tactical questions.

The results of the election were a sharp rebuff to the Provisionals' attitude. We amassed thirty-three and a half thousand votes. We defeated candidates like Paddy Devlin [an established parliamentary figure who split to the right from the SDLP], and we asserted ourselves as serious contenders. In addition to the first preference votes we got we amassed some eighty thousand second preference votes. In this case, the second preference votes did not matter in determining who got the seat.

But these votes mattered to us. Added to our first preference votes, they made up a total of 120,000 Catholic people in the north who had showed that the immediate withdrawal of the British troops, the right to political status and amnesty, and the recognition that there would be no peace or progress in the country until Britain's imperialist presence was removed were the

uppermost things in their minds. That total represents more than a third of the Catholic voters in Northern Ireland.

After the election, then, we faced a new problem. Many of the people who had actually worked in the RACs had been angered by the Provos' attitude and said that if that is the way Sinn Féin [the political wing of the Provisionals] wants it, that's the way Sinn Féin can have it, ourselves alone [in the Irish language, Sinn Féin means "ourselves alone"]. It fell to those of us who understood what the political results of this would be to argue with these people and explain that if Sinn Féin and the IRA were weakened and isolated, if they were put in a position where they could be defeated by the British, we would all be defeated in the process.

So there was a period when we had to work among our own supporters and explain to them what unity actually meant. We had to explain that when the going gets rough and people you are actually supporting seem to be saying that they don't want your support unless they can control it, the answer is not to give up. Instead, we told them, the answer is to continue to argue your position politically and realistically and not to let yourself be pushed off.

So, finally the Provisionals themselves had to admit that we had helped in the post-election period to save them from the effects of their own tactical error.

In fact, I ran up against some of my own socialist comrades, who said that I had gotten the Provisionals into a position of weakness and now I was erasing that by helping to strengthen them. I didn't see it that way. What we were doing was establishing the right to independent political action. But that was not so that we could throw those with whom we had tactical differences to the wolves.

While I was in America, there was a conference of the RACs on October 21 in Ireland. It showed that the Provisionals were prepared to sit down and recognize the need for a wider and more independent united front on the basic issues. Not all the problems have been solved. But we have gained the possibility for going forward.

Q. How would you sum up the gains of the campaign?

A. There is a growing confidence in people that political action does work. They are realizing more and more that they have a vital and valid role to play in political and mass action and that they do not have to do, as they did do in the period of downturn—sit back and be cheerleaders for the armed struggle. They are more and more convinced that they have a right to go ahead with what they are doing even when the Provisionals keep warning them off because they are supposedly getting in the way of the armed struggle.

I think that the election experience has

been one of the healthiest ones we have gone through. We have come through a period of internal struggle and emerged from it stronger and more united with the principles clear. We could not have accomplished this if we had bowed to the Provisionals and told them "O.K., we'll not go ahead because you are calling all the shots." We could not have accomplished it either if we had fallen into the trap we often fall into of spending so much time in attacking those who agree with us in principle but disagree on tactics that we end up by weakening the movement.

Since the Coalisland conference great progress has been made in rebuilding the mass movement. And to my mind, one of the vital factors in it has been that a lot of this struggle has been carried by women. They were not necessarily radical women, or socialist women, or feminist women at this point but they were militant women who when they saw what had to be done and what gains could be made for the struggle were prepared to take on the traditional notions and elitism of the Provisional leadership.

Overall, those who have worked in the RACs over the past period have shown that a movement can be built, that you can have democracy in organizations. They have shown that you can discuss differences and that such discussion can lead to strength. They have shown that you can have political differences in the resistance movement and deal with them without resorting to the traditional blackguarding and sectarian denunciations of people who disagree with you.

Q. Do you think that a mass movement can be built in the south as well against the repression being carried out by the British imperialists and their agents and allies?

A. The potential is there. One indication of this is the fact that Neil Blaney topped the poll in the south in the European elections. He is only a Tammany Hall politician. But the position he puts forward on the north is the standard republican one. It was on this basis that he got his vote, in the face of the attempt by the Fianna Fáil machine to cut him down to size.

Then, you have the speech by Síle De Valera, a young member of parliament for Fianna Fáil, in which she defied both the reaction to the Mountbatten killing and the party leadership to reassert opposition to British rule in the north.

Such events show the strength of anti-imperialist feeling in the south, which lies just below the surface. The problem remains of politically organizing and mobilizing that support.

The Trade Union Committee Against Repression is a help, but it's very small. Little consistent work has been done in the trade unions. There are socialists in the union movement and a great many more

republicans. But few of them have an understanding of how to work in the unions to build support for the struggle in the north.

What is necessary to build support in the south is to make the same sort of breakthrough that we have in the north. The activists there have got to learn how to work with people who are not republicans.

There is a whole layer of people in the south—Social Democrats, liberals, or independent radicals—who could and would play a major role in building support in the south, if they could relate to a broad movement in the north and not be forced to relate immediately just to the Provisionals and the armed struggle. That, they can't handle. We still must convince the Provisionals of the need for them to let this happen.

We must keep trying to convince the Provisionals that you cannot always keep full control of what you build because if you try to do that you can't build anything. To build something that you can control means that you only build amongst those who are with you anyway.

You can't go to people and tell them that they can only support the prisoners if they support the armed struggle. There are many people who will support the prisoners and support the demand for the withdrawal of British troops. And on the basis of such support, other questions could be raised. But if you make it a precondition that people have to be in step with the Provisionals before they even start, then they don't start.

What we need is a broad movement of radicals and trade-union activists who have credibility in their unions. And from there we could build up the basis for mobilizing the support that exists in the south. We don't have that now.

Q. Is the campaign run by Joe Harrington in Limerick in the recent local elections an example of the sort of thing you would like to see in the south?

A. Yes. Joe is a revolutionary socialist and a well-known union activist locally. Limerick is the one area in the south where consistent work has been done in the unions, and the experience there shows that it is effective. Joe has fought as a local activist on immediate local issues, and consistently raises the question of the north among the people he works with. What he and the people who have worked with him have accomplished is an indication of what can be done right across the south.

Q. In the last few months in particular the identification with socialism has become much stronger in the Provisional press. What do you think is the reason for this and what effect has it had?

A. There are a number of factors. First, the younger generations are growing stronger in the movement. More and more

young people have been drawn into the struggle and radicalized by it. That has meant that the younger Provisional leaders such as Gerry Adams, Séamie Drumm, Martin Meehan, and others still younger are playing a bigger role. They do relate to the mass movement. They see where it is going. The more conservative elements have always been older and centered in the south, where the movement has not grown so rapidly. And even in the south, the people they draw in tend to be young and therefore more radical.

So, the whole impetus in the Provisionals is towards more radical ideas, towards an interest in other peoples' struggles around the world. Many of the young Provisionals have used their time in prison to study. And so they have a wider and more internationalist outlook. They identify with the struggle in Nicaragua, Iran, and Black Africa.

Another factor in the more radical tone of the Provisional press, I think, is the decline of the Irish-American lobby's support for the struggle. So, the Provisionals are much less dependent on conservative Irish-Americans and much less inclined to accept their demands that they stick to a narrowly Irish outlook and not say anything that might upset sections of the Irish-American community.

The old Provisional elitism is still there. But there is an increasing understanding that the masses have to be involved in making the revolution. There is a greater openness to socialist ideas and a greater willingness to work with socialist organizations.

This trend is reflected not just in the Provisionals but in the mass movement itself. Ten years ago, even five years ago, it was still possible to red-bait quite effectively. Now, red-baiting in Ireland is dead. It has absolutely no effect.

However, no matter how radical the Provisionals become they run up in the end against the basic organizational structures of their movement. It is impossible to transform Sinn Féin into a mass revolutionary party.

Q. Do you think that the mass of youth in the south are now shifting to the left?

A. If you look at all the young people who cheered the pope in Galway, you'd think that the youth were going backwards. But that would be a false impression. Somebody has said that the pope's visit was a great spectacle for the deaf, meaning that no one was listening to what he was saying. Now he's gone and the contradictions remain.

The percentage of youth in the southern population has grown very rapidly in the last ten years. They are much less willing than their elders to accept the strictures of southern society and they tend to identify with us in the north who are struggling. It's interesting in this respect that Síle De Valera made a point in her speech of

saying that she was speaking as a young person and that if youth did not get leadership in opposing imperialism they might turn to nonparliamentary roads.

Q. I can think of some young people in the south who have shared the bitterest experience of the young fighters in the north, people who have been railroaded to long jail terms on the basis of "confessions" extorted by torture. I am thinking of three members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) who were sentenced at the end of last year on charges of robbing a train. Before their conviction, some of the Irish dailies showed pictures of one of them, Osgur Breathnach, covered with bruises that he got at the hands of police "interrogators." How much support is there for them?

A. The tragedy about this case was that everybody knew that they were railroaded to prison. But nobody at the time knew how to build a defense campaign the way it should have been built. A lot could have been done but the questions of how to go about it had not been resolved and it became hard to do anything.

Q. What's the status of the case now?

A. A pamphlet has been produced, and appeals are going ahead. But basically the case is getting very little publicity.

Q. It can be expected that the upturn in the movement in Ireland will lead to a revival of the support movement in the United States. What development do you see in this regard?

A. I have been coming to America now for a number of years. What impressed me this time was the number of people I met in the Irish organizations who have a radical outlook. They have continued working in these organizations while recognizing all their limitations.

I think that the future lies with the younger Irish-Americans who have become radicalized in the American context. I personally believe that more and more the support for Ireland in this country is going to be built with the help of socialists, trade-unionists, and the oppressed minorities in America. These people can support us most reliably and effectively because they can understand our struggle, where it's going and where it's coming from.

We cannot accept the demands of the conservative Irish-Americans that we not talk about socialism or about other oppressed peoples so as not to divide the Irish in America. It's impossible anyway to get a solid bloc of Irish-Americans, there are too many contradictions among them. A lot of them are basically too committed to the status quo in the U.S. and in the world to really support us. And the price they demand of us is too high, it means isolating our struggle from other forces and peoples who are fighting for the same things; it means weakening our struggle.

I think that there is going to be more and more support for us in the United States as the layers of the American population that are radicalizing and struggling recognize the international importance of the Irish struggle and as its character becomes clearer as a result of the radicalization that is going on in Ireland. I don't accept the claims that America is moving toward the right. Part of it may be moving toward the right, but part of it is moving toward the left. And we must take our stand with the left.

Q. What's the major political difference you have noticed in the U.S. by comparison with the last time you were here two years ago?

A. Every time I come to America, I realize that Americans are finding it easier to recognize what class they belong to. And so the country can't be moving to the right. When I first came here in 1969, very few people were admitting to membership in the working class, except the unemployed. Now whole layers of people are recognizing that they're members of the working class and that life's getting pretty rough for them.

I find generally that Americans are talking about more real things. In a very broad way, they are becoming more and more aware of the bankruptcy of their political system.

When some of the people who are actually trying to sell Ted Kennedy tell me that there's really no difference between Kennedy and Carter or even between the Democrats and the Republicans, then you know that things are changing in America and that people are realizing that things have got to move.

Q. What has happened to the movement in Britain for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland?

A. I went to the demonstration in London that was held in August to mark and condemn the tenth anniversary of the sending of the troops to Ireland. It was a very large action. There were maybe fifteen thousand people on the street. It brought in not only the socialists and Irish support groups that had been marching for years but for the first time it had small but significant backing from shop stewards committees, trades councils, a number of Labour MPs, the Young Liberals, and a number of Liberal Party MPs.

Therefore, the whole Irish question was moving into mainstream politics. Resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the troops at least made it onto the floor of the Labour and Liberal conferences. They were defeated. But that's the first time in ten years that the question has gotten that far, and that reflects the increase in the number of people taking up the issue.

Q. In the early 1970s a considerable interest in the Irish struggle developed

among radicals on the continent of Europe. That was something quite new. Do you think that this interest has persisted or grown?

A. The interest on the continent seems to be growing. The problem is that there has not been enough consistent effort from Ireland to help this along. We have not yet learned how to do this. But what is very hopeful and shows the potential that exists is the number of support activities that have grown on their own and the number of radicals who are taking up the Irish question.

I think that the interest in Ireland on the continent is very important not just because we need support but because the development of the struggle in Ireland over the past ten years offers vital lessons for people in struggle everywhere else.

Q. There has been increasing interaction of struggles internationally. How do you think that this is exemplified in Ireland?

A. The Iranian revolution had the most impact in Ireland. This is first of all because it was widely covered in the British networks. The British were supporting the shah almost to the day he fell. And so, there was a lot of news coverage showing the masses in the streets.

And when the Iranian people brought down the shah nowhere in Iran could the joy have been greater than it was in the streets of West Belfast [the Catholic ghetto]. It was our victory as well, even though we had done nothing in a tangible way to bring down the shah.

People who have not engaged actively in a struggle sometimes find it hard to understand, but the confidence of the Irish people in their own ability to win is immeasurably increased by the victories of other peoples.

Q. What has been the reaction of the Irish people, then, to the new Iranian government's war against the Kurdish people?

A. The Irish people feel an even closer identification with the Kurds than with the Iranian masses in general. The Kurds have fought not just to overthrow the shah but to throw off the national oppression they have suffered. They are doubly oppressed, fighting for the right of self-determination, and therefore they are very close to the hearts of the Irish people who have fought that same struggle for eight hundred years.

The Irish people have no difficulty in seeing that if the Iranians overthrew the shah but stopped short at giving the Kurdish people their freedom, they could only be led back into the arms of imperialism. Because the one truth that is most clearly and vividly understood in Ireland is that a people that oppresses another cannot itself be free. □

Chen Tu-hsiu—A Revolutionist Betrayed

By Li Fu-jen and F.H. Wang

Among honored names to be enshrined in a future Pantheon of the Socialist Revolution there surely will be found that of Chen Tu-hsiu, a leading founder of the Trotskyist movement in China and, before that, the principal founder and first general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This year is the centennial of his birth.

Chen Tu-hsiu was born on October 8, 1879, in Anking, capital of the central China province of Anhwei. It was thirty-seven years after the Opium War (1840-42) and fifteen years after the suppression of the drawn-out Taiping Rebellion (1851-64). Ahead lay the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1900) and China's first revolution (1911) that brought down the Ching (Manchu) Dynasty. The historic points of reference are useful as indicators of the social and political turbulence that influenced the development of an illustrious revolutionary figure.

The society Chen entered stood somewhere between feudalism, abolished centuries earlier, and modern capitalism. The vast majority of the population, stifled under a blanket of illiteracy, worked and lived on the land, fragmented by repeated subdivision to the point where many of the holdings were no larger than garden plots yielding a bare subsistence. Poor peasants toiled alongside the much larger acreage of the middle and well-to-do peasants and landowners.

In the cities there were handicrafts but little modern industry, much of it in textiles and transportation and largely owned by foreign imperialist interests. Business activity was substantially mercantile. The bourgeoisie were of the comprador-banking variety, serving foreigners as junior partners. There was only an embryonic working-class. This was a decaying social order crowned by an effete monarchy and administered by a corrupt and incompetent bureaucracy that could neither manage public affairs efficiently nor defend the country against foreign aggression. Beneath the seemingly placid surface were accumulating the ingredients of coming revolutionary explosions.

The family into which Chen Tu-hsiu was born belonged to the local gentry, landowners of modest wealth who preferred to live in town. His father having died a few months after he was born, the young Chen was brought up and educated by his grandfather and older brothers, both classical Confucian scholars whose dominant purpose was to prepare the boy for the Imperial civil service examinations, the one sure means of entry to the Mandarin or upper levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy. The rewards of success were social status and wealth.

In the summer of 1897, not quite eighteen years old, Chen Tu-hsiu traveled to Nanking by Yangtze River steamboat to take the Imperial exams. Years later, in an unfinished autobiography, he described this experience as a landmark in his intellectual and political development. Nanking itself held few surprises. Most notably, he was astonished by the sheer height of the massive gates giving access to the walled city that for a while had been the capital of the Ming emperors. Otherwise, like Anking and similar cities, Nanking was, though larger, a collection of ancient, crumbling, gray-brick houses and no Western-style buildings. The streets were narrow, stinking alleys, strewn with garbage and human wastes. Oil lamps provided the only illumination by night. The rickshaw had not yet crossed the China Sea from Japan. Travel was by donkey-back, by ox-cart, or on foot. The mandarins and their wives and concubines moved about in style by sedan chair.

The so-called Examination Halls where the written tests were

taken were simply rows of pens set close together. Each pen accommodated one examinee, with his papers, his ink and brushes, and a supply of cooked food to see him through the ordeal. For ordeal it most certainly was. Through nine days of torrid weather the exams went on, with the future candidates for official posts sweating it out under the watchful eyes of guards stationed in watchtowers to discourage collusive cheating.

Even while preparing for the exams, the youthful Chen had been assailed by doubts about the whole system as a means of selecting men to staff the departments of government. The emphasis was on scholastics. Ability to quote Confucian analects was deemed more important than practical knowledge and form was elevated above substance. Actual experience of the exams imbued Chen with disdain bordering on revulsion for the examinees themselves. Most of them came from well-to-do families and were moved by no higher motives than the desire for pelf and place. Many years later, in the unfinished autobiography, Chen wrote: "I began to think about the whole strange phenomenon of the examination system and the candidates involved, and then I began to push my considerations to how much my country and her people would suffer when these animals received positions of power. Because of these ideas, my mind wandered to question



Chen Tu-hsiu in 1920s.

the whole phenomenon of selecting men of talent by the examination system. It was just like an animal exhibition of monkeys and bears performing every few years, and then I pondered whether this system was not as defective as every other system in the nation."

Chen was groping for a comprehensive explanation of the social problems that abounded. The quest would lead him to Marxism and revolution.

As he has told us—again in his unfinished autobiography—Chen Tu-hsiu was attracted by the reform ideas of Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao even at the time he took the Imperial exams, which he passed without difficulty. He had decided that he would not become a government official. Kang-Liang led a movement, largely literary, that advocated a constitutional monarchy and a series of political and social reforms. The Manchu rulers, however, were unwilling to make any concessions to popular discontent. The Kang-Liang party was crushed just one year after it had gained Chen as an adherent. But two years after that, in 1900, the Manchu rulers suffered maximum humiliation when the imperialist powers imposed on China a huge indemnity as punishment for the Boxer uprising.

Under the influence of these historic happenings, Chen became more and more radical in his thinking. In 1904, he published a newspaper in the vernacular, *Su Hua Pao*, in his native province. In it he propagated nationalist-revolutionary ideas. In 1908, he went to Shanghai, where the imperialists administered their own "settlements." There he participated in an underground terrorist organization (directed against the Manchus) and learned how to make bombs. By then, his political views had advanced far

beyond the tame ideas of Kang-Liang. Chen now stood for the revolutionary overthrow of the Manchu regime.

It was customary in those days for young people to spend time in Japan in order to acquaint themselves with the "new knowledge," i.e., the Western sciences and humanities, Japan being the nearest source of such information. Chen was among the seekers after modern culture, making his first trip to Japan* in 1902. He studied Japanese assiduously and in time became proficient in its written use. He made three other visits to Japan, two of them, in 1907 and 1914, to escape the Manchu rulers or their successors who "wanted" him for his revolutionary activities. Between the trips Chen was busy as a revolutionary activist and served a jail term in his native province as a result of this activity. Chen's only other trip abroad came in 1922 when he attended the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow.

When the 1911 revolution took place, ending the rule of the Manchus, Chen Tu-hsiu was on hand for the event. Not as a spectator but as an active participant. He was named "Political Director" of the revolutionary army in his home province. Paradoxical as it seems, the revolution produced little change, though setting in motion developments that would lead to, and require, a second revolution. In the decadent and atomized society of 1911 there was no class strong enough to grasp power and set about the urgently-needed reforms that had made revolution necessary. The bourgeoisie was little more than an agency of foreign imperialism. The working-class was small and unorganized and placed in light industries that counted for little in an economy dominated by a primitive but massive agriculture. The power that fell from the weak hands of the monarchy landed in the laps of regional military satraps, with a quite ineffective central government nominally in power in Peking. Thus began the "warlord era" that would last for sixteen years, until the era of the Kuomintang would begin.

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Chen's fourth and last visit to Japan was in 1914-15. He returned to China in the spring of 1915 and began publication of his famous magazine *Youth* in Shanghai. World War I was in progress and was beginning to produce profound changes in the country's economy and class relations. With imperialist pressures relaxed because of their preoccupation with the slaughter in Europe, the Chinese bourgeoisie found itself with more elbow-room in the economy. That and the worldwide demand for factory-made goods of every kind stimulated a rapid growth of Chinese industry and the corresponding development of a numerous, class-conscious, and militant working class. A few years hence this new proletariat would take center stage in the unfolding drama of the second Chinese revolution, with Chen Tu-hsiu in the top leadership role.

Chen was now well-known not only as a political activist but even more as a man of scholarly attainments, with an authoritative knowledge of Chinese etymology and phonetics. In addition to his knowledge of Japanese he had learned to read English and some French. His fame having spread to the nation's capital, he was offered, and accepted, the post of dean of the College of Letters at Peking National University, perhaps the most progressive and certainly the most prestigious of the country's institutions of higher learning. Chen moved his magazine to Peking, renaming it *New Youth*. It had a notable roster of contributors. Among the intellectuals at the university who wrote for the magazine were Li Ta-chao, who was to be one of the founders and martyrs of the CCP; Hu Shih, the philosopher; Lo Hsun, the novelist; Chien Hsuan-tung, the historian; Chao Tso-jen, the essayist, among others. And also Chen Tu-hsiu! With names such as these (Li Ta-chao and Hu Shih had previously written for *Youth*) *New Youth* forged ahead, gaining rapidly in circulation

*In an obituary on Chen Tu-hsiu in the magazine *Fourth International*, August, 1942, it was stated that Chen had never gone abroad. This was in error.

and influence. Prior to 1919 there was no socialist literature in Chinese. Chen used his magazine to help correct this deficiency. The Communist Manifesto appeared in translation and there were discussions of Marxist ideas.

At the same time, while attending to his academic duties, Chen used his magazine to assail the philosophical and ethical system of Confucianism, which like Christianity in the West was the ideological prop of the status quo. The essence of the Confucian idea was that social progress must be sought in the cultivation of individual excellence; Christianity preaches personal salvation through divine dispensation. Chen, in contrast, advocated "science and democracy" as the twin blessings that would put China on the road of progress. He had also become convinced that the Chinese language itself was a serious obstacle to progress. He labored to effect its reform and bring it into line with modern needs. Classical Chinese, with its thousands of intricate characters or ideographs, was an archaic language going back many centuries and quite different from the contemporary, everyday tongue. Very difficult to learn because it required a prodigious ability to memorize so many characters, it was hardly surprising that persons of fair competence often were unable to compose a simple letter even after ten years of instruction. Chen, through his magazine, popularized the use of the vernacular or "living language" spoken by the people. Known as *pei hua* or northern language (for the fact that it was developed and first took hold in the north) it replaced the classical script, now relegated, like Latin, to the museum of antiquities.

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Like most of the intellectuals at that time, Chen was deeply sensitive to the humiliations heaped on China by the imperialist powers. The long-smoldering indignation burst into flame on May 4th, 1919, when demonstrations, with students in the lead, began in Peking and quickly spread to other cities. What sparked the protests was a gross betrayal of China by the powers gathered at Versailles, where the victors of World War I were holding a "peace" conference—in reality a conclave of robbers dividing up the swag of war.

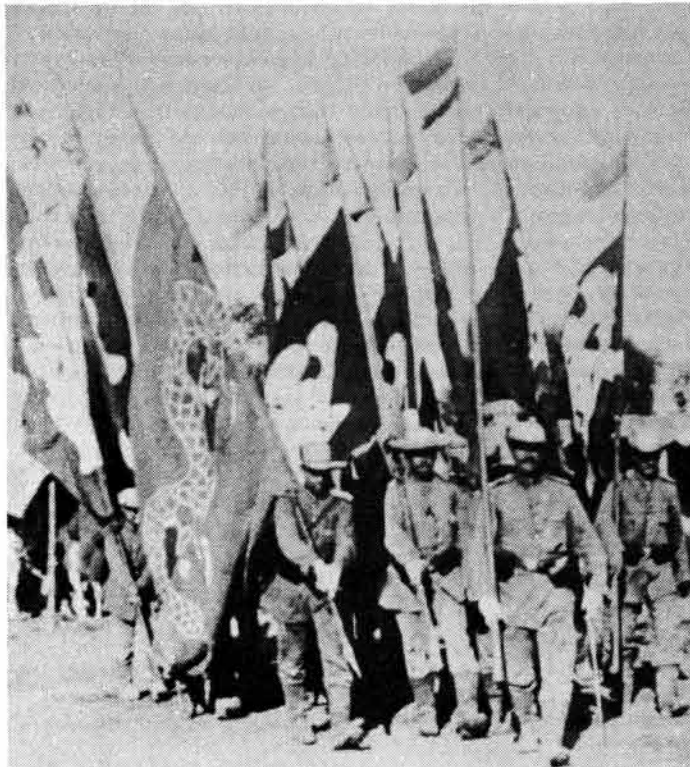
China had joined in the war on the side of the Allies, although only in token fashion, with the naïve expectation, held by the feeble Peking government, that as a reward for such subservience China would be treated by the victors with justice, perhaps generosity, at war's end. To the astonishment of the Chinese, the bandits at Versailles not only refused to redress China's just grievances, but they gave China a resounding slap in the face by ceding German "rights" in Shantung—to Japan!

The protests against this perfidy developed a nationwide sweep that went into history as the May Fourth Movement. They were pointed, first of all, at Japan. It was Japan, just five years before, that had presented to Peking the infamous Twenty-one Demands that would have reduced China to a colonial appendage of the growing Japanese empire. But the anger of the protesters was also directed at a Chinese government that made no attempt to resist foreign aggression and actually had acceded to some of the Twenty-one Demands.

Chen Tu-hsiu was in the thick of the May Fourth Movement; more accurately, he was the outstanding leader, with *New Youth* playing a lively propaganda and agitational role. It is necessary to note here the tremendous influence of the Russian Revolution in the mass awakening. This great event had taken place less than two years before and still cast its warming glow over peoples and classes suffering from exploitation and oppression. Chen saw in the Bolshevik triumph, in a vast backward land comparable in many ways to China, a mirror image of his country's own revolutionary future. It was time to think of building a political vehicle for the program of revolutionary socialism.

For his part in the May Fourth Movement Chen spent three months in a Peking jail. By that time, the group of writers around *New Youth* were falling apart—an inevitable differentiation caused by the impact of great events. The ingrained liberals, such as Hu Shih, had embraced some radical ideas about social reform, but were now shying away, as liberals are wont to do, from what

they perceived as the approaching revolution. Not so Chen Tu-hsiu. After his release from jail he quit the university for good and went to Shanghai. Now, at the age of 41, he openly proclaimed his adherence to Marxism and busied himself with preparations for launching the Chinese Communist Party. In July 1921 the party was formally established at a national congress, with delegates



Imperialist troops, like the Germans shown above, put down the Boxer Rebellion and imposed a huge indemnity on China. Events such as this radicalized the young Chen Tu-hsiu.

drawn from local revolutionary groups throughout the country. Chen was elected to the top leadership post of general secretary. He was reelected at the four subsequent congresses and thus became the leader of the 1925-27 revolution.

Shortly after its Second Congress in 1922, at the direction of the Moscow-dominated Comintern and despite the misgivings of Chen Tu-hsiu and his entire Central Committee, the CCP joined the bourgeois Kuomintang or Nationalist party. It did not join as an affiliated body, retaining certain rights and a degree of autonomy, for that was unacceptable to the Kuomintang. Instead, Communists joined as individual members, obligating themselves to obey Kuomintang discipline. The Communists even undertook to refrain from criticism of the petty-bourgeois doctrines of Sun Yat-sen (the San Min Chu I or Three People's Principles) that formed the political platform of the Kuomintang. It is of interest that Sun Yat-sen, the founder and ideologist of the Kuomintang, officiated at the ceremony in which Chen Tu-hsiu and other CCP leaders were initiated into membership.

Thus the CCP, established to prepare and lead a proletarian revolution, was subordinated, politically and organizationally, to a bourgeois party with contrary aims. In thus surrendering the most vital asset of a revolutionary party—its independence—the CCP made the primary and decisive error to which must be traced the subsequent revolutionary failure.

The surrender was justified by the theoreticians of the Comintern on the basis of a two-stage theory of the coming revolution—a mechanical schema, alien to the spirit of Marxism, that assigned leadership in the first stage, that of the democratic revolution, to

the bourgeoisie. With the democratic tasks fulfilled, the proletariat would push the bourgeoisie aside ("like a squeezed lemon," said Stalin) and direct the revolution into socialist paths. Chiang Kai-shek, of course, did not wait for this neat sequence to be played out. But what was overlooked in putting forth the false conception was the clear fact that in the era of the twilight of capitalism the bourgeoisie, whether in the advanced capitalist centers or in the colonies and semi-colonies, can play no revolutionary or progressive role. The fact was attested by the experience of all three Russian revolutions, as Trotsky has noted, and underscored by Lenin in his famous April Theses, which steered the Bolshevik party clear of the deadly shoals of opportunism and class collaboration.

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On the historical calendar, May 30, 1925, is generally noted as the beginning of the second Chinese revolution, which unfolded over the two-year period of 1925-27 and ended in disastrous failure. In the May 30 Incident, as it became known, British police in the International Settlement at Shanghai fired on unarmed demonstrators composed of workers and students, killing seven and wounding many more. This provocative event sparked nationwide protests and strikes and led to another, more tragic incident at Canton. On June 23, 1925, as demonstrators approached a bridge leading to the foreign concession area of Shameen, an island in the Pearl River, British and French police raked them with machine-gun fire, killing 57 and wounding 117. The Shameen massacre rekindled the popular indignation and the flames of protest soared higher. Imperialism was the immediate target and British Hong Kong was paralyzed by a general strike.

From that time onward and for the next two years—until the fatal denouement when Chiang Kai-shek slew the revolution in the face of the opportunists, compromisers and waverers—the mass movement developed in a rising curve. Where students had been in the forefront of earlier movements, now workers in their own organizations and under their own banners appeared more and more as a new and vigorous class force forging ahead to leadership of all the exploited and oppressed. In the vast rural areas poor peasants were beginning to settle accounts with the landlords by seizing their lands. It was tragic, indeed, that such a grandiose mass movement should have come to grief. The CCP, remaining in bondage to the Kuomintang on Moscow's orders, despite several weak attempts by Chen Tu-hsiu to regain the party's independence, found itself unable to give the necessary political leadership and direct the workers toward the seizure of power.

The bourgeoisie, meanwhile, was aspiring to national rule, with Chiang Kai-shek leading a Northern Expedition that was to subdue the warlords and unify the country under a national government. The capitalists observed the militant workers' movement with increasing anxiety, just as the landlords were alarmed

The Comintern tried to cover its failure in the second Chinese revolution by making Chen Tu-hsiu the scapegoat . . .

by the growing insubordination of the peasantry. The Communists, throwing overboard their basic tenets of revolutionary principle, clung to the "alliance" with the Kuomintang and the bourgeoisie, discouraging and obstructing strikes and peasant land seizures. In this they supplemented Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition, which turned out to be as much an exercise in the suppression of the insurrectionary masses as a campaign to dislodge the warlords.

* * *

The full story of the failure of the second Chinese revolution, which Trotsky attributed to the "classic mistakes of opportunism"

has been told elsewhere and cannot be told again here. In a memorable opening paragraph of a letter addressed to "All Comrades of the Chinese Communist Party" (December 10, 1929) Chen Tu-hsiu wrote: "Since 1920 (the ninth year of the republic) I have worked with the comrades, in founding the party, in sincerely carrying out the opportunist policy of the International's leaders, Stalin, Zinoviev, Bukharin and others, bringing the Chinese revolution to a shameful and sad defeat." That says it all. Chen urged a full discussion of the policy pursued and its disastrous outcome. Stalin, however, was in control of the Comintern apparatus and most of Chen's colleagues in the CCP Central Committee were in the Stalin camp. An easy way out was to make Chen Tu-hsiu the scapegoat for the catastrophe, the opportunist villain of the piece. But Chen had no intention of occupying the penitent's bench alone.

The Comintern, echoed by Stalin's Chinese spokesmen, insisted that Moscow's Chinese policy had been completely correct. But how to explain why a totally correct policy had led to gross opportunistic errors that destroyed a great revolution? Chen Tu-hsiu was blamed for either ignoring directives or misinterpreting them in order to pursue his own opportunist course. This specious argument, refuted by the record, became the basis for removing Chen as general secretary and switching the party to the opposite course of adventurism and putschism, which reached its high point in the abortive and costly Canton uprising of December, 1927.

Retired from the leadership of the party, Chen wrote several letters to the Central Committee warning against the new disastrous course and demanding a critical examination of party policy. The CC ignored his warnings and rejected his demands for a discussion.

Since the summer of 1929, Chen had been able to acquaint himself with the views of the Russian Left Opposition on the problems of the Chinese revolution. These were contained in documents, mostly written by Trotsky, which were brought back to China by party members returning from Moscow. The documents were an eye-opener for Chen, who until then had been unable to comprehend fully the differences on China between the Left Opposition and the Stalin-Bukharin faction. Comparing the views of Trotsky and the Opposition with his own experiences and observations, he accepted the Trotskyist positions and in a letter to the CC again demanded that the party's course, past and present, be put to a thorough discussion and evaluation.

The response of the CC, now totally dominated by pro-Stalin elements, was to expel Chen from the party. Thereupon he wrote his previously mentioned letter of December 10, 1929, addressed to All the Comrades of the Chinese Communist Party, in which, while taking blame for the opportunist errors committed by the party under his leadership, he insisted on tracing them to their ultimate source: policies made in Moscow and saddled upon the young and inexperienced Chinese Communist Party.

Together with eighty-one other party veterans, Chen then produced a statement, "Our Political Views," in which Trotsky's views were espoused. The signatories were promptly expelled from the party. But Stalin, evidently realizing Chen Tu-hsiu's value for the Comintern, tried to lure him back to the official fold. He invited Chen to Moscow in February 1930. The Comintern, in transmitting the invitation, suggested that Chen might find it desirable to acquire additional political training. Chen's acid comment was to the effect that he had already been sufficiently trained by the Comintern. Thus ended the relationship between Chen and the party he had founded nine years before.

The failure of China's second revolution brought heavy consequences. The counterrevolutionary terror that followed upon Chiang Kai-shek's decisive coup at Shanghai on April 11, 1927, took countless lives of militant workers, rebel peasants, and revolutionary leaders as a bloody prelude to twenty years of Kuomintang-bourgeois rule. The Communist Party was driven underground and the tasks of the democratic revolution remained

totally unfulfilled. National unification was still a distant goal. What passed for a new National Government was little more than a flimsy coalition of regional militarists with Chiang Kai-shek at the center in Nanking. The imperialists were able to stabilize positions shaken by the revolutionary upheaval. Foreign "concessions" in the principal cities continued to affront China's sovereignty. The maritime customs administration remained under foreign control. The problem of agrarian relations was unsolved. There was no eight-hour day and workers were back in the factories for ten- to twelve-hour working days. Finally, the way was open for Japan's war of conquest, soon to follow.

For Chen Tu-hsiu personally the consequences of the revolutionary catastrophe were also very heavy. Adding to the psychological burden of failure, he suffered grievous blows when two of his three sons, both active Communists, were murdered by the Kuomintang, one in 1927, the other in 1928. To evade Chiang Kai-shek's police, Chen was obliged to live clandestinely. Despite the difficult circumstances, he organized his followers into a Left Opposition group, giving it the name Proletariat, and published an underground paper under that name. In May of 1931 this group combined with three others of the Trotskyist persuasion to affiliate with the International Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists). The unified grouping later became the Communist League of China, Chinese section of the Fourth International. Chen Tu-hsiu was elected general secretary.

Despite all precautions, Chen's refuge was discovered by Chiang Kai-shek's sleuths and in October 1932 he was dragged from a sickbed in Shanghai and taken before a military tribunal in Nanking for trial on charges of "endangering the state." Facing a possible death sentence, Chen confronted his accusers as the accuser. He denounced the terroristic military regime of the Kuomintang with all its abominations and demanded that the government compensate him for the losses caused by his arrest. Appeals on his behalf by former colleagues and intellectual admirers helped save him from the executioner. He was sentenced to thirteen years in prison.

After serving five years in prison at Nanking, Chen Tu-hsiu was released on parole in 1937, soon after Japan had launched its drive to take control of the entire country. His release resulted from a new "united front" which the CCP entered into with the Kuomintang for joint action to repel Japanese aggression. The agreement included a provision for the release of political prisoners, mostly Communists, held by Chiang Kai-shek's government. Harsh parole conditions were imposed on Chen: he was not to engage in political activity nor write for publication. After a brief stay in Wuhan, he was obliged to move further west to Szechwan province, where he took up residence in Kiangtsin, a small town near Chungking, which was soon to become China's wartime capital. Suffering from a heart ailment complicated by phlebitis and aggravated by his stay in prison, Chen died on May 27, 1942. He was sixty-two years old.

Chen's last years were spent in ill-health, poverty, and isolation. In 1938, soon after his release from prison, his erstwhile comrades of the CCP, now thoroughly corrupted by Stalinism, launched a slander campaign against him, accusing him and the other Trotskyists of "collaboration with the Japanese imperialists." While Chen was forced to remain silent, some of his former academic friends, who continued to hold him in high esteem, countered by citing Chen's record as a worthy champion of his country's interests and his readiness to suffer persecution for his activities. Would such a man serve the imperialist enemy? This defense of Chen put the Stalinists to such shame that they halted their defamatory campaign.

In isolation, the one activity Chen could pursue was to exchange views by correspondence with a few old friends. These exchanges revealed that Chen was moving away from Marxism in the direction of a vague kind of non-class democracy. He

expressed the idea that mankind's major goal in all its struggles through the centuries was democracy and that there was really no difference between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy except one of degree. Proletarian democracy should be more democratic than the bourgeois variety but should not negate it—a synthesis of the two, perhaps. For Marxists, of course, democracy is not an idealist abstraction. It is related directly to systems of class rule. Bourgeois democracy with its parliamentary systems enables a minority of exploiters to rule over the majority of the people, no matter how this is disguised. Working-class democracy, on the other hand, taking the form of a proletarian dictatorship and exercised through soviets, is the genuine expression of the interests of the majority.

Chen's concern with the notion of "pure" democracy or democracy "in general" was in large part a reaction to the destruction of soviet democracy by the Stalin regime, culminating in the frame-up trials and executions of the Old Bolsheviks. But the logic of his new position, in which the class criterion gave way to fuzzy liberal-democratic notions, led him to favor the "democratic" imperialist powers in World War II. He thought the Trotskyists should support the "democracies" against the Axis powers because only an Allied victory could assure a favorable climate for revolution. He even thought that India should postpone its struggle for independence so as not to obstruct the Allied war effort. These anti-Marxist views did not lead Chen to an explicit break from the program of revolutionary socialism. In fact, he continued to stand for the world proletarian revolution as the way to banish war and solve social problems. The discussion remained private and was still going on until very shortly before his death.

After his death, Chen's letters and some other documents written in 1940-42 were collected in a volume by one of his former students and published in Shanghai in 1948. The following year, Hu Shih, the bourgeois philosopher, one of Chen's old friends who became a staunch supporter of Chiang Kai-shek, reprinted the book in Taiwan with an introduction welcoming Chen's new ideas as those of a "returned prodigal."

But Chen had not gone back entirely on the Marxist ideas he had held for more than twenty years. Moreover, we should bear in mind that he had never developed a consistent Marxist outlook, never absorbing the materialist-dialectic methodology into his conscious being. He had acquired basic Marxist ideas in rather piecemeal fashion while engaged in revolutionary activities that allowed little time for study and contemplation. He was called upon to lead a great revolution without adequate preparation.

An awareness of his shortcomings in at least one respect—failure to stand firmly for positions he felt to be correct—is revealed in the unfinished autobiography to which we alluded earlier. Chen began writing this account of his life while in the Nanking prison and was able to complete two chapters telling of his early life and taking the reader only as far as the Imperial

exams for which he sat in 1897. In the first chapter we find this significant self-appraisal: "Some people praise me as being a righteous man who cannot tolerate evil, and some other people criticize me for being too hot-tempered. As a matter of fact, maybe my personality is hot-tempered, but it is not entirely true that I am a righteous man who can tolerate no evil. I am just like my mother, lacking a resolute attitude, and sometimes too tolerant of evil. On account of this, I have time after time ruined many important political affairs, and have been badly taken. Although I have thoroughly understood this, I still have not been able to reform. The important reasons for this unquestionably are that I am unsure about and lack resolve in political matters. My mother's character must have had an influence."

There can hardly be any doubt that Chen, in this self-depreciating statement, was alluding to his repeated submissions to the *diktats* from Moscow that derailed the second Chinese revolution. In his December 10, 1929, letter to "All the Comrades" he had recounted his initial opposition to the entry of the CCP into the Kuomintang and his subsequent efforts to free the party from its Kuomintang straitjacket so that it might fulfill its role as leader of the revolution. Each time, when Moscow's emissaries insisted on continuance of the policy of subordination, Chen abdicated his position. As he wrote regarding one of his efforts: "I, who had no decisiveness of character, could not insistently maintain my proposal. I respected international discipline and the opinion of the majority of the Central Committee" (of the CCP).

However, if one considers all the circumstances, the surrender to the Moscow manipulators of China policy was not a simple matter of Chen's having no "decisiveness of character." True, he admitted to feeling inadequate as a Marxist. But let us remember that in 1927, with the insurrectionary wave rising to its crest, the Russian revolution was not quite ten years in the past. The prestige of the Bolshevik leaders and of the Soviet-led Comintern was at an all-time high. The Bolsheviks were considered experts *par excellence* in the science of Marxism and the strategy of revolution. It could have occurred to no one to seriously challenge the directives that came out of Moscow. And then, reinforcing those directives, when needed, was the always effective appeal to international loyalty and discipline.

* * *

Chen Tu-hsiu was by no means the weak-kneed individual pictured in his unflattering self-appraisals—which, incidentally, are suggestive of that exaggerated humility or modesty affected by many in the polite society of the old China. On the contrary, he was a man of strong will, a fact attested by his long public record: his sustained and fruitful battle against the entrenched orthodoxy of Confucianism, his militant opposition to the monarchy, his many years of struggle as a proletarian revolutionist. He was a bold thinker and a brave leader. Confronting adversaries, he was strong and immovable, as witness his courageous conduct in the Kuomintang court that could have condemned him to death. But with comrades and friends, those in whom he had trust, he was more inclined to be yielding, to the point of surrendering his own judgment.

If there is one lesson above all others that revolutionary socialists should learn from the life of Chen Tu-hsiu it is the need—indeed, the indispensability—of an education in Marxist thought and method. To be sure, Marxism is no certain guarantee or assurance against opportunist errors—Plekhanov and Kautsky were Marxist theoreticians of the first order, yet fell into opportunism and ended as traitors to socialism. Nonetheless, Marxist understanding, leading to a consistent Marxist outlook, does offer a shield against opportunist traps and guidance in finding the correct political road.

Chen Tu-hsiu was betrayed by his acquiescence in false policies that emanated from Moscow and from which he was unable to disentangle himself. The result was tragedy for Chen and disaster for the second Chinese revolution. For that, however, it would be unthinkable to deprive a worthy figure of his rightful place in the gallery of revolutionary heroes. □

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