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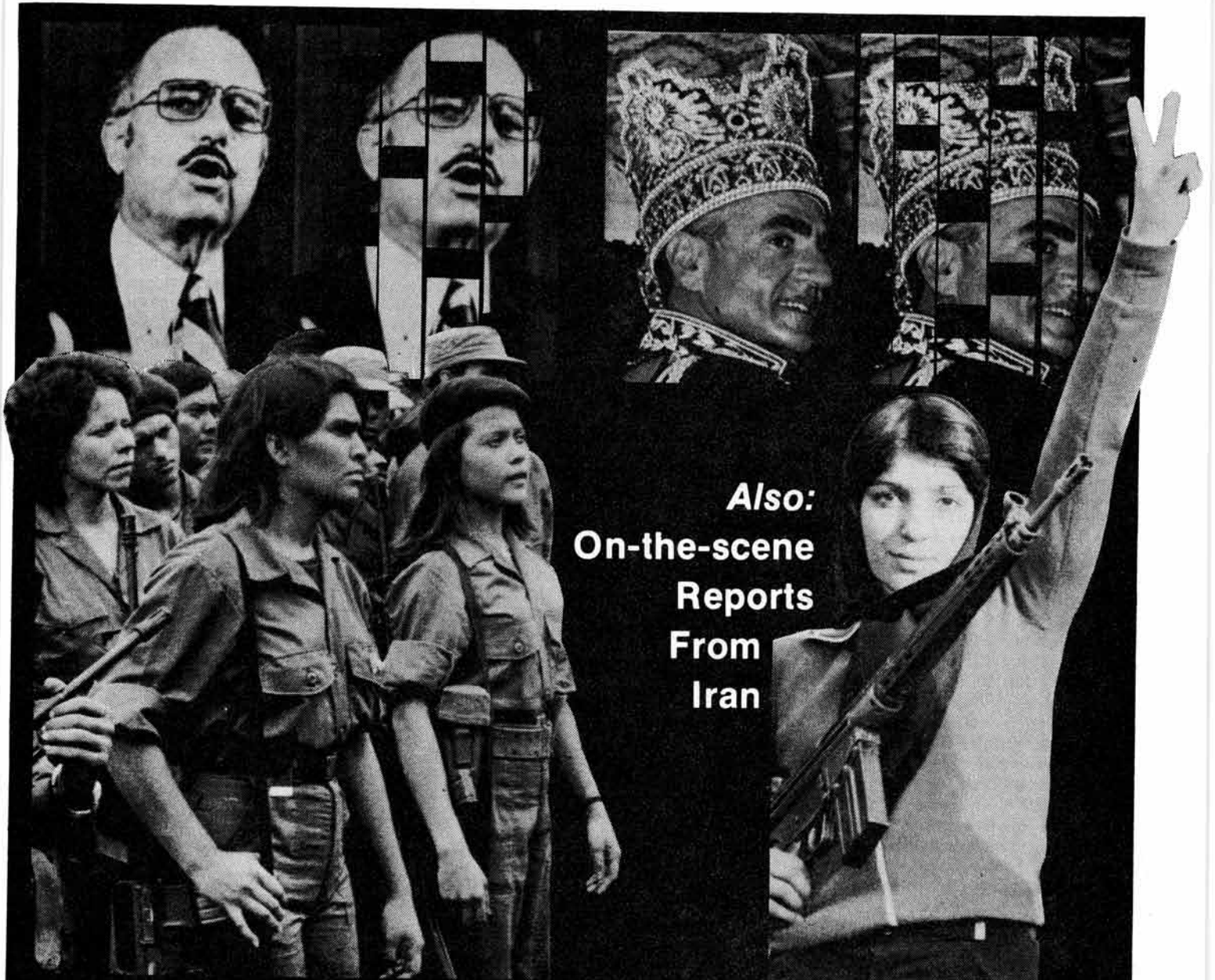
Vol. 17, No. 47

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December 24, 1979

USA 85¢

UK 30p



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**On-the-scene
Reports
From
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1979: Year of Crisis for World Imperialism

World Congress Statement on Split from Fourth International

1979: Year of Crisis for World Imperialism

By Steve Clark

1979 was a bad year for U.S. imperialism and for the entire international imperialist system.

The year opened with Vietnam's victory over the Pol Pot tyranny in Kampuchea and the revolutionary overthrow of the CIA-installed shah of Iran. These two events accelerated the class struggle throughout Southeast Asia and what the capitalist press dubbed the "crescent of crisis" from Ethiopia to Afghanistan.

By midyear, the stakes for imperialism in these two parts of the world were added to by the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. The battle to topple the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship, led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), culminated in a deepgoing urban insurrection in Managua. This opened the second socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere and spurred anti-imperialist struggles throughout Central America and the Caribbean.

And as the year drew to a close, events in all three of these revolutionary arenas were going badly for Washington.

The Nicaraguan revolution has deepened steadily, and the FSLN is preparing the workers and peasants for the showdowns with U.S. imperialism and native capitalists that are on the agenda during the first half of 1980.

Neither Peking's U.S.-inspired invasion of Vietnam, the Pentagon's shipments of arms to the Thai dictatorship and to Pol Pot and other Kampuchean rightists, nor efforts to starve the Kampuchean masses into submission have been able to bring down the Heng Samrin government.

And the firsthand reports from Tehran elsewhere in this issue testify to the growing challenge to imperialism and capitalist stability by the toiling masses of Iran, and the impact of their heroic struggle throughout the surrounding region.

This special year-end index issue of *IP/I* focuses on Iran, Indochina, and Nicaragua. We are not including, as we often have in past years, separate review articles on important developments in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania; the Soviet Union, China, and other bureaucratized workers states; or in other colonial and semicolonial countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

This introductory article, however, will outline some of the main trends and political lessons of the international class struggle that have been highlighted by the events of 1979.

The best place to start is with some important generalizations to be drawn

from the interplay of the class struggle in the imperialist countries and the colonial revolution.

Urban and Proletarian Struggles

1. Urban and proletarian forms of struggle—such as strikes, demonstrations, mass uprisings, and the formation and coordination of councils and committees by workers and their allies—are increasingly characteristic not only of class conflicts in the advanced capitalist countries, but of the revolutionary process in the colonial and semicolonial countries as well.

This was dramatically confirmed by the powerful urban mobilizations and insurrections that marked both the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions; the growth of neighborhood committees, worker and peasant unions, and other mass organizations during and after the fight for power in Nicaragua; the development of workers committees (shoras) and the vanguard role of the oil workers in Iran.

That such developments are increasingly the rule rather than the exception in the semicolonial world was demonstrated time and again over the past decade: Mexico 1968, Argentina 1969 and 1971, Ethiopia 1974, Thailand 1973, South Africa 1976, Afghanistan 1978, South Korea and Brazil 1979, and many others.

Underlying this trend is the growth in all these countries of the size and weight of the industrial working class and the urban proletarian and semiproletarian masses. According to a 1979 study by the World Bank, 51.5% of the world's population will be living in urban areas by the year 2000 as against 29% in 1950 and 39.3% in 1975. The study also predicted that by the year 2000 there will be some forty cities with populations of more than 5 million people in the semicolonial countries, as compared to twelve in the industrialized countries; and eighteen cities with more than 10 million people in the semicolonial countries.

2. Faced with growing insurgency among the masses of the semicolonial world, the imperialists must increasingly rely on bloody tyrants such as the shah and Somoza to perpetuate their superexploitation and political domination of the oppressed countries. This very fact, however, only increases the explosive potential; these dictators become more unpopular and isolated as the working class grows and becomes more restive. No matter how brutal the repression, the workers and poor peasants have shown their ca-

capacity and determination to sweep away the oppressors.

The imperialists are also learning the limits of their counterrevolutionary deals with Moscow and Peking to preserve the world status quo. While Peking's invasion of Vietnam and Moscow's refusal to pour aid into Nicaragua show how valuable such betrayals are to shoring up the imperialist system, the masses increasingly break through the roadblocks thrown up by the Stalinists and give rise to revolutionists of action uncompromising in their commitment to fight imperialism.

The most striking recent example of this phenomenon is the evolution of the FSLN leadership, itself profoundly influenced by the revolutionary Castro current in Cuba.

3. Despite the enormous stakes for world capitalism in Iran, Nicaragua, and Indochina, U.S. imperialism has been incapable of intervening with its own military might to reverse and crush revolutionary advances, which was virtually a knee-jerk reaction throughout the 1950s and much of the 1960s. The antiwar attitudes and mistrust of U.S. foreign policy aims developed by American workers during the Vietnam War have been deepened by the broad recognition that they are being lied to about the energy crisis by both government and big business.

This poses an enormous problem for U.S. imperialism. The rulers must be able to go to war to protect the profits they extract from the cheap labor, raw materials, unequal trade relationships, and export markets in the nations where vast numbers of the world's population live. Capitalist expansionism cannot tolerate the workers' resistance to war.

Throughout 1979 the Carter Administration has staged numerous propaganda efforts hoping to convince the American people that both justice and "all our interests" are at stake in reasserting American military power: the Vietnamese "boat people" campaign; the alleged Soviet combat brigade in Cuba; the attempt to blame the Heng Samrin government and Vietnam for famine in Kampuchea; and now the question of the hostages in Tehran.

Only in this last case have the rulers succeeded to any extent in fanning chauvinistic flames in sectors of the American population. And even here the most striking fact was the outbreak, against the wishes of the Carter Administration, of a widespread public discussion of why and how the shah had been admitted to the United States, his crimes, and whether or not he should be extradited to Iran.

Anti-Iranian protests were limited to small turnouts, largely of confirmed right-wingers. Supporters of the shah's extradition were able to get a hearing on the streets and in the factories. And there was tremendous sentiment among American workers that—at least so long as none of the hostages were harmed—nothing had happened that was worth going to war over.

On this question, Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican workers have been an important political vanguard of their class. A Detroit poll showed that 61% of Blacks in that key industrial city thought the shah should be sent back to Iran. And the Carter Administration's Mideast war drive took a serious blow when pro-Palestinian sentiment among American Blacks spurred key civil-rights leaders to travel to that part of the world to meet with PLO leaders and voice support for Palestinian self-determination.

Changing Relationship of Class Forces

This changing world relationship of class forces to the benefit of the oppressed and exploited was registered by the militant anti-imperialist positions adopted in September at the Conference of Non-aligned Countries in Havana. Under the leadership of the Cuban government, that conference condemned Washington's war drive and its oppressive aims in Africa, the Mideast, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

As chairman for three years of the Nonaligned Movement, Fidel Castro used his speeches in Havana and before the United Nations to launch a blistering indictment of imperialist economic exploitation and political domination of the colonial and semicolonial nations. The political prestige and moral authority of the Castro leadership among the workers and peasants of these countries reached a new high point, as more and more of them became aware of Cuba's anti-imperialist actions in Africa, the Mideast, and Central America and its internationalist efforts to upgrade the health and educational level of the world's poorest peoples.

Carter's war moves against Cuba during the last months of 1979 prove that the imperialists, too, are increasingly aware of, and determined to counter, the internationalist course of the Cuban government in solidarity with liberation struggles. They recognize that this is the opposite of the peaceful coexistence policies that are the be-all and end-all of the foreign policy of the Moscow and Peking Stalinists.

This is why, to cite just one example, the imperialists are so determined to deny Cuba one of the revolving seats on the United Nations Security Council. "The prospect that Raúl Roa Kouri of Cuba might preside over Security Council talks on Iran," Bernard Nossiter reported from the UN in the December 10 *New York Times*, "is one that gives chills to some Western diplomats here."

The events of 1979 also confirmed a rising curve of class struggle trends in the advanced capitalist countries. In Western Europe this new stage in proletarian struggles opened a decade ago, and the radicalization of youth, women, and oppressed national minorities over that period had a profound impact in all the imperialist countries.

But the worldwide recession of 1974-75, coming on the heels of the price explosion and energy crisis of 1973, marked a turning point in the intensity of the employers' austerity offensive against the working class on a global scale. This has lowered the expectations and heightened the insecurity among industrial workers, sparking

the beginnings of resistance and greater combativity in the labor movement of even the economically strongest imperialist countries.

World capitalism has entered a period of overall glut and stagnation that cannot be reversed short of a major defeat of the working class in an entire series of major countries. This will be no easy task for the rulers. In the vanguard of the labor movement today is a generation of rebellious and undefeated industrial workers. They are both attracted in ever-growing numbers to the mass working-class organizations and at the same time more ready than the previous generation to challenge the Stalinist, Social Democratic, and other

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Intercontinental Press (ISSN 0162-5594). Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and third and fourth in August.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

Editor: Mary-Alice Waters.

Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Michael Baumann.

Editorial Staff: Dan Dickeson, Gerry Foley, David Frankel, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

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Intercontinental Press, P.O. Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates on first class and airmail.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, Box 116, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208, Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 3774, Auckland.

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Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

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class-collaborationist leaderships of these organizations.

Nonetheless, workers in all these countries have suffered blows at the hands of the employers. The reformist misleaders retain their control over the labor movement. Nowhere do revolutionary socialists constitute more than small propaganda parties just beginning to gain a hearing in the unions and among industrial workers.

The events of the past year show that there is no reason for pessimism, however. Just the opposite. Prospects are better than any time over the past quarter century for attracting worker militants around the revolutionary program and building a current in the unions that can be a key component in future developments toward a class-struggle left wing.

Below are just a sampling of important labor struggles in 1979:

- In Britain, strikes by auto workers and truck drivers led the way in shattering the government's 5% wage guidelines, winning settlements of between 15% and 25% hikes. The role of the Labour Party government in attempting to enforce the guideline led to its fall. In recent months, British workers have participated in a series of big demonstrations to fight the social service cutbacks of the new Tory government and its plans for major antilabor legislation.

- Also at the beginning of 1979, 100,000 German metalworkers staged their first nationwide strike in fifty years. Although the strikers did not win their demand for a thirty-five hour workweek, their six-week long struggle marked a significant increase in the restiveness and militancy of West German workers.

- In the United States, significant unionization victories in the open-shop South demonstrated the growing tendency of U.S. workers to turn to the unions for protection from the bosses' austerity drive. A hard-fought strike by white and Black workers at the huge shipyard at Newport News, Virginia, resulted in company recognition of United Steelworkers (USWA) Local 8888; it was the biggest unionization victory in the United States for several decades. There was an important unionization success for auto workers in Oklahoma City and a major Teamster organizing drive in North Carolina, as well.

- In Canada, 12,000 members of United Steelworkers Local 6500 struck for eight months to defeat a union-busting effort by Inco, the world's largest nickel mining company. With the solidarity of USWA members and other unionists across Canada, as well as in the United States, the striking workers defeated Inco's attempted lockout and won significant wage gains and an uncapped cost-of-living escalator. This was one of the most important labor battles in English Canada in many years.

- In France, steelworkers in the heavily industrialized north and east conducted militant strikes and protests against massive layoffs, culminating in a March 23

march on Paris of 100,000. A statement by the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League) said these events were an indication "that workers' militancy and radicalization stands at a high level."

- During June and July, a wave of workers struggles and demonstrations shook major Italian cities, including a march by 200,000 steelworkers in Rome. In November, some 13 million Italian workers staged a half-day strike to protest inflation and unemployment.

- The New Zealand labor movement shut down hundreds of factories and other workplaces September 20 during the first general strike in that country's history. This powerful show of labor unity, provoked by a government move to cut a pay raise won by truck drivers, demonstrated the growing determination of New Zealand workers to get rid of the government of Prime Minister Robert Muldoon.

Social and Political Issues

This year was also marked by growing involvement of the labor movement in struggles around social and political issues of importance to workers and their key allies among the oppressed.

In Britain, for example, 40,000 people participated in a demonstration for abortion rights called by the Trades Union Congress, the national labor federation. Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States are preparing for a labor-initiated march in Virginia in January, and there were important conferences of women industrial unionists throughout 1979. There were important strides in Canada and Italy in the struggle to get women into industrial jobs previously reserved for men.

Progress toward involving the unions and mass workers parties in the fight against nuclear power was registered in Australia, where unionists active in Labor Against Uranium played a key role in building a demonstration of 20,000 in Sydney in response to the near-disaster at Three Mile Island in the United States; in France, where the Pennsylvania accident spurred the French Democratic Confederation of Labor to call for a public discussion and three-year moratorium on construction of reactors; in Germany, where among the more than 100,000 people participating in an October 14 antinuclear rally in Bonn were members of a new group of trade unionists fighting to bring the issue into the German labor federation; and in Sweden, where growing antinuclear sentiment forced the Social Democratic Party, which advocates nuclear power, to call for a 1980 national referendum on the question.

In the United States, the impact of the Three Mile Island accident changed the minds of millions of workers on the desirability of nuclear power, opening new avenues to draw the organized labor movement into the growing antinuclear move-

ment there. The antinuclear stance of the United Mine Workers union has been an important factor in advancing this effort.

The United Steelworkers of America and other U.S. unions also played a vital role in defeating the racist *Weber* challenge to affirmative-action hiring and upgrading programs for Blacks, Chicanos, and women. Reflecting the changes under way in the American labor movement, this marked an important reversal in the official stance of American unions on this important fight against racist discrimination.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, opposition in the labor movement to placing U.S. nuclear-armed missiles in those countries has pressured the governments to balk at NATO plans. Opposition among American workers to Carter's war drive has created a situation in which important segments of the labor movement would be among the first sections of the population to respond to a U.S. military adventure, something that began to happen only toward the very end of the massive anti-Vietnam War movement.

Turn to Industry

Recognizing the importance of being participants in these changes in the industrial labor movement, the Fourth International, World Party of the Socialist Revolution, voted at its World Congress in November to make a radical turn toward leading a big majority of its cadres on a world scale into the mines, mills, and factories and into the industrial unions.

This turn was projected not only as a key task for revolutionary parties in the imperialist countries, but for those in Latin America, the Mideast, Asia, and Africa, as well. The industrial working class plays a decisive role in the revolutionary process in the colonial and semicolonial countries, particularly given the growing size and weight of the urban proletarian and semi-proletarian populations.

At the political heart of this decision was recognition of the growing interconnection of the world capitalist economic crisis and the crisis of the imperialist system of oppressed and oppressor nations. These international political factors create the best opportunities in decades to build the revolutionary proletarian parties necessary to defeat the imperialist profiteers and warmakers.

One manifestation of this interplay is the disastrous impact of the world capitalist crisis on the already distorted and impoverished economies of the colonial and semicolonial countries. Pointing to this fact in his UN speech, Fidel Castro explained that "the gap between the developed and developing countries not only persists, but has substantially increased. The relative share of the developing countries in the world output decreased considerably during the last two decades, which has still more disastrous effects on such problems as malnutrition, illiteracy, and

poor sanitation and health services."

Castro cited numerous examples to prove his case. He pointed to the serious effects of the U.S. economic blockade on his own country. (The suffering similar economic sabotage has inflicted on the Vietnamese people is among the other great crimes of the American ruling class.)

The Cuban leader also explained:

- that while the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America import more than a quarter of the world's industrial exports, they export only 6.3% of them;
- that between 400 and 450 million people in the world are undernourished;
- that by the year 2000, according to the World Bank, some 600 million people may still be submerged in absolute poverty;
- that the average per capita income in the industrialized countries is now fourteen times that in the semicolonial countries;
- that the foreign debt of these nations to imperialist financial institutions is now \$335 billion and rising.

On top of all this, since World War II the imperialists have gunned down and napped literally millions of workers and peasants who have risen up against this degradation and demanded dignity, human rights, and a decent share of the wealth they produce through their labor.

The imperialists' scramble for superprofits in a world of dwindling new markets exacerbates all these problems of the oppressed nations. At the same time, the increasing misery becomes a tinderbox that fuels anti-imperialist struggles. This was proven by the demands and character of the urban mobilizations that propelled the revolutionary struggles in both Iran and Nicaragua, as well as by countless struggles elsewhere around the world.

The imperialists' need to quell these rebellions and prevent their spread is a prime factor behind the massive growth of military expenditures by Washington and other capitalist powers. Carter has announced a 157-billion-dollar war budget for 1980! This in turn feeds the inflation that is wreaking havoc on the living standards of American workers and other workers throughout the world. It diverts resources from needed social services, underlying the rulers' austerity drive against spending for education, health, mass transportation, housing, environmental protection, and other beneficial projects.

American and European workers have no more interest in these weapons of destruction than do the oppressed millions against whom they are directed. As working people learned through the bitter experience of Vietnam, they are the ones who pay and die for wars on behalf of the ruling moneyed minority.

International Solidarity

All this points up one of the main lessons that the world's toilers have demonstrated in 1979: the crucial importance of solidarity among working people the

world over.

On the one hand, by their opposition to involvement in wars of aggression, workers in the United States and other advanced capitalist countries have shown themselves to be an invaluable ally of the rebelling masses of the oppressed nations. In fact, all the struggles of workers and their allies in the advanced capitalist countries strengthen the hand of the semicolonial peoples in their battle against imperialism.

This was explained well in an article in the October 21 issue of the Sandinista daily *Barricada*.

"Often when we refer to the United States, the concept of *imperialism* gets distorted to include the entire U.S. population. This is understandable—since it's a matter of generalization—but it's incorrect, and even unfair," said *Barricada*.

"It is necessary to point out that there are many Americans who—with varying degrees of clarity in defining their objectives, posing their demands, or carrying on their struggles—are fighting anti-imperialist battles in their own country," the article explained. And it concluded:

"This reality should be kept in mind, since the potential of these forces is important, and since in their evolution they are objectively allies of our peoples against imperialism."

Growing recognition of the importance of this factor also led to the initiative by the Castro leadership that has become known over the past year as the "dialogue." This is an effort by the Cuban leaders to open lines of communication with Cubans living abroad, particularly in the United States, and to mount a campaign in these countries against the U.S. economic blockade and diplomatic boycott of the Cuban revolution.

The impact this initiative has already had on American politics was shown by the sizable protests against the blockade that were held outside the United Nations around the time of Castro's speech. These were the largest such Cuba solidarity actions in the United States since the early 1960s, and they were only slightly smaller than the right-wing anti-Castro demonstrations that week.

Class Struggle Education

Anti-imperialist fighters in Iran, Nicaragua, and Indochina also provide a class-struggle education to workers in the main capitalist world powers. This is an irreplaceable service to the prospects for socialist revolution in these countries, since the workers will never be capable of defeating the powerful imperialist ruling classes unless decisive sections of them have been steeled against chauvinism and with a hatred of their rulers that doesn't stop at their own borders.

Large numbers of American workers learned from the struggle by Vietnamese liberation fighters that the U.S. rulers will massacre a million people to protect their

interests. The Iranian and Nicaraguan masses have helped teach U.S. workers about the blood-soaked tyrants Washington counts among its best friends around the world.

The imperialist ruling classes try to convince workers that they somehow benefit from the low wages and miserable living conditions of workers and peasants in other countries. The bosses want workers to believe that their interests are threatened by the masses of Iran, Nicaragua, and Vietnam.

This is simply the application on an international level of the rulers' overall divide-and-conquer approach to keeping the workers weak and confused about their class interests. They claim that white workers are better off because of racism; male workers are better off because of sex discrimination; skilled workers benefit when the wages of less skilled workers are held down; employed workers are lucky when other workers have no jobs.

Boiled down to its essentials, the claim is that every worker is better off when the boss is better off and when every other worker is worse off.

Revolutionary class consciousness can only be forged in an unremitting battle against all such false ideas promoted by the capitalists. Explaining this fundamental need for solidarity and internationalism, and mobilizing this progressive sentiment *in action*, is a key responsibility for socialist workers, especially in the imperialist bastions.

Buying Time for Decisive Battles

The ultimate battles to ensure world peace and socialism will be fought by the workers in the advanced capitalist countries, above all in the United States. Only when the American workers have established a workers government and disarmed the capitalists will the threat of worldwide nuclear annihilation be lifted from this planet.

The imperialists claim that the threat to world peace comes from revolutionary struggles by the oppressed and exploited. The Stalinists, Social Democrats, and other class collaborationists tell the masses virtually the same thing, warning them not to "provoke" the wrath of the capitalists. They claim that peace and justice can be achieved through deals with the oppressors.

But the truth is just the opposite. The revolutionary struggles of the masses weaken the capitalists and lessen the dangers of world war. This is particularly true of victorious struggles, and even more true of those that triumph over capitalism and establish workers states.

The anti-imperialist battles by the Iranian, Nicaraguan, and Indochinese workers and peasants *buy time* for revolutionists in the United States and other imperialist countries to settle accounts with their exploiters. The militant anti-imperialist internationalism of the Castro leadership

buys time for revolutionary conditions to ripen in North America, Western Europe, Japan, and Oceania.

The victory of world socialism requires the construction of Leninist working-class parties in countries throughout the world, and of a revolutionary world party that unites them against the imperialist ruling classes and their dependent exploiters in

the semicolonial countries.

Just as the Castro leadership and Sandinistas have arisen outside the Fourth International and bypassed the Stalinist and Social Democratic misleaders, revolutionary-minded currents will also emerge from the labor movement as class battles intensify in all the imperialist countries. The ability of the Fourth Inter-

national and its national parties to link up with, influence, and learn from these revolutionists of action will be decisive in constructing a massive world party of socialist revolution.

Both the events of 1979 and the worldwide turn by revolutionists toward becoming participants in the battles of industrial workers bode well for the struggles of the oppressed and exploited in the 1980s. □

Iranian Workers Seek Unity Against Imperialists

Protests in Azerbaijan Spark Widespread Discussion

By Amineh Sahand

TEHRAN, December 17—Perhaps the largest demonstration ever held in Tabriz took place December 13. Organizers estimated that 1.2 million people turned out for the action, which expressed the demands of the Turkish-speaking Azerbaijani people, Iran's largest national minority.

Tabriz itself has a population of about 1 million, but massive contingents turned out from surrounding areas. In addition to workers and peasants, many soldiers were visible in the march. The main chant of the participants was: "We are your soldiers, Shariat-Madari."

Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, a native of Azerbaijan, has become a symbol for the national aspirations of the Azerbaijani people and for their desire to choose their own Turkish-speaking leaders.

Although the government's first response to the outbreak of the struggle in Azerbaijan was to say that it was dividing Iran in the face of U.S. imperialist threats, there has been a marked change in the tone of official statements over the past few days.

Such statements are now likely to begin by paying tribute to the Azerbaijani people and to their role in the struggle against the monarchy. Attacks focus on Shariat-Madari for his conciliatory attitude during the struggle against the shah and for his silence in regard to the current confrontation with imperialism.

By broadcasting the December 13 demonstration on national television—including segments in Turkish—the government was clearly trying to allay criticism from the Azerbaijanis in regard to previous censorship.

Demands raised at the Tabriz protest were:

1. Cancellation of the vote for the constitution. The Azerbaijanis object to the fact that there are no provisions recognizing the rights of Iran's various nationalities, and to the designation of an individual leader with supreme power.

2. Recognize Shariat-Madari as the leader of the Shi'ites around the world. At the end of the rally, a speaker led people in the chant, "Khomeini is our leader, Shariat-Madari is our religious leader," explicitly indicating their support for Khomeini's anti-imperialist course.

3. Release the prisoners arrested during earlier protests. In this regard, the governor-general of Azerbaijan, who had earlier taken a hard line against the protests, announced December 15 that sixty people would be freed. He said ten were awaiting trial, and it has subsequently been reported that charges are going to be brought against them.

4. Pasdaran (revolutionary guards) sent into Azerbaijan to intervene against the demonstrations should be removed.

5. Government officials appointed in Azerbaijan must be approved by Shariat-Madari.

6. The final demand took the form of a slogan—"We reject all the slanders against our struggle." The main charge that has been made is that the Azerbaijanis who took to the streets did not support the struggle against U.S. domination of Iran and for the extradition of the shah.

The real sentiment of the Azerbaijani people was indicated again December 17 when 10,000 people demonstrated in Tabriz against the decision of the Panamanian regime to grant the shah asylum. The demonstration was called by students in Tabriz who have taken over the U.S. consulate there and renamed it Palestine Consulate.

In another move to meet the demands raised by the Azerbaijani masses, Pasdaran in Qum have arrested a person they said was responsible for killing a guard at Shariat-Madari's house. They said that Shariat-Madari would be invited to have an observer present at the investigation.

Developments in Azerbaijan have helped spark a widespread discussion among Iranian workers. Persian workers want unity in the face of continuing U.S.

threats. Although there is much confusion about what is happening, many are beginning to think about the demands of the Azerbaijanis and to discuss them.

This process is especially evident in Isfahan, where Azerbaijanis make up a sizable proportion of the workers in the construction, steel, and oil industries. When the protests in Tabriz began, Azerbaijani workers fanned out in the factories to explain to their fellow workers what the struggle was about.

Many Pasdaran from Isfahan had earlier been sent to fight against the Kurdish people demanding autonomy. Pasdaran units in Kurdistan suffered heavy casualties. They were told that the Kurds were counterrevolutionaries, but after seeing the reality of the mass struggle there, many Pasdaran changed their minds.

Right now, Iranian television is showing material on the negotiations between the government and Kurdish leaders. Darius Faruhar, the government's chief negotiator, was shown addressing a meeting of Kurds and admitting that all their demands are just. Faruhar asked for patience, saying that there were many demands on the government and it could not meet them all at once.

Shek Ezzeddin Hosseini, a central leader of the Kurdish struggle, explained the desire of the Kurds for autonomy within Iran, saying that "Kurds are Iranians and Muslims, and separation is not in their best interests."

He said that he hoped for a peaceful solution of the dispute through negotiations, but warned that "we are ready to fight for our rights."

Finally, Hosseini expressed his hope that the negotiations would proceed quickly so that "we can fight the real enemy, America."

Persian workers know that even more than in the case of the Kurds, any attempt to try to suppress the legitimate aspirations of the Azerbaijani workers by force of

arms would really divide Iran, and would be doomed. As many as 15 million of Iran's 38 million people are Azerbaijani, and Azerbaijanis compose 40 percent of the Iranian army.

On the other hand, respect for the national rights of the Azerbaijani people and support for their autonomy within Iran would establish a solid basis for unity in the fight against imperialism. □

Assembly of Experts. It was approved by a huge majority.

But the referendum was boycotted by most of the oppressed nationalities because the constitution does not grant them sovereignty in their provinces.

In Azerbaijan, most people look to Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, not Khomeini, as their leader. Shariat-Madari is Turkish-speaking.

On December 1 a national TV broadcast falsely reported that Shariat-Madari urged a yes vote on the constitution. Some Azerbaijanis then went out and voted to approve the constitution.

Shariat-Madari later made a statement criticizing the constitution. He said there was a "contradiction" between articles in the constitution granting the Iranian people sovereignty and a separate article that says the highest authority in the country is the president.

On December 3, tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis, including peasants, demonstrated in Tabriz against the constitution. Some demanded that their "yes" vote be cancelled.

Azerbaijanis also demonstrated in Qum, seat of the Islamic Revolutionary Council. They demanded cancellation of the votes cast on false information, an end to censorship on radio and TV, the same national rights as Kurds, and freedom for Azerbaijanis who had been jailed in the demonstration on December 3.

On December 5, a small armed group attacked Shariat-Madari's house in Qum. Reports indicate that one or more people were killed.

Azerbaijanis in Tabriz reacted with outrage at this attack. Large numbers poured

Behind the Upsurge in Tabriz

By Amineh Sahand

TEHRAN, Dec. 11—The past week's demonstrations in Tabriz, capital of the Azerbaijani people in Iran, have been presented in a deliberately distorted manner by the U.S. news media.

The coverage is designed to show that the Iranian working masses, and the Azerbaijani nationality in particular, are not united in the fight against the Carter administration's war threats.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Azerbaijanis—who speak Turkish—are the largest nationality in Iran after the Persians. Under the shah's dictatorship, they were denied the right to use their own language, victimized for observing their own culture, and discriminated against in employment.

Unlike other oppressed nationalities such as the Kurds or Baluchis, the Azerbaijanis are a big part of the Iranian working class. Tabriz, a city of one million, is heavily industrialized. Tehran, also an industrial city, is almost half people of Azerbaijani origin.

Tabriz has historically been a center of the movement against monarchy and imperialism. In the revolutionary wave that began in late 1977, Tabriz was once again in the forefront. The first massive demonstration calling for the ouster of the shah took place there. Hundreds if not thousands of Azerbaijanis sacrificed their lives in the ensuing year's struggle against the shah.

Nationalist Flowering

After the revolution in February 1979 there was a flowering of nationalist expression in Azerbaijan. Discussions opened up on the need for the people of the province to have autonomy within Iran in order to control their own destiny.

Over the late spring and summer there were sizable demonstrations in Tabriz demanding that the government provide jobs and halt capitalist sabotage of industry. High school students as well as workers led these actions.

As inflation shot up, there were major protests against food prices.

Workers councils called *shoras* have developed in the oil refineries, machinist plants, and other factories.

This fall, the demand for autonomy for Azerbaijan began to be voiced more loudly in Tabriz, especially as the Kurdish people made gains in their fight for national rights.

Against this backdrop of their efforts to extend the revolution in every sphere, the Azerbaijanis responded when students took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran last month. As many as one million demonstrated in a single day in Tabriz in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggle. But the national TV station did not show their demonstration, as it had the big marches in Tehran.

This angered Azerbaijanis, who had long felt that the central government officials controlling television were censoring their contributions to the revolution.

The central political question on the minds of workers today is the attacks of U.S. imperialism and the need to unite to defend the revolution. Within that context, and as part of the anti-imperialist drive, workers are organizing to control their factories.

At the same time, more and more peasants are taking over land, including in Azerbaijan.

Constitution Referendum

In the midst of this upsurge, the central government held a referendum December 1-2 on the constitution drafted by the

Imperialists Find No Support in Tabriz

An indication of the anti-imperialist character of the Azerbaijani struggle was given by *New York Times* reporter Pranay Gupte in a December 7 dispatch from Tabriz.

Gupte quoted Dr. Mansoor Ashrafi, a leader of the Muslim People's Islamic Republican Party, who said: "We do not see ourselves as counterrevolutionaries—quite the contrary. All we are saying is that we don't want a government imposed on us and that we want a good constitution."

According to Gupte, "the political line here [in Tabriz] does not vary much from that of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"For instance, the Azerbaijani leadership supports the Teheran campaign against 'imperialism.' Conversations here with politicians and citizens show that there is general support of Iran's public position concerning the holding of 50 American hostages in Teheran.

"Azerbaijanis agree, it appears, that the United States must return the deposed Shah, Mohammed Riza Pahlevi,

for trial on charges of high treason and corruption before the hostages can be freed.

"They also generally appear to endorse the Khomeini position that the hostages are 'spies' and therefore should be tried.

"We might be Shariat-Madari supporters, but we believe that both our Ayatollah and Ayatollah Khomeini are our leaders," said Behrooz Fathollahi, an air force sergeant.

"When so many of us Azerbaijanis did not vote in the recent referendum over the constitution it did not mean that we were in any way insulting Ayatollah Khomeini," said Sergeant Fathollahi. "We could never do that, for he is our Imam. Our staying away from the polls only meant that we, like Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, were unhappy over certain parts of the constitution and feel that they should be amended."

"These views were echoed today in dozens of statements broadcast by the local radio and television station here."

into the streets December 6. They took over the radio and TV stations, government offices, and the airport.

'Brother Kurds'

The TV began broadcasting in Turkish solidarity messages from more than 100 Azerbaijani villages and from Kurds. When some Kurds joined the demonstration, they were lifted onto the shoulders of Azerbaijanis, who chanted "Brother Kurds."

Ousted prime minister Mehdi Bazargan went on national TV that night to denounce the protesters as "communist outsiders." This only angered the Azerbaijanis further.

When two planeloads of Pasdaran, the Iranian national army, were flown into Tabriz, crowds refused to let them land at the airport, declaring that only Turkish-speaking Pasdaran would be allowed in the city.

It is difficult from Tehran to determine the scope and composition of the mobilizations. News photos show large numbers of workers and some soldiers participating. To the extent that there is leadership, it comes from the Muslim People's Islamic Republican Party (MPIRP), which is connected with Shariat-Madari.

The Islamic Republican Party, which supports Khomeini, also has forces in Tabriz, but is smaller.

On December 9 a crowd chanting slogans supporting Khomeini and calling for unity against imperialism marched on the radio and TV stations in Tabriz, recapturing them. Reportedly, Pasdaran were brought in from the outside to help fight for the TV stations.

Sharp clashes have continued since, with at least six people killed in the fighting.

Avoid Violence

Although the city is deeply divided, with a majority supporting the MPIRP, both sides are trying to avoid violence, an eyewitness in Tabriz reports. Heated discussions are taking place all through the city and its surrounding villages over the constitution, national rights, and censorship.

In the working-class neighborhood of

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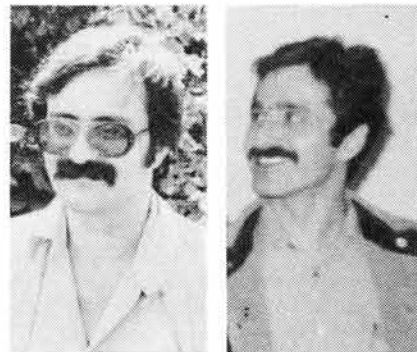
Seven HKS Members Freed

TEHRAN—Seven of the fourteen members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party who were imprisoned in Ahwaz for more than six months have now been released.

The seven are: Hadi Adib, Firooz Farzinpour, Kambiz Lajevardi, Mahmoud Kafaie, Ali Hashemi, Mohammed Poorkavaz, and Kia Mahdevi.

They were freed on bond pending a dropping of their cases or possible further investigation.

This victory for the seven anti-shah fighters has encouraged supporters with the hope that all fourteen will soon be free.



KAMBIZ
LAJEVARDI

HADI
ADIB

Shahabad, which led the revolutionary movement in February 1978, residents support the MPIRP. They believe the argument that they are dividing the anti-imperialist movement is a cover for denying them their rights.

Khomeini has charged that the protests are led by "counterrevolutionaries" and "American spies." Some forces in the central government have demanded the dissolution of the MPIRP and the banning of its paper.

The Tudeh Party, the pro-Moscow Stalinist party here, said in its newspaper *Mardom* that the protests were "stabbing the anti-imperialist revolution of the Iranian people in the back." After this statement appeared, demonstrators in Tabriz burned down the Tudeh Party headquarters.

The tone of some other groups has been different. The People's Mujahedeen issued a statement calling on all Iranians "to avoid any type of clashes." It said, "The sensitivity of the current situation . . . requires unity more than ever among the people."

The Fedayeen issued a statement in Tehran attacking the MPIRP. But reportedly in Tabriz they have changed their line and are supporting the movement for national rights.

The events in Tabriz have opened up a big political discussion in the working class nationwide.

Persian and non-Persian workers alike are opposed to more bloodshed between revolutionaries. The experience of the Kurdish war, which became very unpopular among Persians, has had a deep impact. In the air force barracks in Tehran, for example, no one would volunteer to go into Tabriz to quell the Azerbaijani struggle.

Even Khomeini has said he opposes crushing the upsurge militarily. Stating December 10 that "Tabriz fought for Islam ahead of anyone else," the ayatollah said: "We want there to be peace. We want the country to be calm . . . we are at the

moment facing a big enemy [the United States], an enemy which intends to destroy the essence of Islam and wants to dominate our country as it did before. . . ."

Unity Against Imperialism

How to bring peace among the nationalities and unite them in the fight against imperialism is the big question.

The Azerbaijani masses, who have a proven record of anti-imperialist struggle, want to take an equal place in the revolution with their Persian brothers and sisters. But this is possible only if they have a right to govern their own affairs, choose their own leaders, and observe their own culture.

Their effort to appeal to other Iranian workers has been hindered by the failure of Shariat-Madari to lend his support to the anti-imperialist struggle here. To this date the Azerbaijani leader has not made a single statement supporting the fight to bring back the shah.

This helps explain why many workers are more inclined to look to Khomeini for leadership, given his stand of backing the U.S. Embassy takeover, and to accept some of his charges against the Azerbaijani protesters.

The latest issue of *Kargar*, newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS), carries a front-page headline calling for "unity in the trenches against imperialism."

A strong front against Carter's threats can be built only on the basis of full rights for every sector of the revolution, the HKS explains. It is imperialism that is historically responsible for national oppression in Iran and for the division of the working class. The fight for full national rights is thus an anti-imperialist fight.

Realization of the just demands of the Azerbaijanis and other oppressed nationalities will reinforce the revolution and unite the working class, the HKS says. It is the best way to unite all those who fought against the shah in the current battle against the imperialist danger. □

Focal Point for Anti-imperialist Demonstrations

By Cindy Jaquith

TEHRAN—You can tell we are approaching the U.S. Embassy as we drive along Ayatollah Taleghani Avenue as the walls are increasingly covered with banners, posters, and spray-painted slogans. As we get to the corner of the embassy compound, a giant banner hangs from a pole, depicting U.S. imperialism as an octopus with its tentacles reaching out all over the world. We hear chants of "death to the shah" and tapes playing Persian and Turkish music.

It is almost impossible to drive further. The street is half filled with bookstalls, food stands, and demonstrators. Every square inch of the buildings and walls is covered now with banners supporting the students who are occupying the embassy.

We get out and walk around. The gate to the embassy is barricaded off and guarded by about ten young armed men. After I show my press card, they invite me to go through the barricade to take pictures.

Looking through the gate, you can see several huge signs in English that the students have hung from embassy buildings so the American people can understand why they demand return of the shah. The signs read:

"60,000 killed, 100,000 injured only in the last year of shah's rule and American support."

"Carter's human rights, asylum for the shah—people's human rights, trial for the shah."

"CIA, Pentagon, Uncle Sam—Vietnam wounded you, Iran will bury you."

"The only way to cut off all the imperialistic dependence is by revolutionary action."

The students are anxious to let the American people know they are fighting the U.S. war machine, not U.S. citizens. Thus another big sign reads: "Our enemy is the Americans' government, not their nation."

The students' *shora*, or council, operates a table at the gate where you can pick up the latest statements they have made, speeches by Ayatollah Khomeini, and copies of the secret U.S. Embassy files they have discovered. They sell a book of the files translated into Persian for about twenty cents. During the five minutes I was standing at the table five copies of the book were sold.

Through a translator I introduce myself to a woman who is running the table and show her a *Militant*. She looks at the front-page story on growing U.S. opposition to Carter's war threats.

"I am very pleased to meet you," she

says, shaking my hand. "As the Imam has said we are not against the American people."

The woman goes behind the table into a tent and returns with a new set of embassy files the students have just released. She gives me these and copies of all the students' statements to the media.

We walk further down the street to look at the banners that workers, soldiers, peasants, and students have hung from the walls and trees to show solidarity with the fight against U.S. imperialism.

The banner from the workers at the Mazda auto plant declares: "Occupation of the spy den is one of the workers' demands." There is also an oil workers banner, and one from the peasants of the village of Roudak.

Soldiers have draped a banner on a wall. It says "We, soldiers of Mehrabad air base, declare our total support for the revolutionary action of the students following the Imam's line, and are ready to sacrifice our last drop of blood for the cause."

We return to the embassy gate because there is a demonstration going on. On the left about 100 men are chanting, "The U.S.

is empty." Fifty high school women on the right return with "Vietnam is proof." This is a popular chant in all the demonstrations here. The Iranian people believe the victory of the Vietnamese revolution was a historic defeat for U.S. imperialism and that it has had a big impact on the American people. Identification with the Vietnamese is strong here—Iranians hope to set the same kind of example.

Such demonstrations take place constantly. Often they number in the thousands, especially when a whole factory empties out to march down to the embassy. The demonstrators are almost entirely working class, urban poor, or peasants. Virtually all the women—and there are many of them—wear the chador (veil) or a scarf covering their heads.

Before leaving, we take a look at the literature tables and displays. Among the groups selling books are radical and conservative Islamic organizations, Hezbe Kargarane Sosialist (Socialist Workers Party), Tudeh (Communist) Party, Muijahdeen, and Fedayeen. There are posters up showing pictures of the martyrs who died in the revolution.

Many people are also crowded around a display of photographs of national liberation struggles around the world. The last section of this display is labeled "victories." It shows scenes from the civil war in Nicaragua, the victorious Sandinistas taking power, and then the Cuban revolution, with a big picture of a smiling Fidel Castro surrounded by Rebel Army soldiers. □

Iranian Soldier Appeals to American GIs

TEHRAN—"We ask our brother soldiers in the United States, before you board the planes and boats to fight us in Iran, think about the people you will be shooting at. We are human beings, just like you."

A young Iranian army sergeant made this appeal in an interview here December 14.

"We have no intention of aggression against the United States," he told me. "The fight we are waging against the U.S. government is because it leads the capitalist and imperialist governments of the world. We have nothing against the American people."

The sergeant said he believes the root of war is profits. "For the capitalists, human lives mean nothing. The only thing they know about is dollars.

"We know American soldiers are the sons of workers and farmers, not of businessmen. We value the lives of these soldiers a great deal because we consider them to be just like us.

"If they are sent here, who will benefit? Which class? Not the workers—the U.S. capitalists."

The sergeant said that on his base, the rank and file soldiers discuss the fight against U.S. imperialism constantly.

"Iranian soldiers think that even if the American people live better than us, they know what happened in Vietnam. After Vietnam, we know that American people changed their thinking because they had 50,000 killed in that war.

"The American people are not the same as Carter or Kennedy. We don't think there is any difference between Kennedy and Carter. They are both capitalists."

The sergeant explained that the top officers on the base do not like these discussions. They argue that it is dangerous to challenge imperialism.

"But the sergeants and the soldiers think we should go out and teach the workers and farmers how to use arms. For example, I want to teach my wife, father, and brother how to shoot, but I don't have a gun. I think the government should organize classes in the mosques, schools, factories, and villages."

Returning to the subject of American GIs, he added, "We know that American soldiers do not have democratic rights in their army."

The sergeant concluded the interview with another appeal: "We think the soldiers in the U.S. should unite with us and help wipe out war around the world." □

Carter's Real Target—Gains of Iranian Workers

By Janice Lynn

The revolution in Iran has brought about many improvements in the lives of Iranian workers and farmers. These gains are rarely reported in the big business media, which are too busy trying to whip up sentiment for war against "Islamic fanatics."

As the truth begins to slip out about the real struggles and gains of the Iranian masses, working people can more easily see that these are our brothers and sisters and that we have no interest in a war against the Iranian people.

Some of this information came out in the December 6 *Wall Street Journal*. "I am making more money than I ever did in my life," Jafar Roshani told reporter Ray Vicker. Roshani runs a machine that stamps out corrugated cartons at Tehran's Container Corporation of Iran.

The *Journal* reports that many workers have had their pay doubled since the February revolution that overthrew the shah. Their rents have been cut in half.

At the big General Motors plant outside Tehran, production has been running eighty to ninety cars a day. (They used to consider fifty cars a day as good.)

The GM plant is one where workers councils (*shoras*) have taken increased control of production.

Also at GM, as in many other factories throughout Iran, the salaries of managers have been cut in half.

The government has nationalized banks, insurance companies, and at least fifty major industrial companies formerly owned by families that fled from Iran when the shah was deposed.

The stated goal is "to redistribute the ownership of industry to workers, customers and residents near the factories," the *Wall Street Journal* glumly reports.

More and more workers are participating in management decisions. A former teller, for example, now runs the whole bank.

At the Suliran structural steel operation and other plants, no layoffs can be proposed without approval by the workers council.

In Abadan, near the Persian Gulf, the Iranian oil workers are also exerting more control over their conditions of work.

The December 6 *New York Times* describes the government's attempt last August to institute a six-day workweek. "... the electricians, machinists, and welders in the shops of the Abadan oil refinery, the world's largest, refused to have any part of it," the *Times* reports.

Under the new schedule, they were sup-

posed to report at 7 a.m. as usual, but go home at 2 p.m. instead of 3 p.m. Then on Thursday they were to come in for a five-hour day. (Thursday and Friday are the usual days off in Iran.)

An assistant general manager reported what happened, "On the first day, they started at 7 and at 2:00 nobody left."

The workers went home at 3:00 as usual, and on Thursday only supervisors went to work.

After two weeks, the workers council decided to stop blowing the whistle at 2:00 because some workers quit working then but stood around until 3:00. Now the whistle blows at 3 p.m. and nothing more is said about the six-day week.

In the oil fields, the entry-level wages have been doubled since the revolution. In addition, workers get housing allowances or quarters, a food allowance, and other benefits.

The oil workers are also preparing themselves in case of U.S. military attack on the oil refineries, receiving special training in how to repel an assault.

Because of the devastating economic policies of the shah's U.S.-backed regime, Iran still faces high unemployment, inflation, and food shortages.

But as these accounts show, the Iranian workers are organizing to defend their gains, deepen the revolution, and begin to solve the economic and social problems

Ban on Deportations of Iranian Students

In a victory for civil liberties and a blow to Washington's war drive against Iran, a federal court struck down December 11 President Carter's order singling out Iranian students for possible deportation.

The ruling by Federal District Judge Joyce Green came in response to a lawsuit on behalf of 50,000 Iranian students in the United States, filed by attorneys for the Socialist Workers Party and the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee.

Agreeing with the SWP attorneys' arguments that Carter's order illegally discriminated against Iranians, Judge Green ordered an immediate halt to deportations and to Immigration Service grilling of Iranian students. She added that information already gathered in questioning the students could not be used as the basis for deportations.

The Carter administration appealed the decision immediately, and a higher court ruled on December 14 to allow checking of Iranian student visas to continue pending a review of the district court decision. For the time being, however, deportations of Iranian students have been halted.

that remain. That's what has earned them the undying hatred of the Carter administration and the big-business interests it represents. □

Arms Training on Television

TEHRAN—Popular pressure from workers and the very poor in south Tehran has led the government here to begin arms training for the people. It has been announced that classes will be given in the mosques, and many—including women—have already signed up. Some training is in progress in the schools, involving children as young as eleven years old.

Every night on television ten minutes or more is devoted to teaching viewers how to assemble, load, and shoot a particular weapon. Sometimes an educational talk on imperialism accompanies this instruction.

A good example is the program this reporter watched the night of December

13. First, three soldiers demonstrated how to use a bazooka. After this, an officer came on to give a short talk.

"The ring of freedom for the third world is heard today in Iran," he said. "The United States is losing Iran and Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Palestine. U.S. imperialism is going to die."

The officer went on to say that the Iranian people will create a social system "that is neither capitalist nor communist, but Islamic."

He concluded: "We will move forward through the Islamic Revolution and free all the Third World. . . . As Frantz Fanon said, 'If we do not have enough bullets, we will shoot our blood.'"

—Cindy Jaquith

Sandinista Revolution Advances Interests of Workers, Peasants

By Fred Murphy

Because of the direction the struggle is taking, the vacillators and cowards are abandoning us. Only the workers and campesinos will go all the way; only their organized forces will bring about the victory.

—Augusto César Sandino

The 1970s opened with a series of setbacks for the workers and their allies in Latin America—in Bolivia and Uruguay, and then in Chile and Argentina. But as the decade drew to a close in 1979, the Nicaraguan revolution was bringing new hope and inspiration to the oppressed and exploited throughout the continent.

The July 19 downfall of the forty-year-old Somoza family dictatorship and the collapse of its armed forces in face of a mass uprising led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) opened the way for deepgoing social measures that have already greatly weakened capitalism and imperialist domination in Nicaragua. Bright prospects have been opened for the creation of the second workers state in the Western Hemisphere.

Working Masses Bring Down Somoza

The upsurge that brought down the Somozas and their National Guard began in January 1978 with the mass demonstrations and strikes protesting the assassination of bourgeois opposition leader Pedro Joaquín Chamorro.

Chamorro headed a growing layer of Nicaraguan capitalists who were anxious to remove the dictator from power. They feared a mass explosion against Somoza's rule and hoped to eliminate the obstacle to their own profits that was posed by the power and extensive holdings of the dictator and his cronies.

But by murdering Chamorro, the dictatorship eliminated the main opposition figure to whom the imperialists were beginning to look as a possible alternative to the Somozas' rule. In face of the growing mass upsurge, Washington maintained its longstanding support to Somoza during 1978 and 1979. At the same time, it encouraged him to make a deal with his capitalist opponents.

The FSLN, founded in 1962, came to the forefront as the mass mobilizations unfolded. It gained the admiration of the masses with its spectacular August 1978 raid on the National Palace while Somoza's Congress was in session.

FSLN-led uprisings in the major cities followed quickly, and full-scale civil war

broke out in September 1978. Thousands of youth lost their lives as the National Guard brutally crushed the attempted insurrection. Nonetheless, the September experience convinced wide sectors of the workers and peasants that only all-out military struggle could overthrow the dictatorship.

While Sandinista guerrilla units swelled with fresh recruits, and while preparations were made in the working-class and poor neighborhoods and in workplaces for a better planned and organized insurrection, the capitalist opposition parties and figures discredited themselves in fruitless negotiations with Somoza.

On May 29 the FSLN launched its "final offensive" and called for a general strike that was massively observed beginning June 4. City after city fell to Sandinista-led workers and youth.

On June 21, the Carter administration sought approval from the Organization of American States for a joint military intervention in Nicaragua. Washington's effort failed: no Latin American regime would dare risk offering cover to U.S. intervention, owing to the widespread solidarity the Sandinista struggle enjoyed among working people throughout the continent. Another last-ditch effort by conservative bourgeois oppositionists from Nicaragua to encourage an intervention by the Andean Pact* governments also failed.

Somoza took flight on July 17. Thirty-six hours later, National Guard troops and officers were also fleeing as the masses of Managua jubilantly occupied Somoza's "bunker," arming themselves and celebrating their hard-won victory.

The Sandinista Regime

In the course of the revolutionary war the working masses had seen the Sandinistas fight with courage and tenacity. And it did not escape their notice that the bourgeois oppositionists first frantically sought to head off the insurrection and then tried to betray it.

The war's outcome was thus not only the ouster of Somoza and the smashing of his National Guard but also a sharp shift in the relationship of class forces in favor of the workers and campesinos.

As part of the effort to forge a bloc of opposition forces behind the armed struggle against Somoza, the FSLN had reached agreement with a sector of the

bourgeois opposition on a Program of Government to be followed after Somoza's ouster. This program, published July 9, called for expropriation of all Somoza and Somocista property and other progressive measures.

At the same time, however, the Program of Government provided for a set of bourgeois-democratic institutions to be erected in the new Nicaragua—a legislative body, the Council of State, dominated by the bourgeois parties and by business and industrial groups; a Supreme Court; and an executive Junta of National Reconstruction whose decisions could be vetoed by a two-thirds vote in the Council of State. The Program pledged to "guarantee and fully respect" private property and said the "new national army" would be made up not only of Sandinista fighters but also of those National Guardsmen who had "demonstrated honest and patriotic conduct. . . ."

But the power that was consolidated in the weeks following the victory was quite different from that contemplated in the July 9 Program. Basing itself on the armed workers and campesinos that it had come to lead, the FSLN took command over the decisive centers of governmental power. While the new regime retained formal aspects of the July 9 proposals, its content was quite different.

The Sandinista People's Army (EPS), based entirely on the armed working-class and campesino youth who formed the popular militias and FSLN fighting units during the insurrection, wholly replaced the National Guard. It is being rapidly developed as a professional, well-trained force capable of defending the revolution against any military threat. The FSLN also commands a new national police force built entirely out of young Sandinista fighters. The popular militias that were the key to defeating Somoza have contributed most of their initial members to the EPS and the police, but the FSLN has announced plans for a far larger militia based in the workplaces and schools.

The Supreme Court, which was to have ruled on the "constitutionality" of government measures, has been limited to routine matters such as divorce cases.

The Junta of National Reconstruction has a 3 to 2 Sandinista majority, and all major questions are discussed and decided by the nine "Commanders of the Revolution" who make up the FSLN National Directorate.

National decisions are implemented at

*Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

the neighborhood and municipal levels by the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS). Organizing the democratic participation of the masses on a block-by-block basis, the CDSs arose out of the insurrection itself and were not even contemplated in the July 9 program.

Some bourgeois figures do hold ministerial posts in the new government, and two members of the Junta were leaders of the bourgeois opposition. But they have been incapable of blunting the proworker, pro-peasant thrust of the revolution up to now.

The capitalists have failed in their aim of establishing a bourgeois coalition government of the type envisioned in the July 9 accord.

Nationalizations, Social Gains

Among the many progressive measures taken in all fields since July 19 by the revolutionary government in Nicaragua, the following stand out:

- Confiscation of all the industries, landed property, real estate, and other holdings of the Somoza family and its top partners and supporters.

- Nationalization of all Nicaraguan banks and tight controls on the operations of foreign banks. All insurance companies were also nationalized.

- Nationalization of all foreign- and domestic-owned mines.

- Government control on the export of all major cash crops (coffee, cotton, sugar) and on all internal trade in basic food grains and agricultural supplies.

- Nationalization of the health-care system, with free care being provided in most cases.

- Adoption of a Statute on the Rights of Nicaraguans that not only guarantees fundamental political liberties—such as freedom of the press and the right to assembly—but also upholds women's equality and provides for the restriction of property on the basis of "security, public interest or utility, social interest, the national economy, national emergency or disaster, or for purposes of agrarian reform" (Article 27).

- An ambitious "national literacy crusade" aimed at teaching some 867,000 Nicaraguans to read and write by the end of 1980.

- Repudiation of all the Somoza regime's arms debts to foreign lenders, along with the announcement that the rest of Nicaragua's \$1.6 billion external debt would be carefully studied with a view toward renouncing payment of loans that were made through corrupt dealings. A de facto moratorium on all debt and interest payment is already in effect, owing to Somoza's looting of the national treasury on the eve of his flight. Sandinista leaders have proposed that foreign governments and lending institutions cancel all outstanding debts as one means of providing aid to Nicaragua.

Among the properties confiscated from

the Somozaists were some 1,500 estates comprising more than 1 million hectares of Nicaragua's most productive farmland. These and all other state lands have been put under the control of the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), one of the most important of the new revolutionary institutions and one not mentioned in the July 9 program.

INRA, headed by FSLN Comandante Jaime Wheelock, has taken a series of steps that have already brought big improvements in the lives of Nicaragua's campesinos—the poor peasants and landless agricultural laborers who make up the majority of the economically active population.

INRA has turned the big Somozaist haciendas into State Farms (*Fincas Estatales*). Laborers on these farms, organized independently by the Sandinista-led Rural Workers Association (ATC), received an immediate boost in wages and for the first time are being provided with adequate health care and educational facilities. INRA's plans call for management on the State Farms to be gradually turned over to the campesinos themselves.

On the smaller plots, INRA is encouraging campesino families to join together in democratically run cooperatives, which are provided with technical assistance and credit on easy terms.

To aid campesinos who have their own small plots, INRA has established a loan and technical assistance program. It has also decreed an end to debt foreclosure of small landholders.

Big landholders still control a little less than 20 percent of the land currently under cultivation in Nicaragua. In some provinces hundreds of peasant plots too tiny to yield a living (*minifundia*) continue to exist alongside huge private estates. INRA director Wheelock has indicated that further nationalizations are being studied with the aim of alleviating this situation.

Mass Organizations

The defense and extension of all the social measures taken by the new regime will be crucial for the progress of the revolution. This task falls more and more to the mass organizations of workers and campesinos that are being feverishly built under FSLN leadership.

Foremost among these organizations are the Sandinista Defense Committees.

The CDSs are often described by Sandinista leaders as the "basis of people's power." The CDSs are the principal means through which the FSLN explains its policies to the masses and implements national campaigns such as the nationwide literacy drive.

The CDSs have already taken on a whole series of governmental tasks—approval of exit visa applications; distribution of emergency food aid; liaison with the ministries of health, education, and social welfare; organization of street re-

pair, maintenance, and sanitation; formation of volunteer brigades to build new housing; and so on.

CDS coordinating bodies are functioning at the municipal level in most parts of the country and have been elected on a province-wide basis in some areas.

Sandinista Workers Organize

Only a small percentage of Nicaragua's urban wage workers were organized into trade unions before the revolution. The unions that did exist were either controlled by the Somozaists or else were saddled with reformist-minded bureaucrats linked to the pro-Moscow Nicaraguan Socialist Party or the bourgeois Social Christian Party.

Today, all that has changed dramatically. As of late October, the new Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) had organized some 343 local units involving more than 180,000 workers. CST General Secretary Pedro Ortiz explained to me in an October 24 interview that, "Some of these unions have been organized on the initiative of the workers themselves in a particular factory. Once organized, they come to the Sandinista Workers Federation to affiliate. At the same time, there are other unions that we [CST leaders and staff] have sought out, advised, and organized." Ortiz continued:

The workers identify fully with this Sandinista revolution—the workers *are* Sandinistas. As for the majority of the unions that once presented themselves as belonging to other trade-union federations, today they are disaffiliating from those and joining the CST. It might be added that even those of us who were activists in the Frente [Sandinista] sometimes had to say we were from some other union organization that represented no danger to the government. That was necessary to avoid repression and confound the enemy.

The well-established and militant unions of construction, textile, and dairy workers are among those that have left the old federations and joined the CST.

The trade unions in Nicaragua are taking on new and revolutionary tasks. In the privately owned plants, the unions exercise vigilance to prevent sabotage by the capitalists and in some cases have been able to impose elementary forms of workers control over production. In the nationalized plants, union representatives are already participating in administration; Sandinista leaders have pointed to the need to deepen and extend this process.

The ATC is the main vehicle of mass organization in the countryside, where it concentrates on forming unions of agricultural laborers. CDSs also exist in many villages and peasant communities.

Women

Women have been playing an almost unprecedented role in the Nicaraguan revolution. They make up between 20 and 30

percent of the army, police, and militia. Women cadres of the FSLN hold posts as INRA directors in several provinces, and they participate in the national leadership bodies of the CST, ATC, and CDSs.

At the same time, the Sandinistas have recognized the need for and are building an independent women's organization—the "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMN). The AMN grew out of AMPRONAC, a women's group that was instrumental in organizing the insurrection in the cities.

In explaining the tasks of the AMN the Sandinistas emphasize the need for women to participate "in the general task of overcoming economic backwardness." At the same time, they are beginning to address themselves to the specific oppression women face within Nicaraguan society. An editorial in the November 16 issue of the FSLN daily *Barricada* stated:

The system imposed by imperialism laid the basis for labor discrimination against women. It utilized women as pieces of merchandise, making them prostitutes or relegating them to being objects for reproduction, used only to care for children, keep house, and advertise superfluous consumer goods such as liquor and cigarettes.

But in the society we are building such discriminatory relationships have no place. . . .

It is fundamentally women themselves who must carry this struggle forward. They are the ones who, in an organized way, must conquer their rightful place in the building of a society of free men and women. And this struggle by women must be supported by all compañeros, so that we can all emerge victorious against ideological backwardness.

Political Crisis of Bourgeoisie

The deep inroads already made on capitalist property in Nicaragua, the popular social programs launched by the new regime, the virtually unquestioned authority of the FSLN among the workers and campesinos, and the rise of the mass organizations have all greatly weakened the power of that sector of the native bourgeoisie whose property holdings have as yet not been touched.

A particularly striking feature of the bourgeoisie's weakness and internal division is its failure thus far to construct a political instrument with which to regain some ideological influence among the masses. The old bourgeois parties, such as the Democratic Conservatives and the Social Christians, were discredited during the war against Somoza; and attempts to launch new ones have so far fallen flat.

The bourgeoisie's principal voice is the big capitalist daily newspaper, *La Prensa*, which has a circulation considerably higher than that of the FSLN's *Barricada* and which still enjoys considerable prestige owing to its long history of anti-Somozaism. But many of the paper's writers and even some of its editors are FSLN militants or at least pro-Sandinista, and this is also reflected in its content. *La*

Alejandra Calderón Dies in Auto Accident



ALEJANDRA CALDERON

Alejandra Calderón Fournier, a founding member of the Costa Rican Socialist Workers Organization (OST), was killed in a traffic accident at the University of Costa Rica in San José November 29.

Calderón was one of the central OST candidates in the February 1978 elections to the National Assembly. She had been a national leader of and public spokesperson for the organization since its founding.

The OST, formerly an organization that sympathized with the Fourth International, split from the international on the eve of last month's World Congress.

Prensa has also had to open its pages to Sandinista leaders to present their views or respond to criticism of the government or the FSLN.

The most telling measure of the bourgeoisie's political crisis and its lack of influence on the revolutionary government was the failure of its drive in August and September for prompt convocation of the Council of State. The capitalists had looked to this parliamentary body, with its solid bourgeois majority set forth in the July 9 Program of Government, to serve as an important brake on the revolution and the radical-minded Sandinistas.

But these hopes were dashed on October 22, when the Junta of National Reconstruction postponed the council until May 1980 and announced plans to "restructure" it so as to better represent the "motor forces" of the revolution.

In subsequent weeks the CDSs, CST, ATC, and July 19 Sandinista Youth all issued strong statements calling for the revamped Council of State to take on "a true class character" (CDS statement) and be composed "only of those organizations that really represent the interests of the people. . ." (ATC statement). A *Barricada* editorial declared November 13 that "the Council of State will not be a parliamentary organ but rather the expression of the power of the organized people."

It is no wonder that the bourgeoisie is growing more and more discontented and frustrated with its lack of influence and control at the government level. The clearest statement of this came with the publication December 8 in *La Prensa* of a lengthy declaration by the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)—the "united front" of all Nicaraguan capitalist organs (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.).

The COSEP document, which had been presented November 14 to the Junta and to the FSLN National Directorate, complained against the growing role of the

CDSs, the way the Ministry of Labor helps workers gain their demands against the bosses, the FSLN's control of television, and so on. But the central thrust of it was the charge that the FSLN and the Junta had "unilaterally altered" supposed agreements codified in the July 9 Program of Government.

Deepening Class Struggle

The class struggle in Nicaragua will intensify in the first months of 1980. Already, workers are demanding the nationalization of plants in which the capitalists have stalled in resuming production. Such contradictions will become more acute when unemployment rises at the close of the coffee harvest in January.

Public-works programs are just beginning to reduce some of the current 32 percent joblessness, but tens of thousands more will soon be without work owing to the loss of the 1979 cotton crop. Dependence on emergency food aid and costly food imports from abroad (now needed to feed some 700,000 persons daily) will persist at least until the next harvest of food grains begins in June.

Production losses owing to the war against Somoza and the massive destruction the dictator left in his wake brought a 25 percent drop in Nicaragua's gross domestic product during 1979. The Sandinistas have therefore placed great emphasis on the need to maximize production. ("Let's raise production, let's smash the counterrevolution" has been a ubiquitous slogan in Nicaragua in recent months.) FSLN leaders have visited workplaces and farms to explain the need for this drive to the workers and campesinos.

The revolutionary authorities have offered concessions to sectors of the bourgeoisie, seeking their aid in this effort to revive production. But the bourgeoisie has dragged its feet, hoping to extract further concessions and to press for real participa-

tion in the government. At the same time, many capitalists have left the country, sent their capital abroad, or even tried to sabotage their own plants.

Counterrevolutionary sabotage and acts of terrorism can be expected to increase. Thus far, the remaining capitalists have not openly broken with the Government of National Reconstruction or issued direct calls for counterrevolution; they fear this would be suicidal. For the moment they are stalling for time, hoping that injections of financial aid from imperialism—such as the \$42 million in loans to the private sector now under consideration in the U.S. Congress—will put them in a better position for confronting the FSLN.

The capitalists hope that the persisting economic crisis will call forth opposition to the Sandinistas among sectors of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie, as well as among politically backward workers. They look to such a development to provide an opening and a social base for the growth of counterrevolutionary political currents.

The Sandinistas, for their part, are taking pains to explain to the masses the current problems of the revolution and the plans for overcoming them. They are pressing ahead to strengthen the mass organizations. National gatherings of CDS, ATC, and CST delegates are planned for late December. The emergency economic plan for 1980, now in the final stages of preparation, reportedly calls for the creation of 90,000 new jobs through public works programs and an 18 to 22 percent overall increase in economic activity. The plan puts top priority on upgrading health care, education, and other social services.

An important test of the capitalists' willingness to cooperate in reconstruction will come in March and April—the time for preparing the soil and planting on the big private cotton estates. Cotton has traditionally been Nicaragua's biggest cash crop; it is also the sector of the economy where private ownership remains most concentrated.

Will the capitalists invest and plant cotton? In discussing this question, INRA officials have told me that maximizing cotton production will be crucial for economic recovery in 1980. They point out that the Program of Government makes "idle land belonging to large holdings" subject to nationalization and that Article 27 of the Statute on the Rights of Nicaraguans does not protect private property when it is needed "for purposes of agrarian reform."

Imperialist Pressure

International aid and solidarity played a key role in helping the Sandinistas overthrow Somoza. Anti-interventionist sentiment among working people in both Latin America and the United States itself stopped Washington from launching a last-minute military rescue of the dictator-

ship.

Such solidarity is all the more important now, when the workers and campesinos of Nicaragua are taking the first steps toward building a new society based on their own needs and interests under the leadership of the FSLN.

The U.S. imperialists hate and fear the Nicaraguan revolution. Their longstanding hostility toward the Cuban workers state and its leadership have been redoubled, now that extension of the socialist revolution is on the agenda in Central America.

The aid and solidarity extended by Cuba toward the Nicaraguan revolution has been exemplary. Cuba's support during the fight against Somoza helped the FSLN counter imperialist pressure for political concessions, and since July 19 there has been a steady flow of Cuban teachers, medical teams, technicians, and other assistance into Nicaragua. The social and economic advances made as a result of the Cuban revolution are continually pointed to by the Sandinistas as goals that Nicaragua too should strive to achieve.

Examples set by Nicaragua, in turn, can have a positive impact on the further development of the Cuban revolution. The active role being taken by the CDSs and other mass organizations—and the potential such forms have for evolving into expressions of workers democracy more advanced than any yet seen in Cuba—should be viewed in this light.

As in Cuba twenty years ago, a revolutionary current has come to the fore in Nicaragua, showing *in action* that the Stalinist policy of conciliation and reliance on bourgeois forces is not the way forward. Such developments are crucial for the advancement of the world revolution and for the construction of a mass revolutionary international that is essential to carry forward the fight for socialism on a world scale.

The fates of the Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutions are becoming more and more intertwined. Both face stepped-up threats from the imperialists, who believe that Cuba is dead serious in making it understood that it will not stand idly by if an attempt is made to crush the Nicaraguan workers and peasants.

Washington's entire policy before July 19 was aimed at preventing the Sandinistas from coming to power. Having failed in that, the U.S. imperialists are now utilizing a range of tactics aimed at blocking the FSLN from using its governmental power to mobilize the workers and campesinos to put an end to imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation.

Washington's pressure against the revolution has taken a number of forms:

- Blackmail based on Nicaragua's desperate need for loans and aid to recover from the devastation and bankruptcy Somoza left behind. The massive amounts of assistance needed immediately have been

withheld in hope of extracting political concessions. The Carter administration, after stalling for several months, has now asked Congress for \$75 million worth of aid to Nicaragua—an amount that is still far from adequate. The purpose of this aid was spelled out to a House of Representatives committee on November 27 by State Department official Viron Vaky. It is aimed, he said, at offsetting "the strong flux from the Cuban and Marxist side to move the country toward Marxist rule."

- Efforts to revive the remaining capitalist sector of the Nicaraguan economy. Sixty percent of the U.S. aid package now before Congress involve loans on easy terms to private businessmen.

- Military pressure and threats, which have been aimed directly against Cuba but carry a clear message for Nicaragua as well. The propaganda campaign in September against the supposed "Soviet combat brigade" in Cuba, the landing of several thousand marines at the illegally occupied Guantánamo base in October, and the establishment of a new "Caribbean Task Force" are all part of this drive.

- A "pre-emptive" military coup against the Romero dictatorship in El Salvador in mid-October, with the aim of heading off extension of the Nicaraguan revolution in Central America. The new Salvadoran junta has tried to quell the mass upsurge there by combining continued repression with a few concessions and many promises, but has failed to co-opt the leftist groups with the most influence among the workers and campesinos.

The Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR), the United People's Action (FAPU), and the February 28 People's League (LP-28) are all continuing to mobilize opposition to the junta; they look to Nicaragua for inspiration and solidarity.

- Direct aid to openly counterrevolutionary forces through the CIA, anti-Castro Cuban exile groups, and the military regimes in Guatemala and Honduras. Thousands of Somoza's National Guardsmen are being maintained in "refugee camps" in Honduras for possible rearming and mobilization. Right-wing Nicaraguan exiles in the United States have begun to raise a hue and cry against the "betrayal" of the revolution by "Marxist-communists." Terrorist bands inside Nicaragua continue to harass army and militia patrols and have murdered several Sandinista cadres, including INRA's northern regional director, Jorge Vogl.

- Encouragement of the Honduran government's harassment of Nicaraguan diplomats and border violations with army troops and air force jets. Nicaragua's ambassador to Honduras, Ricardo Wheelock, and two other embassy personnel were arrested and beaten in Tegucigalpa in November, and at one point the embassy was surrounded by troops and armored vehicles. The Carter administration's total silence about such incidents stands in

stark contrast to its professed outrage at the events in Tehran during the same period.

• A near-total blackout in the big U.S. capitalist news media of reporting on the gains of the revolution or the difficulties facing Nicaragua. This is aimed at creating the impression among American working people that Nicaragua is receiving all the aid it needs and that a "moderate" procapitalist government is in place. This lays the basis for a future propaganda charge that the FSLN has "betrayed" the anti-Somoza revolution, and also cuts across solidarity efforts. In addition, it fosters a knee-jerk reaction by some petty-bourgeois radicals who believe that if Washington is not attacking the Sandinistas openly they can't be all that revolutionary.

• Warnings to Moscow to "stay out" of Nicaragua, which the Soviet Stalinists have not failed to heed. In stark contrast to Cuba's self-sacrificing assistance, other workers states have thus far fallen far short of providing the kind of aid they are capable of. Moscow's cold shoulder toward the FSLN has been reflected inside Nicaragua in the uneasy and at times hostile relations between the Sandinistas and the three small pro-Moscow groups there.

At a certain point all of Washington's behind-the-scenes probes and pressures will give way to an open campaign against the Nicaraguan revolution similar to the one now in full swing against Iran. U.S. imperialism will not allow a workers state to be established in Nicaragua without attempting to use direct or indirect military force to crush the revolution.

That is why the international workers movement should lose no time in carrying forward the broadest possible international campaign of solidarity with Nicaragua.

If the imperialists' hands can be stayed, the future looks bright for the deepening and consolidation of the Nicaraguan revolution. The FSLN has shown its revolutionary caliber in carrying out the long and difficult fight against the Somoza dynasty and in continuing the struggle against the remaining exploiters in face of a difficult situation. There is no reason now to believe that, given the breathing space international solidarity and aid can help them gain, the Sandinistas will not continue to act in the spirit of the quote from Sandino that opened this article.

December 17, 1979

U.S. Rulers Fear Impact on Thailand

Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos Gain in Face of Imperialist Attacks

By Fred Feldman

During the last days of 1979 Washington, Bangkok, and Peking were threatening new aggression in Indochina. All three governments have been stung over the past two years by the blows of the Vietnamese, Kampuchean, and Laotian peoples against imperialist-engineered encirclement, economic blockade, and military threats.

The blows began with the expropriation of the last strongholds of capitalist economic power in South Vietnam in April 1978, took another leap with the toppling of Pol Pot in January 1979, and scored a further advance when Peking's imperialist-inspired invasion of Vietnam failed to force a withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea. Most recently, Washington's efforts to use starvation as a weapon against the Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea has showed signs of failing.

Key to all these victories has been the determination of millions of Vietnamese, Laotian, and Kampuchean workers and peasants to maintain their independence of imperialist domination and defend their socialist revolution, even at the cost of enormous privation.

The recent spate of military threats from U.S. and Thai officials has been presented in the guise of warnings against "Communist aggression." Reporting from Washington in the December 12, 1979, *Wall Street Journal*, Karen Elliot House stated:

American intelligence analysts expect that Vietnam will soon begin a major offensive to drive anti-Communist guerrillas out of Cambodia into neighboring Thailand. U.S. officials fear

Vietnamese soldiers won't stop at the border but will pursue Cambodians into Thailand.

It is the Thai army, however, not the Vietnamese, which has refused to "stop at the border." The military dictatorship of General Kriangsak Chamanand is deeply committed to helping the Khmer Rouge and allied rightist forces bring down the Heng Samrin government. Thai army units engage in joint military operations with the remnants of Pol Pot's army on both sides of the border. The military regime provides Pol Pot's forces with arms, camps, supply bases, and medical care—often under the cover of United Nations and Red Cross aid for refugees.

And the Thai regime has warned Heng Samrin's forces to stay away from Kampuchea's border regions. This threat completely exposes the charge that it is Vietnam that is threatening a cross-border strike.

Washington's Role

The Carter administration is backing up Kriangsak's threats. Karen Elliot House speaks of "American encouragement of the Thais to support Cambodian insurgents against Vietnam. . . ."

U.S. military aid to Thailand has quadrupled since Pol Pot fell in January. U.S. military "advisers" are again pouring into the country, including more than 100 preparing Thai military bases for B-52 bombers. And at least one U.S. army officer has been found in one of Pol Pot's camps in Thailand. He claimed to be an "observer."

As tension increased along the Thai-Kampuchean border, the Peking Stalinists

have escalated their military pressure against the Indochinese governments. Laotian Minister of Information Sisana Sisan charged in early December that Peking has concentrated seven army divisions along the Laotian-Chinese border, and that army units have fired salvos into Laotian territory. With only 3.5 million people and an army already fighting rightist insurgents, some backed by Peking, Laos would be far more vulnerable than Vietnam to a military assault.

Peking has also stepped up naval maneuvers in the South China Sea.

Top Peking officials also insist they will come to the aid of the Thai military dictatorship in the event of an open clash with Vietnam and Kampuchea.

The *Wall Street Journal's* House linked the new war danger to imperialism's inability to bring down the Heng Samrin government. In particular, she complained about the increased aid Kampuchea has received from the Soviet Union. Together with assistance from Vietnam and a trickle of aid from international relief agencies, this has enabled Pnompenh to gain ground against famine, and to begin returning cities and farms toward normal life.

"All this Soviet assistance is undermining U.S. policy in Cambodia," charged House.

U.S. officials had hoped Vietnam would withdraw from Cambodia if Hanoi faced the prospect of a long, debilitating guerrilla war there. But Soviet help has given Vietnam a clear fighting superiority over its Cambodian opponents, both the anti-Communists and the Khmer Rouge

under Pol Pot.

The U.S. rulers expect the gains made by the Heng Samrin government to deepen instability in Thailand. ". . . even without a direct Vietnamese attack, Thailand's future is shaky," reported House.

Big Stakes

The stakes are high in the new battles in Indochina. The spread of revolutionary upheaval to Thailand would threaten to tear a strategically located country of 45 million people, with substantial imperialist investments, out of the U.S. orbit.

Today the central role of U.S. imperialism in the drive against Indochina stands in plain view. But it is also increasingly evident that this role is not a new one.

The offensive against the Vietnamese revolution was well under way in January when Hanoi sent some 100,000 troops, supported by 20,000 Khmer insurgents, into Kampuchea and put an end to Pol Pot's tyranny.

Washington's kingpin role in the conflict was forced to the surface by the failure of Pol Pot, the Thai regime, and the Peking Stalinists to hold the line against the further extension and deepening of the Indochinese revolution in Laos and Kampuchea.

While suffering a severe defeat when U.S.-dominated regimes in Indochina fell in 1975, Washington did not withdraw from the region, or give up its battle to contain and ultimately reverse the revolutions.

A key component in imperialism's drive has been the tight economic blockade imposed against Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea since 1975. In the face of the devastation of the countries by U.S. bombers, herbicides, and occupation forces, the blockade presented a massive obstacle to reconstruction. The cutoff of aid and trade left hundreds of thousands of people in the cities of Laos and Vietnam without a livelihood. It blocked the way to the real restoration of agriculture, by barring access to much modern technology.

The disruption caused by the economic blockade was intended to lay the groundwork for stepped-up military pressure when this became possible.

The eagerness of the Peking regime to offer imperialism its services against revolution in Indochina in exchange for diplomatic and economic deals, and the counter-revolutionary course followed by the Pol Pot wing of the Khmer Rouge, provided the opening Washington was looking for.

The brutal measures taken by the Pol Pot regime—the deportation of the urban and much of the rural population, the establishment of forced agricultural labor camps as the basic economic unit, and the savage reduction of living standards and basic public services to support expanded exports—was accompanied from the start by attacks across the Vietnamese border. This reflected the desire of the Pol Pot

regime to seal off Kampuchea from the impact of the Vietnamese revolution where a more progressive development was taking place.

Pol Pot's Attacks on Vietnam

This fighting escalated to full-scale border war in mid-1977. Khmer Rouge attacks were directed particularly against agricultural zones along the border. Hanoi was compelled to evacuate hundreds of thousands of farmers, exacerbating the food shortage caused by natural disasters that year.

Hanoi's initial response to Pol Pot's attacks aimed at conciliation. For nearly three years, there was no criticism of Pol Pot's brutal policies. Asylum was barred to refugees of Khmer descent fleeing the country.

While pressing for negotiations, Hanoi struck back militarily in December 1977, assuming that a demonstration of superior military force would deflect the Pol Pot regime from its anti-Vietnamese course.

Instead, Pnompenh broke off diplomatic relations with Hanoi on December 31, 1977, and won public backing from Peking. Pol Pot's territorial demands against Vietnam escalated, with strong hints that all of South Vietnam, including Ho Chi Minh City, belonged by right to Kampuchea.

In late January 1978, Thailand's foreign minister visited Pnompenh to confer with Khmer Rouge leaders. It was agreed to exchange ambassadors. Border conflicts with Thailand simmered down. These events were a clear signal to Hanoi that Peking and the Pol Pot regime were not acting alone.

Expropriations in Ho Chi Minh City

In March and April 1978 Hanoi struck the first in what became a series of counterblows against the tightening economic and military noose. It mobilized tens of thousands of supporters of the revolution to carry out the expropriation of the Saigon merchants, the last bastion of capitalist property relations in South Vietnam. Until then, the merchants had continued to dominate trade, including in rice.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser, visited China in May. "The day after Brzezinski left China," wrote Helen Chauncey and Lowell Finley in the December 1979 *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, "Beijing began a publicity campaign charging Vietnam with mistreatment of its ethnic Chinese residents. . . . China suddenly cut off its entire aid program for Vietnam."

Large numbers of Chinese troops moved to the Vietnamese border and clashes began to occur frequently.

The imperialists intensified their tilt toward the Pol Pot regime in its conflict with Vietnam. It posed no revolutionary danger to them, since Pol Pot's reactionary measures had no attraction for the masses of Southeast Asia. And Pol Pot increas-

ingly needed the help of U.S. imperialism and its semicolonial allies to carry on its war with Vietnam and repress dissent at home.

The Australian imperialists moved toward establishing diplomatic relations with Pol Pot, on the grounds that "it is essential to preserve [Kampuchea] as an independent buffer between non-communist Thailand and communist Vietnam."

Japan sought to open economic relations. "Behind Japan's desire to aid Cambodia is also its desire to see that it is economically viable," reported the November 10, 1978, *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations stepped up its signals of support to Pol Pot against Vietnam in the border conflict.

And Carter moved rapidly toward cementing diplomatic ties with Peking, while pointing to Vietnam's conflict with the Pol Pot regime as a main obstacle to diplomatic and trade relations with Hanoi.

A team of Western reporters was sent to Pnompenh. The reports they made on their rigidly guided tour were clearly intended to soften up Western public opinion for friendly relations with Pol Pot.

A Measure of Self-defense

Faced with a menacing anti-Vietnamese alliance that could only grow more open and aggressive with time, the Vietnamese government shifted at the end of 1978 from relying mainly on building up an anti-Pol Pot force in Kampuchea to decisive military action.

In an interview published in the October 12, 1979, issue of the New York weekly *Workers World*, Vietnamese Vice-minister for Foreign Affairs Phan Hien asserted that Hanoi had become convinced that a joint attack on Vietnam by Pol Pot and Peking was in the offing.

If the Chinese succeeded in launching an offensive with 19 divisions of the Pol Pot troops in the southwest of Viet Nam, they would launch at roughly the same time another offensive from the north and be in a position to fight the war on two fronts. . . .

So when we were attacked in Kampuchea on December 23, 1977, we knew their plan. We had to react rapidly. We had to destroy the bulk of the Pol Pot forces.

As 100,000 Vietnamese soldiers and 20,000 Kampuchean insurgents swept through Kampuchea, Pol Pot's regime fell. It was supported by only a small portion of the population—mostly those who derived privileges and plunder from ties to the Khmer Rouge army and government apparatus. Pnompenh was occupied on January 7.

Heng Samrin, president of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation, became head of state. Initial steps to end Pol Pot's reign of terror won the regime a popular base that it has



retained, although the poor health, dispersal, and psychological state of shock of much of the population have been big obstacles until recently in beginning to build a large army of Kampucheans. The role of Kampuchean armed forces (including factory and village militias) in resisting Pol Pot's forces is systematically understated in the capitalist press.

The disintegrating Pol Pot forces were steadily pushed toward the Thai border.

Colonel Thanit, a Thai military officer, "said he and many other Thai officials believed that many Cambodian villagers viewed the Vietnamese-backed insurgents as liberators from the harsh regime of Mr. Pol Pot," reported the January 16 *New York Times*.

At this point the Thai government intervened directly to save Pol Pot's forces warning the pro-Heng Samrin troops to stay out of a zone along the border. This

was set up by the Thai army as base areas and sanctuaries for Pol Pot, with supply lines into Thailand. The complete destruction of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge was forestalled.

Nonetheless, Pol Pot's forces lost their capacity to directly threaten Vietnam. (In addition, the fall of Pol Pot broke the supply lines through which the Khmer Rouge had been sending aid for some time to right-wing guerrillas operating in the Vietnamese highlands.)

This was a big setback to imperialism's aim of stabilizing the Thai regime by using Pol Pot to seal off the Vietnamese revolution.

The counterrevolutionary alliance that had taken shape along the Vietnamese-Kampuchean border was now desperately trying to hold the line in the region along the Thai-Kampuchean border.

Washington and Peking

The imperialists responded with a blast of propaganda against Hanoi and by moves to cut back the minimal aid programs that some had maintained. The United Nations and the International Red Cross did the imperialists' bidding, recognizing Pol Pot's hated regime as the "legitimate" government of Kampuchea.

And Deng Xiaoping's government in Peking was given encouragement for war moves against Vietnam. Deng used his visit to Washington in January to propose that Vietnam be "punished" and "taught some necessary lessons" for helping to bring down Pol Pot.

On February 17, tens of thousands of Chinese troops poured across the Vietnamese border. In two weeks of heavy fighting, they seized a strip of territory about six to ten miles deep.

It was hard to miss the contrast between Washington's response to Vietnam's move into Kampuchea and its reaction to Peking's attack on Vietnam.

The official ceremonies establishing full diplomatic relations between Peking and Washington took place in the midst of the invasion, and Carter sent Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal to Peking to discuss stepped-up trade.

These actions were matched by Washington's repeated assertions that Hanoi's role in Kampuchea was an insuperable obstacle to trade and diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

When the Soviet government dispatched warships to the South China Sea in a symbolic gesture of support to Vietnam, Washington sent an aircraft carrier to counter it.

After denying it for some time, the State Department admitted that it had been informed well in advance of Peking's plans for the invasion.

Most importantly, Washington and Peking closely cooperated in international diplomatic bodies in pushing the slogan of mutual withdrawal: of Peking from Viet-

nam and Hanoi from Kampuchea. This revealed the purpose of the operation.

Carter showed his bias in his use of language, as well. Vietnam's presence in Kampuchea was an "invasion," while Peking's assault on Vietnam a "border penetration."

And Washington's allies in Southeast Asia greeted the invasion. According to Henry Kamm in the March 14 *New York Times*, "The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia sent shudders through Southeast Asia; the Chinese counterthrust helped to calm the non-Communist countries."

Heavy Resistance

But Peking's invasion ran into heavy resistance from Vietnamese forces. While massive demonstrations in Hanoi expressed the unity of Vietnamese workers and peasants against the invasion, antiwar wall posters and other signs of opposition appeared in China.

On March 15, Chinese forces completed their withdrawal, holding onto some small but strategically important salients along the border.

Peking failed to accomplish the political goals it had set with Washington. Far from pulling out of Kampuchea, Hanoi stepped up its aid. Pnompenh and Vietnamese forces began to press hard against Pol Pot's border enclaves.

But the invasion devastated much of Vietnam's northern tier, and brought death to thousands of soldiers and civilians. The economically hard-pressed Vietnamese were compelled to reallocate resources from reconstruction to military defense.

Nor did Peking's move slow the pace of anti-imperialist struggle elsewhere in Indochina. The Laotian government of Kay-sone Phomvihhan rejected the option of joining the U.S.-Thai-Peking alliance and instead consolidated its cooperation with Vietnam. The result was a deepening of the socialist revolution in that small landlocked country. The agrarian reforms launched earlier moved toward completion, and nationalizations of industry and state control of trade were extended.

The Laotian government also undertook the task of putting an end to the strongest base of imperialist influence and capitalist power in Laos: the sector of northern and northwestern Laos where opium growing linked a sizable sector of the Meo nationality to Thai capitalists and to U.S. and French imperialism.

Heavy fighting—in which the Laotian government was supported by Vietnamese troops—dealt heavy blows to Meo mercenary armies organized during the Indochina war. And the opium trade was substantially disrupted.

But Peking is acting as a funnel for continuing support to antigovernment military units along China's northern border with Laos.

These developments in Laos were a

major new blow to the imperialist drive against Indochina, and to the Peking bureaucracy's claims that it could police the region in the interests of imperialist "stability."

'The Boat People'

Mid-1979 saw a major international propaganda campaign against Vietnam centering on the plight of the "boat people."

Many of those who left Vietnam were merchants and former Saigon army officers and government officials. They found it impossible to accept a socialist revolution accompanied by a sharp slash in their living standards.

But many others also left.

The main source of this exodus from Vietnam was the imperialist economic blockade, which compounded the ruin left by the U.S. war against Indochina. The effects of this deprivation were multiplied when Vietnam again found itself at war.

And some Hoa (people of Chinese descent) from the North left after being told to move to New Economic Zones where agricultural reconstruction is being carried on under difficult conditions. The tensions between the Hoa and other Vietnamese resulting from Peking's hostility to Vietnam contributed to the outflow.

The imperialists and their allies launched a virulent propaganda campaign claiming that Vietnam was expelling tens of thousands, forcing them out to sea in small boats. In addition to vastly exaggerating the toll of deaths due to drowning, the big business media deliberately ignored Vietnamese offers to airlift 10,000 emigrants a month to imperialist countries—an offer these governments firmly rejected.

Aid programs to Vietnam, such as the food aid sent by the European Common Market, were cancelled in the name of "humanitarianism." Vietnam was equated with Nazi Germany.

This propaganda had an impact on liberals and on many petty-bourgeois radicals. Many took up the cry that, in the wake of U.S. military withdrawal, "Vietnam has lost the peace"—as though U.S. imperialism and its allies have given Vietnam any peace.

The propaganda campaign had nothing to do with aiding the "boat people," as the imperialists showed by their refusal to admit more than a handful. The real target was the tens of millions of workers and peasants who were determined to stick it out in Vietnam despite economic adversity and resist imperialist attacks. The campaign also attempted to soften up public opinion for new military moves against Indochina.

The Rightist Bloc Exposed

As major military defeats hit Pol Pot's forces in Kampuchea, his backers began to court wider international support. In a series of press interviews published in

June, Ieng Sary, Pol Pot's chief deputy, declared that units of the Khmer Serei, which the CIA organized in the early 1960s to combat Prince Sihanouk's "neutralist" capitalist regime, were now fighting side by side with the Khmer Rouge. And he praised the Thai regime for its assistance, while stressing the need for more "outside help." (In a year-end interview with CBS television reporters, Pol Pot himself reiterated these themes.)

Attempts to engineer the proclamation of a rightist front, perhaps headed by Norodom Sihanouk, against the Heng Samrin government accelerated. The effort has been stalled up to now by the reluctance of some rightists to openly admit their ties to the main military component of such a front—the discredited, blood-drenched remnants of the Khmer Rouge.

But famine became the imperialists' most powerful weapon against Kampuchea.

Even without civil war, the need to reorganize agricultural production on a new basis would have posed overwhelming tasks for the Heng Samrin government. The masses refused to continue working in the agricultural labor camps to which they had been forcibly transported by the Khmer Rouge. Hundreds of thousands set off in search of their former homes.

But the main source of famine was the scorched earth policy adopted by the Pol Pot forces in their last days in power. Beginning with the near-destruction of Pnompenh, they extended this policy to the countryside.

Writing from the Thai-Kampuchea border, James Pringle wrote in the June 14 *Newsweek*:

As the Khmer Rouge retreat, they are evidently leaving behind one last bitter legacy. Civilians say Pol Pot's men are burning Cambodia's rice barns and sowing paddies with mines to prevent them from being planted. "It is farming season, but no one can get into the fields to do anything," said Cheam Ly Hour, 31. A few months from now, Cambodia may reap the final harvest of the Khmer Rouge—a nationwide famine.

The Carter administration became more open in its backing for Pol Pot, pressing his cause successfully in the United Nations after he had lost his seat at the Nonaligned conference in Havana in September.

With the active complicity of the Red Cross and the United Nations, a propaganda campaign was launched claiming that Pnompenh was blocking food aid.

At the same time, the Red Cross and United Nations established aid programs purportedly for the hundreds of thousands of refugees camped along the Thai border. But in reality, their aid went to Pol Pot and allied rightist bands, while the refugees are permitted to waste away from hunger and disease.

Far from refusing aid, however, the Pnompenh government actively sought it, while resisting the array of political condi-

tions demanded by the Red Cross and United Nations.

The government invited Western reporters to see for themselves the crimes of the Pol Pot regime and the famine conditions Kampuchea was facing. These reports undercut the imperialist efforts to legitimize Pol Pot, and helped spur an international demand for unconditional aid to Kampuchea that even the Red Cross and United Nations found hard to resist.

After its representatives visited Kampuchea, one Western relief agency—Britain's Oxfam—broke ranks and began actually sending aid to Kampuchea. Oxfam's administrators reported that the claims that the government was obstructing aid were false.

Vietnam continued to pour assistance—including 120,000 tons of food—into Kampuchea, and the Soviet government re-

sponded to the international call for aid by stepping up its shipments (159,000 tons so far).

Because of this aid, signs of normal life are appearing in Kampuchea's cities and countryside. Starvation is being fended off in the cities, markets are opening, and some factories and public services are getting under way. Rice-fields are being cultivated in many districts—an indication of the government's ability to defend the farmers against Pol Pot's raiders.

The new threats from U.S. imperialism and the Thai regime are a direct response to Kampuchea's gains over famine, which the imperialists counted on to starve its people into submitting to a proimperialist government.

International solidarity with the Indochinese revolutions remains a key component of their struggle to survive, deepen,

and extend.

Working people around the world must demand an end to military moves against Kampuchea, Vietnam, and Laos—whether from Washington, Peking, or Bangkok. This includes demanding an end to the support funnelled to Pol Pot and allied rightist forces by U.S. imperialism, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the United Nations, and other sources. All U.S. military shipments to the Thai dictatorship must cease and U.S. advisers must be withdrawn now.

Above all, the countries of Indochina—Kampuchea, above all—require massive infusions of aid to heal the wounds of war and meet the basic needs of the people. U.S., European, and Japanese imperialism—which have done so much over four decades to bring ruin to Indochina—must provide this aid. □

Statement of the Fourth International

The Split by Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and Bolshevik Faction

[On the eve of the Fifth World Congress Since Reunification of the Fourth International (Eleventh World Congress), two groupings, the "Bolshevik Faction" (BF) and the "Leninist Trotskyist Tendency" (LTT), split from the Fourth International. The World Congress adopted the following statement on the split on November 17, 1979.]

* * *

The Fourth International has suffered a split which represents a serious blow to our movement. Given the general rise of the revolutionary struggle on a world scale in the framework of the combined crises of imperialism and the ruling bureaucratic castes in the degenerated or deformed workers states, and the decision of this World Congress to implement a radical turn to the industrial working class to deepen our proletarian orientation, we are convinced of the capacity of our movement to rapidly overcome the quantitative and political effects of the split. All the necessary steps will be taken by the International and its sections to accomplish this.

The leaderships of the "Bolshevik Faction" and the "Leninist Trotskyist Tendency" have publicly attempted to justify their split by charging that the majority of the forces of the Fourth International have "abandoned Trotskyism" by their defense of the Nicaraguan revolution and that this World Congress has not been democratically prepared. The facts speak otherwise.

The charge that the majority of the Fourth International is "liquidating" Trotskyism by its revolutionary response to the Nicaraguan revolution, by its analy-

sis of the present stage of the Nicaraguan revolution, and by its fraternal attitude to the fighters of the FSLN who led the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist-backed Somoza dictatorship, is absurd. Any other stance would amount to sectarian abstentionism in face of the living revolution.

The World Congress has been prepared in a fully democratic way. The BF and the LTT have enjoyed full rights to present their views in the written discussion and in the sections, along guidelines agreed to by the BF and LTT themselves. The lie to their argument is given by the fact that the BF and LTT split right on the eve of the World Congress, refusing even to present their case before the delegates assembled here from more than forty countries in the highest body of the Fourth International, revealing their contempt for the majority of the cadres of our movement and their rejection of its democratic discussions and decisions.

The BF and the LTT had full rights to present their views on Nicaragua and every other point on the agenda of this World Congress. A section of the LTT which rejected the split course has in fact done so. The leaderships of the BF and LTT both make the same excuse that there hasn't been enough time since the overthrow of Somoza four months ago to begin the discussion on Nicaragua at this World Congress. On the contrary, a revolutionary organization such as the Fourth International has the duty to react rapidly to events of such importance as the Nicaraguan revolution. This discussion, which the BF and LTT have now unilaterally cut themselves off from, will continue in the

Fourth International as the revolution unfolds, in the framework of a massive international campaign of solidarity in face of imperialist hatred for the Nicaraguan revolution.

The right of the LTT and BF to present their views inside the International was not and is not challenged. Their split was not politically justified and was therefore unprincipled.

The origins of the split go back before the Nicaraguan revolution. For some years the Bolshevik Faction has been functioning as a more open public faction, without regard to the decisions or norms of the Fourth International. Increasingly, it set itself up as a parallel formation to the Fourth International, organizing splits of our forces in country after country, setting up their own international apparatus and financial system in competition with those of the International, and moving their comrades from country to country without regard to the interests of the sections involved and not under the control of or even in consultation with the regular bodies of the International. Before the Nicaraguan events, they were warned that this World Congress would take the necessary measures to put a halt to this public factional operation. This method of functioning reached a criminal culmination in the operations of the "Simón Bolívar Brigade" in Nicaragua (see statement by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on the Simón Bolívar Brigade in the October 22, 1979, issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, p. 1033).

Right from the beginning, the BF conceived of the brigade in this factional

manner, and not from the point of view of the needs of the Nicaraguan revolution. The Simón Bolívar Brigade was set up behind the backs of the elected leadership of the Fourth International by the Bolshevik Faction with the express purpose of changing the relationship of forces in the Fourth International so that the BF would take over its leadership. The brigade masqueraded as a military unit of the FSLN, fraudulently raised money using the name of the FSLN, and deliberately confused trade-union organizations and groups of workers in Nicaragua who thought they did represent the FSLN. This completely unprincipled behavior in the course of a living revolution represented a carrying over of their factional and sectarian methods within the Fourth International to the Latin American labor movement and Nicaraguan revolution as a whole. The operations of the Simón Bolívar Brigade were a real crime against the Nicaraguan revolution and against the Fourth International.

At its first meeting following the overthrow of Somoza, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International called the Bolshevik Faction to order for the Simón Bolívar Brigade. The United Secretariat warned the Bolshevik Faction to cease its activities as a public faction in Central America. Since they knew that this World Congress would demand that the Bolshevik Faction put an end to all violations of the statutes and norms of the Fourth International and cease its functioning as a public faction, the leaders of the BF decided to split.

The criminal adventure of the Simón Bolívar Brigade was bound to end in disaster, and it did. At that point, the Bolshevik Faction leadership switched its public line from attempting to cover themselves with the prestige of the FSLN to public attack on the FSLN as the instrument of consolidation of a bourgeois state in Nicaragua. This set the stage for their bloc with the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

Both the LTT and the OCRFI reacted in a sectarian fashion to the Nicaraguan revolution. There is a parallel here with the Algerian and Cuban revolutions. In both of those cases, the majority of the Trotskyist forces on a world scale demonstrated their ability to correctly relate to the living revolution and to the revolutionary fighters who came to the fore in the revolutionary process itself, while at the same time defending and applying the Trotskyist program in these revolutions. But both times, there appeared sectarian tendencies within the Trotskyist movement who turned their backs on the living revolution. Leaders of the OCRFI, only recently, twenty years after the event, have come to the realization that a workers state had been established in

Cuba! From the fact that these revolutions were led by revolutionists who did not have the full Leninist program, these sectarians deduced that the correct stance was to denounce them at all times as betrayers, irrespective of what they were concretely doing in the context of the mobilization and organization of the masses, the scope of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist measures taken, etc.

Such a sectarian stance can lead to disastrous consequences, deeply discrediting Trotskyism in the eyes of the masses engaged in the revolutionary process. To a certain extent, this has happened in Nicaragua. In addition to the positions taken by the BF, the positions of the Costa Rican Socialist Workers Organization (OST), whose leaders are members of the LTT, and of the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR) in Nicaragua, are a case in point. The newspaper of the OST, for example, presents the monetary measures taken by the Nicaraguan government as an anti-working-class measure. The LMR has tried to paint the false picture that Nicaragua today is a hotbed of repression against the working class. This same theme was at the center of a meeting jointly organized by the OCRFI, the BF, and the LTT in Paris on November 13. These forces rejected organizing an international solidarity and aid campaign with Nicaragua against imperialism on the false grounds that this will only aid a "bourgeois" government in Nicaragua.

Organizing meetings like that of November 13 can only give aid and comfort to the international campaign of imperialism and capitalist reaction against the Nicaraguan revolution, presenting as tyrants those who have overthrown the bloody tyranny supported by imperialism for forty-five years. Any criticisms revolutionists make, including on any violation of workers democracy, must be in a different framework—that of unconditional solidarity with the revolution, defense of the revolution against imperialism, which will attempt to drown it in blood as it advances, and with a fraternal attitude toward the Nicaraguan revolutionaries.

Under the impact of the Nicaraguan revolution, the OCRFI reversed its line toward reunification with the Fourth International. Some years ago, the OCRFI, which represents forces which had refused to join the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963, approached the Fourth International for discussions. Recently, the OCRFI recognized the Fourth International and its sections as revolutionary organizations and agreed to discuss with us on the basis of the documents prepared for the World Congress, with the goal of sounding out the possibilities of fusion with the Fourth International. When the differences within the Fourth International appeared on Nicaragua, with a temporary convergence between the positions of the Bolshevik Faction and

those of the LTT and OCRFI, a majority of the OCRFI reacted with their old sectarian reflexes. They de facto excluded a delegation from the United Secretariat of the Fourth International from the discussions at their international conference, to which they had originally invited the United Secretariat. In addition, they decided to invite to that conference the LTT and BF, that is, to support the open break with the Fourth International by the LTT and BF. The OCRFI once again began to attack the Fourth International and its sections and sympathizing organizations in its publications, including an especially slanderous attack on the American Socialist Workers Party as "revisionist" and as having betrayed the cause of revolutionary Marxism.

What this reversal by the OCRFI amounts to is a shortsighted policy of seeking supposed temporary factional advantage. To do this, they turned their backs on the objective need of pursuing a course of exploring the possibilities of a principled unification with the Fourth International, which would represent a major contribution toward solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the coming class battles in a number of key countries. The unprincipled and irresponsible character of that decision is underscored by the OCRFI's own analysis of the world situation and the necessity of overcoming the crisis of proletarian leadership.

The OCRFI, the LTT, and the BF have issued an appeal to set up a "parity commission for the reorganization (reconstruction) of the Fourth International." This is an operation designed to further split and attack the Fourth International. Its content is liquidationism of the Fourth International and world Trotskyism as an organization. They have called for an "open conference" of those seeking the destruction of the Fourth International. This "open conference" itself will be nothing more than a talking shop with its only common denominator being opposition to building the Fourth International as a world party. It is clear that the OCRFI, the BF, and the LTT do not agree on the major issues of the class struggle today, and that they are opposed to majority rule, that is, democratic centralism. Their plan will come to nothing, just as the OCRFI itself failed to build an alternative to the Fourth International along these lines. It will result only in the demoralization and destruction of hundreds of valuable cadres.

By these actions, the OCRFI, the BF, and the LTT have turned their back on building the Fourth International as an organization, today. The need to *simultaneously* build national working-class revolutionary parties and the World Party of Socialist Revolution is a fundamental programmatic tenet of Marxism. This is the epoch of imperialism, an epoch of growing internationalization of the pro-

ductive forces and of the class struggle, an epoch of world revolution and counterrevolution. Any attempt on whatever basis to build national revolutionary parties without at the same time working to build a revolutionary International will lead its practitioners to grave errors in the class struggle, not only on an international level but in their own countries.

By reaffirming and defending the integrity of the Fourth International as a world party, as an organization based on democratic centralism as it is applied on an international level, the Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (Eleventh World Congress) reaffirms and defends the programmatic and organizational integrity of revolutionary Marxism, of Trotskyism.

The Fourth International calls on the OCRFI, the Bolshevik Faction, and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency to reverse their course. The World Congress affirms that the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, the largest grouping

supporting the Bolshevik Faction, should become the Argentine section of the Fourth International. We maintain our general orientation on the question of principled fusions and regroupments. We reiterate the basic concept that the building of mass revolutionary workers parties and a mass revolutionary workers International cannot succeed solely by individual recruitment to the existing nuclei alone, which are the Fourth International and its sections, but will of necessity include fusions with other organizations either already existing or which will appear in the course of the revolutionary struggle itself. It reaffirms its conviction that the way in which the Fourth International and its sections respond to openings for fusions is and will be an important test of their revolutionary capacities.

Under the impact of the present split, we will not reverse our course of seeking the reunification of Trotskyist forces, begun in 1963. We are ready to discuss with the

current represented by Lutte Ouvrière along the lines pursued by the United Secretariat in the last few years. In the case of the OCRFI, this would have to be preceded by a reversal of their present course and an affirmation that the Fourth International and all its sections are revolutionary organizations, and that the purpose of such discussions is to unify with them in their totality; and by action in accordance with this stance.

Independently of any preconditions, we will take whatever initiatives might help bring us closer to our goal while defending the integrity of our organization and its strict organizational boundaries. We will advise our national sections to do the same.

The Fourth International will not budge one inch from its principled position that any such discussion can have only the goal of the strengthening of the Fourth International as a world party based on democratic centralism. □

Walk Away From Fourth International

Sectarians Split on Eve of World Congress

By Barry Sheppard

[The following article appeared in the December 28 issue of the *Militant*.]

* * *

The Fifth World Congress since reunification of the Fourth International, World Party of the Socialist Revolution, was held in Belgium the week of November 17-25. Delegates representing sections and sympathizing organizations in forty-eight countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, the Caribbean, and North and South America were present.

A sizable leadership delegation from the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) participated in the congress discussions and registered a consultative vote. The SWP is barred from membership in the Fourth International by reactionary legislation in the U.S. Nevertheless, the SWP remains in political solidarity with the Fourth International and does what it can to help politically advance the development of the world Trotskyist movement.

The congress was held in the midst of the deepening crisis of imperialism and of the intensification of the international class struggle exemplified by the unfolding revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua. Of special note was the presence of delegates from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party. It was an expression of the geographical extension of the forces of the Fourth International since its last World Congress in 1974, as well as its deepening roots among the toilers who are more and more prone to

revolutionary action.

The congress hailed the overthrow of the imperialist-backed regime of the butcher Somoza by the Nicaraguan people led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The Fourth International pledged to make its central international campaign helping to build the worldwide solidarity movement for aid to Nicaragua and for defense of the revolution against imperialist aggression.

In order to prepare for the major class battles to come, the congress voted to make a radical turn—to place in industrial jobs a large majority of the members of the sections of the international in every country.

It adopted resolutions on the world political situation, on the specific tasks in carrying out this turn and building the Fourth International in Europe and in Latin America, on Nicaragua, and on the struggle for women's liberation. It discussed the situation in Indochina and decided on an international campaign to defend Hanoi and Phnompenh against the intensified attacks by imperialism. It discussed the relationship of workers democracy and socialist revolution.

An International Executive Committee was elected to lead the work of the Fourth International until the next World Congress.

The delegates who participated in the congress were elected from each national section after extensive democratic debate and discussion, including an international

written discussion. They represented the various points of view in the international on the matters under consideration.

Despite the months of discussion and debate, on the very eve of the world gathering two minority factions that had been part of the Fourth International for some time decided to split from the international rather than participate in the congress and try to win a majority of delegates to their views. Together they led approximately 25 to 30 percent of the international.

The two groupings—known as the Bolshevik Faction (BF) and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (LTT)—formed an alliance with another group outside the international called the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI).

On October 29 the three groups announced the formation of a "parity committee" to organize the fight against the Fourth International, which they claim has embarked on a liquidationist course, abandoned the "terrain of Trotskyism," and gone over to "revisionism."

The Test of Nicaragua

The major political issue that provoked the split is the revolution in Nicaragua.

Revolutions not only mark abrupt breaks with the past, they are acid tests for revolutionists everywhere. The Nicaraguan revolution rapidly divided forces throughout the world claiming to be Trotskyist and revolutionary Marxist into two irreconcilable camps: those who have em-

braced the Nicaraguan revolution as their own and recognize the revolutionary qualities and achievements of the Sandinistas, versus those who, in sectarian fashion, see the Sandinistas (and the Castroist current in general) as a counterrevolutionary obstacle barring the advance of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants.

The first public act of the "parity committee" definitively established what was driving them. Those who split from the Fourth International did so in order to free their hands to pursue a criminal course of giving aid and comfort to the international campaign of imperialism and capitalist reaction against the Nicaraguan revolution. On November 13, the three organizations of the "parity committee" held a public meeting in Paris. The theme of this meeting was to denounce the Sandinista National Liberation Front for allegedly carrying out systematic repression of the workers and peasants in Nicaragua, and to attack the Fourth International and the American Socialist Workers Party as being complicit with the repressive acts supposedly organized by the FSLN.

At this meeting, OCRFI representative Stéphane Just, who is emerging as the major spokesperson for the "parity committee," said:

It is clear that supporting the Government of National Reconstruction (in Nicaragua), approving of the repression of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, demanding that everyone in the workers movement subordinate themselves to the Sandinist leadership, is revisionism. It leads to supporting the repression of Trotskyism. It leads the leadership of the SWP to approve the policies of Castro, who preaches peaceful coexistence . . . which is synonymous with the Holy Counterrevolutionary Alliance. . . . This leads to measures whose goal is the liquidation of those tendencies and factions inside the United Secretariat [of the Fourth International] that do not accept this policy. [*Informations Ouvrières*, November 17-24. Ellipses in original.]

The picture of Nicaragua as a country ruled through repression of the toiling masses and brutal victimization, even torture, of revolutionary fighters, is a complete and utter falsification. To claim to launch a "solidarity" campaign with the Nicaraguan revolution on this theme only reveals the sectarian and factional blindness, with deadly right-wing consequences, that motivates the "parity committee." This is made even clearer by the refusal of the groups supporting the "parity committee" to join the international solidarity campaign with Nicaragua. Their spurious contention is that giving aid to the Nicaraguan government is only aiding a "bourgeois" government, and that the imperialist countries will use any aid they give to attempt to block the progress of the revolution. By this twisted logic, they come out against demanding that aid be sent to Nicaragua!

While a sectarian reaction to the forward march of the Nicaraguan revolution brought together the forces now calling

themselves the "parity committee," that was not their only mutual attraction. They share a common aversion for the decision of the World Congress to continue and deepen the proletarian orientation of the Fourth International by radically reorienting the membership of the international and transforming its composition through sending the overwhelming majority of its members into basic industry.

In addition, both the Bolshevik Faction and the OCRFI have long histories of organizational practices diametrically opposed to the norms of democratic centralism—nationally and internationally. In practice they reject the fight to simultaneously build proletarian parties firmly rooted in the living class struggle of their own countries and a mass revolutionary international based on a Marxist program and Leninist organizational norms.

To understand the issues involved in the split more clearly, it is necessary to briefly review the history of the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, as well as the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The Bolshevik Faction

The Bolshevik Faction is an international grouping whose main strength is in Latin America. Its central leader is Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PST). The Argentine party has for many years been the strongest Trotskyist organization in Latin America, with a continuity that goes back to the late 1940s. Its recent evolution can only be understood in light of the deepgoing political differences in the Fourth International during the last decade.

At the 1969 World Congress of the Fourth International, a majority voted for a line projecting rural guerrilla warfare on a continental scale as a strategy in Latin America for an extended period. A minority, supported by the American SWP, strongly opposed this line. The Argentine section had already been split by this political difference, with the two groups known by the names of their newspapers—*Combatiente* (Fighter) and *Verdad* (Truth).

The *Verdad* group, led by Moreno, supported the minority position at the 1969 congress. The *Combatiente* group supported the majority position, and went on to organize the Argentine Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP), led by Roberto Santucho, which became famous for its spectacular actions by small armed groups in the cities.

The *Combatiente* group left the Fourth International in 1973. In spite of the courage of its leaders and members, its guerrilla strategy led it to increased isolation from the Argentine masses. The military relentlessly hunted down and brutally murdered the ERP cadres, including Santucho himself in 1976.

The *Verdad* group took the opposite road of working to build a party, along the lines

of the Leninist strategy. In the early 1970s, massive struggles against the dictatorship erupted in Argentina, including semi-insurrectionary struggles in Córdoba and other cities. As a result, the military decided to allow the return of bourgeois populist figure Juan Perón, and to hold elections. The *Verdad* group was able to intervene effectively in this new situation. Through taking advantage of the openings created by the elections and the combativity of the working class, they built the PST and gained an important hearing and new members from among the workers.

The debate in the international begun in 1969 proved to be long and deep. The majority and minority currents crystallized into two factions by 1973, called the International Majority Tendency (IMT) and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF) respectively. As the strongest organization in Latin America that refused to go along with the guerrilla line, the PST was the main target of the majority faction. Despite the fact that the *Combatiente* group had broken with Trotskyism, at the 1974 World Congress the majority refused to recognize the PST as the Argentine section. Nor did it reverse the 1969 line on guerrilla warfare, despite the growing doubts of many IMT supporters. As a result, the faction struggle within the international deepened.

Following the 1974 World Congress, Moreno decided that the course charted by the LTF of fighting within the international to reverse and rescind the guerrilla line was insufficient. But the majority of the LTF, including most of its Latin American supporters, rejected his proposal to form a "public faction" which would have been a separate international organization, in reality, with its own structuring, finances and discipline, contrary to all the norms of democratic centralism and the program of the Fourth International.

Break From the LTF

In 1975 Moreno decided to break with the LTF and implement his own preferred course.

The first step in this process was a drive to take over the Mexican Socialist League (LS), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. In order to accomplish this, he had to get rid of a majority of the leaders of the LS, who supported the LTF and rejected Moreno's line. Through a campaign of personal vilification, he tried to isolate, demoralize, and destroy a whole group of cadres, and purge the membership of the LS. This campaign was organized by leaders of the Argentine PST, whom Moreno had sent to Mexico to "aid" the LS. The result was a split, with Moreno "capturing" a section of the organization.

As a result of this operation, the LTF expelled from its ranks the PST leaders responsible for such gross violations of the organizational principles of Trotskyism.

Within a few months, a similar opera-

tion was carried out in Portugal. In the unfolding revolution there, Argentine comrades were sent to help the Portuguese Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). But when some of the original leaders of the PRT disagreed with Moreno's views and organizational methods, Moreno again organized a violent campaign of personal charges against those involved, and had them expelled.

Two aspects of the Portuguese operation were to more and more mark Moreno's subsequent course.

The Portuguese PRT was a relatively small group, largely composed of high-school-age youth inspired by the revolution. Moreno played on their spirit of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm, demanding not only unquestioning agreement with every twist and turn, but also a level of hyperactivity, including a frantic search for funds, that finally demoralized many of them. The rationale for this was Moreno's conception that if only the PRT could find enough money, sell enough papers, etc., it could grow to "10,000 members" within a year. No attempt was made to build stable party units among the industrial workers.

Second, Moreno himself, from afar or during short visits to Portugal, laid down the tactics for building the PRT, even to the smallest details. Members of the PRT who resisted such methods were told that while in general it was wrong for leaders of one section to try to run another section, Moreno was the "Lenin of our time," and was qualified to decide tactics for all countries, above all, in revolutions.

During the four years between his break with the LTF and his split from the international, the same kind of destructive splitting operation was carried out in several other countries, including Colombia, Peru and Panama. The Bolshevik Faction became more and more openly contemptuous of the Fourth International and its democratic norms. The "Lenin of our time" became more and more the object of a cult.

According to Bolshevik Faction documents, some get-rich-quick scheme was always on the verge of success, in Spain or elsewhere. The Bolshevik Faction was going to achieve some spectacular breakthrough somewhere, which would then "prove" to the rest of the international the superiority of Moreno's methods and the necessity of him becoming the central leader of the Fourth International.

As the Bolshevik Faction degenerated into such a personal cult, Moreno was compelled to launch increasingly violent public attacks on other leaders of the international. Ernest Mandel was singled out, as was the leadership of the French LCR. Another special target became the leaders of the American Socialist Workers Party, especially since Moreno had previously claimed to stand in the tradition of James P. Cannon and other pioneer leaders of the SWP.

At the end of 1976 the majority faction reassessed its line on guerrilla warfare in Latin America and adopted a self-critical balance sheet. Among other points, the IMT stated it had been wrong to refuse to recognize the PST as the Argentine section in 1974, and indicated that this should be corrected at the coming World Congress.

The Leninist Trotskyist Faction and the International Majority Tendency were dissolved and the leadership of the international worked together to prepare major political resolutions for the 1979 World Congress. The United Secretariat repeatedly urged the leaders of the Bolshevik Faction to participate in the work of the bureau and the international center. But they neither participated in this process nor did they prepare their own resolutions on the political points to be decided on by the congress.

Then, in the summer of 1979, Moreno launched another "spectacular" get-rich-quick campaign. The Simón Bolívar Brigade was formed in Colombia, ostensibly to go to Nicaragua and fight with the Sandinista National Liberation Front against Somoza. But the entire operation was simply a cynical attempt to exploit the Nicaraguan revolution. In their own internal bulletins, the ranks of the Bolshevik Faction were told that the formation of the Simón Bolívar Brigade would be "a big political success for the leadership of the BF, legitimatizing it as a real leadership alternative for the FI."

From the beginning, Moreno organized the Simón Bolívar Brigade to advance his factional interests vis-à-vis the Fourth International, and not to aid the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. The object was to enhance Moreno's prestige. It represented a qualitative new stage in the degeneration of the Bolshevik Faction.

The Simón Bolívar Brigade covered itself with the flag of the FSLN even though it was not organized in collaboration with the FSLN. It raised money in the name of the FSLN, which the FSLN never saw. As a unit, it entered Nicaragua from Costa Rica only after the fall of Somoza.

Once in Nicaragua, the brigade, still fraudulently claiming the authority of the FSLN, tried to set up unions under its control, and even tried to take over the town of Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast. In spite of the fact that the brigade presented itself as a military unit of the FSLN, and remained armed, it refused to place itself under FSLN military command.

After attempting, unsuccessfully, to negotiate with the leaders of the Simón Bolívar Brigade, who were almost all non-Nicaraguans, in August 1979, only a few weeks after the fall of Somoza, the FSLN command decided to deport them from the country.

The criminal, sectarian adventure of the Simón Bolívar Brigade disgraced Trotskyism in Nicaragua and internationally,

although it was done behind the backs of and against the policy of the Fourth International. In September the United Secretariat of the Fourth International publicly called the Bolshevik Faction to order for this flagrant and damaging violation of its discipline, and recommended that further disciplinary action be taken against the leadership of the Bolshevik Faction by the World Congress unless they agreed to change their course.

Moreno's latest scheme of coming to the World Congress with the prestige of the Nicaraguan revolution and the FSLN behind him was in shambles.

In order to explain what had happened, Moreno abruptly reversed his political line 180 degrees. From opportunistically pretending to be the FSLN, he switched to charging that the FSLN had deported the leaders of the Simón Bolívar Brigade as part of its counterrevolutionary drive to consolidate a bourgeois government and rebuild capitalism in Nicaragua. This set the stage politically for the bloc between the Bolshevik Faction, the LTT, and OCRFI.

The Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

The Leninist Trotskyist Tendency had its main forces in the French section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), where it had some 350 to 400 supporters.

The central leaders of the LTT had joined the LTF in 1976.

When the leadership of the International Majority Tendency reversed their former line on Latin America, and both factions voted to dissolve, there was resistance to this within both formations.

In the LTF, a group of comrades opposed the dissolution outright. This group included the leaders of what would become the LTT. The LTT viewed the dissolution of the factions as a political capitulation by the majority of the LTF, especially the leaders of the American SWP, to the former IMT. They wanted to cling to the factions even though the political basis on which they had been formed no longer existed. This sectarian stance towards the former IMT prefigured the subsequent evolution of the LTT.

The dissolution of the factions had important positive results in reknitting the international after the long faction struggle. Not the least of these results was the preparation by the majority of the United Secretariat of the four main resolutions adopted by the World Congress.

These resolutions reflected important areas of agreement. Not all differences were overcome. Some new differences emerged, cutting across previous faction lines. Some subjects remain open for further discussion. But the major achievement represented by these documents is undeniable. (The documents of the 1979 World Congress will be available shortly in a special supplement to *Intercontinental*

Press/Inprecor.)

The leaders of the LTT, however, maintained their stance, charging that these resolutions covered up what they considered to be the key "differences."

Their sterile sectarianism began to be reflected more and more in their overall political positions, especially in their assessment of the Cuban revolution and the role of the Castro leadership. Since the American SWP recently conducted a lengthy internal discussion on Cuba and rejected any concept that the Castro leadership is Stalinist or a political revolution is necessary in Cuba, thus reaffirming what has been the long-standing Trotskyist position on Cuba, the LTT began to center more of its fire on the SWP.

This chronic sectarianism on the part of the LTT leaders broke out into a virulent disease with the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua. They *knew* the Sandinistas would *have* to betray the revolution, because they were strongly influenced by the Castro leadership. When the majority in the Fourth International took a different course, hailed the revolution, greeted the Sandinistas as fellow revolutionists, sought to reach out to them, and joined the international solidarity effort with the revolution, the LTT went into a paroxysm of factional fever. They charged the majority in general and the SWP in particular with having betrayed Trotskyism.

Another major rallying point for the LTT was opposition to the central organizational conclusion flowing from the facts and analysis explained in the world political resolution. This projected the necessity for our movement on a world scale to immediately send the cadres recruited in the previous period into basic industry, as a precondition for our movement to survive as a politically viable force in the workers movement during the period ahead. It is the only way to take advantage of the new openings that are now before us to overcome the historically imposed isolation of Trotskyism from the mainstream of our class.

The LTT rejected the necessity of making this kind of wrenching turn, a forced march to change the composition of our forces in order to be able to lead the working class in the battles that are on the agenda.

The LTT reflected a tendency in our ranks which became *comfortable* with the isolation of revolutionary Marxism after the triumph of Stalinism in the 1930s and during the long years following World War II. Far from viewing our isolation as an evil we had to endure—but one we were always seeking to break out of—this tendency attracted people who prefer to comment from the sidelines rather than immerse themselves in the class struggle itself. This is one of the roots of their pious sectarianism, as they are content to sit above the fray, "criticizing" all.

The Bolshevik Faction, too, opposed the

projected turn to send the majority of our leaders and members into the factories, but for different reasons. The Argentine PST has always had an important base in the workers movement. For many years it was the most proletarian section of the international, in terms of composition, and regularly sent cadres recruited from the student movement into the factories and mills to take advantage of political openings. This was always one of its strengths.

But supporting the turn in the international would have run counter to the factional interests of the BF, as one of its claims has been that it alone represents the proletarian current in the international. Moreover, in recent years, in organizations dominated by the Bolshevik Faction, it has become increasingly common to send members into industry as a form of punishment for disagreeing with Moreno's line—not as a party-building activity.

Moreno's concept of "bolshhevizing" or "proletarianizing" those guilty of petty-bourgeois origins is the opposite of the political turn decided on by the majority of the delegates at the 1979 World Congress.

THE OCRFI

In 1963, a ten-year split in the world Trotskyist movement was healed. Certain sections of the movement rejected the reunification, however, including the current led by Juan Posadas in Latin America; Michel Pablo and his followers internationally; a grouping in Britain around Gerry Healy; and the French organization whose principal spokesman was Pierre Lambert.

One of the factors which brought the two sides together in the reunification was a common political attitude towards the Cuban revolution. Healy and Lambert, however, denied that a socialist revolution had occurred in Cuba at all. They charged that the majority of world Trotskyism had abandoned its principles by supporting the revolutionary anti-imperialist actions of the Castro leadership team. They refused to chart a course of trying to link up with this revolutionary current that was bypassing Stalinism to the left. But that was part and parcel of our defense of the first successful socialist revolution in the Americas. It was the only possible road to building a mass revolutionary international.

For the remainder of the 1960s, Healy's "International Committee," supported by the French Internationalist Communist Organization (OCI), headed by Lambert, attempted to build a counter organization to the Fourth International. In the early 1970s, as Healy's course in Britain became more and more sectarian and opportunist, Lambert's organization broke with Healy.

The Lambert group, following the split with Healy, formed the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, with affiliates in a number of countries. The most important group in

the OCRFI is the French OCI. They began to take a less sectarian stance toward the Fourth International.

In 1973, the OCRFI approached the Fourth International for discussions, stating that the debate inside the Fourth International involved the questions they felt were not clarified in the 1963 reunification. Unfortunately, the factional situation in the Fourth International at the time blocked a positive response to this initiative and valuable time was lost. By 1976, however, this began to be turned around. There were more contacts and exchanges between the Fourth International and the OCRFI. Then in 1978, at a public meeting in Paris celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International, spokespeople for both sides stated that the goal of discussions between them should be a fusion (which the OCRFI said it would consider a "reconstruction" of the Fourth International).

Both sides agreed to hold a series of informal leadership discussions based on the documents prepared for the upcoming World Congress. These discussions proceeded to the point where on many of the major questions of world politics, there were broad areas of agreement.

An important exception remained Cuba. Stéphane Just, one of the leaders of the OCI, had written an article that at least belatedly recognized capitalism had been overthrown in Cuba and a workers state established. But at the same time he equated Castroism with Stalinism and called for a "political revolution" to overthrow the Castro leadership. This position is diametrically opposed to that of the Fourth International.

When the mass upsurge in Nicaragua toppled Somoza, the OCI's reaction was an unfortunate repetition of their response twenty years ago to the Cuban revolution. Instead of recognizing the achievement of the Sandinistas in leading the masses in the insurrection that overthrew Somoza, and correctly assessing the steps they have taken since to advance the interests of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants, the OCI leaders have turned their fire against the FSLN, charging it with being the main counterrevolutionary force in the country.

The sectarian position taken by the main forces in the OCRFI towards the Castro leadership and the Nicaraguan revolution prepared the way for their political bloc with the Bolshevik Faction and the LTT.

Leaders of the OCRFI, including Just, had also expressed opposition to the proposed turn to industry projected by the Fourth International majority. Their party-building activity up to now has generally included work to build union fractions, but not mainly industrial union fractions, and not through orienting party members and leaders themselves to become part of the industrial working class.

Their concentration in non-industrial jobs and unions such as teachers, is another variant of trying to build proletarian parties from outside the major sections of the working class.

Under the impact of Nicaragua and the increasingly weighty role of the Castro leadership in anti-imperialist struggles around the world, the OCRFI abruptly reversed its course toward fusion. While there were signs of some internal resistance to the new course in the OCRFI, a majority opted to work toward splitting the Fourth International instead of fusing with it. On the basis of the charge that the Fourth International had abandoned the "terrain of Trotskyism" in responding to the Nicaraguan revolution and charting a course toward influencing and winning its leadership to revolutionary Marxism, the OCRFI formed the "parity committee" with the BF and LTT, and helped organize the split of the latter two groups from the international.

They have now called for an open conference of the world Trotskyist movement to discuss Nicaragua. They have coyly announced that they hold open the door for participation by the Fourth International—from which they have just split in order to avoid taking part in a world congress that would discuss Nicaragua!

Some Undemocratic Practices

The abrupt turn away from a fusion perspective with the Fourth International will mean cutting short another process that had begun in the OCI, that of beginning to correct undemocratic aspects of their own internal functioning. An element of this came to light, earlier this year when the OCI expelled one of its central leaders, Charles Berg.

Berg was in charge of liaison with OCI units outside of Paris ("the provinces," as they say in Paris). The OCI has the undemocratic practice of appointing local leaderships from Paris, not allowing each unit to elect its own leadership. Berg headed the commission that made the appointments. He was charged with falsifying the membership figures of these "provincial" units in order to enhance his own prestige and influence at an OCI congress, and with having diverted rather large sums of party funds for his own use and to further the work of his commission.

The Berg affair initiated a discussion in the OCI concerning democratic norms. Obviously, something was wrong if an individual like Berg could have gotten away with such corrupt measures for any considerable time. Wasn't the absence of rank-and-file control the source of the problem?

The leaders of the OCI knew that a fusion with the Fourth International would necessarily entail a modification of their organizational practices to ensure party democracy. Unfortunately, the turn away from the Fourth International will

probably mean a hardening up of these practices by the OCI, which will be encouraged by their renewed sectarianism.

Split or Expulsion?

Following their exit from the Fourth International, the LTT and BF have charged that they were in fact expelled by decisions taken by the United Secretariat. The decisions referred to were motions by the United Secretariat at a meeting in early October. They concerned the functioning of supporters of the Fourth International in Nicaragua.

A small grouping in Nicaragua called the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR) generally supports the views of the Bolshevik Faction. Another tiny group in Nicaragua was organized by the Socialist Workers Organization (OST) of Costa Rica, whose leaders support the LTT. Neither of these two groups had ever been recognized by the Fourth International, which has no section in Nicaragua. However, they each projected the line of the BF and LTT respectively, and falsely used the name of the Fourth International.

The United Secretariat decided that the Bolshevik Faction had to withdraw its Simón Bolívar Brigade and cease and desist from all other undisciplined operations in Nicaragua. In view of the need for the real views of the Fourth International to be made known in Nicaragua, the United Secretariat also decided that all supporters of the Fourth International in Nicaragua should function in collaboration with the United Secretariat on the basis of its line.

These decisions in no way amounted to expulsions. The LTT and BF—with the advice of the OCRFI—decided to seize upon these decisions as a justification for their split. They turned their backs on the Fourth International and walked away. They did not even come to the World Congress to challenge the United Secretariat decisions they opposed, let alone to present their own political positions.

Both the LTT and the BF had full rights to present their views on all questions, in the long discussion within the international that preceded the World Congress and at the World Congress itself. Their split right on the eve of the congress indicated their contempt for the membership of the sections of the international and for their democratic decisions. In practice they abandoned one of the most basic elements of Trotskyism, the need to build a revolutionary Marxist international.

The charge that they were "expelled" does not square with the facts or with their refusal to attend the World Congress. It is also contradicted by their own explanation for the split—the need for a "parity committee" to organize to combat the political positions of the Fourth International. They can't have it both ways—either they left the Fourth International in order to fight

against it, or they were unjustly driven out and really want to remain part of the international.

Responding to the unfolding revolution in Nicaragua and sending the majority of the leaders and members of the Fourth International into industry are not unrelated questions. Both have to do with how to build proletarian parties and a mass revolutionary international in the concrete situation before us.

The turn is a necessary tactical step which the Fourth International can now take—and therefore must take. Once it is done, our organization will be rooted in the decisive sectors of the working class, which is the "normal" place for us to be to build Leninist parties. It will not in and of itself solve any political problems, but will correct an *abnormal* situation. It is one thing to be forced into isolation by circumstances beyond our control. It is another to choose isolation when these circumstances no longer exist. That is a surefire formula for a sectarian and petty-bourgeois existence that will mean the death of any revolutionary organization.

In the past decade, Trotskyist forces on a world scale broke out of their political isolation to a certain extent through their leadership role in the youth radicalization. This also brought them valuable cadres. Now the opportunity and task is to build on those gains to physically place our organizations in the industrial working class where we belong.

For years, the forces of the Fourth International defended the program of Lenin against the Stalinist degeneration. With the victory of the Cuban revolution, a leadership emerged that could best be described as revolutionists of action. In spite of their theoretical and programmatic weakness, they bypassed Stalinism and Social Democracy in struggle. There is a chance that the Sandinistas are going to successfully follow the same road as the Cubans. Their actions so far are all to their credit. We will see other such forces emerge, including some who will not measure up to the historic tasks of the proletariat, like the left wing of the Algerian fighters who overthrew French rule in the early 1960s. But if the Fourth International is not to be a sect, and if a mass revolutionary international is ever to be rebuilt, we must constantly strive to find our way to such revolutionists of action in the advanced capitalist countries as well as the semicolonial world.

Driven by frenzied opposition to the course taken by the majority of the International, unable to come up with cogent alternatives, the LTT and BF left the Fourth International. In doing so, they have begun to move away from the living forces of proletarian revolution and to abandon the construction of parties capable of leading the struggle of the toiling masses against the exploiters on a world scale to victory. □

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