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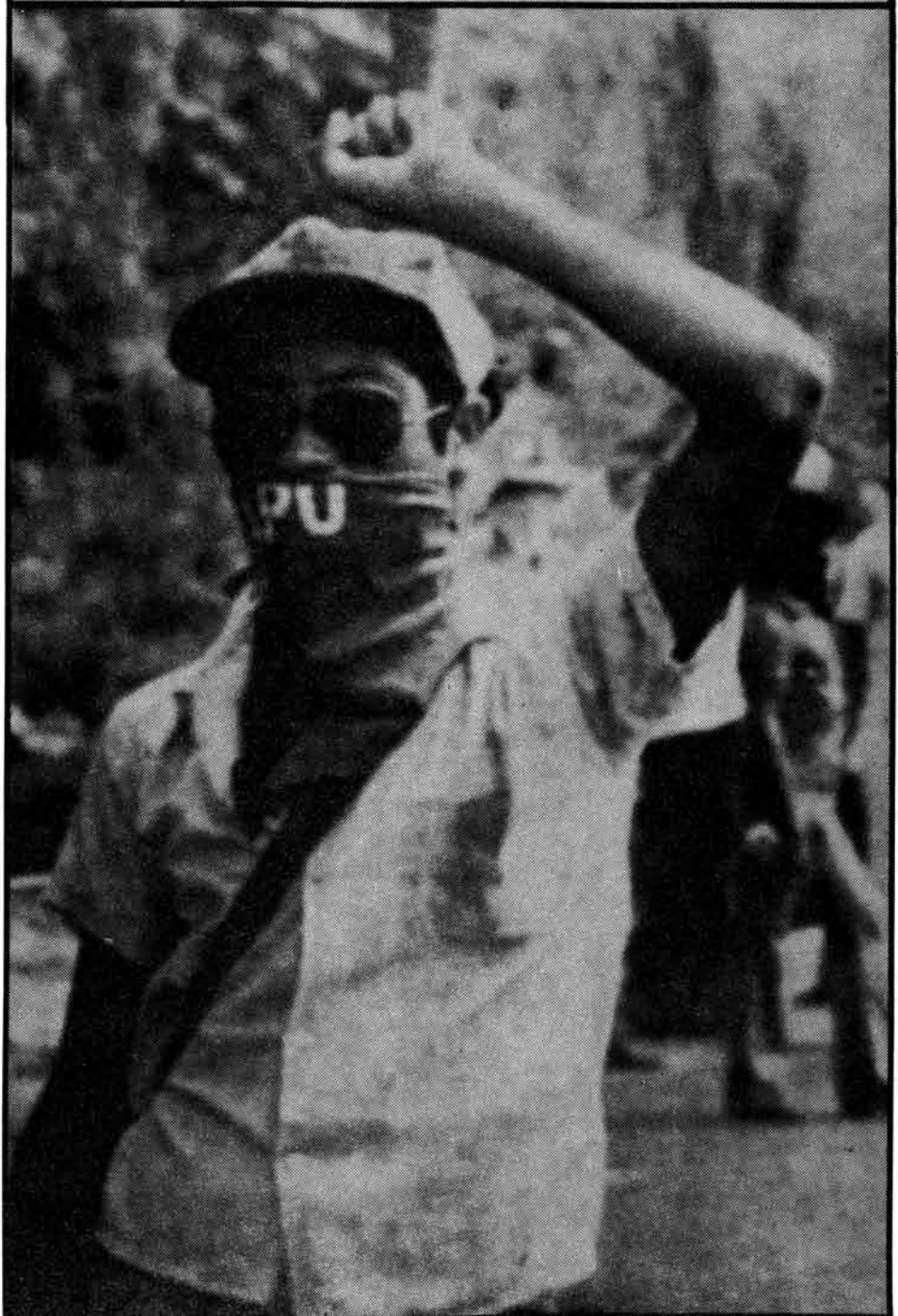
Afghanistan

**CARTER'S
HAND
BEHIND
RIGHTIST
GUERRILLAS**

**HOW U.S.
PRESS LIES**

**Elections Offer
Opportunities for
Labor Movement
in Canada**

EL SALVADOR Regime in Crisis as Revolutionary Opposition Unites



NEWS ANALYSIS

Spanish, Italian Stalinists Knife Afghan Revolution

By Steve Clark

By adding their voices to the capitalist propaganda campaign against Soviet military aid to Afghanistan, the Italian and Spanish Communist parties have not only stabbed the Afghan workers and peasants in the back, but have once again betrayed the class interests of Spanish and Italian workers.

"... we say 'No!' to the intervention of the Soviet military forces in Afghanistan," said an editorial in the Spanish CP's daily *Mundo Obrero*. A January 5 statement by the Italian CP stated its "sharp disagreement" with the action by the Soviet government.

Furthest from the minds of the Italian and Spanish Stalinist leaders is how they can aid the defense of the Afghan workers and peasants against U.S.-backed counter-revolution. The Afghan masses are fighting to preserve the social gains of the April 1978 revolution, which includes a major land redistribution to benefit the poor peasants, legalization of trade unions, expanded language rights to oppressed nationalities, upgrading of the social position of women, and a campaign against illiteracy among some 90 percent of the country's 18 million people.

The Italian and Spanish Stalinists are unmoved by such considerations. Instead, they were motivated by a desire to stay on the good side of the Italian and Spanish capitalists. The Italian CP doesn't want additional barriers to its efforts to gain cabinet posts in the Christian Democratic government. Likewise, the Spanish Stalinists are eager to demonstrate their moderation and reliability to the Spanish rulers.

Of course, the CP leaders cannot explain their real motivations to Spanish and Italian workers. One of the main attractions of the CPs to these workers, especially young workers, is the claim to stand on the side of the oppressed and exploited around the world.

So the Stalinists cloak their capitulation to the class enemy behind protestations of concern over "peace" and "national inde-

pendence." Not only are these arguments patently insincere, they are also just plain false. Let's take a look at a few.

- Both the Italian and Spanish CPs say that the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan is a violation of the principles of national independence and sovereignty.

The real threat to Afghanistan's national sovereignty, however, comes from Washington and the capitalist military dictatorship in Pakistan, which ever since the April 1978 revolution have been funding and arming the landlords and other reactionaries. The Afghan government has repeatedly requested Soviet military aid to counter these efforts by Washington, and Moscow has finally committed major forces to prevent the establishment of an openly proimperialist regime on its southern border.

- The Italian CP statement comments on the "unexportability of revolutions,"

while the Spanish Stalinists strike a similar note, saying that "the liberation of peoples from imperialism is the work of the peoples who suffer from it."

These are particularly cynical attempts to paper over a counterrevolutionary stance by claiming to speak—as the Spanish CP puts it—"from a class and revolutionary posture."

Such statements are an insult to the Afghan workers and peasants. Their revolution against imperialist-perpetuated economic and social backwardness is "the work of the peoples who suffer from it." The April 1978 rebellion brought tens of thousands into the streets of Kabul to bring down the old government and replace it with one more responsive to the needs of the oppressed.

That revolution was not "exported" from anywhere. In fact, the U.S. government had admitted that Moscow was taken by surprise when the insurrection occurred.

- The Italian CP statement says, "The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is the most recent of grave episodes in the multiplication of political and military tensions, of acts of force that place world peace in danger."

But the joint Afghan-Soviet offensive to crush an imperialist-instigated counter-revolution does not "place world peace in

Solidarity Key to Victory in British Steel Strike

[The following statement appeared on the front page of the January 3 issue of the British Trotskyist weekly *Socialist Challenge*.]

* * *

The 1980s have started in the best possible way with 100,000 steelworkers on strike in a direct challenge to the Tory government. Already the battle lines have been drawn.

Battle line one is over the miserable six per cent pay offer made by the British Steel Corporation [BSC] and backed by the Tory Industry Secretary Keith Joseph. With inflation running at 20 per cent that would mean a slashing cut in the living standards of steel workers. And this is what the Tories are out to do to all our wages.

Battle line two involves what the Tories call "secondary picketing." The steel unions have called for the stopping of all steel imports. That means solidarity action by dockers, railway and other transport workers—the very type of action the Tories want to outlaw in their "reform" of trade unions.

Battle line three concerns the Tories' industrial strategy—sacking workers to pay for the bosses' crisis. Joseph and his puppet Charles Villiers—the highest paid boss of any nationalised industry—say 52,000 steel jobs have to go because the industry is in a mess.

But who is BSC losing money to? BSC's interest payments on loans increased from a rate of 8.2 per cent in 1972 to 13.4 per cent in 1978. Compare that with the American steel industry interest and dividends payments which amounted to 6.5 per cent in 1972 and 6.05 per cent in 1978. It is BSC's payments to the bankers which should be chopped, not workers' jobs.

These are the issues in the strike. A victory for the steelworkers would be a defeat for the Tories' attacks on jobs, wages and union rights. That's why the steel confrontation amounts to a war against a whole range of Tory policies.

It's a war neither the steelworkers, nor the rest of us can afford to lose. This government must be brought to its knees.

- No movement of steel or raw materials, either at the docks or on the railways.

- No special exemptions for private industry, run down the steel stock and boycott the use of all private and imported steel.

- For all out strike action, the craft unions and steel workers in the private sector should join the strike.

- For international solidarity from European and American steel unions in boycotting the British industry.

- Every trade union and Labour Party branch should support the steel workers by setting up local labour movement support committees through the trades councils. □

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danger." To the contrary, it is another blow against the reactionary foreign policy aims of the government of U.S. banks and big business—the real source of "the multiplication of political and military tensions" and "acts of force."

Such defeats for Washington increase the chances for world peace. The Vietnamese people proved that. The Angolan people, with the help of Cuba, proved that. And events in Afghanistan are offering still more proof.

To cite just one example: Has Washington's setback in Afghanistan made it more or less likely that Washington could get away with the use of military power against the anti-imperialist revolution in neighboring Iran? One clear indication of the answer came in an editorial in the January 21 issue of *Business Week*. Because of events in Afghanistan, this leading big business weekly counseled, "For the present, the U.S. also must continue its policy of patience in dealing with Iran."

• The Spanish CP attempts to adopt a stance of evenhandedness in the face of the imperialist's condemnations of the new offensive by Soviet and Afghan troops. "... neither the United States nor the other main NATO powers have the moral authority to reproach the Soviet Union," it says. The Italian Stalinists include a similar disclaimer in their statement.

But there is no "evenhanded" position in the battle between revolution and counter-revolution in Afghanistan. Those who condemn the Soviet Union for aiding the Afghan government parrot the political line of the imperialists and willy nilly end up on their side of the battle lines.

Evidently fearing too adverse a reaction from their working-class memberships to an open endorsement of the capitalists' diplomatic stance, neither the Italian nor Spanish CP leaders call for the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Ironically, the counterrevolutionary pronouncements by the Italian and Spanish Stalinists are an outcome of the class collaborationist policies that Moscow urges CPs around the world to follow toward capitalist governments.

This betrayal of the Afghan masses is simply the extension to world politics of constant betrayals at home of the Spanish and Italian workers, whose class interests require a victory over counterrevolution by their brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. The CP leaders in Spain and Italy work with the employers to impose austerity campaigns, preserve "labor peace," and strengthen repressive legislation to "fight terrorism."

But just as the constant struggle between the employers and the workers periodically forces the Stalinist CP leaderships to carry out strikes or demonstrations, so too does the international class struggle sometimes force the Stalinist bu-

reaucracy in the Kremlin to carry out actions that benefit the workers and oppressed.

And when that happens, as it has in Afghanistan, those such as the Italian and Spanish Stalinists who condemn the ac-

tion of the Soviet government merit the same epithet that any class-conscious Spanish or Italian workers would apply to those who shrink from supporting a strike or progressive demonstration because it is CP-led. □

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Carter's Hand Behind Afghan Counterrevolution

By Ernest Harsch

As 1980 opened, tens of thousands of Soviet troops continued to fan out throughout Afghanistan to bolster the Afghan government's military drive against U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary forces.

The Soviet government had first begun sending in large numbers of troops in late December, to stave off the threat that the regime in Kabul would be overthrown and replaced by an openly proimperialist regime on the Soviet Union's southern border. The move came in response to an escalation of imperialist-sponsored attacks against the Afghan revolution, including guerrilla actions by rightist groups opposed to the land reform, literacy drive, legalization of trade unions, and other measures introduced following the seizure of power in April 1978 by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

Contrary to claims in the imperialist press that Soviet troops were supplanting or disarming the Afghan army, Afghan government forces are in fact spearheading the offensive against the counterrevolution. According to a report in the January 9 *New York Times*, U.S. Defense Department analysts admitted that it was the "Afghan Army that was doing the fighting. They said the Russians had relegated themselves so far to a supporting mission." A dispatch from Kabul in the January 11 *New York Times* confirmed this.

Washington has gone on a major propaganda drive to try to portray the Soviet assistance to the Kabul regime as an "invasion" aimed at the subjugation—in Carter's words—of "an independent Islamic people." This transparent attempt to isolate the Afghan revolution from other anti-imperialist struggles, particularly in the Middle East, has not been particularly successful.

Speaking in Beirut January 8, Yasir Abd Rabbou, the head of the Information Bureau of the Palestine Liberation Organization, declared the PLO's support for the Soviet aid to Afghanistan. The Soviet intervention, he said, "is a big contribution to the struggle of all revolutionary forces opposing United States military expansionism in the Middle East." He accused those Arab governments that denounced the Soviet move of having adopted a "reactionary" position. (Tokyo *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 9.)

The Cuban and Vietnamese governments have likewise come out in support of Moscow's action.

The Indian government, following the electoral victory of Indira Gandhi, dropped

its earlier condemnations of the Soviet move. Speaking before the United Nations January 11, Indian representative Brajesh Chandra Mishra said that the Indian regime now accepted Moscow's explanations and in an implicit attack on Washington condemned "the attempts of some outside powers to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan by training, arming and encouraging subversive elements to create disturbances inside Afghanistan."

Camps in Pakistan

Much of the current fighting in Afghanistan is being carried out in the eastern mountain regions, near the country's long border with Pakistan. Many of the rightist guerrilla groups that are active there operate from bases in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), with the approval and support of the proimperialist military dictatorship of Gen. Zia ul-Haq.

Officially, the Afghan bases in Pakistan are designated as "refugee camps." But unlike most refugee populations, a large proportion of those in the camps are adult males. They receive military training, arms, and supplies in the camps, periodically recrossing the border to engage in guerrilla attacks against supporters of the Afghan revolution.

The Pakistani regime denies that it is directly aiding the guerrilla forces. Instead, it maintains the fiction that it is only helping "refugees." This assistance averages, according to official Pakistani figures, about \$5 million a month.

In a January 10 dispatch from the NWFP capital of Peshawar, *New York Times* correspondent William Borders reported that the Afghan guerrillas "operate with relative impunity on Pakistani territory, holding news conferences to denounce the Soviet Union and its Afghan sympathizers, and flying from Pakistan to other parts of the world in their campaign for international support.

"Although the rebels will not concede it publicly, it is also widely believed that they get some of their arms here, either from Pakistani sources or from Middle Eastern contacts who ship them through Pakistan into Afghanistan across a mountainous border that is untamed, unpatrolled and largely unrecognized by the people who live along it."

Agents and Opium

Behind this extensive support apparatus for the Afghan counterrevolution stands American imperialism. From the very beginning, Washington has opposed the

revolutionary changes under way in Afghanistan. It fears that the example of the Afghan revolution will further strengthen anti-imperialist struggles throughout the region.

While backing up Zia's support to the counterrevolutionary forces, the Carter administration has also been directly involved.

New details about Washington's activities have been revealed in "U.S. Intervention in Afghanistan" by Konrad Ege, published in the most recent issue (Vol. 4, No. 1) of *CounterSpy*, a Washington-based journal that specializes in exposing American intelligence activities around the world. Its information has generally proved to be accurate.

One of the U.S. institutions currently based in Kabul is the Asia Foundation, which in the past has had close ties to the Central Intelligence Agency and which still receives most of its funds from the U.S. government. In a June 1979 letter to Ege, Joel W. Scarborough, the foundation's representative in Afghanistan, admitted that the foundation collaborated closely with such U.S. government bodies as the International Communication Agency and the Agency for International Development.

According to Ege, "Another U.S. intelligence agency which is highly active in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area is the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Comprised partly of 'former' CIA officers, the DEA has rarely limited itself to 'pure' prosecution of drug traffickers."

In fact, judging from the increase in opium and heroin smuggling in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region over the past year or two, the DEA agents in the area may not be trying to suppress the drug trade at all. They may be seeking to promote and protect it, as the CIA had earlier helped proimperialist guerrilla forces in Laos and Thailand cultivate poppy fields to finance their operations.

According to a report in the April 30, 1979, issue of the Canadian weekly *McLean's* magazine, the counterrevolution in Afghanistan is also being partly financed through the sale of opium. "Feudal landlords whose holdings are threatened with confiscation by the . . . government are bringing the produce from their poppy crops into Pakistan, and use the proceeds to buy rifles, explosives, and other weapons. Pakistani arms merchants report . . . that their new customers come in daily and business is booming."

In addition, Ege noted, there have been reports that CIA agents themselves were

directly involved in the training of Afghan rebels in the Pakistani camps.

At least one of the leaders of the Afghan counterrevolution is, in fact, an American citizen.

Zia Nassery, a representative of the Afghanistan Islamic and Nationalist Revolutionary Council, lived in the United States for years before moving to Pakistan to help direct the insurgency. He had discussions with American State Department officials in early March 1979, including Ronald Lorton, the department's Afghanistan desk officer. According to Ege, Lorton refused to say whether arms shipments were discussed, since Nassery "is an American citizen." Senators Frank Church and Jacob Javits, who also had discussions with Nassery, likewise refused to comment.

A Class War

The groups that Washington is backing represent the most reactionary forces in Afghan society.

These "Afghan patriots"—as the American press often refers to them—favor the reimposition of imperialist control over the country. If successful in overturning the PDPA regime, they have promised to scrap the reforms that have been enacted, including the agrarian reform, under which 1.4 million acres of land have already been redistributed free to poor and landless peasants. They are actively opposed to the government's literacy campaign and steps to improve the social position of women.

The leaders of the various groups include dispossessed landlords, who want to regain their vast estates and reimpose serflike conditions on the peasants; supporters of the monarchy, which was ousted in 1973; tribal chiefs and some Islamic religious figures, many of whom also happened to be landlords and usurers; ex-officers, such as a former air force major general who had once commanded the Shindand Air Base; merchants, whose profits have been affected by government price controls; opium dealers, who fear that the revolution could put them out of business.

Their victims have included workers, peasants, land-reform administrators, teachers, PDPA militants, and anyone else who supports the government's progressive measures.

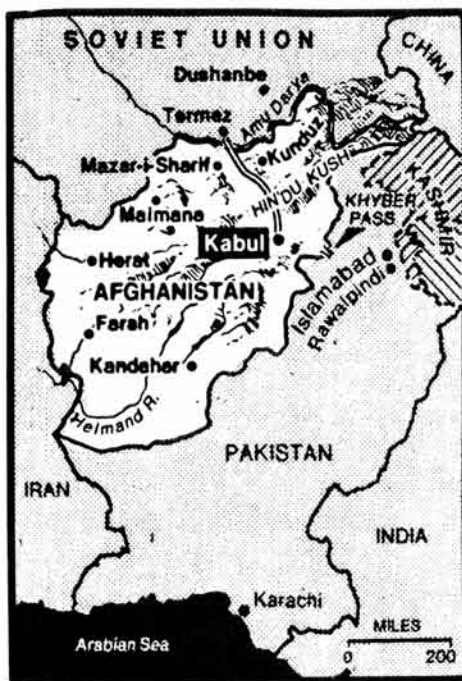
Although no restrictions have been placed on religious freedom, the numerous guerrilla groups claim they are fighting for "Islam." But they are in reality fighting a class war—with the full and active backing of American imperialism.

It was against the growing threat that these proimperialist forces would come to power in a neighboring country that Moscow felt compelled to act. Its dispatch of tens of thousands of troops to Afghanistan represented a sharp blow to the counterrevolutionary drive.

President Babrak Karmal, who came to

power on December 27 through a Soviet-backed coup, has taken some steps to try to broaden the regime's base of support and thereby strengthen the fight against the counterrevolution.

A number of PDPA leaders who had previously been purged or jailed during the party's internal factional conflicts have



now been reappointed to positions in the cabinet and the ruling Revolutionary Council. While most are from Karmal's own Parcham faction of the party, at least two cabinet ministers are from the rival Khalq wing.

In one of his first public statements, Karmal pledged to defend the social gains registered since the April 1978 revolution. He also promised that a "new democratic constitution" would soon be enacted, said that there would be freedom to form "patriotic, progressive and people's political parties," and decreed a "general amnesty."

On January 6, more than 2,000 political prisoners—of an estimated 10,000 covered by the amnesty—were released from Kabul's Pul-i Charkhi prison. Although Western reporters in Kabul claimed that opponents of the government were still being arrested, an Associated Press dispatch in the January 9 *New York Daily News* reported that "even anti-government Afghans in Kabul said the measures taken so far have been on a smaller scale than those under [Hafizullah] Amin," Karmal's predecessor, who was killed in the December 27 coup.

Carter's Counterrevolutionary 'Consortium'

The setback to the counterrevolution in Afghanistan comes at a time of rising anti-imperialist ferment throughout the region, especially in Iran, but also in countries like Pakistan and even Saudi Arabia. The stakes for imperialism are enormous.

Washington's ability to respond with massive military force has been greatly weakened since its defeat in Vietnam, but it is nevertheless trying to contain the revolutionary upheavals.

Under the cover of an extensive propaganda campaign against the Soviet "invasion," Carter has acted to strengthen the remaining U.S. allies in the region and to provide more open support to the Afghan counterrevolutionaries.

Propping up the Pakistani regime is a key element in this effort. On January 13, the White House announced that it would offer Zia about \$400 million worth of economic and military aid. The military aid, about half of the total, would include infantry equipment, antitank weapons, and anti-aircraft systems, all of which could prove invaluable to the Afghan counterrevolutionary forces if it is passed along to them.

Zia, however, has been cautious about accepting the U.S. aid offers too eagerly, fearing that if he is too closely identified with the White House the deep anti-imperialist sentiments among many Pakistanis could be turned against the regime itself. As a report in the January 3 *Wall Street Journal* noted, "President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq's regime is so weak, most U.S. officials say, that a sharp switch toward the U.S. could topple him."

Another problem worrying the military officers in Islamabad is the continual political restiveness among the oppressed Pushtun (Pathan) and Baluchi peoples in the NWFP and Baluchistan, both of which border on Afghanistan. Historically, they have received some backing from the various regimes in Kabul (Pushtuns comprise the largest single nationality in Afghanistan). The Pakistani regime fears that the Afghan revolution could further inflame the Baluchi and Pushtun national struggles.

In an implicit warning to Zia that the Afghan regime could step up its support to these forces, Karmal declared that his government supported the right of the Pushtuns and Baluchis in Pakistan "to decide their own future."

Given Zia's political difficulties in accepting direct and open American military assistance, Carter announced January 7 that the White House would help form an international "consortium" to provide aid to Islamabad, which would be partly financed by the Saudi regime.

This "consortium" will undoubtedly seek to funnel arms, money, and supplies to the Afghan guerrillas as well. The same day as Carter's announcement, the *Washington Post* reported that the Pentagon was mapping various plans to support the counterrevolution.

"One plan," correspondent George C. Wilson wrote, "is an effort to ally the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and

U.S. Warships Anyone?

At a time of rising anti-imperialist sentiment in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, Carter's efforts to establish new American military facilities around the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea have highlighted the nervousness of some of Washington's allies in the region.

In December, a team of State Department and Pentagon officials made a brief tour of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kenya, and Somalia to assess the feasibility of using their naval facilities for U.S. warships.

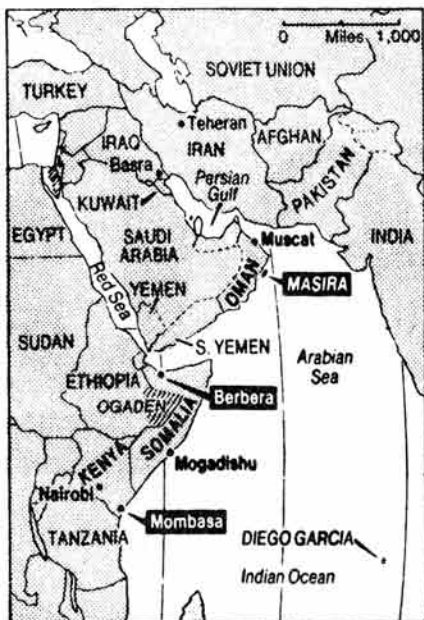
The governments in the latter three were reported to be receptive to Washington's proposals, and the Pentagon scheduled further visits by technical experts to study the ports of Berbera in Somalia, Mombasa in Kenya, and Masira in Oman.

While privately encouraging an increased American use of port facilities, both the Kenyan and Somali regimes have reacted with embarrassment to the publicity given to the visits by the American officials. Neither wants to be identified too closely with Washington, and both have denied offering Carter actual "bases."

Both the Egyptian and Israeli regimes publicly offered Washington port facilities, but the White House turned them down, apparently fearing that a direct U.S. military presence in either of those countries would be too politically explosive.

Washington initially expressed an

interest in facilities in Saudi Arabia, but that proposal was promptly turned down by the Saudi regime itself. In an interview in the January 9 issue of the



Lebanese paper *As Safir*, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd reiterated his regime's refusal to give "military bases or facilities" to Washington.

Rather than promoting capitalist stability in their countries, some of these regimes fear that a U.S. military presence could instead serve as a lightning rod for popular discontent.

China in supplying anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan with modern weapons.

"Saudi Arabia has expressed interest in supplying such weapons, either directly or by paying for those supplied by another country, according to administration sources. But the Saudi connection is not expected to be made public by the Carter administration officially."

Defense Secretary Harold Brown raised this proposal during his visit to Peking. According to a report by Wilson in the January 4 *Washington Post*, "... defense officials said that Brown will explore ways to build up the military capability of Pakistan on Afghanistan's border and extend help to guerrilla forces expected to combat the Soviet troops in Afghanistan." On January 5 Brown declared in Peking that the two governments would respond to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan with "parallel action."

According to some reports, Peking has been backing the Shula-i Jawed (Eternal Flame), a guerrilla force active in Afghanistan's northeastern province of Badakhshan. (The group was originally formed in

the 1960s and was once an influential Maoist current within the Afghan student movement.)

On January 6, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat announced that his regime was also willing to offer arms to the Afghan guerrilla forces.

Carter has likewise been seeking to get Washington's imperialist allies to take more direct responsibility for countering the Soviet aid to Afghanistan. Some, particularly the French government, have proved somewhat reluctant, but the Canadian and Australian governments agreed to join Washington's embargo on grain sales to Moscow, and British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington began a tour on January 9 of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Pakistan on behalf of NATO to discuss ways to respond to the Afghan events.

These steps against Afghanistan and the Soviet Union are closely connected to Washington's efforts to strengthen its military position in the region as a whole, especially its plans to establish a Rapid Deployment Force for quick military inter-

vention in the area and to acquire new military bases and facilities (see box).

Washington's military moves have been accompanied by a massive propaganda campaign and a drive within the United Nations to generate opposition to the Soviet actions and to politically isolate the Afghan revolution from potential allies.

Iran and Afghanistan

One particularly cynical maneuver has been Carter's attempts to sow divisions between the Afghan and Iranian revolutions, which so far has not met with any real success.

Karmal, in a January 1 speech, hailed the "national, Islamic, anti-imperialist" revolution in Iran and pledged to promote closer ties with its western neighbor. This was a significant shift in the PDPA regime's policy, since both of Karmal's predecessors, Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, had maintained a sectarian stance toward the Iranian revolution.

Immediately after Soviet troops began moving into Afghanistan in large numbers, the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement denouncing the move, but Khomeini himself did not speak out against it and Iranian revolutionary guards helped protect the Soviet embassy in Tehran from rightist Afghan demonstrators.

In a report from Tehran in the January 9 *New York Times*, correspondent Christopher S. Wren stated, "Though the Iranian Government could give the Afghan guerrillas some badly needed weapons from the arsenals of the partially demobilized Iranian armed forces, diplomats here say it has not done so."

Journalists travelling with Afghan guerrilla forces operating in western Afghanistan noted bitter complaints over the lack of Iranian backing. "What kind of Islam is this Islam of Khomeini's, who has never personally condemned the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, while other countries near the Soviet Union, such as Romania, have condemned it?" one rebel leader asked. They pointed out that border surveillance by the Iranians has actually increased since the shah was overthrown.

Anti-imperialist fighters in Iran will also take note that it was Washington that initiated the UN Security Council motion for economic sanctions against Iran and the Soviet government that vetoed the sanctions January 13. This will help clarify the source of the real danger to the Iranian revolution.

Far from being a threat to Iran—as Carter has tried to portray it—the Soviet intervention against the Afghan counterrevolution aids the Iranian workers and peasants. By weakening imperialism's position in the region and countering Washington's threats of military aggression, it strengthens Iran's own struggle against American imperialism. □

The U.S. Media and Afghanistan

By David Frankel

Afghanistan has replaced Iran as the number-one story in the mass media. And as in the case of the Iranian revolution, the capitalist newspaper and television industries are attempting to shape public opinion in accord with the needs of the ruling rich.

Just compare the reaction of the big-business media and the U.S. government to the use of Soviet troops to help put down the counterrevolutionary rebellion in Afghanistan to their response to the invasion of Vietnam by Chinese forces in February 1979. In that case, the Carter administration (which later admitted having discussed the move in advance with Chinese Vice-premier Deng Xiaoping) responded by sending a delegation to Peking to arrange expanded trade ties.

One of the most powerful levers of capitalist rule is the bourgeoisie's control of the mass media. The capitalist class uses the means of communication as a weapon in the class war. That is what we are seeing now in regard to the revolution in Afghanistan.

Lie after lie is presented as "news"—not only in the scandal-mongering tabloids but also in those periodicals that claim to offer truthful and objective reporting.

At first, in order to promote the lie that there was no popular support for the fight against the reactionary uprising, the big-business media tried to portray the struggle in Afghanistan as a war between an invading Soviet army and the Afghan people as a whole. Fierce battles, later admitted to have never happened, were reported by both the U.S. State Department and the capitalist news media.

Newsweek reported January 14: "The invaders were soon locked in bitter combat with Islamic rebels."

Filling in what it admitted were "sketchy reports from the countryside," *Newsweek* told of "a Soviet column advancing on the provincial capital of Bamian" being ambushed and mauled. Meanwhile, "The Soviets were reported to be attacking pockets of guerrilla resistance

with paratroops and devastating Mi-24 helicopter gunships."

Time magazine carried a similar report, although it deleted the fantasy about Soviet paratroops.

The *Washington Post* carried an Associated Press dispatch by Robert H. Reid on its front page January 3. Reid, reporting from Kabul, said: "Soviet troops were reported today to have thrown tanks and sophisticated attack helicopters against Moslem rebels in fierce fighting about 100 miles northwest of Kabul, the capital city."

Reid, apparently impressed that he was able to get the same story in so many places, said that "information about the battles came from four different Western embassies."

New York Times correspondent William Borders didn't bother to give his sources when he claimed in a January 7 dispatch that "Battles between Soviet troops and the rebels are believed to have occurred in several widely scattered areas in the last few days."

Borders also repeated the frequently made claim that "a major part of the [Afghan] army is reported to have been disarmed."

But on January 8 the Pentagon flatly contradicted all these reports. "Taking issue with reports that Soviet troops have been battling Afghan insurgents, Defense Department analysts said today that it was the depleted Afghan Army that was doing the fighting," *Times* correspondent Richard Halloran reported.

Halloran said that the Pentagon had found "no evidence of pitched battles between Soviet troops and Afghan insurgents."

He weakly noted that the Pentagon's information "appeared to differ from [that] of the State Department and some press reports from the Afghanistan region. . . ."

State Department officials quietly dropped their stories about big battles between the Soviet Army and Afghan rebels. "Briefing reporters on the latest intelligence information," *Times* corres-

pondent Bernard Gwertzman said in a January 11 article, "Hodding Carter 3d, the State Department spokesman, said that Soviet troops . . . had not so far engaged in any significant military action with the insurgents."

In fact, despite the capitalist media's claims of massive support for the rightist rebels, there has been little direct opposition to the Soviet troops.

One disappointed "senior military analyst" complained to *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent James Dorsey: "There is hardly any resistance."

Washington will do its best, of course, to keep the counterrevolutionary bands going and to strengthen them. And in the overheated imaginations of some in the foreign press corps, the intention continues to be identified with the fact.

Thus, the *New York Post* ran a dispatch from Kabul by United Press International reporter William J. Holstein on its front page January 10. According to Holstein, "Rebel forces—in a stunning military victory—routed Russian troops and recaptured a key provincial capital today."

"Some 400 Soviet soldiers died in the fierce fighting as the rebels took control of the town of Faizabad in northeast Afghanistan, according to reports reaching Pakistan."

"At least two Russian helicopters were shot down over the city's airport."

In this report Holstein—in Kabul—quoted "reports reaching Pakistan"—meaning an article in the newspaper *Jang*, published in Rawalpindi. *Jang* gets its "reports" by printing the claims of the rightist gangs. On this basis the *Post* ran a headline in inch-and-a-half-high type claiming "400 Russians Die as Rebels Seize Key City."

It would be a big mistake to think that such fabrications are a result of sloppiness. On the contrary, they are part of a calculated campaign to mold public opinion and to create support for greater military spending, for unleashing the CIA, for bearing the burden of new military bases in the Middle East, and ultimately, for new counterrevolutionary wars such as the one in Vietnam.

For the capitalist media, the lie is an essential tool. How else but by lies can the workers be mobilized against their brothers and sisters around the world? How else but by lies can they be convinced to support imperialist wars?

Imperialists Fear Growing Challenge to Saudi Monarchy

The Saudi monarchy beheaded sixty-three political prisoners January 9. The executions, held in public squares, were spread out over eight different cities in order to have the maximum effect in intimidating the population. They were in reprisal for the rebellion in Mecca last

November, during which the Grand Mosque was held by a rebel grouping for two weeks.

Although the Saudi regime has dismissed the rebellion in Mecca as the work of a handful of religious fanatics, those rebels who were captured were never al-

lowed to tell their own story. There is good reason to believe that recent unrest in Saudi Arabia involves much more than the regime is willing to admit.

A December 3 Reuters dispatch from Beirut reported that the Saudi regime had moved 20,000 troops into the country's

eastern province sealing off some areas on the Arab-Persian Gulf after demonstrations in the region.

Saudi officials denied the report. But Walter Mossberg reported in the December 20 *Wall Street Journal* that in the town of Qatif, in the eastern oil field area, demonstrators "smashed bank windows, overran the local police station and set up barricades in the town before being dispersed by national guardsmen in a gun battle that claimed eight lives. . . ."

A more complete account was given in the December 27 issue of the Tokyo daily *Yomiuri Shimbun*. In a dispatch filed from Dhahran, the headquarters city of the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), *Yomiuri* correspondent Fujiwara said:

"Today, more than three weeks after the events, Saudis here are still reluctant even to talk about the demonstrations. . . . Aramco, fearful of further provoking the Shi'ite Muslims, has advised its foreign employees here not to go out at night, and has even suspended the customary radio broadcasts of Christmas songs. The atmosphere here in the world's largest oil-producing region remains charged with tension."

Quoting "informed Western sources,"

Fujiwara says that demonstrations around Qatif continued for ten days, from November 21—the day after the seizure of the Great Mosque in Mecca—through November 30.

On November 30 they reached their peak. "Demonstrators shouted slogans in support of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, as well as demands for a ban on oil exports to the United States, and for a republic to replace the monarchy in Saudi Arabia. . . . A force of some 2,000 National Guardsmen was sent in to restore order, and by one estimate ten demonstrators were killed and hundreds wounded in clashes with the troops.

"According to another source here, the ten days of demonstrations left a total of nearly 100 persons killed, 200 wounded, and as many as a thousand arrested."

These protests, Fujiwara said, "were clearly an act of defiance against the Saudi monarchy by Shi'ites who had gained renewed self-confidence from the revolution in Iran, and were now determined to take direct action to press their own long-standing grievances."

Fujiwara notes that Shi'ite Moslems in Saudi Arabia face discrimination on religious grounds. "The construction of new Shi'ite mosques is not allowed here, and the people are even forbidden to give the

names of Shi'ite saints to their children." In addition, Shi'ites face systematic discrimination in employment.

Demonstrations among Shi'ites took place immediately after the overthrow of the shah. However, dissatisfaction and opposition to the Saudi regime is hardly limited to the Shi'ite community. About one third of the country's 7 million inhabitants are foreign workers, mainly from Yemen, Egypt, and Palestine. These workers—as much as 70 percent of the country's labor force—live under close police surveillance and receive only a pittance of the wealth they produce.

Furthermore, outside of the royal family and its hangers-on, even those holding Saudi Arabian citizenship frequently live in poverty.

Writing in the December 6 *Washington Post*, Edward Cody noted that the rebellion in Mecca, "in light of accumulating reports, has emerged as a major uprising by well-organized rebels supplied with modern weapons.

"As a result, diplomats and analysts in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries have begun to reconsider the widely shared impression that Saudi Arabia was immune to Iran's call for Islamic agitation and that the royal family was safe from any challenge to its rule." □

As Support for Ruling Junta Evaporates

Revolutionary Forces Unite in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR—A public meeting of several thousand at the university here January 11 marked the creation of a national coordinating committee for unity of El Salvador's revolutionary and democratic organizations.

The main organizations that make up this national coordinating committee are the People's Revolutionary Bloc (BPR), the United Front for People's Action (FAPU), the February 28 People's Leagues (LP-28), and the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN—backed by the Salvadoran Communist Party).

On January 10, a political document was released here, signed by three of the organizations in the coordinating committee: the CP, the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN—linked to the FAPU), and the "Farabundo Martí" Peoples Liberation Forces (FPL—armed wing of the BPR). This document affirmed that there is no peaceful way out of the crisis in El Salvador and that the only alternative is armed struggle and a popular insurrection.

The CP's endorsement of these positions marks an important reversal of its political stance toward the military junta that came to power last October 15 in a bloodless coup against another military dictator,

Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero. The CP initially welcomed this new government, and even accepted posts in it. It did so despite the widespread knowledge that Washington had helped engineer this cosmetic change in personnel in hopes of staving off revolutionary developments such as those in nearby Nicaragua.

The change in the CP's attitude toward the government was clearly one of the preconditions for any steps toward greater unity.

United action and a common approach of intransigent opposition to the government will be an important boost to the struggles of the Salvadoran workers and peasants. Recognition of this political fact had been growing among all the revolutionary organizations here as the crisis of the regime deepened over the past month and a half.

This was the theme, for example, of a speech by Ana Guadalupe Martínez, a commander of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), at a mid-December rally of 4,000 workers, farm laborers, students, market vendors, and domestic workers, organized by the LP-28 in Santa Ana, El Salvador's second-largest city.

"The unity of the people and of their

organizations is indispensable," Martínez declared, "and we can already see and feel that this deeply desired unity of the people's forces is close at hand. This alliance and unity . . . will be the key to the definitive victory."

Unabated Repression

The capitalist forces in El Salvador are using every available means to avoid "the definitive victory" of the oppressed and exploited.

Repression against working people and their organizations has not ceased for a single day since the new military junta took power. During its three months of rule, the junta has massacred close to 600 people; Romero had killed 1,000 during the previous ten months.

The ongoing repression has been a desperate attempt by the ruling class to stop the mounting antigovernment mobilizations and increasingly bold actions of armed revolutionary groups.

On November 28 the FPL kidnapped the South African ambassador to El Salvador. The FPL demanded that in exchange for his release two proclamations be printed in newspapers in 102 countries, with the apartheid regime footing the bill. Accord-

ing to press dispatches, one of the proclamations describes the wretched conditions in El Salvador and calls for a popular insurrection, and the other calls for solidarity "against imperialism and South African racism." The FPL has also demanded that El Salvador recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and that the government break all diplomatic relations with Pinochet's Chile.

To date neither the Salvadoran junta nor the South African government has responded to the FPL's demands.

On December 14, thirty television workers, supported by the LP-28, occupied the Communications Center in San Salvador to demand wage increases. That same day, 2,000 workers marched in the capital against unemployment, a protest called by the Construction Workers Union and others.

Struggles in the Countryside

Important mass mobilizations also took place in the countryside in December. Rural workers organized by the BPR and the LP-28 occupied fourteen sugar haciendas throughout the country. Other workers took over a cotton gin in Entre Ríos and six other mills east of San Salvador.

In face of mounting pressure by rural workers organizations, the government had decreed seasonal wage increases for those who harvest El Salvador's main export crops of cotton, coffee, and sugar cane. The increases did not cover the immense majority of rural workers who for nine months a year wander from place to place in search of jobs, however, so the hacienda and mill occupations took place simply to demand better wages.

On December 18 the government responded to the occupations by killing twenty-five campesinos and LP-28 militants in the "El Congo" hacienda, some 50 kilometers from San Salvador. A similar attack the night before resulted in the death of at least eight persons in the city of Berlín, 120 kilometers from the capital.

The military used airplanes, helicopters,

antiriot tanks, machine guns and tear gas to dislodge the campesinos. Furthermore, according to the Independent News Agency (API) of El Salvador, "combined army and security forces set up a military cordon five kilometers wide around the Entre Ríos plant and approached the place as if it were an enemy camp that they were going to take by assault."

The night of December 19, the BPR organized a demonstration of 5,000 people in San Salvador. The demonstrators called on the government to halt the repression and to meet the demands of workers who had earlier agreed to end their occupation of two ministries and release the minister of labor and the minister of the economy. (The ministries were seized peacefully at the end of October by the BPR and the "José Guillermo Rivas" Trade Union Coordinating Committee; those occupations ended on November 6 when the government promised to meet the workers' demands.)

The BPR's December 19 demonstration stepped off from San Salvador's Central Market, which at that time was occupied by the LP-28. Four National Guard trucks and police units opened fire against the peaceful demonstrators. The marchers dispersed, setting fire to nine vehicles.

Between December 27 and 29, FPL comandos touched off bombs in the San Salvador offices of the giant U.S. corporation, International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT—infamous for its complicity in the CIA-organized coup in Chile) and at the U.S.-owned First National City Bank.

On December 28, the U.S. State Department announced that it was cutting the size of its diplomatic contingent in El Salvador. Washington sources underlined that this reduction in no way indicated disagreement with the policies of the military junta!

New Year—New Crisis

The new year brought a deepening of the political crisis. Nearly all the cabinet ministers appointed after the October 15 coup

resigned in protest, along with two of the three civilian members of the ruling junta. They declared that the "political-military oligarchy" was putting a brake on all the reforms promised after Romero's overthrow. They deplored the fact that the right wing in the country was "making the armed forces continue to stain their hands with the blood of the people."

At a public meeting in San Salvador on January 9 attended by some 1,000 persons, one of those who resigned, ex-Education Minister Salvador Samayoa, announced that he was joining the "Farabundo Martí" People's Liberation Forces. Guarded by twelve FPL fighters, Samayoa declared that "the peaceful road has failed because the oppressive system never really disappeared. He continued:

Those who in good faith try to avoid a civil war must understand that the country is at war and that the people are already combating their aggressors militarily. Considerations of the number of dead or wounded that could result from a civil war are not appropriate, since even more would die from malnutrition, lack of medical attention, and the army's repression.

Showdown Approaching

The junta began in early December recalling all military pilots and personnel who were in the United States for training. All Christmas and New Year's leaves were cancelled by the armed forces.

Attempting to create the impression abroad that the junta enjoys popular support, the bourgeoisie and upper middle class have staged their own demonstrations, using organizations like the National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP) and members of the Democratic Nationalist Organization (ORDEN), a fascist-like paramilitary network.

The Salvadoran rulers have also circulated slanders in the international capitalist press against the revolutionary organizations, such as the charge that they attacked a demonstration of bourgeois and middle-class women.

Neither the high death toll nor the hollow promises of democratic reform have been able to demobilize the workers and peasants, however. On the contrary, the creation of the united coordinating committee marks a major step forward for their struggles.

Mass demonstrations and occupations are continuing, and both the government and the revolutionary organizations are preparing for a showdown that could come at any time.

The courageous struggle of the Salvadoran masses and their revolutionary organizations deserves the support of working people throughout the world. We must tell Washington, other imperialist powers, and capitalist regimes elsewhere in Latin America that we will tolerate no intervention against the Salvadoran people.

International solidarity with El Salvador!



Iranian Trotskyists Field Presidential Candidate

The Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (Hezb-e Kargar-e Engelab—HKE) is running Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh for president in the upcoming national elections.

In the January 1 issue of Tehran's daily *Baamdad*, beginning on the front page, the election platform of the HKE was featured.

The HKE explains that the elections are being held during a period of U.S. military, economic, and political attacks against the Iranian revolution.

The United States has mobilized its imperialist allies and capitalist forces inside Iran to try to defeat the struggles of the workers and peasants; to beat down the oppressed nationalities; and block the road to independence and freedom.

Thus, the unity of all toilers against this threat by U.S. imperialism is the key task and a question of life or death.

The HKE also denounces those who have criticized the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line for releasing new spy files discovered in the U.S. Embassy. The party supports the demand raised by the Iranian people, "Students, continue the exposures!"

The struggles of the Iranian workers for factory *shoras* (committees) which can defend their rights; of peasants for land; of oppressed nationalities for their rights; of women for freedom and equality; and of youth are all part of the anti-imperialist



Cindy Jaquith/Militant

MAHMOUD SAYRAFIEZADEH

struggle. The outcome of all these struggles is intertwined, the HKE says.

It is in this context that Sayrafiezadeh enters the elections presenting a program to unite all these movements against imperialism.

The HKE's platform calls for:

- Stop the attacks on the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line, who have been releasing spy documents. Continue the exposures!
- Build the army of 20 million. Arm and mobilize the population through the workers and neighborhood shoras;

Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE)

At the same time that it announced its presidential candidate, the Central Committee of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) also announced that it was changing its name to the Revolutionary Workers Party (Hezb-e Kargar-e Engelab—HKE). The change in name is to avoid confusion with another Iranian group calling itself the Militant Wing of the HKS.

The HKE and the Militant Wing of the HKS are both part of the Iranian section of the Fourth International. *Kargar* (Worker), the newspaper of the former HKS, will continue publishing as the voice of the Revolutionary Workers Party. The Militant Wing of the HKS puts out a paper called *Che Bayd Kard* (What Is To Be Done).

- Support the efforts of the workers and peasants to stop sabotage by the capitalists and landlords;
 - Grant demands of the peasants for land reform. The shoras in the rural areas should control the big landholdings;
 - Expropriate the property of capitalists who are hoarding goods and closing plants. Place their property under the control of the workers shoras;
 - Nationalize and place under shora control all imperialist-owned companies, to defend the country against U.S. economic blockade;
 - Implement a government monopoly of foreign trade;
 - Release to the public all facts about the imperialist blockade and the sabotage of production by the capitalists. Open all the capitalists' books and place them under the supervision of the shoras;
 - For a sliding scale of wages and a cost-of-living allowance for all workers to combat inflation;
 - For a thirty-five hour workweek with no reduction in pay to provide jobs;
 - To unite all of Iran's nationalities against the imperialist threats, grant full national rights now to the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and other oppressed nationalities. Withdraw Pasdaran and army units from Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.
 - Establish equal rights for women.
- To put the above program into practice, defeat the imperialist threat, and solve the daily problems of the workers and peasants, the HKE calls on the factory shoras to unite in their common struggles and ally with the shoras in the rural areas and in the army. Through this, united shoras in the cities and nationally can be created.
- These steps point toward the need for a workers and peasants government in Iran, based on delegates elected by the shoras of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. □

Emergency Appeal for Fatima Fallahi

[The following appeal is being circulated among supporters of the Iranian revolution in the United States.]

* * *

To the Islamic Revolutionary Council:

I am a supporter of Iran's demand for return of the criminal shah and an opponent of the U.S. government's attacks on your revolution. I want to express my concern over the grave illness of Fatima Fallahi, an antishah fighter currently imprisoned in Karoun Prison in Ahwaz.

I understand that Ms. Fallahi is suffering comas and severe loss of weight. Prison authorities have refused her medical attention. In view of this emergency situation, I urge you to have her immediately transferred to a hospital.

Ms. Fallahi is one of the seven members of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party currently in Karoun. All



seven have proven records as anti-imperialist fighters and have appealed to be freed so they may join in the struggle to defend the Iranian revolution.

I urge you to speed their release.

A Day With Sandinista Union Organizers

By R. Sylvain

MANAGUA—Carlos arrives at 7 a.m., as we had arranged, in a pick-up truck. We had met the day before, at a meeting of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) commemorating the FSLN's audacious action December 27, 1974, that led to the release of several Sandinista leaders.

He works in an auto repair shop. General assemblies are held there every morning from 7 to 8 o'clock, with discussions on a broad range of topics. That would probably interest us, right?

The repair shop is not far—a few kilometers out on the road to Masaya. The "Mercedes-Benz" sign is still in place. "Somoza was the actual owner of the place," Carlos explains, so the shop was nationalized. The old manager is still on the job, and there is no shortage of frictions.

The thirty-five workers are paid a monthly wage of 2,500 córdobas (about US\$250). "It's quite a bit better than average," Carlos says. "We work forty-two hours a week, spread over six days—from 8 to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m." Some time ago, however, they began working until 4:30—"half an hour for the revolution."

Nearly everyone is there, sitting on odds and ends of furniture in the parts department. The meeting begins. I am introduced by Carlos as a French *compañero* who wants to learn about the revolution. Then he turns the meeting over to the head of the parts department, who has many, many things to say. To begin with, he suggests that the other *compañeros* don't speak up enough.

Why? he asks. We have nothing to fear today. Each one of us should speak up, so that individual problems can be discussed collectively. We want to organize ourselves, all of us, into a single working-class federation—the CST. There is no need to hesitate about criticizing anything, even the government. That's the meaning of the slogan "Workers and peasants to power." We are the ones who hold the power. Increasing production is fine with us, but we also have to see what use our work is being put to.

The meeting continues. The CST delegate takes the floor. He is going to read an important document that the *compañeros* may not be familiar with. It is the CST Organization Council's reply to the demands made by the bosses. He pulls out the issue of *La Prensa* in which the statement was published, as had been earlier the statement by COSEP (the employers organization). He reads. The audience is

attentive, even though the statement takes some time to read. [See text on p. 36]

The time is about up. But perhaps the French *compañero* would like to say a few words about what he thinks of our revolution, about the situation in France. Gladly. And we discuss for a few minutes May 1968, millions of workers occupying the plants, the lack of a revolutionary leadership to carry through the seizure of power, the defeat.

As he gets ready to start work, Carlos insists that we come back another morning, some time the following week. We promise. One last word—his pride that here the workers and peasants have taken power. Much remains to be done. The revolution must continue to its ultimate consequences.

We return to the CST offices, where Frank is expecting us. We take off for the duty-free zone. There have been several conflicts there in recent weeks, particularly at a company called Texcosa, which is where we are going.

"My name is Francisco," he says, "but everyone calls me Frank. I've been a member of the FSLN for three years. I belonged to the Prolonged People's War tendency. I was on the southern front, near the Costa Rican border."

Frank, who is barely twenty-five years old, wears a Che Guevara-type beret atop his long hair. Shortly after the victory, the Sandinista Front asked him to go to work full time organizing the CST. It was something new for him; he has no trade-union

experience. Before joining the FSLN he worked in a small shoe plant.

The duty-free zone consists of several groups of modern buildings. Many of them are textile factories that were built at the end of 1972, just after the earthquake.

Texcosa is not the largest plant, but when running at full production it employs 140 workers. Ninety-five percent of them are women, often very young women. The men either work in the office or are technicians.

Texcosa is a U.S.-owned plant that makes jeans. The denim comes from the U.S. in large rolls. Once cut and stitched together, the jeans are sent back to the United States.

"This is the situation Somozaism left us in," Frank tells me. "This is the heritage of fifty years of capitalist dependence and imperialist plunder. We produce and export cotton, but we don't have the machinery to make cloth out of it. The operation of this plant is totally dependent on the parent corporation in the U.S.—both for shipment of fabric and the continuation of production. One hundred-forty jobs are at stake."

The threat of a shutdown is played up to the hilt by the local manager. Frank, who is supposed to see him to take up several problems, insists that we go along. So we make our way into the office of Don Arturo.

Frank comes to the point: Seven young women workers still haven't received their pay for June and July. This despite agreement that all workers would receive their pay. The Sandinista Front had ordered the National Development Bank to open up a line of credit of 109,000 córdobas to Texcosa so that it could pay these wages. All of them.

The bank had turned the money over to Texcosa. What happened to it? A series of evasive explanations, followed by a prom-

Rents Slashed in Nicaragua

[The following dispatch by Prensa Latina correspondent Erasmo Terrero appeared in the December 30 issue of the weekly English-language edition of the Cuban newspaper *Granma*.]

* * *

On December 19, the Nicaraguan Government announced a rent reduction ranging from 50 to 60 percent for dwellings where tenants pay less than 100 dollars a month. It also decided to extend national sovereignty over its 200-mile sea limit.

The rent reduction measure, which will go into effect in January, stipulates a 50-percent cut in rents of less than 50 dollars a month and 60 percent for

rents ranging from 50 to 100 dollars.

In cases of dwellings on which the rent is more than 100 dollars a month, the new rate will be fixed at five percent of the dwelling's declared yearly value; that is, five percent of the house value will be divided by 12 to calculate the maximum rent.

The measure will benefit thousands of Nicaraguans who now pay exorbitant rents and will increase the real income of the people, "a key objective of the Sandinista popular Revolution."

The new law stipulates that the Ministry of Housing can take over slum dwellings that have inadequate sanitary conditions and can reduce rents to below 50 percent.

ise to pay the seven women the next day.

Then the factory delegate, one of the women workers, spoke up. First she took up the question of the weekly paycheck. It is to be issued on Friday, even when, like today, there is work on Saturday.

Then she made clear that the tone in which Don Arturo had spoken to a worker the other day was unacceptable. Don Arturo said he didn't think he had been overbearing, but that in the future he would first see the trade-union delegate before speaking to an employee about poor work.

She wasn't finished. "The girls do not appreciate at all the rumors that have been circulated in the whole industrial zone that

they stole several hundred pairs of jeans. You know very well that it couldn't possibly have been us. We are searched every night when we leave the factory.

"What's more, we aren't the ones who leave the plant by car. From now on everyone is going to be searched. Not just the workers in the factory but those in the office as well. Everybody."

Yes, everyone, Don Arturo agrees. Even his car . . .

Frank then explains how the factory is going to continue production. "The plant is now part of the economic plan. Wages will be paid at the end of the week, regularly, if the machines are operating. The plan does not call for a wage increase for 1980, but

the employees' buying power will be protected and major initial efforts to improve education, health care, and housing will provide new benefits to the workers. The union must be strengthened so that it can intervene in all questions that come up in the plant. Production will be stepped up."

Here, as in many other plants, the CST is barely beginning to be organized. Six months ago there was no union. The young women work very hard for 200 córdobas a week, 800 córdobas a month. That is the minimum wage, a wage of poverty. But it is a poverty less severe than that of the 32 percent of the population that is permanently unemployed and the 17 percent that is seasonally unemployed.

'This Revolution Is Irreversible'

Sandinista Trade Unions Answer Nicaraguan Capitalists

[The following declaration was issued in Managua on December 19, 1979, by the Organization Council of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). It is a response to the Nicaraguan capitalists' November 14 statement listing complaints against the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the Sandinista-led Government of National Reconstruction. For details of the latter document, see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, December 17, 1979, p. 1236.

[The CST's statement was published in the December 22 edition of the Managua daily *La Prensa*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Brothers and Sisters—Workers:

We have seen the declaration in which the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP)—a body made up of the country's most reactionary and exploitative class—insolently declares itself without a shred of morality to be against our revolutionary process and its vanguard, the FSLN, and against our Government Junta, the genuine expression of the consensus of the majority.

These gentlemen (let's use this term, since it is the common title among the minority class and quite different from *compañero*, the form of address taken up by the majority) arose in the period of the dictatorship and became monopolistic and exploitative with the support of the Somozaist policies that were their public expression. When Somoza later parted company with them, they tried to take part in the insurrection. But before doing so they withdrew all their money and deposited it in U.S. banks.

Now these gentlemen are claiming a place in this revolution and talking of

unity and consolidation. But they do not talk of unconditional support to the revolution, and they do not talk of creating jobs with the money they hold abroad. Nor do they take an honest attitude toward economic development, which is the only way they might have a place in the process.

They speak of effort and sacrifice. In the very midst of the bombardments they ordered workers to cross the lines of fire and rescue a truck or some piece of equipment, threatening them with dismissal. Even then such orders came from abroad, where these gentlemen were offering their unconditional support to the revolution. Construction companies made intense efforts to remove their equipment from the country. Many enterprises made great sacrifices when they called [Somoza's] Security Office to investigate their employees.

They talk of facing a crisis, about doubt, insecurity, and even lack of confidence, about disregard for human resources. These can only be the concern of those who are now deprived of Somozaist backing and who have been accustomed to reaping fabulous profits from the surplus value of the workers. They long for their business partners who have gone abroad with guilty consciences after usurping the immense wealth of the state—wealth once in the hands of the peasants—and unscrupulously dividing this wealth to fill the bottomless pit of their personal ambitions of exploitation.

They speak of the "rules of the game": this corrupt phrase was typical of Somoza, whose only rule was distributing to Miami, New York, and elsewhere the sweat of the people converted into dollars. But the only game now is the will—sealed by 40,000

dead and 80,000 orphans—to demand that this process go forward until it culminates in the victory of the working class.

Pluralism—Synonym for Special Interests

The COSEP purports to be the leader in the political field and seeks to confuse the masses. But the masses are conscious about this process and realize that this group's sole aim is to divide the masses so as to conquer economic territory.

When the FSLN appeared as a political movement, these very same gentlemen did not call for pluralism but instead condemned and excluded the FSLN and considered it their enemy. But the FSLN remains the vanguard of the majority that they are now trying to divide.

The businessmen also demand pluralism in television. They lament not being able to see the luxuriant imperialist propaganda, the advertising that emptied the pockets of the exploited class just as the Spaniards traded mirrors and trinkets for our gold at the time of the conquest.

As for the CDSs [Sandinista Defense Committees], these gentlemen don't care to recognize the reality of a revolutionary process. Do they have blinders on, or are they still dreaming of Ali Baba and his forty thieves? Let them take care to note that the people are the majority. We are guided by the FSLN in our fight, and we recognize it alone as our vanguard in the defense of our interests. The CDSs have been organized by the people themselves, and they are led politically by the FSLN, the guarantor of the revolution.

Trade Unions

Not once under the dictatorship did these gentlemen offer any support to the spread of trade unions. What few unions that existed legally were manipulated by

the CIA and defended the interests of the bosses. Political struggle was prohibited inside these unions, and the only thing an honest trade unionist could expect was jail, exile, or death. These gentlemen did not ask for trade-union pluralism then, because they were protected by the National Guard and by maneuvers with Labor Ministry functionaries.

But now they call for the proliferation of trade-union federations. They seek to use their imperialist maneuvers to divide our working class. But the working class is well aware of the exploiters' tricks. We are coming together in the united workers federation—the Sandinista Federation—to strike sharply at the COSEP's pretensions and to guide the destiny of the country under the leadership of our vanguard, the FSLN.

Economic Policy

If any doubt exists concerning economic policies, it can only be that of businessmen like the ones who besides having transferred all their money to other countries keep trying to sell to multinational corporations factories such as Corlisa and others that still retain markets offering acceptable and honest profit margins. Such moves can only lead to unemployment and hunger for many heads of families; nonetheless, these businessmen are the same ones who are demanding urgent financing.

As for the charge that much time is being wasted at the Labor Ministry in meetings and disputes, this should be understandable at the present stage of the revolution. Such disputes have to do with justice and not legal technicalities; they flow from injustices committed against the working class through trickery and legal maneuvering in collaboration with the Somozaist officials of the old Labor Ministry.

If the businessmen could get it through their heads that they are living under a new system of justice that they must respect, they would not make themselves ridiculous with such statements.

This revolution is irreversible. It is not abstract or passive—it is concrete. We must all participate actively toward the same goal—the benefit of the great majority—and not for the benefit of a minority. Somozaist ways of doing things and access [to government ministries] based on friendships are not called for here. Those who refuse to take the initiative and work within the process will be left out, alone like a tree in the desert. It is such types who are now promoting themselves and changing their old masks for new ones.

We are in complete agreement that this revolution is unique in the Americas, both for its generosity and for the great scope of its goals.

We believe our revolution has made great achievements to benefit the people as a whole. It has passed from quantity into

quality in such important fields as the following:

- a. Expropriation of the goods of the Somozas and the Somozaists.
- b. Nationalization of the banks and insurance companies.
- c. Expropriations of housing and vacant lots.
- d. Nationalization of the mines.
- e. Creation of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, which has already begun to bear fruit with no guidelines other than those that arise from the majority.

Besides the damage done to honest dealings within the revolutionary economic process, the COSEP document is an open and insolent aggression against the people, who have conquered their freedom with dignity and valor and broken the chains that tied them to the exploiting class.

The COSEP represents the *burguesía vendepatria* [traitorous bourgeoisie]. It is playing the game of the most reactionary agents of the imperialist enemies of this

process, in order to undermine the rightful economic plans of the revolution.

We condemn their claim that they are indispensable. We don't want them to tie us—from behind their benevolent and paternalistic mask of exploitation—to the imperialist banks, or to sell our country to the multinational corporations and later allow an international blockade. This form of exploitation is in total contradiction to the sentiments of the majority.

The COSEP declaration is a counterrevolutionary tactic aimed against the working class, which is the only source that generates our wealth and which is confident of its definitive liberation.

We reaffirm our stance, taking up the words of the legacy of our General of Free Men, A.C. Sandino:

"Only the workers and peasants will go all the way; only their organized forces will bring about the victory."

Free homeland or death!

People, army, unity—guarantee of the victory!

Speech by Commander Tomás Borge

'Organization of Militias Is a Strategic Task'

[Among the changes in government personnel announced in Nicaragua at the close of 1979 was the naming of Commander Edén Pastora ("Commander Zero") as vice-minister of defense in charge of the Sandinista People's Militias. Pastora said December 28 that "one of the great projects we have for next year will be the military training of each and every Nicaraguan to defend our liberated homeland."

[The importance Sandinista leaders place on the organization of the militias was also made clear in a speech by Commander of the Revolution Tomás Borge, the minister of the interior, to units of the Sandinista National Police on December 16. The following excerpts from Borge's speech have been translated by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

We are going to organize tens of thousands of Nicaraguans in the Sandinista People's Militias. The full participation of the people in the organization of the militias is necessary. For if we are attacked inside our country one day, the invaders must have to confront not only the Sandinista army and the Sandinista police but also the entire people in arms.

The reactionary regimes of Latin America would of course never run the risk of arming their people. Because if a Pinochet were to arm the Chilean workers, he would not remain in power for more than twenty-four hours.

But as for us, we know that the people support our revolution and that this revo-

lution is the people. Thus we haven't the slightest objection to distributing arms to the people so that they can defend themselves if we are attacked.

Organization and training of the militias is a strategic task.

It is the workers themselves, in the factories, and the students in the schools who will be the *milicianos*. They will insure that their factories, workplaces, schools and universities are well guarded. Because the day our enemies attack us they will carry out sabotage everywhere or at least attempt to do so.

We must make sure that the guarding of our newspaper, *Barricada*, of the Sandinista television system, of Radio Sandino, and of all the means of communication is in the hands of our people and our revolution. Who is going to defend these installations? The *compañeros* themselves who work in them. We will give them military training and weapons, and they will be integrated into the Sandinista militias as volunteers.

In the factories, all the workers will want to join the militias to defend their plants. At first, of course, the ones that belong to the people [that is, the nationalized factories]. But we are also going to organize militias to defend enterprises that belong to the private sector.

Often, of course, the owner may not like this. He will not like this at all, but what can we do about that? We are going to organize the factory workers not only in trade unions but also in the militias and in the other mass organizations.

Above all, we are going to be organized.

Elections Offer Opportunities for Labor Movement in Canada

[The following statement, issued December 18 by the Political Committee of the Revolutionary Workers League, appeared on the front page of the December 24 issue of the Montreal fortnightly *Socialist Voice* under the headlines "Oust the Clark gov't—defeat the Liberals," "In English Canada, vote for the NDP—In Quebec, fight for labor candidates."]

* * *

The fall of the Clark government is a victory for working people. News of the parliamentary vote was greeted with cheers in factories and mines across the country.

The February 18 election can help strike decisive blows against both the parties of big business.

Defeated by Mass Opposition

The Conservative government was defeated above all by mass opposition to its austerity program.

The budget introduced by Finance Minister John Crosbie marked a new stage in the big business offensive against working people. Its key measure was an increase in oil and gas prices by 18 cents a gallon immediately and by about a dollar a gallon by 1983. The price hike would have raised government revenues by \$57 billion by 1983. It would have swelled oil corporation profits by an astounding \$33 billion. And during the next year alone it would have cost the average family across Canada up to \$575.

A massive shift in incomes from workers to the corporations and governments, these measures were aptly compared with Trudeau's wage controls. Only this time, instead of taking it directly from our paycheques, the government did it through sales taxes.

Stock prices soared when the budget was announced. But labor, consumer groups, and even small business reacted with outrage. The Canadian Labor Congress [CLC] underscored its opposition by announcing its withdrawal from all joint labor-management committees sponsored by the federal government.

It was this groundswell of protest that forced the Liberals to support the NDP [New Democratic Party] no-confidence motion on December 13. The Quebec Social Credit MPs withdrew their support of the government, and it was defeated.

Behind the parliamentary instability is a growing dilemma for Canada's ruling class. Working people refuse to bear the burden of the capitalist economic crisis. And the unions are moving increasingly to

the fore in organizing opposition to the austerity drive.

In recent months, unions in English Canada have campaigned together with the NDP to defend medicare, oppose UIC cuts, and retain the state-owned oil company, Petrocan.

Union conventions across Canada have firmly registered their opposition to the jailing of postal workers leaders, including CUPW president Jean-Claude Parrot. Unions have come out in support of affirmative action programs to increase the number of women in industrial jobs, and against thrusting them back into the home where the bosses want them. Thousands of Quebec hospital workers went on strike in November in defiance of the Parti Québécois [PQ] government's strikebreaking legislation.

And even as Parliament debated the budget, Nova Scotia labor was threatening a general strike against the antilabor "Michelin bill."

These struggles contributed to the Clark government's defeat. The issues they ad-

dress are major issues in the election campaign.

Another key issue is the need to defend Quebec's national rights. On the same day the government fell, the Supreme Court of Canada declared sections of Quebec's language law unconstitutional. The court's action exposed all the pro-federalist rhetoric of Clark, Trudeau, and Ed Broadbent for what it is. It showed the futility of the argument that the needs of Québécois can be met within the framework of the constitution and Confederation.

The Clark-Trudeau austerity program has deepened the effects of Quebec's national oppression. Unemployment is soaring in Quebec. Entire regions are being depopulated as giant corporations like ITT-Rayonier depart in search of higher profits and more "stability." Public sector workers felt the sharp sword of Clark's budget-slashing, wielded in its turn by the PQ government.

The Tories' lack of support in Quebec deprived them of a parliamentary majority in the last election. This election, held on

Labor Battles 'Michelin Bill'

Despite strong opposition from the labor movement, on December 28, 1979, the Conservative Party-dominated provincial legislature in Nova Scotia passed the antiunion Bill 98, which has been dubbed the "Michelin Bill."

The Michelin Bill puts severe limits on labor's ability to organize unions in the province. The United Rubber Workers union (URW) has been trying to organize Michelin's Granton, N.S., tire plant for some years. The French-owned tire company has two plants in the province and has announced plans for a third.

Under Bill 98, a union seeking to organize any plant of a manufacturing company must win certification at *all* the company's plants in Nova Scotia. The way the law is worded, however, it only affects one Nova Scotia manufacturer—Michelin.

The bill also has a retroactive clause cancelling an application already filed by the URW for certification of the union at the Granton plant.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labor, which represents 70,000 of the province's 351,000 workers, had threatened a general strike if the bill passed. The federation held a big meeting on the bill on January 7. Details of any decisions

taken are not available as we go to press.

Canadian Labor Congress President Dennis McDermott has thrown the weight of the CLC behind the struggle against the Michelin Bill.

Michelin, a notoriously antiunion company, has a long record of getting special favors in Nova Scotia. The company received a \$10 million grant to begin operations in the province, as well as a \$50 million low-interest loan and a three-year waiver of import duties.

When labor disputes broke out during construction of a Michelin facility, the provincial legislature passed legislation banning wildcat strikes and picketing and restricting craft union organization.

Elsewhere in North America the tire concern has three plants in South Carolina, one in Alabama, and three under construction in Texas. All are nonunion.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Labor is using the passage of the Michelin bill to point up the need for a vote for the New Democratic Party, Canada's labor party, in the upcoming February 18 federal elections. The federal NDP issued a statement condemning the bill after its passage.

the eve of the Quebec referendum, will pose sharply the need to defend Quebec in the face of the mounting federalist offensive of both Tories and Liberals—and the Supreme Court—against its national rights.

Defeat Parties of Big Business

Working people in both nations must unite to throw out the Clark government and defeat the Liberals. How can they do this?

In English Canada, the New Democratic Party, widely seen as the only real opposition to the government, stands poised to make major gains. The CLC has already pledged to “double or triple” its efforts to elect the NDP. Unions should throw massive resources into this campaign, which is a giant step forward in labor’s struggle against the employers, their parties, and their government. And unions should fight to make the NDP defend workers’ struggles.

In Quebec, workers enter the election, as in the past, without a political party of their own. They have no means of fighting in their own name to defeat the capitalist government and parties responsible for Quebec’s oppression and the austerity drive. The Parti Québécois does not defend workers’ interests. Its proposed sovereignty-association—a continued alliance with imperialism—would not free Quebec from national oppression or lead toward independence. The PQ’s subservience to the federal regime is revealed also in its failure even to challenge the Liberals and Conservatives in the federal election.

Quebec unions—the CSN and CEQ, as well as the FTQ—are challenged to mount a parallel campaign to the CLC’s. Every local should discuss the need to run workers’ candidates independent of the capitalist parties, as a step toward building a labor party that can fight for independence, in defense of workers’ struggles, and for a workers government. The labor federations should unite their resources in the fight for labor candidates.

For a Government of NDP & Quebec Labor

Only the capitalists benefit from the organizational and political divisions between the workers in both nations.

The NDP leadership supports the “national unity” campaign against Quebec. That is one reason why the party has little appeal in Quebec. This severely weakens its capacity to appear as a credible alternative to the Liberals and Tories at the federal level.

Unions must fight for the NDP to defend Quebec’s rights. And the NDP should support the struggle for a labor party in Quebec. Workers candidates in Quebec should solidarize with the workers’ struggle in English Canada to elect the NDP. Quebec workers should look to English-Canadian workers—not the PQ—for allies in the struggle against the federal state.

Together, these campaigns can pose the

A Blow to Quebec Language Rights

The struggle against national oppression of the people of Quebec was dealt a heavy blow on December 13 by a Canadian Supreme Court ruling that struck down seven clauses of Quebec’s Law 101, which made French, the language of 80 percent of Quebec’s population, the only official language in the province.

Canada’s highest court upheld a challenge by three Montréal lawyers to the constitutionality of those clauses of the law declaring French the official language of legislation and of the courts in Quebec.

Quebec Premier René Lévesque angrily pointed out that the decision has “maintained, or rather re-established, the exorbitant privileges of a minority [the English-speaking residents] that has dominated for two centuries.”

The Quebec National Assembly was forced, as a result of the ruling, to put through a bill that retroactively passed in English all bills passed since Law 101 was adopted in August 1977. In addition, all minutes, orders-in-council, proceedings, and regulations even of municipal councils, much of which has been only in French since Confedera-

tion in 1867, will now have to be in English as well.

Within hours of the Supreme Court decision, the Quebec Court of Appeals halted the Parti Québécois government’s nationalization of Asbestos Corporation on the grounds that the expropriations law was adopted only in French.

Although the ruling affects only the language of the legislature and courts, it invites other legal challenges to the rest of Law 101. Some are already before the courts.

Despite its inadequacies, Law 101 did register gains in the battle for French language rights in Quebec. Since its adoption the trend toward increasing enrollment in English-language schools in Quebec has been reversed. Public opinion polls show that the vast majority of Québécois feel their ability to work and be serviced in French has improved in recent years.

One of the most important acquisitions is that Law 101 declares French the language of work. Corporations, which have vociferously campaigned against this measure, will now try to get this too declared unconstitutional.

possibility for workers in both nations to elect a government of their own organizations—the NDP and the Quebec unions—that can implement policies in the workers’ interests.

Against Austerity! For Quebec’s Rights!

Unity and solidarity are needed to defeat capitalist austerity and the offensive against Quebec’s national rights.

The NDP program, while containing some correct proposals, is permeated with economic nationalism. Broadbent’s protectionist “industrial strategy” would pit workers in Canada against workers in other countries in support of our “own” capitalists.

Labor in both nations must pursue an alternative course. We must use the election campaign to build support for workers’ struggles: against the judicial frame-up of CUPW leaders; against the Michelin bill; for nationalization under workers control of companies like ITT-Rayonier in Port-Cartier that threaten to flee Quebec. Nationalize the oil companies; stop the “energy crisis” blackmail.

Labor’s campaign can build solidarity with the oppressed. The NDP must break from the federalist Pro-Canada Committee, and defend Quebec’s right to adopt laws like Law 101 aimed at defending the French language. It must campaign in English Canada in unconditional defense of Quebec’s right to self-determination,

including the right of Québécois to form their own state. Quebec workers’ candidates can use the campaign to build the fight for Quebec independence and to help educate workers in English Canada who support the NDP about the justice of their national demands.

Women’s rights are a key issue. The austerity drive strikes against many of the gains made by women in the previous period. Women, the last hired and first fired, are being driven out of the workforce and back into the home. The NDP must highlight the affirmative action program adopted by its recent federal convention, as well as fighting for equal pay, the right to abortion, and against childcare cut-backs. NDP and Quebec labor candidates should join in support of the CLC’s call for International Women’s Day actions and in support of all actions in defense of women’s rights.

International solidarity—against the U.S.-led war drive against Iran; for massive aid to Nicaragua, with no strings attached—is also a central issue. Canada should get out of the imperialist war alliances, NATO and NORAD, and support struggles of the exploited and oppressed around the world.

These are some of the central issues that the Revolutionary Workers League will be campaigning around in the election. They should be central issues for the NDP and the Quebec labor movement. □

How Bolivian Masses Fought the Coup

[On November 16, 1979, the Bolivian working class won a big victory when Col. Alberto Natusch Busch, who had seized power on November 1, was forced to step down.

[The main opposition to the coup had been organized through the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB). The following article—a day-by-day account of the struggle—gives a feel for the level of resistance the workers put up against the coup.]

* * *

The Coup on November 1

At 4:15 a.m. on November 1, columns of tanks from the Tara Parka and Marx Toledo regiments surrounded the presidential palace in La Paz, while infantry detachments simultaneously occupied the streets in the center of the city and encircled the university. Immediately afterwards, radio stations in the capital began broadcasting statements by the leaders of the coup, indicating that Col. Alberto Natusch Busch, a former minister in the Banzer government, was heading the rebellion against President Walter Guevara Arce.

The radio statements maintained that this was an "institutionalist" movement that had the support of [former President] Victor Paz Estenssoro (which was later denied), and revealed that even a sector of the MNRI, linked to the Social Democracy, was involved (which was later confirmed).

In Santa Cruz, however, the head of the Second Army Corps announced that he had decided "to respect the democratic process the country is in." At the same time, the big units in the interior of the country announced that Gen. Padilla, the commander of the armed forces, was opposed to the coup and that he supported President Guevara.

The Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) also opposed the new government.

In the face of such opposition, Col. Natusch felt obliged to proclaim his respect for parliament, for the unions, for university autonomy, and civil liberties. Despite this, parliament refused to recognize the Natusch government and the COB immediately held a large meeting of the country's unions. Workers began leaving their jobs to consult among themselves and participate in the meetings.

On the afternoon of the day of the coup, twenty-nine parties got together with the COB to form the Antifascist Democratic Committee, which established three commissions. The Commission for Coordinating Resistance was entrusted to the POR-Combate, the MIR, and the Espartaco movement. (The POR-Combate is the Bolivian section of the Fourth International). A Press Commission was headed by the

MNRH, the MNRI, and the MLN. An Organizing Commission was entrusted to the CP, the PDC, the PRA, and the PRIN.

Each commission was rounded out with three members of the Executive Committee of the COB. The COB, like the political parties, called for a mobilization to force Natusch to renounce his adventure.

The Natusch government sent delegations to negotiate with the COB. But these delegations were rejected. Nonetheless, Colonel Natusch invited Juan Lechín, the leader of the COB, to come to the presidential palace to get a report on Natusch's intentions.

November 3

Lechín came to the palace on the morning of November 3. Natusch again stated his desire to respect the constitution and to hold new elections on May 1, 1980. At the same time he declared that the parliament had not been dissolved, but simply "suspended," and that he was ready to designate a worker to be manager of COMIBOL, the Bolivian state mining company. Lechín and the COB delegates refused to take part in any negotiations. At the same time they pointed out that they did not support the Guevara government,

but that they were defending the democratic process.

The same day, starting at 11 a.m., workers and students organized a series of demonstrations and the first clash took place. The workers blew up a bridge at Villa Victoria to prevent tanks from entering working-class neighborhoods. Very bloody clashes with the police ensued.

Several hours later, five regiments of riot-police sent a delegation to the union headquarters to say that they were opposed to the coup. The workers considered this step a victory for the COB. At almost the same time, the Guevara government, operating clandestinely, came to the COB seeking coordination with the activity of the workers.

At 8 p.m. there was a big meeting involving trade-union and political leaders in a riot-police barracks. Around three hundred riot-police openly declared their agreement with the COB. At the same moment, four officers of the riot-police, among them Lieutenant-Colonel Rubin de Selis, were shot by the army. A short while later troops supporting the coup surrounded all the riot-police facilities and disarmed and arrested them.

Beginning at 10 p.m., members of the left parties fought with military detachments and there were injuries. A number of army officers expressed their readiness to bring

Political Organizations and Unions

The following are the political and trade-union organizations mentioned in the accompanying articles.

ADN—Acción Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Action), General Banzer's group.

APIN—Alianza para la Integración Nacional (Alliance for National Integration).

COB—Central Obrera Boliviana (Bolivian Workers Federation).

MIR—Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), a Social Democratic Group.

MITKA—Movimiento Túpac Katari (Túpac Katari Movement), upholds a form of nationalism that stresses the Indian heritage of Bolivia's Quechua- and Aymara-speaking population.

MNRH—Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario Histórico (Historic Revolutionary Nationalist Movement), Paz Estenssoro's group.

MNRI—Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario Izquierda (Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement), Siles Zuazo's group.

MNR-Alianza—An electoral front composed of the MNRH, PDC, PC-ML, and PRA.

PCB—Partido Comunista Boliviano

(Bolivian Communist Party), the pro-Moscow CP.

PC-ML—Partido Comunista Marxista-Leninista (Marxist-Leninist Communist Party), pro-Peking.

PDC—Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party).

POR—Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers Party), Bolivian section of the Fourth International, often called POR-Combate.

PRA—Partido Revolucionario Auténtico (Authentic Revolutionary Party), Guevara Arce's group.

PRIN—Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista (Revolutionary Party of the Nationalist Left), led by COB head Juan Lechín Oguendo.

PS—Partido Socialista (Socialist Party), led by Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz.

PUB—Partido de Unidad Boliviana (Bolivian Unity Party).

UDP—Unidad Democrática Popular (Democratic People's Unity), an electoral front composed of the MNRI, PCB, and MIR.

VC-POR—Vanguardia Comunista del POR (Communist Vanguard of the POR).

VO—Vanguardia Obrera (Workers Vanguard).

their units into the working-class neighborhoods to distribute arms there. But the majority of these officers were arrested.

In the Alto neighborhood in La Paz, the population fought an all-day battle on Saturday, November 3. Fifty people were killed and a hundred wounded.

November 4

On Sunday, November 4, beginning at 7 a.m., thousands of workers and students spontaneously began to build barricades in the neighborhoods of La Paz, especially in Villa Fatima, Villa Victoria, Tejar, Chamoco Chico, Villa Nueva Potosí, Tembaderani, Avenida Buenos Aires, and Garita de Lima. Bloody clashes took place. The army especially directed their fire at women and children in order to terrorize the population, but the only result was to provoke further clashes.

In face of this resistance by the working class and the people, the military government proclaimed martial law. Toward 8 p.m., hundreds of young people took up positions behind the barricades, armed with molotov cocktails and sticks of dynamite. The army sent about a hundred tanks and shock troops into the working-class neighborhoods to rush the barricades. Many civilians were killed or wounded.

At about 10 p.m. on Avenida Buenos Aires the army began breaking into houses and rounding people up. All young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five were immediately seized and shot. Their bodies were taken in trucks to unknown destinations.

Much later, on November 9, peasants reported that they had seen naked bodies buried in the Alto Cota Cota region and

had witnessed three trucks transporting the bodies of youth toward Chuspipata (in the Yungas).

Early on Sunday, November 4, only the radio stations of the army and the state were functioning. Later, however, the miners' radio stations were able to resume their transmissions and the demonstrators could get information of the situation. The COB decided to organize the resistance through a step-up of twenty-four-hour strikes until Natusch's departure.

November 5

On Monday, November 5, beginning at 8 in the morning, in all the residential neighborhoods of La Paz and in the commercial center of the city where the ministries are located, thousands of public employees, workers, youth, and students spontaneously set up barricades, taking advantage of the army's withdrawal toward the city's strategic points. In some cases people attacked the tanks with stones.

The strike called by the COB became a genuine popular insurrection. In response, air force planes machine-gunned demonstrators in the center of town and in the Garita de Lima neighborhood, and all afternoon helicopter gunships attacked the working-class neighborhoods of Pura Pura, Munaypata, and Achachicala, resulting in a number of casualties among the inhabitants.

In Villa Fatima another bridge was blown up and the battle against the troops lasted all of Monday.

November 6

On Tuesday, November 6, the situation remained unchanged. The country re-

mained paralyzed. Even in Santa Cruz, one of the traditional bastions of the right wing, work completely stopped. In the mining regions, the miners and the general population set up struggle committees to fight back any incursion by the army.

In the countryside the mobilization did not begin until Tuesday, November 6, but then it had quite significant results. In the Cochabamba region, the peasants marched on the cities. In Achacachi they attacked a garrison, disarmed the soldiers, and took their weapons.

In the Coro Coro mine region the workers, residents, and peasants went to the regiment in the area to fraternize with the soldiers and through this prevent them from being shifted to La Paz.

The activists of the political parties played a positive role, especially in providing information about the strikes and the decisions taken by the COB.

November 7

Unhappily, due to the lack of concrete objectives and preparation for the clashes, the mass mobilizations resulted in full-scale massacres. According to reports appearing in the press through November 10, there were 230 deaths, 123 disappearances, and 350 wounded. These are the official figures and it will be difficult to learn the whole truth.

On the evening of Wednesday, November 7, the COB called a news conference to announce the suspension of the general strike. This was a truce aimed at preventing a total massacre of the population by the army. □

After Two Years of 'Institutionalization'

Bolivian Political Situation Remains Deeply Unstable

By Livio Maitan

A little more than two years ago Bolivia's rulers embarked on a process of "institutionalization," an attempt to carry out a gradual and orderly transition from military to civilian rule. A simple listing of the chronology of events since then provides eloquent evidence of the failure of that process.

On November 9, 1977, General Hugo Banzer, who had been in power for six years, a record for Bolivia, announced the opening of the new stage. New elections were slated for the following July and were to be preceded by an amnesty. Under pressure from an increasingly broad mass movement, the amnesty was rapidly turned into a general amnesty and all

restrictions on trade-union activities were ended.

The elections took place on July 9, 1978. They were, however, characterized by flagrant vote frauds. Hernán Siles Zuazo, the candidate of the Democratic People's Unity (UDP), who in all probability won a majority of the votes, lost the election to the candidate of the right, Gen. Juan Pereda, who had the support of Gen. Banzer.

The National Electoral Court had to invalidate the election results. (Gen. Pereda himself had to ask that this be done.) On July 21, 1978, Pereda launched a coup and replaced Banzer before new elections could be held.

On November 18 Pereda announced that the new elections would not take place before May 1980. Three days later, on November 21, General David Padilla, the leader of what he calls the "institutionalist" military officers, overthrew Pereda and began to organize elections for July 1, 1979. He was supported by the UDP. Padilla himself had to confront two cabinet crises, one on January 15, 1979, and a second, more serious one, on May 9. On July 22 Gen. Padilla had to replace the minister of defense.

The elections took place on July 1, 1979, but none of the three presidential candidates received an absolute majority. The two front-runners, Siles Zuazo and Paz

Estenssoro, ran neck-and-neck. The parliament, which was to decide between the two, appeared to be opting for Paz Estenssoro. The Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) organized a general strike on August 2 to protest the fraudulent parliamentary maneuvers.

On August 8, despite the COB's efforts, a compromise solution was imposed. The parliament elected the president of the senate, Walter Guevara Arce, as president of Bolivia, although Guevara had not been one of the candidates in the general election.

Guevara announced that new elections would be held in May 1980 and formed a caretaker government made up of people who were not well-known political figures. He had to reshuffle his cabinet on October 12, 1979.

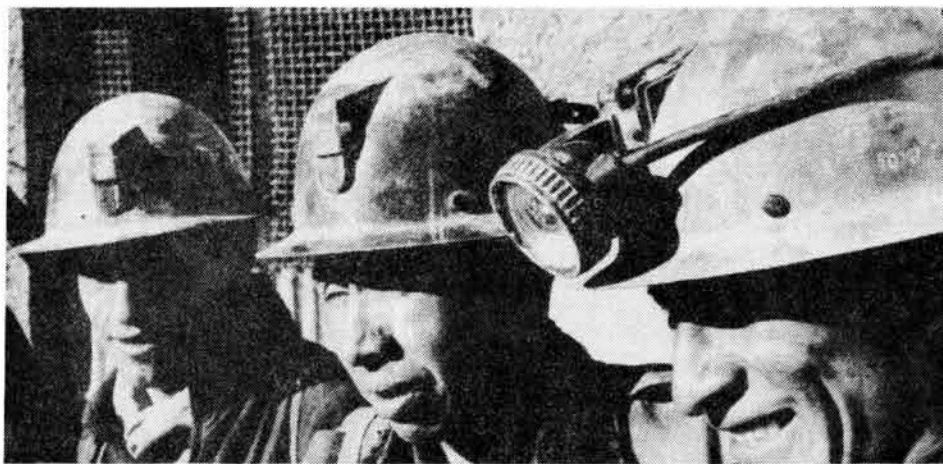
The previous day, October 11, an abortive military mini-coup had broken out in Beni. Its leaders were demanding the replacement of Guevara with a military man and dissolution of the parliament.

On November 1, Col Alberto Natusch Busch launched a new coup, but the big units in the interior and Gen. Padilla opposed it. Guevara refused to resign as president and the parliament refused to recognize Natusch's *fait accompli*. The COB organized the workers counterattack against the coup.

As a result, Natusch had to step down on November 16. In a new compromise, Lidia Gueiler, the president of the Chamber of Deputies and a supporter of the MNR-Alianza, was elected to replace Guevara. She formed a government composed of one military man (the minister of defense), 8 members of the MNRH (the group led by Víctor Paz Estenssoro), 4 members of the PDC, 3 from the MNRI (led by Siles Zuazo), 2 from the PRIN, and one from the PC-ML.

On November 23, 1979, the right-wing Gen. García Meza was the leader of a dramatic protest against the designation of René Villarroel as commander of the army. García Meza won his demand: Gen. Hugo Rocha, a "hardliner," was named to head the army while Armando Reyes became head of the armed forces.

This is the balance sheet of two years of institutionalization!



Tin miners are a decisive sector of Bolivian working class.

An article in the April 16, 1979 *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, p. 398, contained an analysis of the divisions that exist within the ruling class. These divisions have been confirmed in the clearest form, both through the elections and through what has taken place in the course of the past two months.

One grouping feels that the armed forces must continue to run the political regime, even if, after the prolonged experience of the Banzer regime, some civilian cover is needed.

Another grouping, which is itself divided, favors a return to civilian authority. A conservative wing is grouped around Paz Estenssoro, while a center-left or reformist wing supports Siles Zuazo.

Moreover, the successive coups last year by Pereda and Padilla, and the conflicts that broke out during Natusch's coup have confirmed that the armed forces themselves are divided along similar lines.

The previously mentioned article gave some indication of the social forces behind these political alignments. We must guard against setting up categories that are too rigid and might prove arbitrary. Nonetheless, it is clear that at the present stage the right wing on the whole represents the interests of the agrarian bourgeoisie, the layers involved in the exploitation of petroleum, and the big commercial interests, while the center-left is supported by the

industrialists of the La Paz region, mining interests, other commercial sectors, and sectors of the construction industry. In terms of the masses, the elections confirmed that the bloc between the regime and important sectors of the peasants, which for quite some time had been a point of strength for the conservatives, has been deeply shaken.

What led to the fact that the compromise reached in August with the election of Guevara Arce was torpedoed faster than had been generally expected?

One element is the economic situation. The growth rate, which in the most favorable period fluctuated around 6 percent, had fallen to 3.6 percent in 1978. In 1979 it fell to 3 percent. (The population growth rate is around 2.6 percent.)

More significantly, the foreign debt reached enormous proportions. According to Guevara, the foreign debt is close to the total GNP. Moreover, Guevara asserted that "the crisis that was masked for years has reached a climax." There would be a further worsening of the economic situation if the United States actually carried out its decision to dump 35,000 tons of tin on the market, thereby reducing Bolivia's potential foreign exchange earnings.

Some observers feel that Washington was actually trying to blackmail Guevara to get him to accept the plan for economic recovery worked out by the International Monetary Fund. Among other measures, this plan included a devaluation of the currency, an increase in the price of hydrocarbons, and a worsening of the tax burden.

At any rate, it is clear that a government based on such a precarious equilibrium was not in the best position to impose these measures, measures that were likely to provoke violent reactions (we should note in passing that this was confirmed by the demonstrations that took place at the beginning of December).

Guevara, for his part, did not hide his intention of exploiting the situation to

Results of July 1979 Election

Group	Votes	Percentage	Representatives	
			Chamber	Senate
UDP	528,696	35.98	37	8
MNR(Paz)	527,184	35.88	43	16
ADN	218,587	14.88	21	3
PS	70,765	4.81	6	-
APIN	60,262	4.10	6	-
MITKA	28,344	1.93	1	-
PUB	18,979	1.29	2	-
VO	16,560	1.13	-	-

(The POR called for a vote for the PS.)

strengthen his own position. He was pushing a maneuver aimed at unifying the MNRH and MNRI—a maneuver that would culminate by discarding the two “historic” rivals, Paz and Siles. He asked that his term be prolonged for two years or more. He demanded full powers to confront the economic situation.

At the same time, Guevara tried to draw the maximum advantages from the Organization of American States (OAS) session that was held in La Paz at the end of October. He wanted it to bestow some sort of blessing on the new Bolivian “democracy,” and he hoped to score some points on the question of Bolivia’s gaining access to the sea. On this second point, an incredible chauvinistic propaganda campaign was officially organized while the OAS was meeting, and the OAS adopted a motion favorable to Bolivia which, while remaining purely verbal, represented to some extent a blow to Chile.

However, part of the ruling class and armed forces were not ready to place their bets on Guevara. In particular, they felt that it would be best to attack the workers and peasants movement while it was still at the stage of rebuilding and recouping its strength, before it became characterized by generalized combativeness.

It is difficult to determine whether Natusch was motivated primarily by this, obviously incorrect, assessment of the state of the workers and peasants movement. But it would be wrong to think that he rushed into this ill-conceived undertaking all alone.

It is true that, given the way events unfolded, he was condemned virtually unanimously, both within Bolivia and internationally. But it is clear that at least a segment of the MNRH, and even of the MNRI—probably sectors that were afraid they would have to pay the price of the reunification maneuver under Guevara’s auspices—encouraged the unfortunate Colonel’s initiative. Some names have been put forward: Fellman Velarde and Guillermo Bedregal for the MNRH, Sandoval Moron and Abel Ayoroa for the MNRI.

But neither Natusch nor his known and unknown accomplices expected that the reaction of the masses would be so strong and would achieve such a large scale.

It is significant, for example, that even in the right-wing stronghold of Santa Cruz the work stoppages achieved a high degree of success, and important mobilizations took place in the peasant regions. In the mining provinces the response was in keeping with the best traditions of the miners. In La Paz, according to several witnesses, the movement was larger than in the proudest days of the 1971 resistance to Gen. Banzer’s coup.

As a result, despite the violence of the repression and the fact that the COB had to suspend the general strike, the sponsors of the coup had to retreat and acknowledge their defeat.

The November events have a significance that goes beyond Bolivia. They reveal the contradictions inherent in the “institutionalization” operations that the Latin American bourgeoisies and U.S. imperialism have been preparing for several years. This attempt at “institutionalization” is being put forward in the wake of the extreme erosion of a whole series of military dictatorships. Its aim is to try to prepare alternatives to these military regimes in time to prevent the whole system from being threatened.

But when “institutionalization” is accompanied by a reawakening or resurgent mass movement, it is hard to hold the process within the hoped-for limits. And in the final analysis, “institutionalization” cannot prevent the mass movement from exploiting every opening, however limited, to reorganize and to increase its strength.

And the undertaking becomes still more

Bolivian Trotskyists Hold National Congress

The Partido Obrero Revolucionario, the Bolivian section of the Fourth International, held a national congress on October 27 and 28, the eve of the coup by Colonel Natusch.

As the newspapers in La Paz noted, the congress included an open session at which representatives of organizations in the workers movement spoke. Among the speakers were a representative of the Socialist Party led by Quiroga Santa Cruz; Antonio Peredo, who spoke in the name of the PRT-ELN; a representative from Vanguardia Obrera and from the Vanguardia Comunista del POR. These last two organizations claim adherence to Trotskyism and sent observers to the recently concluded World Congress of the Fourth International.

The national congress, attended by more than 150 delegates and guests, confirmed that a great majority of the POR is made up of workers and peasants, and that the POR has also been successful in implanting itself in the student movement to a greater extent than in the past. Among those present at the congress were trade-union cadres from the main unions, miners, peasants from the La Paz region, comrades leading provincial and regional union bodies, and a comrade who is a member of the national leadership of the COB.

The delegates discussed a document analyzing the questions on the agenda of the World Congress as well as a resolution on the national situation and the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in this period. As can be seen in the accompanying article, the members of the POR were involved in the front lines in the mobilizations led by the COB against the November 1 reactionary coup.

In the last issue in October of its paper,

difficult when the economic situation makes it impossible to project a policy of concessions that could provide some satisfaction for the needs of the masses, when in fact the economic situation requires drastic measures that are themselves likely to provoke bitter conflicts and explosions.

For well-known historic as well as immediate reasons, all this is expressed in Bolivia in extreme, almost paradoxical forms. And it is easy to predict that the November coup will not be the last somersault in a still-explosive situation.

But the Bolivian situation simply reflects the contradictions that are inherent in the present course of the bourgeoisie throughout the continent. Sharp turns, rapid changes in the situation, spectacular events, dramatic confrontations—these are the general features of Latin America in the period we are now entering. □

Combate, the POR published a draft of a “Workers and People’s” Economic Plan. The draft presents a working-class response to the problems posed by the economic crisis, while pointing out that such a plan can only be achieved through a revolutionary mobilization of the masses.

The document adopted by the national congress outlines the following tasks for the organization:

- To unite the masses and the workers parties to oppose the government’s economic plans and to thwart the fascist danger. To strengthen the COB and the revolutionary united front of the masses, the left parties, and tendencies around the COB.

- To struggle on the national level to defend the standard of living of the workers and masses of people, who have been hit hard by inflation and the price hikes. For an across-the-board wage hike, with a 5,000-peso minimum wage and an escalator clause linked to inflation. Unification of platforms in a united struggle. For a price freeze.

- To impose collective workers control over industry, including state-run industry, in order to counter corruption, waste, and improper investments.

- To organize trade-union self-defense squads to put a halt to the activities of the paramilitary terrorist gangs.

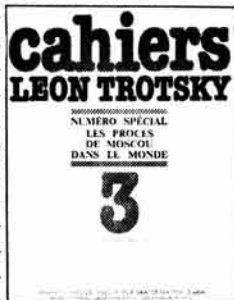
- To expand the civil liberties of the masses, establish total trade-union freedom, including full compliance in regard to company payment of union leaders’ wages, etc.

The building of the mass workers party is the cornerstone of the revolutionary process. Without such a party, it is not possible to win. To move forward the workers must understand this, for building the mass workers party is a political task of the working class as a whole. □

Resources for Socialists

'Moscow Trials Around the World'

Issue number 3 of *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* has just reached the United States. This is the French quarterly magazine (its title can be translated as Leon Trotsky Studies or Leon Trotsky Notebooks) which specializes in information and analyses of the revolutionary movement and its leaders in Trotsky's time (1879-1940). Its scope and aims were explained and its first issue was warmly welcomed in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, April 16, 1979, p. 387.



Number 3 is a special issue about "Moscow trials around the world." Its focus is not on the Moscow trials of 1936-38, through which the Stalinist bureaucracy launched the purges that wiped out all opposition to its totalitarian domination in the USSR, but on (1) the activities of the trials' opponents in three countries; (2) Moscow-type frame-ups that were concocted by Stalin's secret police in three countries; and (3) the attempts to cover up the Soviet secret police's crimes that were made by a typical Stalinist newspaper.

(1) In the United States the active opposition to the Moscow trials was organized around the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, (ACDLT), whose work made possible the creation of an international commission (usually called the Dewey commission, after its chairman, John Dewey), which investigated the first two Moscow trials in 1937 and found them to be frame-ups. The ACDLT's history is described in the *Cahiers* by Gérard Roche, in an article reviewing a 1974 Ph. D. thesis on the subject written in Massachusetts; the Dewey commission is recalled in Alan Wald's excellent essay from the *Antioch Review* in 1977; and the picture is rounded out by the final report on the ACDLT's activities made by its secretary, George Novack, shortly before it dissolved in 1938.

The story of the French Committee for an Inquiry into the Moscow Trials is much less known in the United States than the ACDLT's, and very little about it has been in print in France. That is now corrected by Gérard Roche's careful and informative study of the ups and downs of the French committee, and how it coped with the many problems it faced in a country where the Communist Party was very strong.

Immediately after the first trial in August 1936, Trotsky was interned by the Norwegian government and thus pre-

vented from answering the Stalinist charges for several months. One device he hit on to get around this was to file suit against the Stalinists for their slanders, first in Norway and then, after the Norwegian government passed a special law forbidding such a suit by him, in other countries. David Vogelsanger, who is studying the history of Trotskyism in Switzerland, here uncovers the story of the suit on behalf of Trotsky filed in the courts of Basel, and the difficulties it encountered.

(2) The skepticism with which many people abroad greeted the Moscow trials drove Stalin and his secret police to organize or instigate similar frame-ups of his opponents in other countries. The outstanding example was in Spain during the Civil War, when the Stalinists resorted to widespread murder and kidnapping to destroy the left-people's Frontist Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) and the anti-people's Frontist partisans of the Fourth International. To justify the repression they accused these antifascist opponents of being pro-Franco fifth columnists, which led to their arrest and prosecution. In *Cahiers* René Revol examines the literature new and old to bring up to date our knowledge about the infamous trial of the POUM, the kidnapping and murder of POUM leader Andres Nin, the discovery and execution of a Stalinist stool pigeon who infiltrated the POUM, and the trial of the Fourth Internationalists.

In Czechoslovakia, Anton Grylewicz, a German refugee and leader of the Fourth International, was arrested by the Czech police in 1937 as an alleged spy for the German Nazis after the Stalinists planted some Moscow-trial-type documents in an old suitcase being held for him by an alleged friend. Pierre Broué's account of this incident, which did considerable damage to the Czech movement before charges were dropped against Grylewicz, makes it clear that the alleged friend was a Soviet agent, something that Grylewicz and his comrades did not suspect at the time.

And in the United States there was the mysterious Robinson-Rubens case, which was intended, among other things, to discredit the Dewey commission just as it was about to announce its verdict on the first two Moscow trials at the end of 1937. But this rather bizarre effort to provide Americans or people with American passports who would "confess" ties with the commission and Trotsky at a future Moscow trial became a fiasco for the Kremlin and had to be abandoned because it threatened to produce exposure of several Stalinist crimes in the United States, including the kidnapping and liquidation of a former CP leader, Juliet Stuart Poyntz, who had become disillusioned with Stalinism and

was about to denounce it publicly. Pierre Broué's thorough and detailed investigation of this complicated case is certainly the most complete and informative treatment it has received in any language.

(3) In "When *l'Humanité* covered up the tracks of the killers," Jean-Paul Joubert examines how the French CP's daily paper presented two famous murders committed by the Soviet secret police—that of Ignace Reiss, who broke with Stalinism in 1937 because of the Moscow trials, and of Rudolf Klement, administrative secretary in charge of preparations for the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938.

In addition, *Cahiers* contains an over-all introduction by Pierre Broué, a chronology, 17 documents (including letters, articles and manifestoes by Leon Sedov, Marcel Martinet, Pierre Naville, Juan Andrade, Anton Grylewicz, James P. Cannon, Herbert Solow, and Carlo Tresca), and eleven short biographies of principal figures mentioned in this issue.

Since number 3 is 248 pages, almost twice as long as the normal issues, it has a special price—35 francs (a franc equals U.S.\$0.25). The price of foreign subscriptions is 85 francs for the first four issues (that's for Numbers 1 through 4, including the special number 3). Foreign subs for 1980 (Numbers 5 through 8) will be 100 francs. The price of air mail subs can be learned from the Institute, whose address is 29 rue Descartes, 75005 Paris, France.

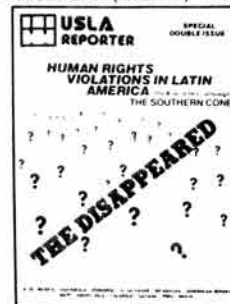
Because of its historical and scholarly nature, the *Cahiers* cannot hope for mass circulation today. That makes it all the more imperative for it to get support, especially in the form of subscriptions, from the relatively few people who are now interested in the history of the Fourth International and its early leaders.

George Breitman
December 27

One of Mexico's 'Disappeared' Speaks Out

The U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) has published a special double issue of *USLA Reporter*, with important new information on political repression in a number of countries.

Especially significant is the testimony of Bertha Alicia Lopez García



de Zazueta, a Mexican woman who was kidnapped in April 1979 by the paramilitary Brigada Blanca (White Brigade), and held in a clandestine prison for four months, during which she was brutally tortured. Her case differs from those of hundreds of other "disappeared" Mexican activists only in that she was released alive, and dared to tell her story despite the threat of reprisals from her captors. Her detailed account, which appears in English for the first time in the *USLA Reporter*, offers unique, first-hand evidence of the operation of semi-official death squads and secret prisons whose existence the Mexican regime refuses to acknowledge.

The new *USLA Reporter* also announces the launching of a campaign on behalf of

political prisoners in the Southern Cone of Latin America—Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Among the estimated 18,000 political prisoners (not counting thousands more "disappeared") of the Argentine military dictatorship is José Francisco Páez, an auto workers' union leader and former vice-presidential candidate of the Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PST). Although Páez has been in prison since before the 1976 military coup, he has never been brought to trial. His arbitrary imprisonment has been protested by hundreds of trade unions, professional organizations, and prominent individuals around the world.

Argentine law allows political prisoners

(those not accused of any criminal acts) the option of going into exile, and in May 1979 authorities in the United States approved a visa for Páez to enter the U.S. as a refugee. Nevertheless, the Argentine regime has still not let him out. USLA is urging that letters or telegrams inquiring about the status of Páez's emigration request and asking for his immediate release be sent to Argentine embassies and consulates, with copies to USLA.

The new *USLA Reporter* also contains information on Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Peru, and Puerto Rico. Copies can be obtained by sending \$1.00 to USLA, 200 Park Avenue South Suite 812, New York, NY 10003.

Dan Dickeson

Pierre Frank's Message to Trotsky Centenary

'He Spoke Plainly, Acted Vigorously, Could Face Adversity'

[Following is the text of a message sent by Pierre Frank, a veteran leader of the Fourth International, to the commemorative meeting held in Mexico City last November 5-7 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Leon Trotsky (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, December 3, 1979, page 1180).

[Pierre Frank became a supporter of the International Left Opposition in 1927 and was expelled from the French Communist Party in 1929 for "Trotskyism." During 1932 and 1933 he served as secretary to Trotsky, who was living in forced exile on the island of Prinkipo in Turkey.]

* * *

Dear friends and comrades,

I greatly regret that I am unable to attend the ceremonies and meetings you are organizing for the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Leon Trotsky, and that I can only participate in them by sending this message.

There is no need to remind all those who will answer your call that Leon Trotsky was the kind of genius of whom only three or four are born in a century, or that he devoted his entire life to the service of the working class and its struggle for socialism.

But it should be recalled that among the great revolutionaries of history, Trotsky has been one of the most, if not the most, vilified. It is true that the foulest of these slanders, which were used to instigate his assassination, are no longer generally heard. But the historical truth about his life and work is still a long way from having triumphed.

One example will suffice to prove this. The 250 million Soviet citizens do not yet have the opportunity to know the real history of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions in

their country, because to make known the outstanding role that Leon Trotsky played in those revolutions would be dangerous for the heirs of Stalin who now rule the Kremlin.

That is why the ceremonies marking the hundredth anniversary, in Mexico City and many cities around the world, are not pious tributes to the memory of a great man, but are an episode in a continuing struggle to see historical truth triumph and to move forward the march of all of humanity toward socialism.

In this message I would like to confine myself to stressing, as succinctly as possible, the continuity and continual growth that marked Leon Trotsky's political thought and action. At the beginning of the century, he was the youngest member of the editorial board of *Iskra*; he was barely more than twenty years old when he was involved alongside Plekhanov and Lenin in the work of introducing Marxism to the young Russian proletariat and organizing it.

It was in the course of the 1905 revolution that he gave the first measure of his personal qualities, in the sphere of action as well as theory. He chaired the sessions of history's first soviet, the Petrograd Soviet.

Once the revolution was crushed, although he maintained his reservations about Lenin in regard to party organization—reservations that did not disappear until fifteen years later—Trotsky was in fact the only one besides Lenin to enrich Marxism through drawing the lessons of the revolution.

But regarding the prospects for the next revolution in the Tsarist Empire, Trotsky drew the lessons of 1905 with much more audacity than Lenin. He was only twenty-seven years old when he formulated the

theory of permanent revolution, which postulated that the coming Russian revolution would be led by the proletariat, drawing the peasantry behind it, and would give rise to a workers state that would abolish capitalist exploitation.

This perspective was confirmed in October 1917, and in that revolution Trotsky was found at Lenin's side in the most responsible positions. He played a particularly essential role in the creation of the Red Army, practically from scratch, an army he led to victory against the coalition of White armies and expeditionary forces of the capitalist powers, which included both World War I allies and enemies.

Moreover, in August 1914, he had been among the handful of militants who did not let themselves be drawn into the abandonment of proletarian internationalism by the parties of the Second International. Trotsky participated in the first gathering held at Zimmerwald in 1915, writing its call to the workers.

In 1919, he took part in the founding of the Communist International. In those years, although he was very busy with the problems of the young workers state, he devoted a large part of his time to the work of the International, to aid in the education of young Communist parties and develop answers to the new problems of strategy and tactics that confronted these parties and the workers movement.

He seemed at that time to be at the height of his glory and his powers and unable to rise any higher. But history, taking an unexpected course, would enable him to provide, under exceptionally adverse conditions, the most striking examples of his genius and character. Roughly five years after the October 1917 victory one of the most tragic events in history began. This was the bureaucratic degener-

ation of the Soviet Union, in the course of which the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International would unfortunately be destroyed.

At the beginning, the majority of the Political Bureau did not understand the danger that threatened. Lenin and Trotsky were preparing to fight it as a minority. But Lenin died and Trotsky remained alone to launch the fight.

Trotsky then showed that the years of power had in no way softened either his revolutionary convictions, his capacities for political analysis and orientation, or his combative power. While men like Zinoviev and Bukharin involuntarily acted as stepping-stones for Stalin, Trotsky explained the conditions that favored the growth of the bureaucracy, outlined the new tasks resulting from the situation, and helped institute the planning and industrialization of the Soviet Union. He prepared for an event that was to be farther off than he expected—the anti-bureaucratic political revolution destined to restore workers democracy in the Soviet Union, which is the precondition for going from “existing socialism,” with its still rampant gulag, to real socialism.

At the same time, he waged a struggle against the consequences of the bureaucracy's policy outside the borders of the Soviet Union, a policy that was to lead to very heavy defeats for the masses. In battling against the policy of alliance—in reality, of subordination—to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang, he generalized the theory of permanent revolution, extending it to China, and, by extension, to the colonial and semicolonial countries.

In this way, Trotsky formulated the biggest acquisition of revolutionary Marxism since Marx, by showing that in the twentieth century socialism was the goal of the struggle not only in the economically developed capitalist countries, but also for the very big majority of the human race that is exploited and oppressed by imperialism.

This theory of permanent revolution became the axis of the struggle against the bureaucracy's “socialism in one country.” He also sounded the alarm against the rising Hitlerite danger in Germany, appealing—unfortunately in vain—for unity in action, for a united front of the mass workers parties, and, with an incomparable lucidity, assessing the biggest defeat that the working class has ever experienced in its history, and the new world war that would result from it.

Finally, in that period of frenzied reaction, remaining faithful to proletarian internationalism, Trotsky undertook to found a new international, the Fourth International, in the face of the disintegration of the workers internationals, and despite the very minimal forces gathered around him. For five years, until the day he died, he devoted the bulk of his energies to this work, which he said was “the most

important” work of his life, “more important than 1917, more important than the civil war period.”

Whereas he waged a battle of ideas, with his pen, through books, pamphlets, and articles, he ran up against not other ideas, but slanders and monstrous repression that, in the Moscow Trials, struck down all those who led the October revolution and that exterminated his children.

Trotsky knew that Stalin was preparing his assassination. This assassination would be carried out at a time that was both the apex of Stalin's crimes and when, with the European continent crushed by the Nazi terror, Hitler was getting ready to make war on the Soviet Union. During that whole time, Trotsky remained firm, unshakable, not wasting a single minute, pursuing his activity without faltering in the slightest.

Allow me, in conclusion, to say a few words of a more personal nature. First of all, to Trotsky's name I would like to join the name Natalia, his companion. I was at her bedside in Paris at the end of her life. She also showed to the end an unparalleled strength of character that certainly contributed greatly to that shown by Trotsky in the dark years of his exile.

I am sure she would have wanted me to repeat here what she told me—namely, how grateful Trotsky and she were to your former president, Lázaro Cárdenas, for having granted them during those years the right to asylum that was denied them everywhere, especially by those rich capitalist countries that proclaimed themselves the supposed champions of democracy. What would have been a mere gesture in the euphoric periods of flourishing capitalism had become an act of courage, an act of courage that is even rarer today.

I am one of the survivors of those few

militants who joined with Leon Trotsky more than half a century ago when his last exile began. Some of them, as well as others who had joined us later, perished in the fight. Others abandoned a struggle that was so difficult and promised so little in the way of rapid successes.

I would like to say, however, that after so many years when difficulties piled up, and when it is only recently that somewhat more tangible hopes have appeared, it is a great happiness in my life to have known Trotsky and to have been able to participate in the struggle at his side.

How many men and women were duped for many long years by the crimes and lies heaped on Trotsky and on us. How many people confused a “socialism” stained with so many infamous deeds with socialism plain and simple, people who today bemoan the sidetracked and lost efforts of their lives and can hardly reorient themselves.

We of course bear the marks of the blows we received. But what happiness it is for me to have very early turned toward the man who could speak plainly, act vigorously, and face adversity! What happiness to have been inspired by his example and to have drawn substantial strength from it. What happiness to be able to say that in the long march we have made, and that is not yet completed, together with Trotsky and because of him, we did not waste our lives. On the contrary, during that whole time we pointed the only way forward that can lead to victory, one that the great masses will take up.

I am sure that the young generations of today, and those of the future, will take this road in ever greater numbers, and that one day, humanity in its entirety will celebrate Leon Trotsky as one of the greatest pioneers of its emancipation.

Interview With Palestinian Freedom Fighter

[The following interview with Saleh Baransi was obtained by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* in December, 1979. Baransi, who was on a tour of the United States, recently completed ten years in prison for his opposition to the Zionist state and its oppression of the Palestinian people.]

Question: Could you begin by giving a brief account of your personal and political background?

Answer: I was born in Taibe in 1929. I completed my elementary studies in Taibe, then I went to Jerusalem to study in a secondary school. I registered at the An-Nahda College. In 1947 I had completed my secondary studies and I registered in the Arab College in Jerusalem in 1948 to continue my higher studies. But the war broke out, so I couldn't go on.

In 1951 I was appointed as a teacher of Arabic in secondary schools. In 1956 I was

one of the founders of the Popular Front, which was a front of all leftist groups in Israel who were ready to fight against the racism and discrimination practiced against the Arabs.

In 1958 I was one of the founders of Al Ard movement—that is, the Land movement. In 1960 I was dismissed from my job without compensation. I was placed under house arrest from 1960 to 1969. During this period I was also arrested several times under Article 111 of the Emergency Regulations [these articles in the Israeli legal code were taken over from the British colonial regime]. I spent about three or four years—not successively—in prison without being accused of any crime.

In 1969 I was arrested and for the first time officially charged with being a member of a Palestinian resistance organization, which was not named. During the hearing of the case they failed to prove my membership in any Palestine resistance

organization, but I was convicted of trying to establish an illegal organization, a hostile illegal organization in Israel, and I was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. I was released on March 7, 1979.

Q. Just recently there was a big victory in the case of Bassam al-Shaka, the mayor of Nablus, who the Israeli regime had intended to deport. Could you indicate what impact the mobilizations on the West Bank around his case and the victory in it have had on the Palestinians living inside Israel?

A. Before answering that I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the policy that was practiced against Bassam Shaka was a policy that was also followed against the Arabs who remained in Israel after 1948.

The Israelis always refused to recognize the right of Arabs to form their own organizations and to defend their own rights. Their method was to prevent the establishment of any organization by victimizing the leaders in the struggle for human rights, or, as in the West Bank, against the occupation.

It's quite difficult for them to crush an organization. It's easier to crush individuals. And in the absence of organizations, the struggle will be led by people who are vulnerable, who have no organizations to defend them.

This is what happened in Israel after 1948. We were never allowed to form an organization of our own, and whenever there was a leadership that flourished it was easy for the authorities to crush it.

This policy is now followed in the West Bank. All the organizations were dissolved. So individual leaders became of great weight in leading the struggle, so they are always vulnerable because there is no organization to defend them.

In the case of Bassam Shaka, he is a leading figure in the struggle against occupation. They wanted to deport him to hinder the national struggle.

Q. Yet despite this policy there was an effective defense campaign mounted.

A. That's true. Because repression cannot achieve its aims when the people are conscious and ready to face it. And that was the case. We didn't yield—neither the Arabs in Israel nor the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza.

We faced this policy, and we opposed it, and we struggled against it. And we succeeded.

Now, about your question—about the impact this had. I think the Palestinians in the occupied areas are now more self-confident and have higher morale. It is the first time that Israel has yielded to world public opinion. The first time.

Q. Over the past few years there has been a change in attitude toward the Palestinian struggle. There have been a

number of dramatic shifts. Some of the high points were the invitation to Yassir Arafat to speak at the United Nations, the UN's condemnation of Zionism as a form of racism, the Iranian revolution, and the reaction of Black leaders in the United States—and more and more people in the United States in general—who are beginning to recognize the justice of the demands of the Palestinians. What do you think about that?

A. First of all, I agree with you that there is a change, although it is still a slight one. The beginning is always like that, and it will become larger and larger.

But to speak of the change, I have to speak on two levels, the public level and the official level.

On the public level the change began because people were misinformed and misled, and when the facts were put before them and proved to them, the change began.

But on the official level it is different. Governments did not change their policy because they began to see the facts. In my opinion they always knew the facts.

They supported Israel because of their interests—from either a strategic point of view, or because they considered Israel to be the guard, the defender, of their interests in the Middle East. The change was a result of the struggle of our people. It was a change that was imposed on these governments, imposed on these regimes. It was not something that was given willingly.

When the people began to struggle, they began to impose their will and to force others to recognize the rights that were denied to them.

Q. How do you see the role of the Iranian revolution in this struggle?

A. I support the Iranian revolution because first of all it annihilated one of the strongest forts of imperialism in the Middle East. It crushed a regime that murdered tens of thousands of people and that hindered the progress of the whole area for decades.

As a Palestinian I appreciate it and support it because 60 percent of the oil that Israel used was imported from Iran. Now they can't get one drop from Iran.

Secondly, Iran was a market for Israeli industrial products, and through Iran many products were exported to the Arab states. Now they have lost this market and this transit station through which their products reached the Arab world.

As a freedom fighter I support the Iranian revolution. As an Arab I support the Iranian revolution. And as a Palestinian I support the Iranian revolution.

Q. You describe how the Iranian revolution heightens the morale of the Palestinians, gives them allies, and makes them more ready to struggle. Doesn't this also have an impact on the Jewish population

in Israel?

A. I think it had an impact, but it was not so great because at exactly the time that this imperialist base was being crushed in Iran, Zionism and imperialism found a substitute in Sadat, although it is a weaker substitute. But this helped them to make the impact of Iran weaker on the Israeli people. It made an impact, but it would have been greater if it were not for this traitor Sadat.

Q. Do people in Israel believe that Sadat and this treaty that has been worked out with him are any more permanent than the regime of the shah?

A. No, I believe that the Israelis know that Sadat's regime is not stable and it will not be permanent. It is a matter of time.

Q. What has been the response to the Camp David accords among Palestinians inside Israel?

A. We are even more extreme in refusing the Camp David accords and all the autonomy plans than those in the West Bank. Because we know Zionism. We have lived for practically thirty-one years under the Zionist regime and we know exactly what it is.

There will be no autonomy as long as Zionism exists.

We Palestinians in Israel believe that first of all we are an inseparable part of the Palestinian people.

Second, we believe that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Third, we refuse all the suggestions currently being put forward for the solution of the Palestinian problem for two reasons. The first reason is that we do not believe in the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, because the Zionists will never allow that. And the second reason is that even if such a state was established in Gaza and the West Bank, this would not guarantee the complete national rights of the Palestinians. So for both reasons we reject this solution.

We want peace and we want a peaceful solution, but we don't believe that there is the slightest possibility of reaching any peaceful solution with Zionism, because Zionism is racist, discriminatory, expansionist, and reactionary.

There is no regime in the world that willingly changes its nature. An outside force that can force Israel to change its policy doesn't exist yet. So that is why we believe that there is no possibility of reaching a peaceful solution with Zionism.

Against the Jews we have nothing. We lived with them for hundred of years and relations were very good. We can live with them for hundreds years more. Our problem is with Zionism, not with Judaism. There are many individual Jews who cooperate with us and defend our human rights. □

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