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LESSONS OF BRITISH STEEL STRIKE

Zimbabwe Wins Independence

By Ernest Harsch

In 1890, an armed detachment of white settlers led by Cecil John Rhodes invaded Zimbabwe to conquer it for the British empire. For the subsequent ninety years, the British colonialists and their white settler allies plundered the country—which was renamed “Rhodesia”—exploited its indigenous African inhabitants, and imposed a brutal system of racist oppression over the Black majority.

At midnight on April 17, 1980, the British flag was hauled down for the last time in Salisbury. A few minutes later, as tens of thousands of Blacks cheered at Rufaro Stadium and millions watched on television, the new green, yellow, black, and red banner of an independent Zimbabwe was unfurled.

For the Zimbabwean masses, that ceremony symbolized an historic victory. With it, they have taken a major step toward regaining control of their country.

It was a victory, too, for all of Africa. Like the attainment of independence by the former Portuguese colonies of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau in 1974-75, the emergence of an independent Zimbabwe under Black majority rule will inspire the oppressed and exploited across the continent.

Its political repercussions will be felt most immediately in neighboring South Africa and in the South African colony of Namibia, where millions of Blacks are still fighting against white minority rule. But they will also redound throughout Africa, strengthening the workers and peasants in their struggles against continued imperialist domination.

The proclamation of an independent Zimbabwe on April 18 was not a British gift. It was a Black conquest, wrested out of the hands of the imperialists and Rhodesian settlers through an arduous and costly struggle.

That struggle has been a long one, dating back to the mass-based *chimurenga* (liberation war) of the 1890s. It resurfaced on a mass scale during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s with a series of militant strikes and large demonstrations and with the emergence of the first major African nationalist groups, especially the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

Because of the terrorist repression and political intransigence of the Rhodesian settler community—which administered the country with London's approval—

Blacks were forced to take up arms to defend their struggle. During the mid-1960s, both ZANU and ZAPU launched their first armed actions against the Ian Smith regime.

Smith had proclaimed Rhodesia's “independence” from London in 1965, but in reality his settler regime remained a colonial outpost of Britain—and increasingly of the white South African ruling class, which invested heavily in the Rhodesian economy and sent thousands of paramilitary police to help Smith suppress the guerrilla insurgency.

After some initial setbacks, the mass movement revived. Beginning in late 1971, Blacks demonstrated and went on strike throughout the country in opposition to attempts by the British government to accord the Smith regime legal independence and recognition. This upsurge provided a basis for the resumption of armed insurgency the following year by ZANU, and later by ZAPU as well. In 1976, these two groups allied to form the Patriotic Front.

The “boys”—as the ZANU and ZAPU fighters were popularly known by Blacks—soon acquired mass support in the countryside. They held innumerable rallies and meetings in villages, farms, and African reserves to explain the goals of the struggle. They spoke about the need to overthrow the white racist regime, regain the land that had been stolen from Blacks, and improve the social and economic conditions of the mass of the population.

Blacks responded to this vision of a free Zimbabwe in large numbers. They actively supported the liberation struggle. Peasants stopped paying taxes. Tens of thousands of youths flocked to the nationalist movements.

By the end of 1979, ZANU and ZAPU had established their predominant influence in much of the countryside, particularly in eastern Zimbabwe where ZANU was most active. The Rhodesian forces, however, were still in a strong position.

Despite the imposition of martial law over most of the country; despite the acquisition of sophisticated armaments from South Africa, France, the United States, Britain, and other imperialist countries; and despite the appointment of some former Black nationalist leaders like Bishop Abel Muzorewa to the government, the Smith regime proved incapable of containing this upsurge.

The major imperialist powers—in an

attempt to derail the freedom struggle and protect their long-term interests in southern Africa—stepped in to try to impose a neocolonial “settlement.” They maneuvered to install an acquiescent Black regime that would safeguard imperialist interests and keep the masses under rein.

To that end, negotiations were held in London in late 1979, while the military and political campaign against the Patriotic Front stepped up: Rhodesian planes bombed Zimbabwean camps in neighboring countries, South Africa increased its aid to Smith and Muzorewa, and some of the African regimes backing the front “advised” it to compromise.

Under these pressures, the leaders of the front made some concessions at the talks, including promises to “guarantee” continued white privileges in certain fields. ZANU and ZAPU leaders publicly acknowledged that the London accord was unsatisfactory, but maintained that they had little choice but to go along with it for the time being, given the relationship of forces.

If London and its allies in Washington had thought that they could use the accord to demobilize the Zimbabwean population, they were sorely mistaken.

Taking advantage of the legalization of ZANU and ZAPU, hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans poured into the streets of Salisbury, Bulawayo, Fort Victoria, Sinoina, and many other towns to demonstrate their support for the main nationalist groups and their opposition to Muzorewa and other openly proimperialist Black figures. When ZANU leader Robert Mugabe returned to Zimbabwe on January 27, 1980, after several years of exile, he was greeted by a crowd of 200,000 Blacks, one of the largest political rallies ever held in the country.

The British colonialists—who had taken over formal administration from the Smith regime—were alarmed at these outpourings. They did everything they could to prevent the strongest of the liberation groups—ZANU—from winning the elections that were held in February.

The Rhodesian military continued to harass and intimidate the population—with the tacit approval of Lord Soames, the British governor. Some 25,000 Black “auxiliary” troops loyal to Muzorewa terrorized Blacks to vote for Muzorewa, while South African and other imperialist interests poured nearly \$30 million into Muzorewa's election campaign. The hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean refugees in Mozambique and Zambia—who overwhelmingly supported the Patriotic Front—were not allowed to return in time for the elections. At least two attempts were made to assassinate Mugabe.

When Black voters finally got to the polling stations, however, they cast their ballots overwhelmingly for the parties of the Patriotic Front: ZANU got 63 percent of the 2.7 million votes, and ZAPU got 24

percent. Mugabe—whose election the imperialists had tried to stop—became prime minister designate. Massive street celebrations swept the Black townships.

The large vote for ZANU and the big mobilizations greatly strengthened the Zimbabwean masses in their struggle for political and social liberation. But they were still in a precarious position. British and South African troops remained in the country for the moment, and sectors of the Rhodesian military hinted at a coup against Mugabe. The apartheid regime in South Africa warned of a possible invasion.

Facing this situation, Mugabe has sought to present a "moderate" image. He denied that there would be any immediate nationalizations, appointed a white landowner and a former official under the Smith regime to his cabinet, and retained Gen. Peter Walls, the Rhodesian military commander, in his post.

At the same time, however, the new regime also faces very high expectations for social change among the Zimbabwean masses. Reflecting this pressure, Mugabe said in an interview in the April issue of the London monthly *Africa*, "It is the status quo that we fought against and we must be seen to be overthrowing it."

He pledged to rapidly rebuild the many schools that had been destroyed during the war, improve medical and social services, and institute rapid promotions of Blacks in the civil service and in the officer corps of the new army that is to be set up through a merger of the guerrilla forces and units of the Rhodesian military.

"The position of the worker is paramount," Mugabe said, "his conditions of work must be redefined and a minimum wage must be set." Nonetheless, ZANU officials have so far sought to convince striking Black workers to return to their jobs, stating that their demands would be dealt with in time.

The Mugabe government has said that no "productive" white-owned farms would be taken over for the time being. But abandoned farms and idle or underutilized land would be quickly distributed to landless peasants and returning refugees.

Even before Zimbabwe had gotten its independence on April 18, the day-to-day lives of millions of Blacks had already improved: the brutal Rhodesian counterinsurgency operations were brought to an end, martial law was lifted, and the 600,000 villagers who had been herded into fenced-in "protected villages" by the Smith regime were free to go home.

Throughout the Zimbabwean freedom struggle, it was the mobilizations of the Black majority that proved decisive. They fueled the insurgency and upset the plans of imperialism. Continued mass mobilization and organization will determine the further advance and direction of the Zimbabwean revolution.

To what extent the new government

relies on the masses will be an important test of its capacity to respond to the major problems and obstacles that still confront Zimbabwe.

Much of the countryside was devastated by the years of war. Entire villages were dispersed. Some 750,000 Zimbabweans are listed as "displaced persons." Unemployment is rising. With the widespread failure of subsistence crops, severe hunger stalks some regions.

White settler and imperialist interests continue to control industry, mining, and the most productive sectors of agriculture. They will attempt to use their strong economic and social position to obstruct

and subvert the struggles of the Black masses.

The white-led Rhodesian military forces—though demoralized and weakened—still survive. As long as they do, the danger exists that they will try to overthrow the new regime and protect the economic position of the exploiters.

And to the immediate south lies the apartheid regime, the most heavily armed power on the African continent, poised to strike out with massive military force.

Now more than ever, the Zimbabwean masses need the greatest possible international solidarity. □

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Lessons of the 1980 British Steel Strike

By Brian Grogan

LONDON—After thirteen weeks of bitter struggle, the British steel strike has come to an end. The final deal, a 16% pay increase tied to job loss and productivity increases, was a despicable sellout of steelworkers by union officials.

But management and the Conservative Party government of Margaret Thatcher cannot claim victory. The large-scale redundancies [layoffs] demanded by the Tories—which before the strike seemed certain to go through without any problems—now threaten to become a battle ground. The steel strike raised the temperature of the class struggle in Britain and brought workers from one of the key basic industries out of hibernation.

On the very day of the return to work, two separate disputes broke out, one in South Yorkshire and the other in Port Talbot in South Wales, over the blacking of [refusal to handle] scab transport contractors who had not recognized picket lines. By the second day of the return to work, 20,000 workers were involved in unofficial strike action.

What the Deal Includes

The deal was finally accepted after a so-called independent commission of inquiry upped the management's final offer by 2%. The deal is made up of two parts. Eleven percent is to be paid on existing rates. On average this will mean a £10 wage rise. Financing for this, some £180 million, has to be found almost entirely from future redundancies, given the government's cash limit on subsidies to the nationalized industry. The British Steel Corporation (BSC) has put the job loss figure at 52,000, one-third of the total workforce.

Another 4.5% is dependent upon the successful negotiation of local productivity deals involving massive changes in working practice, manpower flexibility, and speedups. All this will lead to the loss of another 12,000 jobs. This 4.5% will be paid for the first three months to all workers. But after that, it will only continue to be paid if satisfactory local deals are completed. In many cases, therefore, workers will only be awarded 11%—in the face of an inflation rate of 18.5% and rising. Take-home pay will be further affected by the agreement to renegotiate the guaranteed workweek.

Nonetheless, a 16% deal is a far cry from the original management offer of 2%. Steelworkers hardly became the sacrificial lamb the Tories intended them to be. The lesson the Tories gave to the rest of the class will not be such as to intimidate the strong sectors like the miners. This was

the whole point of the exercise. Weaker groups of workers will, of course, be looking at the length of strike action necessary to even get in reach of the going rate. Undoubtedly, many groups of workers will think twice before they go into struggle over small questions.

The situation inside the steel industry has been completely transformed. There was widespread anger at the acceptance of the deal. Pickets lobbying the union headquarters when the deal was accepted, chased the executive members who had voted for the deal round the building and physically assaulted them. The police had to be called. The near unanimous view of the active strikers was to oppose the deal. But these were only a minority of the total workforce, which had, by and large, remained passive during the strike and subject to the pressure of the capitalist media. This had of course been encouraged by Bill Sirs, leader of the largest union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC), and other steel union leaders.

Accordingly, local leaders generally took the view that a united return to work was the best way to preserve fighting capacity. In face of the executive's decision on the deal—endorsed by the delegate-based negotiating committee of the biggest union, the ISTC—the militant areas felt that they would get isolated and picked off, pitting steelworker against steelworker. Better to wait for new struggles.

Even so, it took local leaders in South Yorkshire, a key militant stronghold, all their prestige to win a small majority for a return to work at the mass meeting called to consider the question.

What Tories Were After

The fact of a thirteen-week strike by the steelworkers—the longest national strike since the Second World War—was completely unexpected, not least by the Tories. Their idea, hatched while in opposition by Nicholas Ridley, a leading Tory MP [Member of Parliament], was to pick a group of workers as an example to the rest of the class. What they had learned from the previous Tory administration of Edward Heath in the early 70s was that they could not immediately take on the core militant sectors without encouraging the sort of conflagration that Heath had touched off with the miners and that finally brought down his government.

Therefore, Thatcher's policy was to compromise with the core unions in this round. Thus, miners won 21% without any struggle. British Oxygen workers got over 30% similarly. Such wage increases cannot go

on if the Tories are to put British capitalism back on an expansionary basis. A swinging defeat for the steelworkers was felt to be necessary preparation to be able to take on and defeat a sector like the miners in the next wages round.

The ISTC seemed to be well chosen. Bill Sirs, its general secretary, was renowned for his "moderation." The ISTC had only held four conferences in its history, the first in 1976. Even then these conferences were only advisory.

There had been no national steel strike since the British general strike in 1926. Over the past two years, the union leadership had agreed to 40,000 redundancies, and in the last wages round had accepted 8% when everyone else was gaining 15% and inflation was 17%.

British steel workers are by far the lowest paid in the whole of Europe. They had fallen to seventeenth in the British wages league if overtime is counted, and only sixtieth out of 120 in basic pay.

On the eve of the strike, Sirs announced that there would be no fight against a further 53,000 redundancies demanded by the British Steel Corporation.

The initial BSC offer of 2% on top of the massive redundancies was the spark that brought this colossus into motion. Despite its leadership, the strike was 100% solid from day one. Workers from those plants like Shotton, Corby, and Consett—which were facing virtual total closure—came out solid, even though they appeared to have nothing to gain by the strike.

Within days the whole of British steel was at a standstill. During the course of the next weeks, a massive flying picket operation was organized towards other sectors of industry, particularly steel stockholders [stockpilers], docks, and private industry. Such actions were against the policy, and in many cases the explicit instructions, of the national ISTC leadership. They were against the picketing of stockholders and other "secondary" targets. Sirs at first refused to call out his members in the private steel industry, although this sector accounts for 26% of production. Sirs was so bankrupt, that he not only gave four weeks notice of intention to strike, allowing a massive buildup of stocks by steel users, but he gave no concrete target for the strike. It was the determination of the rank and file that took the strike forward.

Local Strike Leaderships

It was the local strike leaderships that actually formulated the strike aims: 20% with no strings. In this, the South Yorkshire strike committees came to the fore. The policy of the strike committees was that no steel should move. Flying pickets were dispatched all over the country, financed primarily by the local strike committees. The extent of the flying pickets, the scope of the targets, and the number of pickets involved far exceeded the previous

highest level of struggle, set by the miners in 1972.

It was typical that the South Yorkshire divisional strike committee took on militant miners leader Arthur Scargill, architect of the 1972 miners operation, as its adviser. The level of rank-and-file self-organization in the strike was remarkable. This was coupled with a widespread distrust of the union leadership, which led to the popularization of the demand for Sirs' resignation.

A key early focus was the private steel firm Hadfields, owned by the big international conglomerate Lonrho. The mobilization by the South Yorkshire strike committee of thousands of steelworkers, backed by thousands of miners and local engineers, succeeded in closing the plant. The lack of determination by the national leadership and its failure to formulate a policy that could involve the private sector meant that the Hadfields management was able to exploit the workers' fear of redundancy and get them back to work a couple of weeks later. But up to this point, it was a series of actions such as these, led by an emerging rank-and-file leadership, that kept the strike advancing.

The policy of Sirs, on the other hand, was to attempt to find a compromise with the management at every turn. It was Sirs, with the backing of Trades Union Congress (TUC) boss, Len Murray, who only one week into the strike actually proposed the form of the final sell-out formula—8% plus 5% local productivity.

Very quickly, it became obvious that a new strike leadership had to be forged. The delegate-based national negotiating committee was somewhat responsive to rank-and-file demands. For instance, the 2% plus 12% pay-for-jobs deal offered by management and recommended by Sirs in the fifth week of the strike was thrown out after a meeting of only twenty minutes. But this body could not act as a day-to-day leadership.

It was the South Yorkshire strike committee that by and large played this role, almost immediately forming themselves into a divisional committee under a coordinated command. It decided on national targets and on organizing and financing the flying pickets. It was also somewhat of a model in developing rank-and-file and community involvement in the strike. It organized a whole series of rallies and demonstrations to keep the mass of workers involved and informed. Its strike committees were often elected and subject to mass meetings. But clearly a committee based on one region did not have the authority to openly go for the leadership of the whole strike. Many things had to be done behind the scenes.

This laid the basis for the emergence of the unofficial national strike committee. Again, the initiative came from South Yorkshire. Its first meeting was held in the seventh week of the dispute, in some



Women steelworkers on March 9 demonstration.

Socialist Challenge

secrecy, with representatives from most areas. From then on, it held regular weekly meetings. Its objective was to make good nationally the determination to stop all steel moving, to extend the action to major steel users, and to popularize the strike objective of 20% with no strings. It was this body that decided to close Fords Dagenham, the largest plant in Britain. In the final week of the strike, the Dagenham plant was under serious threat of imminent closure. This body also took the initiative in organizing lobbies of the official national leadership meetings to try to prevent sell-outs.

A tremendous amount was achieved in building this body in the course of the strike. The coordination effected and the contacts made will now be turned to organizing to remove the sell-out leadership. But the fact of the previous non-existent organization of the rank and file and the lack of implantation of a revolutionary organization nationally, together with its late formation, prevented the national strike committee from challenging the national leadership.

Strike in South Wales

In the other militant area, South Wales, the picture was more complicated. The threatened redundancies in the Port Talbot and Llanwern plants had actually galvanized the whole of the movement in the area. The 11,000 redundancies threatened at these two plants would actually reverberate throughout the whole of South Wales, taking the toll in lost rail, docks, and mining jobs to 45,000. The whole region will therefore be devastated.

For this reason, the strike in Wales took on a class-wide character from the very

beginning. Thus, on January 28 200,000 workers from all trades participated in a one-day general strike. The dynamic was developing to an all-out general strike, led by the miners, due to begin on March 10. But owing to the prevarications of the Welsh TUC and the sabotage of the national TUC, a ballot of the miners rejected the proposal for indefinite strike action despite a positive recommendation by the local leadership of the National Union of Miners. This decision, together with the decision of the Hadfields private sector workers to return to work, were the first major blows to the strike.

But the situation in South Wales graphically revealed the underlying dynamics of this strike. It continually threatened to engulf the whole movement in a general strike against the Tory government. The only reason it didn't, and the only reason the strike took so long to really bite, was due entirely to the sabotage of the trade-union leaderships.

Challenge to Tories

There is little doubt that rank-and-file workers had the greatest sympathy with the strike. They could see that the struggle was essentially against the Tory government, despite Industry Secretary Sir Kieth Joseph's phony policy of "non-intervention."

The hatred for this government is profound. Mass action on a broad front has been escalating against the anti-working-class attacks of this government since the middle of last year.

At the end of November last year, 50,000 people demonstrated against the government's cuts in social expenditure. Mobilization against the anti-abortion rights Corrie

Bill was so broad and extensive—even involving a 40,000-strong TUC-led demonstration—that the proposal was dropped, despite the formal parliamentary majority of the Tories. In the middle of the steel strike, the TUC called a demonstration against Tory anti-union laws to which 80,000 workers responded. The TUC has been forced to call a day of action against the government on May 14, which looks set to become a one-day general strike. And an emergency recall conference of the Labour Party has been called to plan action against the Tory attacks, despite the determined opposition of Labour leader James Callaghan.

The dynamic of the situation is clearly towards confrontation with the Tory government. Union leaders are doing everything to divert the movement into harmless channels. But in order to do this, it by and large has to put itself at the head of the movement the better to keep control.

Labor Solidarity

From the start of the steel strike, miners, railworkers and dockers in militant ports offered solidarity to the steelworkers and implemented blacking. But the TUC refused to organize solidarity across the board. The real situation was seen in the docks. Dockers in the militant ports of Liverpool and Hull responded immediately. But action in other ports was patchy. So, when an issue presented itself in the port of Liverpool, 6,000 Liverpool dockers walked out declaring their solidarity with the steelworkers.

The day the steel strike was called off was to have been the start of an all-out national dock strike in solidarity with the steelworkers, decided upon by a national delegate conference of dock workers. Such



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action could clearly have been organized from the beginning except for the refusal of the national leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), the main dockers union.

The TGWU leadership was the main problem, too, with another key sector—the lorry [truck] drivers. For the first crucial week, only a clear instruction not to cross so-called primary pickets (the steel plants themselves) was given. The decision to cross other steel pickets of stockholders and major users (“secondary” pickets) was left up to the “conscience” of the drivers. This was interpreted by most local bureaucrats as an invitation to cross picket lines, thus sabotaging effective picketing. It was only in the ninth week that a clearer instruction went out.

The result was the long delay before the steel strike affected manufacturing industry. The bosses were in no way as inhibited. They organized a massive operation to share the available stockpiled steel and, aided and abetted by BSC management, kept imports rolling in through unregistered ports. Nonetheless, it was clear that in the last two weeks the strike was biting.

Major users like Fords and British Leyland were threatened with closure. And a national dock strike was on the agenda.

This was the reason for the indecent haste with which the “independent” inquiry reported. The dynamic was towards a general strike, which would have brought down the government.

Need for Class-Struggle Strategy

The steel strike brought the overall strategy of the reformist ISTC leaders into sharp relief. The strategy of Bill Sirs and the rest of the ISTC leadership has as its starting point the need for British steel to compete on “equal terms” with its main competitors in the world market. The whole thrust of the ISTC campaign was to indict the bad management of the BSC for its lack of an aggressive export drive. The union officials’ call for a government subsidy to the steel industry, therefore, is quite within the framework of a “rationalization” of BSC that involves massive attacks on the hard-won rights of steelworkers and the sort of job loss envisaged by BSC management.

It is true that the BSC management is bad. Bureaucratic management in both the public and private sector will breed inefficiency—only workers control of production by an informed workforce and within the framework of a workers plan for the whole industry can eliminate waste and inefficiency in large-scale production. But the colossal waste of resources exhibited by BSC management arises not from incompetence but from the chaos of the capitalist market. To demand import controls to deal with this is to continue to join with the bosses in trying to resolve their problem at the expense of workers—this time foreign workers. But the needs of steelworkers, as revealed in the strike, was shown to be solidarity with foreign workers.

The new class-struggle leadership that is beginning to form out of the experience of the strike must center its strategy on safeguarding jobs. Steelworkers had no say over the anarchy of the capitalist market, so they should not be made to pay for it. The Tory cash limits must be smashed and a subsidy to save jobs forced on the government. The starting point must be safeguarding the guaranteed forty-hour week. This should be extended to a total policy of worksharing with no loss of pay.

The shop stewards committees that have been established in South Yorkshire must be extended nationally, and a national combine committee formed committed to a class-struggle strategy to save jobs. But equally, the fight must go on inside the ISTC. The Liaison committee for the reform of the ISTC, which already existed before the strike, can now be placed on a higher level, integrating class-struggle policies into the fight for democratic control of the union. This is now the task.

April 3, 1980

Appeal by Irish Socialists Goes to Court

An appeal by three leaders of the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) is slated to come before the Irish Supreme Court on April 30.

The three—Osgur Breatnach, former editor of the IRSP’s newspaper, Brian McNally, and Nicky Kelly—were convicted in December 1978 by a special court on train robbery charges.

The case was a notorious frame-up. No evidence was introduced against the three except statements extorted from them by torture, which was well documented in the mass-circulation Irish press. The court that convicted them had no jury and highly “streamlined” rules of evidence. (See *IP/I*, April 26, May 3, 1976.)

The police-state methods used against the IRSP leaders when they were arrested in April 1976 raised an outcry in

the formally independent part of Ireland. The public revulsion at such procedures was a major factor in the defeat of the National Coalition government in 1977.

The Dublin authorities were forced to retreat for a period. But when public attention died down, it reinstated the case and railroaded the IRSP leaders to jail. McNally got nine years and the other two twelve.

Relatives of the three have appealed for letters and telegrams expressing concern about the case to be sent to the Minister for Justice, Dept. of Justice, Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2. Copies should be sent to IRSP 3 Release Campaign, 34 Upper Gardiner St., Dublin 1. Copies of a petition on behalf of the three can be obtained from the same address.

An Appeal for Worldwide Solidarity With El Salvador

By Fred Murphy and Lars Palmgren

MANAGUA—Leaders of the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador are appealing for a worldwide campaign of solidarity “to counter the lies spread by the ultraright and fascist sectors . . . and by the junta’s own official reports.”

We spoke to two leaders of the human rights group here April 6: Marianella García Villas, president of the commission, and José Antonio Hernández.

The Human Rights Commission was formed two years ago in response to a brutal government attack on unionized farm workers in the village of San Pedro Perulapán. According to García and Hernández, the commission is made up of students, professionals, trade unionists, and representatives of the Catholic Church and other organizations.

The commission provides legal aid to those few political prisoners actually turned over to the courts—García and Hernández estimate that 90 percent of the detainees are simply murdered. The commission also takes testimony from victims of human rights violations and tries to gain national and international publicity for these cases.

“Recently we have found it necessary to open up a third area of work,” García told us. That task is photographing the many corpses that are found in the streets and roadsides and arranging for their burial.

Then, she said, “families of the ‘disappeared’ come to our office to look through the photographs. In this way, we have managed to identify about 50 percent of the dead we have photographed and buried.”

Recently there have been so many corpses that a part of the cemetery in San Salvador has become known as the “Cemetery of the Human Rights Commission.”

As a result of its activities, the commission itself has become a target of terrorist attacks. On March 13 a bomb destroyed nearly a third of its office and half its equipment. Since then, the office has received fifteen to twenty death threats each day.

On the day of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero’s funeral, the owner of the building where the commission has its office received a call threatening her life and saying that the building would be dynamited if the commission remained there.

“We don’t think these are empty threats,” García said. She explained that the previous bombing had been publicly announced eight days before it happened.

“But, if they destroy our headquarters, they still won’t destroy us and our work,” García said.

We asked what changes had taken place in regard to human rights since the ouster of the military regime of General Romero last October. The military-civilian junta that replaced it has tried to portray itself as a “reform” government besieged by violence from the “ultraleft” and “ultraright.”

Despite the junta’s “proclamations of its good intentions,” said García, “grave and massive human rights violations have continued. Nearly all demonstrations have resulted in massacres.”

The situation has gotten even worse since the junta’s March 6 declaration of an agrarian reform coupled with a state of siege.

“The famous agrarian reform amounts to no more than the name,” García said. “No peasant has yet been given any land.”

After the estates are occupied by the army, she said, and “after leaving some troops in the central part of the hacienda, others are sent to pursue the peasants who live in the outlying parts and kill or capture them. Many peasants disappear and are never found.”

García and Hernández also rejected the junta’s claim to be caught between the right and left. Testimony from both rural and urban populations, they said, indicates that government security forces work jointly with rightist paramilitary forces such as the White Warriors Union (UGB).

“So, we conclude that the UGB is simply a special section of the security forces themselves,” García told us. “There is no radical distinction between the so-called ultraright groups—the UGB, Falange, OLC [Organization for Liberation from Communism], and so on—and the security forces.”

“They all obey the orders of the high command.”

The human rights activists pointed out that while the junta has reported numerous armed confrontations with left-wing organizations, it has never reported a clash with the rightist groups. No member of these groups has ever been brought before the courts for any crime, despite the fact that they openly take responsibility for assassinations and other crimes.

Events at Romero’s Funeral

We asked García and Hernández for an account of what happened at Archbishop Romero’s funeral.

García was in the Cathedral Plaza that morning when the demonstration of the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) marched in. “The lead-

ers deposited a floral offering on the altar and were applauded by the crowd,” she said.

Suddenly a bomb exploded about 100 meters from where García was standing. Several people were killed, including an activist from the February 28 People’s Leagues, one of the organizations in the CRM.

Then, a volley of high-caliber rifle shots started coming from all directions. There was a panic as everyone tried to flee. Many people fell to the ground and were trampled.

“I fell on top of several bodies,” García said, “and others fell on top of me. Fortunately, someone recognized me among the bodies and pulled me out. I was passed over the top of the crowd and thrown over the cathedral fence. Someone gave me artificial respiration, because I was nearly asphyxiated.”

The great majority of those killed and wounded were CRM militants, who were on the fringes of the crowd—“the attack was directed specifically at them,” García said.

“This leads us to think that the bomb was the signal for the attack. They didn’t need to fire directly into the multitudes because the bomb was sufficient to produce panic.”

The CRM did have its own self-defense, García said, but it was very weak in face of the heavy arms used by the security forces.

Hernández believes that there will be a step-up in repression in the absence of a figure such as Romero to keep a spotlight on the regime nationally and internationally. “The death of Msgr. Romero has been a harsh blow,” he said.

García agreed, saying that the archbishop “was, is, and will go on being a symbol of liberation for the Salvadoran people”

But morale remains high among the masses, she told us. “The very fact of his death has radicalized the consciousness of the population. People are realizing that there are no more roads open in the country—that if the rulers did not even respect the life of Msgr. Romero, how much less will they respect the life of a peasant.

“The helplessness felt at the death of Msgr. Romero is turning into a feeling that it is no longer a question of waiting for someone to defend you,” García said, “but rather of defending yourself. So there is a readiness to struggle among all sectors of the people”

Hernández explained that the murder of Romero was “definitely linked to the reactionary sectors of the country and to the

government junta.

"The government of the United States also has its share of responsibility in the assassination," he added.

We asked whether the Human Rights Commission had evidence of U.S. military advisers cooperating with security forces.

Washington's Complicity

García said that on the day of Romero's funeral, North Americans were spotted in the atrium of the cathedral and others outside were speaking in English over walkie-talkies. They disappeared before the massacre began.

García explained that while she personally has never seen U.S. advisers in joint actions with government forces, "many peasants, especially in the Aguilares area, have reported seeing English-speaking people directing the squads that come to carry out repression."

She also cited testimony from union militants in San Salvador who say they were interrogated by North Americans speaking in very poor Spanish, as well as from people who live near Ilopango Airport and have seen planes landing and unloading guns there at night.

According to García, the CRM reported at a recent news conference "that ships have been observed unloading munitions at the port of Acajutla. Four truckloads of rifles and munitions have left Acajutla on the way to San Salvador. Workers in the area have seen the ships unload."

Denied U.S. Visas

The junta's state of siege declaration prohibits all press communiqués. Hoping to break through this media blockade, the Human Rights Commission has decided to conduct a tour of North America and Europe.

When García and Hernández went to the U.S. embassy in San Salvador to request visas, they were met with abuse by Ambassador Robert White. "He treated us from the first moment as though we were his servants and he was the master," García said.

White has identified himself entirely with the junta, in line with U.S. policy. He publicly backed up the junta's false claim that leftists were responsible for the massacre during Romero's funeral, for example.

Nonetheless, White claims to be a defender of human rights in El Salvador. García told us that the commission has "stated publicly that the U.S. ambassador will be considered a defender of human rights only when he demonstrates that in action. So long as he does not demonstrate this, for us he is no defender of human rights."

Referring to these statements, White accused the commission, and García in particular, of being liars. Then, in what García called a "peremptory and threatening tone," he repeatedly asked the two

commission representatives if they were afraid.

García and Hernández replied that they had not come to the embassy to meet with White, but merely to obtain visas. According to García, White responded that "he would have to think about whether or not our visit would be convenient for the United States."

Then, White again insisted that he is a defender of human rights. "That seems very paradoxical," García commented. "If he were a defender of human rights, why would he deny us entry into the United States?"

In the end, the embassy denied the visas and told García and Hernández to apply again later if they wanted to.

Sandinistas Reaffirm Solidarity

New Salvadoran Opposition Front Formed

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—A further step toward united action among forces opposing the U.S.-backed junta in El Salvador was achieved April 16 with the formation in the capital city of San Salvador of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR).

The FDR represents a bloc between the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM)—which in turn is made up of the four main organizations of the Salvadoran workers and peasants*—and the Salvadoran Democratic Front. The latter grouping was formed April 3 and is composed principally of the Revolutionary National Movement, which maintains links with the social-democratic Second International, and the dissident "People's Tendency" of the Christian Democratic Party.

The new front also involves the People's Liberation Movement (MLP), which is led by the Central American Revolutionary Workers Party (PRTC); important trade-union federations such as the FENASTRAS and the Revolutionary Trade Union Federation; the General Association of Salvadoran University Students (AGEUS); and the National Federation of Small Businesses.

Reports reaching Managua on the new opposition front have not indicated what programmatic positions it has adopted. However, the Democratic Front had earlier announced its support for the CRM's government program (see *IP/I*, April 7, page 357).

While El Salvador's main cities remain heavily patrolled by the armed forces,

*These are the Revolutionary People's Bloc (BPR); United People's Action Front (FAPU); February 28 People's Leagues (LP-28); and Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN), the legal arm of the Salvadoran Communist Party.

While "the ambassador's attitude was offensive," Hernández said, "that is not particularly important.

"What we do consider quite serious," he said, "and what we must denounce above all and make known to world public opinion is the military intervention the United States is carrying out in our country to uphold the current government and the repression."

This information should be widely known inside the United States, Hernández said. "The idea of getting visas was precisely for this purpose—to provide information to the American people that would be different from what they are getting from the U.S. embassy and the junta." □

there has been a considerable increase in rural guerrilla activity. On April 10, at least 400 militants of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces (FPL) occupied five large haciendas in the northern province of Chalatenango, near the Honduran border. Army troops and paramilitary forces were sent in with tanks and helicopters to dislodge the guerrillas. As of April 18, there was no indication that this operation had succeeded.

According to an FPL representative, the occupied haciendas "could be considered liberated zones where the peasants work, have refuge, and prepare to confront the enemy." Some 3,000 peasants who have fled intense repression in other areas of the countryside have reportedly sought refuge in these zones.

Here in Nicaragua, a week of solidarity with El Salvador was organized from April 13 to 20 by the Nicaraguan Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples, which is made up of representatives of all the Sandinista-led mass organizations. As part of the solidarity week, the Rural Workers Association (ATC) encouraged all its members to donate a day's wages for the struggle in El Salvador.

Leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front have reiterated earlier warnings against direct imperialist intervention in El Salvador.

"If they commit the adventure of intervening in El Salvador," Commander Tomás Borge declared in a speech to the Sandinista police April 16, "we are going to consider it an aggression on our own soil; and members of the militias, the army, the CDS's [Sandinista Defense Committees], and the police will have to be ready to pick up their guns and defend our Salvadoran brothers." □

Cuban Masses Mobilize to Answer Imperialist Slanders

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—The campaign of slander being carried out against the Cuban revolution by the U.S. government and its accomplices in Latin America is being met by massive anti-imperialist mobilizations across the island.

As the events at the Peruvian embassy in Havana began to capture headlines in the big-business press around the world, tens of thousands of Cubans turned out for street demonstrations and workplace and neighborhood rallies to reaffirm their support for the revolution and its leaders.

The Cuban trade unions, Federation of Cuban Women, and other mass organizations have announced plans for huge rallies and marches on April 19, May 1, and May 8. On the latter date, a new series of threatening U.S. military maneuvers—including the landing of 1,200 marines at the illegally occupied Guantánamo naval base on Cuba's southern coast—are to begin in the Caribbean.

The May 8 mobilization will target the U.S. "interests section" at the Swiss embassy.

"Now the people will go into action," the Cuban Communist Party daily *Granma* declared in a front-page headline on April 14. Beneath it was an extensive editorial hailing and encouraging the mobilizations.

"What most offends and causes indignation among our working people," *Granma* said, "is that the imperialist news agencies and the bourgeois and right-wing press of the United States and Latin America have tried to create the image that these elements [in the Peruvian embassy] represent the people of Cuba.

"But nothing else could be expected from those who, impotent in face of the growing power and prestige of the Cuban revolution and driven mad by the economic crisis and the vigorous upsurge of the worldwide revolutionary and progressive movement, cannot hide their hatred of Cuba and their dreams of destroying our revolution."

Granma reiterated Cuba's longstanding position that anyone who wants to emigrate is free to do so. It condemned the efforts of "the bourgeois governments of

this hemisphere" to "blackmail" Cuba.

Pointing to the hypocritical anti-Cuban statements issued by the Andean Pact* foreign ministers at their April 9 meeting in Lima, Peru, *Granma* asked:

"Why doesn't the Andean Pact protest the blockade of Cuba, which has been in force for more than twenty-one years—a criminal imperialist attempt to use hunger to force an entire people into submission? Why doesn't the Andean Pact protest the forcible occupation of a part of our national territory by the Guantánamo Naval Base? Why doesn't the Andean Pact protest the threatening Yankee maneuvers around Cuba? Why doesn't the Andean Pact protest the genocidal repression against the people of El Salvador—which had already cost thousands of lives—with the complicity of Yankee imperialism and the Christian Democracy of Venezuela? Why don't they protest the massacre of campesinos, workers, and students in Guatemala? Why don't they protest the shameful colonial swindles imposed on the fraternal people of Puerto Rico?

"In El Salvador there are not thousands of lumpen elements trying to leave the country, but rather thousands of patriots being killed. What do the United States and some of the Andean Pact governments do? Help in the killing."

It is no accident, *Granma* said, that the hue and cry over the events at the Peruvian embassy came at the same time as the U.S. announcement of "provocative and threatening military maneuvers around Cuba. . . .

"But it is necessary to insist that they still do not know us well enough. The threats and provocation have shaken our people with indignation from one end of the country to another."

The renewed attacks on Cuba "have to do with the titanic effort of building socialism ninety miles from the richest and most powerful imperialist country on earth and surrounded by oligarchic and bourgeois regimes that because of their class spirit collaborate in one way or another with the United States in its policy of aggression and hostility toward Cuba.

"We have resisted heroically for twenty-one years. Our enemies must resign themselves to the idea that we will go on resisting until the final victory of the peoples of our hemisphere." □

*Composed of the governments of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

Millions of Cubans March in Havana

More than a million people, led by President Fidel Castro, marched past the Peruvian Embassy in Havana April 19 to show their support for the Cuban revolution.

Held on the nineteenth anniversary of the Bay of Pigs invasion by U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries, the demonstration was one of the largest outpourings of popular support for the Cuban government since the revolution. It took thirteen hours for the tightly packed marchers to file past the Peruvian Embassy.

New York Times correspondent Jo Thomas admitted in her April 19 dispatch that "there was no mistaking the crowd's energy and enthusiasm."

People not only marched—they danced, they sang, and they shouted. "Cries of 'Go, go, you worms . . . Leave Cuba to those who produce,' and 'Fidel! Fidel! Fidel!' thundered from the crowd," reported the Associated Press dispatch on the march. "Huge banners and waving red flags proclaimed 'Carter—Remember Giron (the Bay of Pigs).'"

Although Thomas obviously tried to find exceptions, she reported that "no

one in the crowd expressed any sympathy" for those inside the Peruvian Embassy compound. Instead, "there were posters and effigies of worms of every description, worms carrying suitcases, worms being flushed down toilets, gangster worms, worms wearing too much makeup. Jimmy Carter, shown variously protecting or welcoming worms or being kicked in the seat of the pants by Cuba, was also a popular target."

Blame for the new campaign against Cuba was placed squarely on Washington. As a Radio Havana broadcast explained, the protest was "to condemn this new maneuver against the Cuban revolution by imperialism and its lackies in Latin America."

Symbolizing Cuba's refusal to be intimidated by threats from Washington—such as the landing of U.S. Marines at Guantánamo scheduled for May 8—units of Cuba's workers militia, along with representatives of the internationalist fighters who had served in other countries, marched along with President Castro at the head of the demonstration.

Carter Issues New Threats Against Iran

By Janice Lynn

On April 17, ten days after he first announced sanctions against Iran and broke off diplomatic relations, President Carter announced further measures, even threatening to take "some sort of military action."

Carter's threats, while addressed to Iran, have other targets, as well.

They are aimed at Washington's European and Japanese allies, in order to get them to fall in line behind the anti-Iranian sanctions and to shoulder an overall greater share of the economic and political costs of protecting imperialist interests.

Fearing the economic and political repercussions at home, the governments of these countries—heavily dependent on Iranian oil imports—have been reluctant to follow Washington's lead. So Carter is turning up the heat.

Foreign ministers from the European Economic Community and Japan are scheduled to begin meeting April 21 to discuss the sanctions. Some have already warned against any U.S. military action, such as a naval blockade or harbor mining.

American working people were another target of Carter's speech. The U.S. rulers are trying to chip away at the antiwar and antidraft sentiment in the United States that has prevented Washington from undertaking new Vietnam-type military interventions anywhere in the world. Carter also wants to cajole American workers to accept the "sacrifices" they are being forced to make for the sake of the "national interest"—i.e. for the sake of protecting the hated ex-shah.

Carter also ordered a ban on travel to Iran by all Americans. Along with his moves to prevent U.S. athletes and spectators from attending the Moscow Olympics, this is a serious attack on the democratic rights of all Americans.

In a most arrogant move, Carter proposed that the \$8 billion in Iranian assets that the U.S. government has seized be used to pay the Pentagon for keeping its twenty-seven ship military task force off the coast of Iran.

Carter also tightened trade sanctions and barred all financial transactions, and

stated his intention to impose an embargo on food and medicine and possibly a total communications blackout.

In Tehran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called on all Iranians—"men and women, young and old"—to take up arms and join the "army of 20 million" to defend Iran.

In response to Carter's economic moves, Iranian Minister for Economic Affairs Reza Salami pointed out, "We can get in touch with the outside world by using our northeast and northwest borders," referring to the Soviet Union.

Trade delegations from several East European workers states have been in Tehran recently. And a Soviet correspondent has described "heavy refrigerator trucks" carrying butter, cheese, baby food, construction material, and other goods from a number of European countries across the Soviet border to Iran. A trucking center is already being constructed at the Soviet town of Astara on the Iranian border.

Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr has pointed to Carter's hypocritical lack of concern for the fifty Americans in the embassy. "Economic blockade and military attack will make saving them more difficult, not easier," he declared.

Many hostage families themselves are publicly criticizing Carter's threats of military action. They recognize this has nothing to do with the American hostages arriving home alive.

In open defiance of Carter's travel ban, the mother (Barbara Timm) and stepfather of hostage Kevin Hermening arrived in Tehran and on April 21, Mrs. Timm visited her twenty-year-old son in the U.S. Embassy. Three other hostage families have also indicated their intentions to defy the travel ban.

Hermening's father, Richard summarized what many other hostage families felt when he declared, "I'm against any military action. We don't want our son coming back feet first."

The latest *New York Times*/CBS poll showed broad agreement with Mr. Timm's opinion; only 22 percent of those polled favored military action.

Pointing to the antidraft protests in the United States over the past several months, U.S. Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Andrew Pulley declared April 18 that "American youth are unwilling to fight and die for the profits of the oil corporations."

Pulley said that Carter's threats "will not bring the hostages out of Iran, but will put the lives of thousands of Iranian and American workers in jeopardy."

Carter did not even mention the shah in his April 17 news conference, Pulley pointed out. "If Carter is serious about obtaining the release of the hostages," Pulley said, "all he has to do is send back the shah." □

Hostage Mother: 'We Want to Understand People of Iran'

"We want desperately to see Kevin. But we have a deeper reason for being here, and this is to understand the people of Iran," explained Barbara Timm upon her arrival in Tehran, the first American to defy Carter's travel ban.

Mrs. Timm is the mother of twenty-year-old Marine Sergeant Kevin Hermening, one of the Americans being held in the U.S. embassy there. On April 21, the students in the embassy escorted her in to visit her son. Mrs. Timm was also taken on a tour of the Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery where thousands of martyred victims of the shah's brutal massacres are buried.

Reporters asked Mrs. Timm if she thought her trip would be used for anti-American propaganda. She replied that after weeks of either the U.S. government or the telephone company blocking her attempts to call the embassy, she began to "wonder if maybe I was used by American propaganda, not Iranian."

Mrs. Timm, a switchboard operator at a Milwaukee, Wisconsin, steel company, said that she wanted to understand "what happened to make them

take over an embassy, why their feelings are deep toward the Shah."

She explained the evolution of her thinking over the last several months. At first she was "filled with hatred" for the Iranian people, she said. Then—as it became clear that the hostages were not being harmed, and as more came out about the shah's crimes and U.S. complicity in them—her "feelings started changing back and forth, where one minute I was so filled with hatred for all the Iranian people, and the next I was so filled with hatred for the American Government."

Like a number of other hostage families, Mrs. Timm bitterly opposes Carter's threats of military action. "I do not want to see any of those 50 hostages killed," she said, "and I do not want to see one single Iranian killed as a result of the fact that there cannot be found a peaceful way to end this crisis."

Mrs. Timm had earlier called on Carter to make a national apology to the Iranian people. "If we have wronged a nation we must humble ourselves to at least apologize," she had written to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*.

Is Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan 'Counterrevolutionary'?

By Ernest Harsch

Like few other recent events, the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan has posed many sharp and vital questions for the international workers movement.

Does the Soviet intervention help or hinder the Afghan workers and peasants in advancing their struggles? Does it strengthen or weaken imperialism's ability to intervene against revolutionary upsurges around the globe? On which side in the Afghan civil war do revolutionists belong—with those seeking to defend the land reform and other progressive social measures enacted by the government in Kabul, or with the various antigovernment guerrilla bands, armed and supported by Washington and the Pakistani military dictatorship?

The White House's current efforts to free its hands for military aggression in the region make it especially important for revolutionists to cut through the barrage of imperialist propaganda around Afghanistan. They must stand shoulder to shoulder with those fighting on the side of the Afghan revolution against imperialist intervention.

There are some, however, who have failed completely in this task. Among them are the leaders of the so-called Parity Committee for the Reorganization (Reconstruction) of the Fourth International.

The committee, an international grouping that claims to be Trotskyist, was formed in late 1979 following a split from the Fourth International by the Bolshevik Faction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.* These two currents then joined with the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International to form the Parity Committee, and together they have charted a course aimed at destroying the Fourth International.

The Parity Committee's position on Afghanistan was outlined in a declaration published in the January 19 issue of the Paris weekly *Informations Ouvrières*. That declaration has provided the basis for the subsequent coverage of Afghanistan in the press of all three currents within the Parity Committee.

The committee maintains that the dispatch of Soviet troops to Afghanistan to aid the government forces there is a "counterrevolutionary intervention in its methods and content." Its basic aim is said to be the preservation of capitalism and imperialist domination: "The Kremlin bureaucracy is thus using its presence to

maintain the semicolonial bourgeois state, and in that way maintain Afghanistan's ties of subordination to imperialism. . . ."

According to the committee, "The Soviet rulers have not only brutally flouted the right of the Afghan people to self-determination, but have aroused the hostility of millions upon millions of people in the semicolonial world against the Soviet Union, permitting imperialism to initiate a 'diplomatic backlash' against the Soviet Union. By using all the means of a great power against a small nation, the ruling bureaucracy is sidetracking the anti-imperialist struggles of the masses."

The Parity Committee even implies that Moscow intervened with the tacit approval of the imperialists. It holds up the intervention as an example of a "joint counterrevolutionary strategy by imperialism and the [Soviet] bureaucracy" to defend "the established bourgeois order wherever it exists." The rising class struggles in Afghanistan and on a world scale "can only strengthen the desire for counterrevolutionary cooperation between imperialism and the bureaucracies. . . ."

Outside the Class Struggle

The declaration of the Parity Committee does not begin with the real class struggle,

either in Afghanistan or on a world scale. Instead, shoving aside consideration of the social forces in conflict in Afghanistan, it deduces its entire position from the fact that the bureaucratic caste that controls the Kremlin fears revolutionary upsurges and often directly betrays them. Therefore, so the reasoning goes, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan *must* be a stab in the back to the Afghan revolution as well.

Through such formal logic, the committee loses sight of the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy, despite its counterrevolutionary goal of preserving the international status quo through deals with imperialism, at the same time rests on the progressive nationalized property relations and planned economy ushered in by the Russian revolution of October 1917.

It is like a trade-union bureaucracy, which under certain circumstances can be impelled to call and lead strikes. The class-collaborationist orientation of the trade-union bureaucrats does not make such strikes reactionary, nor does the fact that they are called by the union tops mean that the bureaucracy has become progressive.

In the same way, the Kremlin hierarchy can sometimes be compelled—under the pressure of the class struggle or in re-

Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution

Some of the arguments in the Parity Committee declaration were taken up by Léon Peillard, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International, in an article in the February 29 issue of the Montreal fortnightly *Lutte Ouvrière*. The declaration had been reprinted in an issue of *Tribune Ouvrière*, the newspaper of the Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs, the Quebec-based affiliate of the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

One of the points that Peillard took up was the claim in the declaration that the Afghan rebels had been inspired by the Iranian revolution.

"In the first place," Peillard wrote, "it is simply not true, as the 'Parity Committee' asserts, that what is happening in Afghanistan is only a response to the Iranian revolution. The April 1978 'revolution' that allowed the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan to take

power preceded the fall of the shah by several months. In fact, the shah had seriously considered a military intervention into Afghanistan to overthrow the PDPA regime, fearing the impact of Afghanistan on Iran and other neighboring countries.

"Secondly, the social aims of the 'Muslim rebels' in Afghanistan have nothing to do with the social aims of the Iranian revolution. The Iranian masses rose up against a regime that kept the country under imperialist domination; they have mobilized to achieve democratic rights and to meet the demands of the working people, women, and oppressed nationalities. In Afghanistan, the revolt of the 'rebels' is directed *against* all the reforms aimed at modernizing the country and has the *encouragement* of imperialism. In no way can the movement of the Iranian masses be identified with the reactionary uprising of the Afghan 'rebels.'"

*See *IP/I*, December 24, 1979, pages 1275-1281, for the issues behind the split.

sponse to imperialist threats against the Soviet Union itself—to act in a way that objectively strengthens the side of the workers and peasants.

The Parity Committee's abstract schema allows no room for such a possibility; the Kremlin can only betray.

This makes it impossible to clearly explain why Moscow has given economic and military aid—whatever its limitations—to Vietnam in its struggle against U.S. imperialism, to the Cuban revolution, and to various African liberation movements.

To protect its own position against imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy seeks points of support among the workers and peasants by providing certain amounts of such assistance. This is also one of the ways it seeks to exert pressure on the imperialists to come to terms.

Revolutionists do not oppose such aid, which can be vitally important to the struggles that receive it. In fact, revolutionists press Moscow to give more aid, as they demanded of the Soviet regime during the Vietnam War.

Of course, the Kremlin provides assistance through its own bureaucratic methods and seeks to use it to gain political leverage or control over those who receive it. Revolutionists condemn such attempts by the Kremlin to subordinate struggles to its overall pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

But the Stalinists are often unsuccessful in exerting their counterrevolutionary control, more and more so as the class struggle has accelerated internationally over the past decade. The actions of the masses themselves and the aggressive response of imperialism upset the bureaucracy's plans.

In a 1939 letter (see box), Trotsky addressed himself to a speculative question about the stance of revolutionists toward a possible military intervention into India.

Trotsky wrote, "The general historic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and their Comintern is counterrevolutionary. But through their military and other interests they can be forced to support progressive movements. We must keep our eyes open to discern the progressive acts of the Stalinists, support them independently, foresee in time the danger, the betrayals, warn the masses and gain their confidence."

Rather than keeping their eyes open, the leaders of the Parity Committee have shut them tight. It is not surprising, then, that they do not seem to have noticed the two most central developments before the Soviet troops were sent in: the beginning of a social revolution in Afghanistan and American imperialism's efforts to stifle that revolution.

A Revolution Ignored

The Parity Committee places the regime set up in April 1978 by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a

Trotsky on the Soviet Army

[The following letter by Leon Trotsky was sent in December 1939 to Selina M. Perera, a Ceylonese socialist who was sympathetic to the Fourth International. It is reprinted, in abridged form, from *Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1939-40* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973).]

* * *

Dear Comrade Perera,

The question about the possible military intervention of the Red Army in India (not to speak about Ceylon) has been launched absolutely artificially by some of the American comrades. The possibility is not excluded, but it is not this question that is now on the order of the day.

The Red Army is not an independent political factor but a military instrument of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of the USSR. Military intervention would be only the continuation of political intervention, and the political intervention of Stalin's Comintern [The Communist International] is developing in India as elsewhere every day. But our task is not to speculate about the possibilities of a future military intervention—rather it is to learn how to fight against the present political intervention. Every fight demands a correct appreciation of all the factors involved.

The first thing is not to forget that the direct enemy of the India workers and peasants is not the Red Army but British imperialism. Some comrades, who in the last period have replaced Marxist policy by anti-Stalinist policy, forget the political realities in India and imitate the Stalinists of yesterday who proclaimed—before the Stalin-Hitler pact of course—that the main enemy in India is . . . Japan.

The Stalinists in India directly support the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois national parties and do all they can to subjugate the workers and peasants through these parties. What we must do is create an absolutely independent proletarian party with a clear class program.

The general historic role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and their Comintern is counterrevolutionary. But through their military and other interests they can be forced to support progressive movements. We must keep our eyes open to discern the progressive acts of the Stalinists, support them independently, foresee in time the danger, the betrayals, warn the masses and gain their confidence. If our policy is firm and intransigent and realistic at the same time, we would succeed in compromising the Stalinists on the basis of revolutionary experience. If the Red Army intervenes we will continue the same policy, adapting it to military conditions. We will teach the Indian workers to fraternize with the rank and file soldiers and denounce the repressive measures of their commanders and so on.

The main task in India is the overthrow of British domination. This task imposes upon the proletariat the support of every oppositional and revolutionary action directed against imperialism.

This support must be inspired by a firm distrust of the national bourgeoisie and their petty-bourgeois agencies.

We must keep a suspicious eye on the temporary ally as well as on the foe.

If we follow seriously these good old rules, the intervention of the Red Army would not take us unawares.

Stalinist party, on the same plane as that of the ousted dictatorship of Mohammad Daud. They ignore the fact that Daud's overthrow marked the beginning of a revolution.

There is no mention anywhere in the declaration of the abolition of many of the legal and social restrictions on women, of the legalization of the country's first trade unions, of the beginnings of a mass literacy campaign, of the granting of language and other national rights to Afghanistan's various oppressed nationalities. There is no mention of the mass demonstrations, in some cases of more than 100,000 persons, in support of the regime and its reform measures.

The declaration does refer, in passing, to the land reform program that was enacted. But it does so only to dismiss it as a fake. It does not mention that the land reform

program proclaimed the expropriation, without compensation, of all land over a set amount or that land has been distributed free to 240,000 poor peasant families.

Who Are the Rebels?

Having ignored the revolution, the Parity Committee then proceeds to paint the counterrevolution in a progressive light. It goes to the extent of presenting the rightist guerrilla bands as part of a regional "revolutionary wave" directed against the "semicolonial bourgeois state."

"While religion can be utilized as a vehicle for national affirmation," the declaration explains, "the movement that developed into rebellion against the central government is not a 'religious' movement, any more than it was in Iran. It is part of the broader mass mobilizations in the region, directed against a state that

remains a semicolonial bourgeois state and that appears to the masses as a guarantor of their exploitation, oppression, and misery."

The Parity Committee is correct in not labeling the antigovernment resistance in Afghanistan a "religious" movement. It opposes the PDPA regime for social and class reasons. But it is more than just a distortion of facts to portray the guerrilla forces as having anything to do with the struggle against "exploitation, oppression, and misery" or of being part of the anti-imperialist upsurge in Iran.

By playing up the guerrillas, the committee covers over their own stated objectives: abolition of the land reform, opposition to women's rights and the literacy campaign, restoration of the power of the semifeudal landlords and the moneylenders, and, in the case of some of the groups, even reimposition of the monarchy that was ousted in 1973.

The committee also ignores the fact that the guerrilla bands are led by the very social forces in Afghanistan who were responsible for the "exploitation, oppression, and misery" of the Afghan workers and peasants: landlords, merchants, drug smugglers, bandits, capitalists, former military officers, sectors of the Islamic clergy, and other reactionaries.

Since such facts do not fit the authors' schema, they are left aside.

Silence on Imperialist Intervention

Even more seriously, the Parity Committee is totally silent on the imperialist backing to these counterrevolutionary forces. While going through great contortions to try to "prove" that Washington was not too unhappy with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the committee at the same time helps to cover up the imperialists' active intervention against the Afghan regime and the Afghan revolution.

That intervention has taken the form of economic pressure against the PDPA regime ever since it came to power in April 1978. It has taken the form of aid to the Afghan guerrillas, many of whom operate out of camps set up in Pakistan. And it has taken the form of covert CIA operations against the Afghan regime, both along the Afghan-Pakistani border region and in Kabul itself.

The response of revolutionary socialists to such imperialist aggression should be to immediately sound the alarm and begin organizing opposition to the intervention and to the escalation of militarism and anti-Soviet propaganda since the turn of the year.

The response of the Parity Committee, however, is to look the other way and scream at Moscow.

The claim that the Soviet troops have "flouted the right of the Afghan people to self-determination" collapses in face of the facts.

By struggling to throw off the imperial-

ist yoke on Afghanistan, the workers and peasants were seeking to exercise their right to self-determination. By intervening against the Afghan revolution, Washington was seeking to deny them that right.

Months before Soviet troops were sent to Afghanistan, the PDPA regime had requested increased Soviet aid to help fight off the imperialist-backed counterrevolution. It had every right to do so. Moscow did provide some aid, but hesitated to become directly involved, responding only when there appeared to be a serious danger that the PDPA would be overthrown.

The Kremlin bureaucracy did not intervene because it supports revolutions or was upset at Washington's violations of Afghanistan's national sovereignty. Far from it. It was primarily motivated by the fear that an openly proimperialist regime would be installed in a country that has a long common border with the Soviet Union and that has traditionally served as a "buffer" against imperialist military pressures.

Based on their characterization of the Soviet intervention as a counterrevolutionary act, the authors of the Parity Committee document argue, "The intervention of the bureaucracy's armed forces thus facilitates imperialism's pressures against the Soviet Union. . . . It has placed in greater danger the conquests of the October revolution, of which the bureaucracy is the grave-digger."

Rather than endangering the foundations of the Soviet workers state, the Soviet aid to Afghanistan helps to defend them. A defeat for the counterrevolution in Afghanistan will be a powerful blow against Washington, weakening imperialism's ability to threaten or pressure the Soviet

Union or to intervene against revolutionary upsurges in other parts of the world.

It would, at the same time, also undermine the Kremlin's counterrevolutionary world schemes, which in the long run would strengthen the position of the Soviet workers against the bureaucracy.

Revolutionary socialists place no political confidence in the actions of the Soviet bureaucracy, which tomorrow could be directed against the interests of the Afghan masses. Nor do they defend Moscow's methods. But they recognize the present intervention for what it is: a move that objectively aids the defense of the Afghan revolution and leaves open the possibility that the workers and peasants will be able to carry it further.

Based on that understanding, they side with the Afghan and Soviet forces, against the imperialist-backed guerrilla bands.

Moving to the Right

The basic response of the Parity Committee to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is a sectarian one. In a Stalinophobic reaction, it blindly recoils from everything the Kremlin does and thereby loses sight of where the real battlelines in the class struggle lie. It ends up in the camp of the counterrevolution.

Given the political orientation of the Parity Committee since its formation, this is not surprising.

The forces comprising the committee came together last year on the basis of a sectarian rejection of the Nicaraguan revolution. The Bolshevik Faction, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International all condemned the Sandinista leadership. They all came out against sending material and financial

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aid to Nicaragua to help rebuild the country following the devastation caused by the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship.

The Parity Committee thus took the same side as the opponents of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The committee's political trajectory on Afghanistan has been similar. It now finds itself joining the imperialist chorus against the Soviet intervention and singing the praises of the counterrevolutionary guerrilla forces.

Glad to Help an Impoverished Neighbor

How Soviet Asians View Afghan War

[Many commentators in the bourgeois press—and some on the left—have maintained that one of the reasons that Moscow sent troops into Afghanistan was because of its fear that the rightist rebellion there would somehow inspire and attract the nationalities in Soviet Central Asia. The following article by Craig R. Whitney, which was published in the April 11 *New York Times*, provides information on what the peoples of Soviet Central Asia actually think about the Afghan insurgency and the Soviet aid to the Afghan regime.]

* * *

DUSHANBE, U.S.S.R.—A young man, 23 years old and a student at the university here, close to the border of Afghanistan, will have to do three months of active military duty this summer. "But I'm not worried," he said. "They won't send me to Afghanistan—they're only sending the regular army there now."

In December, he recalled, things were different. There was the eerie night about a week before New Year's when a throbbing roar set the buildings of Dushanbe trembling almost as in the earthquakes that strike Tadzhikistan so frequently.

People got out of bed, went out into the streets and discovered what the noise was—an endless column of tanks and armored vehicles heading south.

Secret Orders at Night

"Reservists were given secret orders, at night, to return to active duty and be prepared for field maneuvers," the student said. "They weren't told where but after a few days it was clear—Afghanistan."

"The reservists are all back home now," he went on. "And most of them were glad to go to help—it's a very backward country and we are neighbors, after all."

All over the Moslem southern crescent of the Soviet Union, the echoes of the military intervention in Afghanistan still resound but with few audible overtones of discontent or protest.

Soviet authorities have only now reo-

Ironically, the Stalinophobia of the Parity Committee also leads it into the "Euro-communist" camp of the Spanish and Italian Stalinist parties, which have both condemned the Soviet action as well.

That is the ultimate logic of ultraleft sectarianism. While seeking to present revolutionary-sounding arguments for its opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Parity Committee finds itself moving rapidly to the right. □

opened the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent and Dushanbe to foreign travelers, after largely sealing them off when the transports were flying and convoys were rolling into Afghanistan.

Yet the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks who live in the region and share linguistic, ethnic, and religious ties with many of their Afghan neighbors seem to display a far wider acceptance of the Soviet military role across the border than Russians in Moscow's critical intellectual circles.

According to a census in 1967, there were 3.5 million Tadzhiks, 1.5 million Uzbeks and 300,000 Turkmen in Afghanistan. Across the border in the Soviet Union there are about 13 million Uzbeks, 3 million Tadzhiks and 2 million Turkmen.

Years of ideological and social transformations, extirpation of ancient customs and exposure to Russian culture have made Soviet Central Asia a different world from the mountain backwardness of Afghanistan. Women on the Soviet side of the border do not wear the veil and they are not chattel of their husbands. There is little unemployment. And if there is no great wealth, there is also no abject poverty or hunger.

In the desert cities of Uzbekistan and here in the mountain valley around Dushanbe, people asked by this correspondent and other foreign travelers about the intervention in Afghanistan seemed to believe their Government's version of what happened. The social gains of the April 1978 "revolution" in Afghanistan, they remarked, were about to be lost to a collection of reactionary armed bandits supported and armed from the outside by China, the United States and Pakistan.

"We remember the Basmachi rebellion here," commented a university professor in Dushanbe. "They were also a bunch of mercenaries and gunmen, much like the Afghan rebels. Ibrahim Bek, the last Basmachi leader, was caught near Dushanbe only in 1931, a decade after Soviet rule had been proclaimed in Tadzhikistan. We know

the barbarism and the suffering of that kind of war, and any Tadzhik would be able to sympathize instinctively with the supporters of the revolution in Afghanistan."

A driver in the old trading center of Bukhara told two visiting Americans that he had just returned from three months of active duty in Afghanistan. "I have personally seen 30 Soviet soldiers ripped from here to here," he said, zipping a finger from his abdomen to his gullet. "Killed by Chinese spies. I saw them myself, Chinese spies in Afghan uniforms." He refused to believe they might have been Afghan rebels.

Afghans 'Appreciate the Help'

It's a poor, backward country, he tells his acquaintances. "The Afghans really appreciate the help we're giving them there."

Another man in Bukhara—an Uzbek with nine children who complained that the Bukhara stores never had enough meat and that the privately raised beef on sale at the local market was unaffordable—then asked an American visitor why the United States was so agitated about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan.

"Agh," he said, "if the Soviet Union pulls out of Afghanistan, will that make the United States pull out of the Persian Gulf?"

In the mud-walled town of Khiva, once a flourishing market on the caravan route through the deserts of Khorezm, a young Uzbek-Tatar woman casually mentioned that her brother was serving in a helicopter crew in Afghanistan.

"He says the only thing the Soviet Army is doing there is helping people," she said. "Building roads and repairing bridges. Why is there all this American propaganda about poison gas and massacres of civilians? He says it isn't true."

Bandaged Soldiers in View

This is not the impression produced by the military hospitals in Tashkent, the main Soviet base for airlifts to Afghanistan. On a warm spring day late last month, American tourists who happened to stroll past the facility in the northeast of the city saw more than 100 closecropped soldiers sprawled in the sun on the lawn. Many of them wore head bandages. Others had their arms in slings, their legs in casts. Military doctors, in uniform, bustled about, attending to those inside.

"Either the only soldiers who have accidents are young ones 18 and 19 years old," one of the tourists remarked later, "or they had been wounded in Afghanistan—and ambulances came and went one a minute."

A member of a Canadian tourist group staying in Tashkent in the last week of March said that in one night the roar of propeller planes was so constant "it sounded like London in the Blitz." What they apparently heard was a military

airlift in the darkness by swarms of Soviet Antonov-22's and Antonov-12's.

Unwise to Query Soldiers

This is a society in which military secrecy is both pervasive and intimidating. It is not possible to stop a soldier on the street and ask him if he's coming from or going to Afghanistan without risking arrest as a foreign spy.

Similarly, it is impossible to find out why the ethnic Tadjik and Uzbek reservists who went into Afghanistan in the first waves last December have largely been replaced by army units that are less ethnically identifiable, though it could be that Moscow anticipated less resistance from the rebels than occurred.

Trains coming into Tashkent from the border town of Termez, across the Amu Darya from Afghanistan, bear weary troops in soiled sheepskin-lined field coats. The replacements, mostly Slavs, wait for their trains south equipped with bandoliers and bayonets, not standard issue for troops in the European parts of the Soviet Union.

There appear to have been few serious economic disruptions to Central Asia as a result of the mobilization of civilian reservists earlier this year. And life is deceptively normal only a few hundred miles from the military action.

Farmers from the mud huts of the countryside around Khiva bring their melons, onions, radishes and tomatoes into the minareted city now as before. Donkey carts trundle through the narrow streets of Bukhara as placidly as before. Soldiers in green field uniforms take time out from drills beside the splendid citadel of Samarkand, talk with their wives and let their children try on their broadrimmed summer ranger hats.

Yuldash A. Shakarymov, first secretary of the Dushanbe Communist Party organization, said in an interview: "There have been no economic difficulties at all as a result of Afghanistan. The people of Dushanbe are fulfilling their plans and assignments and there were no disruptions."

Some of this attitude may be official bluster. Yet this is a populous region and its population is growing faster than anywhere else in the Soviet Union. Dushanbe is a city of 500,000. Samarkand has about 480,000. Tashkent is the country's fourth largest city, with just short of two million people. A military operation involving even 80,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, as American military experts claim, does not overwhelm even on a regional scale.

There seems little support here for an idea sometimes advanced in the West that the Soviet Union may have withdrawn the Tadjik and Uzbek reservists from Afghanistan because of dangers they might be "infected" by the Moslem fervor of the rebels.

Moslem religious leaders here preach political loyalty to the Soviet state so

Islam is officially tolerated. Moslems, when they are asked to express their feelings about Afghanistan in private, say their duty is to help their fellow Afghan Moslems reach the same levels of economic progress and social emancipation that they have in the Soviet Union.

In Bukhara's 16th-century Mir-Arab Medresseh, or Moslem theological semi-



nary, one of two still permitted in the Soviet Union, the director, Abdul-Kakhar Gaparov, said:

"Whenever there has been a revolution, there have been people who are against it. Here, after our revolution, the Basmachi rebels fought against it for a long time. Many of the rebels in Afghanistan are from the Moslem brotherhood, an extremely reactionary group."

"If they were truly patriots," he went on, "the Afghans outside their country would support the revolution, for bringing social progress to their people at home."

'It Is Our Duty to Help'

Out in the desert at Khiva, Bakhadyr A. Rakhmanov, an irrigation engineer born in the town, remembers that there was a slave market there until the Soviet authorities deposed the last Khan of Khiva. He added: "The Afghans are our neighbors. Where there is poverty and backwardness it is our duty to help."

His father was a teacher and a member of the Uzbek Communist Party, so his loyal views came as no surprise.

A visitor wondered whether the large Uzbek families living in cubical mud huts on collective farms outside Khiva, cultivating cotton with ancient canals built by their ancestors and improved by people like Mr. Rakhmanov, think the same way. But politics seems to be a concern people leave to the rulers in Moscow. There is no known Uzbek or Tadjik political dissident movement.

In Tashkent, Mullah Abdulghani Abdulla, deputy chairman of the officially sanctioned Moslem Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, said:

"We believe that this revolution in Af-

ghanistan had begun to solve the serious social and economic problems of that country. The leaders of the revolution also say they intend to observe the precepts of Islam, and they have promised to restore the mosques and holy places. We as Moslems support the revolution—the medieval feudalism we had here until the 19th century slowed up our social and cultural development, too."

Former Poverty Is Stressed

The Soviet Government does its best at all historical tourist sites—visited by many local people looking for their roots as well as by busloads of foreign visitors—to remind everyone just how backward and impoverished Central Asia was before Soviet rule.

In the Ark, the citadel in the old town at Bukhara, a museum reminds people that the last Emir there, Said Alim Khan, fled to Afghanistan after he was deposed in 1920. He died there in 1947.

Now a nine-span road and rail bridge is being built across the Amu Darya south of Termez and it will be finished in 1982. About 190 Afghan students began studying at Dushanbe University this fall, before the military intervention. The long-term goal would be, from all indications, to transform Afghanistan into a country along the lines of the Soviet republics of Uzbekistan or Tadjikistan.

This is not something most Tadjiks or Uzbeks would object to; they have flourished under it. After half a century they have the highest birth rates in the Soviet Union and many Russian collective farmers envy them their relative prosperity.

Soviet 'Humanitarianism'

Rauf Dadaboyev, Tadjikistan's Minister of Secondary Education and head of the Dushanbe branch of the Soviet-Afghan Friendship Society, a ceremonial body whose purpose is propaganda, said:

"We explain that our Government has shown its humanitarianism by helping the Afghan people with a limited military contingent to help them repel foreign aggression. When I was there a few years ago, the situation in Afghanistan was much the same as it had been here before our revolution. There was foreign intervention here, and the reactionary Moslem clergy played a negative role—the Basmachi hanged the first teachers and killed the revolutionaries as heretical nonbelievers. We remember, and we all support our Government's policy here."

At a park in Dushanbe, a truck driver was no less fiercely loyal, as William R. Carter, a Harvard graduate student, found out when he was having an innocent conversation with a friend of the driver.

"Carter!" roared the truck driver, a Tadjik. "Carter is a warmonger, a menace, worse than a gorilla! Don't give him your address." □

Jamaica—Under the U.S. Gun

By Ernest Harsch

Since late 1979, the Caribbean country of Jamaica has been the victim of increased U.S. economic and political pressures.

At a time of rising anti-imperialist struggles throughout the region, the Carter administration, the major North American banks, and the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF) have redoubled their efforts to maintain an imperialist stranglehold over the island.

They have sought—by withholding much-needed financial assistance and through outright threats—to force the government of Prime Minister Michael Manley to impose even stiffer austerity measures on the Jamaican workers and peasants, make concessions to foreign and local business interests, and modify aspects of its foreign policy—particularly its friendly relations with neighboring Cuba.

Though Manley had previously given in to some of these pressures, his government is now putting up greater resistance to the imperialist demands.

On March 24 Manley proclaimed that he was rejecting the IMF's latest demands for additional austerity measures and was breaking off negotiations with the IMF for further financial assistance. General elections have been announced for the end of the year, and Manley's People's National Party (PNP) is seeking to mobilize support for its stand against the IMF.

In addition, Manley signaled his government's intention of retaining ties with Cuba by making an unscheduled visit to that country on March 26. According to a report in the April 6 English-language *Granma* weekly, Manley was personally greeted at the airport by Fidel Castro and discussions were later held on bilateral relations between the two countries.

Manley's new stance against the IMF and Washington comes not only in the face of tremendous economic pressures on Jamaica, but also despite imperialist threats to topple him if he fails to cooperate.

Citing a State Department source, American correspondent Les Payne reported from Kingston, Jamaica, in the January 23 issue of *New York State's Long Island Newsday*, "The Carter administration has decided that, if Prime Minister Michael Manley does not moderate his pro-Cuba policies within six months, the United States will use all available influence and pressure to drive him from office. . . ."

Washington's heightened concern over Jamaica comes partly in response to the massive upheavals that have rocked the Caribbean and Central America during

the past year: the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, the popular mobilizations in El Salvador, and the growing influence of the Cuban revolution.

Despite socialist rhetoric, the PNP regime in Jamaica remains capitalist. But the imperialists have little confidence in it. They fear that it will either be swept aside by the revolutionary wave that is rolling over the region or that it will be pushed to follow increasingly anti-imperialist policies to remain in power. Moreover, given the instability in the region, Washington is hostile to any signs of independence or resistance to its aims on the part of governments there.

With a population of 2.2 million, Jamaica is the largest of the English-speaking Caribbean islands. What happens there can have a wide impact. In the words of a U.S. diplomat quoted in the February 25 *Wall Street Journal*, Jamaica "can be the linchpin to what goes on in the other islands."

Manley's 'Democratic Socialism'

Though Washington's worries about Jamaica have become more acute over the past year, they are not new. They actually date back to the mid-1970s, shortly after the PNP was elected in 1972.

The PNP is a bourgeois nationalist party. It had previously been allowed to hold office under British colonial rule. Initially, Washington had little cause for concern; the PNP's first two years back in power produced no major policy changes. But then the struggles of the Jamaican masses and the economic crisis of the early 1970s forced it to adopt certain policies that were inimical to the imperialists.

The social pressures bearing down on the PNP flowed from Jamaica's position as an underdeveloped semicolon. It had been formally independent of Britain for ten years, but its economy was still largely dominated by imperialist concerns, particularly the North American bauxite firms (Jamaica is the world's second largest producer of bauxite, the raw material for aluminum). Much of the rest of the economy was controlled by fifty local families, who were in turn closely allied with the imperialists.

Because of Jamaica's subordination to the world capitalist market, its economic development was greatly hindered. Industrialization was greater than in many other Caribbean countries, but it was still very limited. Agricultural production was in decline. The economy, moreover, was the victim of unequal trade relations with

the imperialist powers. The low prices Jamaica received for its main export products, bauxite and sugar, could not cover the expensive manufactured imports it needed to keep the economy going and to meet consumer needs.

The living conditions for the vast majority of Jamaicans were abysmal.

Many had left the countryside and streamed toward the cities in search of work, but the stagnant economy could provide few new jobs. Unemployment had reached 25 percent by the time the PNP took office. Every year tens of thousands of Jamaicans were forced to leave the country to seek work elsewhere (there are now as many Jamaicans living abroad as there are within Jamaica).

Average per capita income was just US\$810 in 1972. But even that figure was deceiving, since the lowest 60 percent of Jamaica's income earners received only 24 percent of all individual income, while the top 5 percent received a similar proportion. A 1970 survey of central Kingston found that only 14 percent of all dwellings had inside plumbing and that 43 percent of them had just one room. About half of all Jamaicans over the age of fifteen were functionally illiterate.

The poverty, rising unemployment, and proliferation of crowded shantytowns around the major cities combined to fuel social ferment. In 1968, widespread student protest swept the island. During the early and mid-1970s, workers in many sectors went on strike for higher wages and against layoffs. Some factories were occupied by their workers. In early 1975, poor peasants in Westmoreland, Portland, and St. Mary began to seize the land of big capitalist farmers.

In some cases, the PNP sought to contain these struggles through repression. But it was at the same time compelled to bend to the demands of the masses, especially since the party had a large base among the poorest sections of the population and had come to power with the promise that "better must come."

At its 1974 congress, the PNP's political stance shifted to the left. It came out in favor of "democratic socialism" and outlined a policy of nationalization and social reform.

The government soon took over Radio Jamaica, the electricity company, and a majority stake in a number of the largest foreign-controlled bauxite firms, including Kaiser, Reynolds, and Revere. To partially alleviate land hunger, it bought up unutilized land and leased it to small farmers;

some large sugar plantations were transformed into farming cooperatives managed by those who worked them. Companies were more heavily taxed, the added income being used to finance a housing program, eliminate school tuition, improve social services, create 50,000 jobs, and subsidize food costs.

In an effort to gain greater economic leverage with the imperialist mining firms, Manley helped initiate the International Bauxite Association, which sought to coordinate the pricing and production policies of the major bauxite-exporting countries.

Manley's foreign policy also took a swing to the left. Close ties were established with Cuba, and several hundred Cuban construction workers, educational experts, doctors, and technicians arrived in Jamaica. Manley came out in support of the southern African liberation movements and publicly defended the Cuban decision to send combat troops to Angola in 1975 to help defend that country from a U.S.-backed South African invasion.

The CIA in Action

Manley's reforms, though limited, upset both the imperialists and the small Jamaican bourgeoisie. Private investment came to a standstill and Jamaican businessmen began to smuggle their capital abroad.

Washington was particularly incensed by Manley's pro-Cuban stance and by his bauxite policies.

According to a detailed study by Ernest Volkman and John Cummings in the December 1977 issue of *Penthouse* magazine, the CIA embarked on a covert action program to try to "destabilize" the Manley regime in 1976. This followed a rejection by Manley of a U.S. ultimatum in December 1975 that he reduce his ties with Cuba.

The CIA, according to Volkman and Cummings, provided financial assistance to the opposition Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), an openly proimperialist group, and helped incite strikes and antigovernment demonstrations.

Heavily armed gangs of JLP supporters took to the streets and clashed with members of the PNP. During the fighting in 1976, which spread through the shantytowns of Kingston and other cities, at least 300 persons were killed. Several Cuban targets were also bombed.

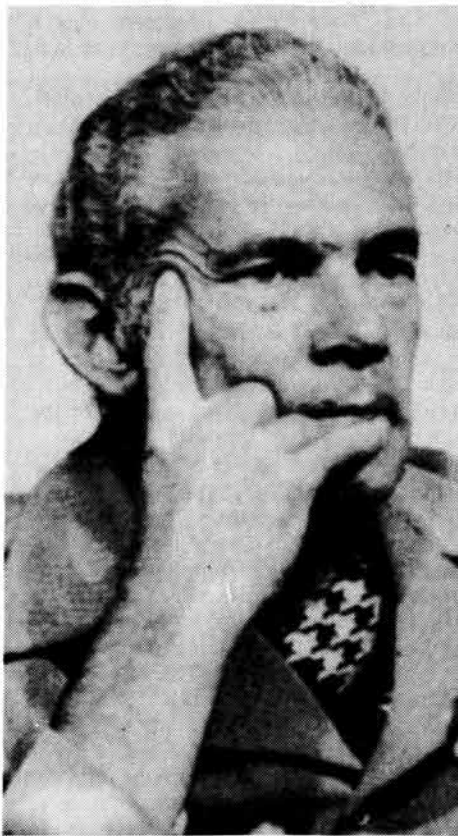
According to Volkman and Cummings, the CIA also tried to assassinate Manley. Three times, in July, September, and December 1976, plans were laid to have the Jamaican leader killed, but each time something went wrong.

On the night of the third assassination attempt, December 15, 1976, Manley was reelected to a second term of office. Promising to continue its reform measures, the PNP won a landslide victory against the JLP.

The PNP's decisive victory in the December 1976 elections temporarily scuttled

Washington's plans to remove the ruling party in favor of the JLP. The new Carter administration shifted gears and adopted an alternative course of using economic pressure to get Manley to change his policies.

Jamaica's severe economic difficulties gave the imperialists a convenient handle



Jamaica's Prime Minister Michael Manley.

to use against the country.

Bauxite production had fallen in Jamaica due to cutbacks by the mining companies in favor of their Australian operations. The rise in world oil prices hit Jamaica particularly hard; while its oil import bill stood at \$44 million in 1972, it has since climbed to \$880 million. Foreign exchange reserves dwindled, hindering the import of industrial equipment and severely disrupting manufacturing. Jamaica's gross domestic product had declined every year since 1972. Inflation, meanwhile, drastically cut into the living standards of the Jamaican workers and peasants.

Although Manley had proclaimed in early 1977 that "we are not for sale," he was soon forced to approach the International Monetary Fund for help in keeping the Jamaican economy afloat. Later that year, Jamaica received the first of a series of sizeable IMF loans. By December 1979, the government had borrowed about \$250 million from the fund.

The IMF's price for these loans was steep and exacting. It demanded cuts in

social services and government employment programs. It insisted that Manley impose wage controls. It compelled him to repeatedly devalue the Jamaican dollar, a move that increased the inflation rate.

To retain access to IMF credit facilities, the Jamaican regime had to subject its economic performance to periodic "monitoring." Failure to meet the IMF targets resulted in loan cutoffs until new terms were negotiated.

Despite some demagogic protests against the IMF, Manley attempted, for nearly three years, to impose the IMF's austerity policy on Jamaica.

As a result, the official unemployment rate rose to 30 percent, while for young people it climbed to 50 percent. Food subsidies were heavily cut, leading to increases in the prices of some food items by as much as 90 percent. In the sixteen-month period between June 1978 and October 1979, real incomes fell by a staggering 35 percent.

At the same time, Manley used repression to control the mass reaction to these measures. Police and troops were sent against strikers. Factory occupations and land seizures were dealt with ruthlessly. Prominent left-wing figures in the PNP, such as D.K. Duncan, were purged and removed from their posts.

Workers Fight Back

This shift to the right met with considerable resistance, however.

Squeezed by eroding living standards, workers refused to accept the IMF-dictated wage controls. Railway workers, journalists, fire fighters, cement workers, government employees, sugar workers, dockers, telephone workers, oil workers, and others struck repeatedly in defiance of the austerity policy. In some cases the workers were successful in breaking through the 15 percent ceiling on wage increases laid down by Manley.

Many unions, representing a majority of organized workers in Jamaica, called on the regime to withdraw the wage guidelines and demanded wage increases linked to the cost of living. The PNP Youth Organisation, in July 1977, sharply criticized the government and called for the takeover of land, banks, and insurance companies and for a united struggle against capitalism and imperialism by the workers, poor farmers, unemployed, and students.

The Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), which describes itself as "communist" but gives "critical support" to the Manley regime, led some of these struggles, presenting a political challenge to Manley from the left.

In January 1979, the mounting discontent erupted into a series of uprisings in the shantytowns around Kingston, Spanish Town, and Montego Bay, sparked by an announced increase in gasoline prices (which Manley said was necessary under

the terms of an IMF loan). Some 500 barricades were erected in the capital and workers at three large bauxite plants walked off their jobs to join the protests. The army and police were sent in, and by the end of the third day of protests seven persons had been killed.

The growing popular disillusionment with Manley gave new opportunities to the rightist JLP to try to broaden its support at the expense of the PNP. The JLP adopted a demagogic stance against the austerity policies, combined with anticommunist rhetoric and denunciations of the Cuban aid to Jamaica.

The JLP-affiliated Bustamente Industrial Trade Union led strikes against the wage controls and initiated protests against price hikes. JLP supporters were active in erecting barricades during the January 1979 outbursts.

Faced with an eroding base and the pressures of his own supporters, Manley wavered in his determination to impose the IMF's terms. At a meeting of twelve major trade unions in early 1979, Manley announced that he would ignore an IMF stipulation limiting wage increases (although several months later he again proposed a ceiling on wage hikes).

Manley also maintained an anti-imperialist stance on some key foreign policy questions. At the Sixth Summit Conference of the Nonaligned Movement in Havana in September 1979, Manley not only praised Fidel Castro, but also Lenin and the Russian revolution of 1917. He denounced the U.S. blockade of Cuba, hailed the overthrow of the shah of Iran, and backed the Cuban motion to withdraw recognition from the imperialist-backed Pol Pot forces in Kampuchea. To the anger of the White House, Manley likewise demanded the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States.

Carter Calls Out the Marines

The Nonaligned conference in Havana clearly reflected Cuba's growing influence in the Caribbean and throughout the colonial and semicolonial world. Coming just months after the New Jewel Movement seized power in Grenada and the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza in Nicaragua, the Havana summit prompted the Carter administration to adopt a more aggressive and belligerent policy toward Cuba and the rest of the Caribbean.

On October 1, 1979, less than a month after the Havana summit, Carter announced the creation of a special military task force, based in Key West, Florida, to make possible the rapid deployment of American troops into the Caribbean. Shortly after, some 1,800 American troops participated in a highly publicized military exercise at Guantánamo Bay, a U.S.-occupied enclave in Cuba, which happens to be just 130 miles from Jamaica.

On October 6, the Manley regime joined with the governments of Grenada, St.

Lucia, and Guyana to issue a joint declaration rejecting Carter's creation of the military task force. Manley also attempted to get the twelve English-speaking countries of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) to issue a statement condemning Carter's aggressive actions.

The American stance toward Jamaica itself hardened perceptibly. In reaction to Manley's remarks at the Havana summit, the U.S. embassy in Kingston sent a recommendation to Washington that U.S. food aid to Jamaica, totalling about \$10 million, be ended. Carter okayed the cutoff.

Simultaneously with Washington's stepped-up military presence in the Caribbean and increased pressures on Jamaica, the JLP escalated its public opposition to the Manley regime and the Cuban presence in Jamaica. The party organized provocative demonstrations against the Cubans and demanded the ouster of the Cuban ambassador. The PNP, WPJ, and Communist Party of Jamaica pledged to organize counterdemonstrations against the JLP and to provide protection for the Cuban doctors and nurses on the island.

All the major capitalists' organizations in Jamaica came out publicly for the government's resignation, including the Jamaica Manufacturers Association, the Jamaica Federation of Employers, and the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica.

In November, Manley attended a U.S.-sponsored conference on the Caribbean held in Miami, Florida. There, he made public pleas for greater U.S. investment and trade ties with Jamaica and sought to reassure Washington that his regime was not "anti-American." As an example he pointed to his regime's condemnation of the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Iran. (In a similar vein, the Jamaican government later voted with Washington in the United Nations against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.) Manley also took the occasion of the Miami conference to meet with Philip Habib, a member of Carter's National Security Council and special adviser on the Caribbean.

Carter was not impressed. According to the report by Les Payne in the January 23, 1980, *Newsday*, the White House decision to give Manley just six months to change his policies followed the Miami visit.

According to an unidentified State Department official quoted by Payne, "We don't believe that Manley is retrievable, that he will alter his move to the left. If, within, this 6-month testing period, Manley shows some signs of moderating his position, then we will take a softer line. If not, then we will continue to pursue a hard line." He indicated that further pressure on Jamaica, especially economic pressure, would be part of that hard line.

Even before this "testing period" came into effect, however, the imperialists' banks were already tightening the squeeze on Jamaica.

In September 1979, a consortium of

mainly North American banks turned down a Jamaican request for \$650 million in loans. The American-dominated IMF, citing Manley's failure to meet the fund's exacting terms, cut off funding to Jamaica in December. In return for a resumption of credits, it demanded that Manley lay off another 11,000 workers, devalue the Jamaican dollar, and cut \$20 million in food subsidies from the budget. Manley attempted to get a waiver of the conditions, but failed.

In response to these imperialist pressures, the left wing of the PNP again gained greater influence. D.K. Duncan, who had previously been purged, was elected general secretary of the PNP at a party congress in September.

Together with the Workers Party of Jamaica, the PNP left wing demanded that Manley end all negotiations with the IMF and seek out alternative sources of financing.

Under the pressure of such demands and the likelihood of further popular outbursts if he attempted to impose new austerity measures, Manley concluded that any more concessions to the IMF would only endanger his own political survival.

The March decision to rebuff the IMF and call new elections was calculated to rally the PNP's supporters and revive its sagging popularity. Manley sounded a nationalist note for the election campaign, declaring that the new course was "a challenge to all those who defend national sovereignty."

Simultaneously with the rejection of the IMF terms, Hugh Small, another prominent PNP left-winger, was named the new finance minister.

The JLP charged that the government's rejection of the IMF was the result of a "Marxist takeover" of the PNP. While the JLP had previously posed as an opponent of the IMF austerity measures, it now came out against breaking ties with the fund.

The Jamaican regime's efforts to make up for the loss of the IMF funding by seeking loans from other imperialist financial institutions and banks have so far not been very successful. But Manley has also begun elsewhere. Approaches have been made to the Libyan regime for a \$50 million loan, to Moscow, and to various member states of the Nonaligned movement.

Even if Manley is able to get some new loans, the Jamaican economy will remain in dire straits. The imperialists will continue to put the squeeze on Jamaica and other countries in the region, forcing governments like Manley's to either buckle in to Washington or to put up greater resistance.

As the imperialist vise tightens, the masses of Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean will be attracted more and more to the example of the revolutions in Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba. □

Statement of the Fourth International

Zimbabwe: After the Election Victory

[The following statement was adopted March 29 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The landslide election victory of Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) is a big step forward for the people of Zimbabwe and a serious blow against imperialism and the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The leader of the white settlers, Ian Smith, had boasted many times that there would never be majority rule in his lifetime. The Western bourgeois media had waged an uninterrupted offensive against the Zimbabwean guerrillas. Imperialist politicians had proclaimed that the guerrillas were "terrorists" who had no support inside Zimbabwe itself.

The British Conservative government had hoped that the election results would be inconclusive and that Joshua Nkomo could therefore be maneuvered into office at the head of a coalition. The Rhodesian security forces sought to ensure that the ZANU campaign was disrupted by a well-orchestrated process of slanders, terror, and intimidation. In the period leading up to the elections there were:

- two assassination attempts against Robert Mugabe;
- a series of rocket and firebomb attacks on the homes of ZANU officials and their families;
- 10,000 ZANU members and supporters were arrested and, in some cases, subjected to brutality at the hands of the white security forces;
- ZANU was banned from campaigning in one constituency;
- two sets of bombings were carried out by the notorious Selous Scouts, who tried to pin the blame on ZANU;
- major obstacles were put in the path of returning Zimbabwean refugees in order to prevent their votes from being cast.

Despite these obstacles the election rallies of ZANU represented the largest mobilizations of the urban and rural masses seen in the history of Zimbabwe. This process was reflected inside the polling booths itself. Despite the racist terror; despite the presence of South African troops, stationed provocatively at Beitbridge; despite the random violence of Bishop Muzorewa's lumpen thugs ("auxiliaries"); despite the declaration of martial law by the white Rhodesian army in parts of the country; despite Lord Soames's decision to renew the State of Emergency with all that it entailed—censorship,

forced labor, curfews, powers of arrest and detention without trial, thousands of nationalist prisoners, etc.—and despite the constant attacks by the racist media, the imperialists and white settlers failed miserably.

The Zimbabwean masses flocked to the polling booths to take advantage of the first opportunity ever to express their opinion on the organizations that had waged an unremitting armed struggle against the hated settler regime. ZANU obtained more than 60 percent of the vote and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), headed by Nkomo won 24.1 percent. The joint votes obtained by these *chimurenga* (war of liberation) parties amounted to 87 percent. They won 77 seats out of the 80 set aside for Blacks.

The size of ZANU's election victory can be directly attributed to the fact that ZANU was the most combative, the best implanted, and the most uncompromising exponent of the liberation war against the white settler regime and its imperialist allies.

Mugabe was constantly denounced as a Marxist, who would "inflict communism" on Zimbabwe. This was the daily ideological diet imposed on the masses by the Rhodesian propaganda machine. In voting for Mugabe, they indicated that they were willing to go all the way. Their expectations were aroused by the promises of ZANU, and their determination was hardened by the racist propaganda of the settlers. The ZANU victory was seen by the Black masses throughout southern Africa as *their* triumph.

While the white rulers in Pretoria could not suppress their anger and made military threats the day after the election, the Black masses in Soweto enthusiastically expressed their jubilation. Thus the impact of the victory was felt far beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. The guerrillas in the Namibian bush greeted ZANU's victory as their own.

But the mobilizations and the expectations of the Black masses in Zimbabwe, especially those deprived of their land by the Land Apportionment Act and other white racist devices, pose the biggest threat to imperialist and white settler interests in the region.

But it should be noted simultaneously that despite ZANU's election victory and its large echo among the masses everywhere in southern Africa, the institutions of the white-settler capitalist state remain largely intact in Zimbabwe.

After the break-up of the Portuguese em-

pire in Angola and Mozambique in 1974-75, and after the Soweto uprising in South Africa, imperialism had to find a quick solution in order to preserve its overall interests in the whole of southern Africa.

The incapacity of the white settler minority to inflict a decisive military defeat on the liberation forces in Zimbabwe, indeed the strengthening of the armed struggle during the last three years, made it even more urgent for imperialism and its local allies to find a political solution. They needed a solution that would permit the formation of a regime in which the role given to the leadership of the Patriotic Front would not imply any fundamental questioning of the economic positions of imperialism and the privileges of the white settlers. The experience of the government headed by Bishop Abel Muzorewa had demonstrated how precarious any arrangement was that did not include Patriotic Front forces. Another formula was necessary.

The situation was made more difficult by the growing influence of the Patriotic Front among the Black population and the eroding base of the Smith-Muzorewa regime. It was thus necessary for imperialism to get the assistance of the regimes in the neighboring countries of Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana, and Angola to put pressure on the leadership of the Patriotic Front.

British and American imperialism and the racist regime in South Africa significantly increased their pressure on these states to make them get the Patriotic Front forces to see "reason." They utilized the deep economic crisis these countries are experiencing and the considerable need some of them have for food imports to get them to fall into line. The South African government was especially adroit in using the economic links that it has with them. Zambia, for example, largely depends on Pretoria for investment in copper mines. Mozambique benefits greatly from South African exports that pass through on the railway to its port of Beira, and it also exports part of its labor force to South Africa. In addition, a social and political crisis was deepening in Mozambique.

Furthermore, each time a delicate phase was reached in the negotiations, the Rhodesian army launched murderous raids into the territory of these states in order to intimidate them. It was in these neighboring countries that the liberation movements had established the center of their operations both for supplies and the training of their troops. Their governments

therefore have held an important influence over ZANU and ZAPU. By squeezing these governments and by relying on them, the imperialist powers have been able to wrest concessions more easily from the nationalist movements and to get the signature of the latter on an agreement in December 1979 that they had refused to accept some months before. This was the Lancaster House accords.

The civil war in Rhodesia constituted a dangerous abscess to the South African regime, which has been looking toward establishing closer economic links with the relatively more stable neocolonial countries in the region. It seeks important new markets and opportunities for investment for the development of its own economy.

British and U.S. imperialism, in order to protect their strategic and economic interests in South Africa, have a big stake in trying to "pacify" southern Africa. South Africa and the neocolonial regimes also sought, in their own way and for their own interests, an end to the conflict in Rhodesia. Imperialism had at its disposal effective means of pressure that it could exert on both the Patriotic Forces and the white settlers in order to achieve the Lancaster House accords.

A Neocolonial Agreement Forced on the Masses

The document the Patriotic Front signed at Lancaster House was a neocolonial agreement forced upon the Zimbabwean masses. The transition itself involved Britain reassuming colonial power and sending in a governor backed by 1,200 Commonwealth troops, most of them British. The guerrillas were to surrender themselves to assembly areas where they would be lightly armed and at the mercy of the Rhodesian air force.

The constitution agreed to at Lancaster House maintains many of the features of the internal settlement previously rejected so vehemently by the nationalist leaders. The Lancaster House accords by and large fell short of the demands put forward for many years by the Patriotic Front forces.

The constitution involves the reservation of 20 percent of the parliamentary seats for the white settlers, while they are only a little more than 2 percent of the total voters (200,000 out of a population of about 7 million). It also keeps intact the army, police, judiciary, and other features of the state apparatus dominated by the white settler minority, and rejects agrarian reform for the next whole period.

Mugabe has so far committed himself to implement these accords. He asked the reactionary General Peter Walls, the commander of the Rhodesian army who conducted the anti-guerrilla war, to stay in his post. He is to supervise the formation of a "new army" in Zimbabwe that has to integrate the white forces and the two ex-guerrilla armies. The civil service commissions that prevented Muzorewa's govern-

ment from taking any independent initiatives continue to function. Although some racist judges have been eased out, this just provides cover for the continued functioning of a racist judiciary.

The Mugabe government, swept in by the massive vote for ZANU, has placed itself within the framework of the neocolonial agreement. The majority of the members of the cabinet are members of ZANU (fourteen), four are members of ZAPU. However, two ministers represent the white settlers. One of them, David Smith, a big landowner and member of the Rhodesian Front, is minister of commerce and industry. He participated in the governments of Ian Smith and Muzorewa. The other is Denis Norman, the minister of agriculture. He is a big capitalist farmer and in 1978 was President of the Rhodesian National Union of Farmers.

Will the Masses Respect this Agreement?

The Mugabe government has announced that the land question will be "resolved" by distributing the land that has been left fallow by the white landowners and by organizing cooperatives. However, according to its present statements the essential interests of the white settlers will not be touched.

The ex-guerrillas will enter the ranks of the army and police, and to ensure their integration, many of the old guerrilla army's intermediary cadre will be promoted to officer status.

Mugabe shows no intention of challenging the interests and prerogatives of the British, American, and South African firms that control nearly 65 percent of industrial investment.

He has drawn attention to the fact the implementation of the agreement requires considerable financial aid from the imperialist countries, who are ready to oblige. He has emphasized the necessity of an economic agreement with his powerful South African neighbor, for the same reasons.

Imperialism's plans are clear: rapidly try to establish a neocolonial state based on a specific alliance at the political and socioeconomic levels between the leaderships of the nationalist organizations and the white settlers, under the "protection" of imperialism.

One factor can shake up all these plans: a powerful rise of the mass movement. Mugabe's coming to power is seen by the masses as their victory. It was the armed struggle that forced the white racists to grant elections and led to a Black majority parliament. The demands for universal suffrage and equal rights have been a powerful stimulus to the mobilization of the workers and peasants in Zimbabwe. As long as many aspects of national oppression remain, democratic, social, and economic demands will trigger new struggles.

One of the most pressing issues is the land question. Eighty-three percent of the

Black population live in the countryside, but the tiny white population owns the best 50 percent of the land. This unequal distribution has resulted in a massive overpopulation in the "tribal trust lands," where the Blacks are condemned to subsistence farming.

The consequence of this is a migrant labor system, similar to that operating in South Africa, where people are forced to work in white-owned mines, farms, factories, and homes for part of the year. Between 60 and 75 percent of all Black households depend on some form of wage labor for their subsistence.

The countryside, particularly the "tribal trust lands," has been devastated by the racist security forces. Health and education programs are in ruins. The Red Cross says that 20 percent of the population is suffering from malnutrition.

There are 750,000 "displaced persons" living in wretched shantytowns, and on the borders there are another 175,000 refugees. To this must be added the estimated 225,000 people living in the so-called "protected" villages, who will wish to return to their own areas.

It is estimated that \$100 million will be needed to bring the "trust lands" back to life.

Thousands of semiproletarians have concentrated in the urban centers where unemployment and underemployment are severe problems. Furthermore, there is gigantic discrimination in wage levels, social security allowances, and education.

All of these social and economic conditions facing Blacks in Zimbabwe create a very explosive situation that can only stimulate a challenge to the very content of the accords.

Already in the factories of the main towns and also at the principal gold mine (Dalny), strike action by Black workers has been taken. The response of the bosses was as to be expected: they immediately sacked a large number of workers.

Mugabe's response was to affirm that the workers should use legal procedures—those created by Smith—to advance their demands and that all "illegal action" will be vigorously repressed. Therefore, it's also on the social level that fissures in the Lancaster House agreement will appear.

A Prolonged Instability

The neocolonial content of the Lancaster House agreement and the first moves by Mugabe's government are still far from being sufficient to fully meet the needs of the imperialists. Social and political contradictions remain sharp, and instability continues to reign in the whole region.

Pretoria will have problems trying to divert the Black masses suffering from apartheid in South Africa from the irresistible attraction of majority rule and complete political equality. It will now, especially, redouble its resistance to the

independence struggle in occupied Namibia.

The imperialist powers, the racist regime in South Africa, and the white settlers in Zimbabwe will use every means to defend their economic interests and their privileges. They hope Mugabe will firmly confront the workers' and peasants' struggles, and won't hesitate to use economic blackmail and intimidation to pressure him to do so. The South African capitalists especially are brandishing military threats and will continually probe for an opportunity to intervene.

The struggle to win full independence for Zimbabwe is centered around the following objectives: a radical agrarian reform; full democratic rights without restriction or discrimination; the dismantling of the colonial administration, the army, and the police inherited from the colonial state;

and the expropriation of foreign-owned firms.

Many nationalist leaders, now promoted to coalition government ministers, will try to subordinate the mass organizations to the government. This means that establishing unions and Black farmer organizations independent of the state is very important. The perspective of independent political organization for the working masses is necessary.

Furthermore, the threat of terrorist attacks from the white settlers and from the South African government sharply poses the question of arming the masses and their organizations.

Reinforce Solidarity

In the coming struggles, the principal weight of solidarity falls on the shoulders of the working class of the imperialist

countries, in particular those of Britain and the United States, which have large investments in the area.

It is up to the workers movement to organize solidarity against imperialism's conspiracies in the region, including Namibia. We should defend the Mugabe government against all reactionary plots and maneuvers.

But at the same time we pledge our assistance and aid to the workers and peasants, including their attempts to establish independent mass organizations.

We will carry out this campaign under the slogans:

"End South African Occupation of Namibia!"

"Defend the Zimbabwean Revolution!"

"U.S., Britain, South Africa: Hands Off Zimbabwe!"

French Petition Calls for Rank-and-File Unity

The French working class faces a basic problem in all its economic and political struggles: it is deeply divided both on the political and trade-union levels.

There are two mass workers parties, the Communist Party (CP) and the Socialist Party (SP), and two big union federations, the CP-dominated General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), which is heavily influenced by the SP.

As the austerity offensive of the French rulers has intensified, the workers are less and less able to win victories without joint activity by the CP and SP and by the CGT and CFDT. But instead of charting a course of joint action, the current leaders of these forces are involved in a bitter feud.

In 1972 the CP and SP and the small bourgeois Left Radicals joined together to form an electoral bloc called the Union of the Left. The hope of the reformist CP and SP leaders, codified in the bloc's class-collaborationist "Common Program," was to attract more substantial bourgeois forces through a show of strength at the polls.

French workers, however, hoped that the unity between the CP and SP would strengthen their struggles against the employers and unseat the capitalist parties, bringing in a government that spoke for them.

Reflecting this sentiment, the CP and SP won a huge victory in the March 1977 municipal elections. But factional in-fighting between the SP and CP leaders ended in the break-up of the Union of the Left as the March 1978 legislative elections approached. This factionalism also undermined what had been expected to be another big victory for the mass workers parties. Right up to the eve of the first round of the elections, the CP refused to say whether, in the second round, its candidates would step down in favor of SP candidates with a better chance of win-

ning. (This had been previously agreed to by both parties.)

Largely due to the factionalism, a minority capitalist government came out of the March elections. And the feuding has made it nearly impossible ever since to organize united working-class responses to the regime's hard-hitting austerity programs.

The 1977 municipal elections had marked a significant growth in the SP vote, and this trend continued in the legislative election. Previously, the CP had been France's largest workers party, both in members and votes received. But in March 1978, the SP polled a higher vote.

Trying to redress this electoral balance, CP leaders are treating the SP as their main enemy. They would rather cover up for the Giscard government than attack it in such a way that might end up boosting the SP's vote.

As France's attention shifts to the 1981 presidential elections, the CP's main focus is to see that its candidate either does better than the SP candidate, or at least does well enough in the first round to extract a big price for stepping down in the second round.

The petition campaign around a "Call for Unity in Struggles," discussed in the following article, is an attempt to overcome the divisions and paralysis in the

workers movement. It reflects broad sentiment among French workers to overcome the divisions and join together to struggle.

Since the campaign was launched, more than 60,000 signatures have been collected, many in factories, toward a goal of 100,000. In addition, local committees cutting across party and union lines have been set up to circulate the petitions.

In many places the original text (see box) has been amended to take into account local experiences and to call for a general strike to bring down the government. French Trotskyists in the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) have been among those most active in circulating the amended petitions.

The CP has alternated between ignoring the petition, which is becoming increasingly difficult, and describing it as an anti-CP maneuver by the SP.

In the SP, the Mitterrand wing has supported the petition, while the Michel Rocard wing, which wants to have nothing to do with the CP, has opposed it.

The plans for May Day in Paris are a clear example of the disunity that the petition campaign is trying to overcome. In early April, the CFDT announced it would hold a May Day festival in one place, the CGT announced a demonstration somewhere else, and Force Ouvrière, the third union federation, announced its own march. □

Petition: A Step Toward Working Class Unity

By Jeannette Habel

On December 18, 1979, a petition calling for "unity in struggles" was issued over the signatures of 100 activists from the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and independents. The petition called for "action" at the "rank-and-file level." It was written with clarity and without trying to

cover over existing differences.

Since then, this call has been signed by 45,000 people, a large number of whom are in the plants. A goal of 100,000 signatures has been put forward.

The appearance of a current composed of members of the main workers organiza-

tions that favors unity and that could ultimately be organized in rank-and-file committees is a significant development. It could be a decisive factor in the present French political situation, two years after the left's defeat in the March 1978 legislative elections and on the eve of the May 1981 presidential elections.

Changes Taking Place in the Workers Movement in France

The response the petition has received is not a fluke. Since the breakup of the Union of the Left, the most conscious workers have been mulling over the results of the last ten years of class struggle.

They are drawing the lessons of May 1968, which was a general strike without a political solution, and of the March 1978 elections, which was a pseudo-political solution without mass mobilization. They are trying to understand why it is that such a weakened regime as that of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Premier Raymond Barre—one that is tainted by scandals, reduced to governing by decree, and disavowed by its Constitutional Council—is still able to deal them the heaviest blows they have suffered in twenty years. There are 2 million unemployed; the purchasing power of workers is falling; there are attacks against the social security and health systems; and previous gains in the fields of education and public services are being taken back.

A Socialist Party leader, Pierre Mauroy, provided the answer. "If unity between the CP and SP had been consummated," Mauroy noted, "this government would fall like a dead leaf."

The Giscard-Barre government survives only because of the divisions between left parties; the divisions between the union federations, especially between the CP-led CGT and the CFDT, many of whose leaders are in the SP; the absence of a vehicle to centralize workers struggles; and the lack of political solutions.

At a time when the situation calls for a centralized and united response to the government's attacks, the most advanced workers empirically understand that the mutual attempts to trip each other up by the CP and SP, and by the CGT and CFDT, have nothing to do with the basic concerns of the workers.

The raging polemical battles between the reformist apparatuses find no echo in the real discussions that are taking place within the working class on how best to fight against the government.

These polemics are viewed as something that only concerns the general-staff politicians. At the same time, the polemics are driving a certain segment of the radicalized currents into a kind of apolitical dead-end. These currents are beginning to think that the dividing line runs not between classes, but rather between the "politicos" and the masses.

Thus Huguette Bouchardeau, the na-

Call For Unity in Struggles

It has been two years since the Union of the Left broke up. The patience of the most optimistic is exhausted. Discouragement is spreading and no one now knows how far such a process could go.

Meanwhile, the rightist government is using this situation, through the capitalist economic crisis, to develop new forms of domination and exploitation to profit the national and international bourgeoisie. The workers are calculating what it costs them: intolerable unemployment and inflation, setbacks to political, union, and individual rights.

Abroad, French imperialism is the cop of Africa, and is maneuvering in Asia. The French state is speeding up the installation of the European repressive role.

It would be a serious mistake to ignore a very real danger: the threat of authoritarianism that the sharp change in the political relationship of forces allows. Only the determination of the workers, their ability to struggle in the plants, can make the government and bosses hesitate on this.

We, men and women of the left, members of the CP, of the SP, of no party, refuse to resign ourselves to this.

We call for action. Unity at the rank-and-file level is possible, and is imperative. Without covering over our differences and divergences, in clarity, we call for its consummation.

First, by participating together in the workers' struggles. By responding together to all the attacks on our rights. By mobilizing together against the resurgence of fascism, racism, and antisemitism. By building the women's liberation struggle together. By everywhere pushing forward new forms of democracy against the old forms of oppression.

We do not concede that election dates, whatever their importance, should lead to substituting "general-staff strategies" for mass struggles. We demand that the conditions for unity of the left in the coming elections be discussed now, and in the open.

The only alternative to the rightist government, the only path to socialism, is the rise of a people's movement on a new and broader basis. Unity of the forces of the left is decisive for this.

We ask you to make this call for unity in struggles into a national petition by reproducing it, circulating it, and getting signatures everywhere you work and carrying out activity.

tional secretary of the United Socialist Party (PSU), former CPer Roger Garaudy, and the "Ecologists" are now saying that in the second round of the presidential elections, their main consideration won't be candidates of the workers parties against candidates of the capitalist parties, but rather the "pro-nukes" on one side and the "anti-nukes" on the other.

While there is undeniable disorientation and confusion among certain sectors inside and outside the working class, the dominant characteristic of the situation is that a process of maturation, reflection, and politization is taking place within the workers movement. This is tied to a growth of antibureaucratic consciousness ("fed up to here" with the policy of the apparatuses).

The growing social discontent, the clearer understanding and consciousness about the policy of the working-class leaderships, and the desire to take charge of the struggles and control how they develop, are the early indications of deep changes taking place in the working class. They are the precursors of a change in the relationship between the reformist apparatuses and the advanced workers, especially within the unions.

Some of the signs of this changing relationship are the accumulated mistrust that increases the desire for independent organization; the positive response both to

the proposals for trade-union regroupment and to the battles in the union congresses based on proposals by revolutionary socialists; and the defeats inflicted on notorious trade-union bureaucrats (for example at the CFDT congress of the Paris regional postal and telephone workers union).

In several important congresses such as the Metalworkers Federation of the CGT, which is the CGT's biggest federation, and the Railway Federation, debates and even votes have shown the breadth of the audience for perspectives that correspond to the basic concerns of the workers today. These concerns are centered on fighting together to defeat the government's austerity policies.

That is the thrust of initiatives like the one taken by 500 railworkers in Rouen. They demanded that the railway federations of the CGT and CFDT jointly organize a national rail strike, renewable on a daily basis, until their demands are satisfied.

In the health-care field as well, on December 18 more than 500 hospital workers met for the first time in a coordinating assembly organized by the CFDT health-care unions of the Paris region. A number of departmental CFDT unions (from the départements of Haute-Garonne, Tarn, Pyrénées-Orientales, Rhône, Aisne, Marne, Seine-Maritime, and the cities of Nancy and Besançon) and dozens of CGT acti-

vists also attended. The assembly came out for a renewable general strike in the health-care field "since lack of perspectives leads to shortness of breath," as one worker put it.

The assembly decided that the trade-union officials in attendance should go back to their workplaces, union sections, or general assemblies and present a motion in favor of "struggle in unity, within the framework of a massive, united, renewable strike at the beginning of 1980, not aimed at the opening of negotiations, but at the satisfaction of our demands."

This aspiration to fight "all together" and in a general strike is accompanied by a desire for unity that shows the degree to which the most conscious workers understand the breadth and character of the attacks by the government and bosses.

They recognize that the rise in unemployment, the massive increase in part-time work, the weakening of the level of contractual collective guarantees (such as the gap between the wages guaranteed by the contracts and the average real wages), the growth of disparities of all kinds, the spreading practice of individualizing wages, the regional inequalities, and the discriminatory practices against women make it even more difficult to organize a common struggle.

When we add to all this the divisive practices of the very organizations that are supposed to collectively unify the fights against the bosses, we can understand the disgust that the workers feel and their desire to overcome this multi-faceted division. Symptomatic of this was a poll taken in the workforce organized by the CGT and CFDT at the Saint-Laurent des Eaux nuclear power plant. Eighty percent said they would get involved in struggle only if there was unity; 13 percent if the CGT was alone; 7 percent if the CFDT was alone; and 70 percent if the strike took place throughout the Electricité de France system.

In this context, what does the undeniable decline in union membership in the traditional bastions of the workers movement mean? Some journalists, searching for good copy, attribute the decline to demoralization and to a sense of defeat. But that analysis does not take into account the complexity of the phenomenon. For example, in the December 12, 1979 arbitration-board elections, in which all the workers whether in unions or not had the right to vote, the 63% turnout among workers and the 83% vote for the CGT, CFDT, and Force Ouvrière exceeded all predictions. The size of the turnout, and the virtual wipe-out of company unions, show that when confronted by the government and the bosses, the workers don't want to break ranks. But in the face of leaderships that are fighting each other, they don't want to waste their time.

Whatever one thinks of the effectiveness of such reasoning, the proof is there.

Initiatives for unity that are proposed outside the traditional channels achieve a degree of success—as confirmed by the response to the petition for unity in struggles.

Difficulties Within the Traditional Organizations

The call for unity in struggles exposes the hidden crisis in the French CP, as well as the discontent among many members and intermediate cadres in the CGT (leaders of which signed the call), and internal problems in the Socialist Party.

The problems inside the workers organizations have grown considerably since the Union of the Left broke up in March 1978, and the deepening of the divisions between them has led to a real crisis in the traditional workers organizations. The crisis encompasses their relationship to the working class, their recruitment, authority, and credibility.

It is not surprising that the call for unity in struggles was first put forward by members of the CP and SP, and was then taken up massively by trade-unionists. They saw it as a way to protest the policies of their leaderships.

- In the CP, members are disoriented. There is an absence of political perspectives. The CP's sectarianism on the question of alliances and its adoption of pro-Soviet international positions are in contradiction to its adoption of a classical gradualist reformist strategy. The CP's gradualism in no way differs from the strategy of Social Democracy, where self-management (which supposedly makes it possible to move toward socialism "a step at a time") means nothing more than simple co-management within the framework of the capitalist system.

The sharpening attacks against the SP, aimed at weakening that party in order to establish a balance of forces on the left that is more favorable to the CP, as well as the CP leadership's successive about-faces have hastened the development of political currents within the party and have shaken the party apparatus itself (for example the recent crisis in the Paris Federation, the resignation of members of the party's Regional Federations Bureau, the abolition of the Central Committee weekly *France-Nouvelle* and the magazine *La Nouvelle Critique*, which were replaced by the new weekly *Révolution*).

Aside from an overtly social-democratic orientation embodied by Jean Elleinstein, there are two CP currents that are playing an active role in the petition campaign and have evolved considerably through the petition. One current, around the magazine *Dialectiques*, presents itself as left Eurocommunist. The other is the "Althusserian" current around Louis Althusser.

David Kaisergruber, of the left Eurocommunist current, quite clearly differentiates himself from the parliamentarism and gradualism of Spanish CP-leader Santiago Carrillo's book *Eurocommunism and the*

State. Instead, Kaisergruber proposes Eurocommunism "from below," favoring rank-and-file committees and "intervention for the workers to control all forms of government." He proposes not the abandonment of Leninism, but its critical assimilation, and he clearly rejects any perspective that aims "grosso modo to ameliorate the existing system."

In Kaisergruber's view the differences between the right and left Eurocommunists are like the differences "that were seen in other times between reformism and revolution." He acknowledges not having an analysis of the character of the USSR, while being in solidarity with the struggles against the repression there.

He is beginning to ask questions about the theory of the Leninist party, while being favorable to a "pluralism without tendencies," within the framework of a mass revolutionary party that would have to include the contribution of the far-left organizations.

But the most interesting phenomenon is the evolution of what are called the "Althusserian" militants. While it was formerly just an ideological current, today it is involved on a directly political level and has played a decisive role in launching the petition.

Opposed to the Twenty-Second Congress's abandonment of all reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they uphold the need to destroy the state apparatus; they come out for a socialism that develops forms of democratic power in the factories and neighborhoods, but that would also make the state wither away, especially its most repressive apparatuses.

Since the breakup of the Union of the Left, they have stepped-up their criticisms of CP policies, of its concept of alliances and of the union. They have attacked its "social democratic, reformist drift" (G. Molina in *Que faire aujourd'hui*), its internal functioning, and its nonrevolutionary character, which leads them to say that it is necessary to work "inside and outside the party at the same time" (G. Molina, *op. cit.*).

While recognizing that they do not have an answer about the character of the USSR, they taken positions siding with the workers who are fighting for their social and democratic rights in the deformed workers states and they empirically recognize that "in the countries that [the USSR] aids, it does not follow the profit motive" (G. Labica in *Que faire aujourd'hui*).

But today their thinking is focusing on the theory of the party. Their desire to "break with the traditional forms of politics," "to integrate the movements that are arising," "to change the mentality of each one," to question the Leninist concept of organization, all find an echo in a "non-party" sentiment that is embryonic in the working class, an attitude that the CFDT has habitually seized upon.

The future of this current depends largely on its answer to this question of the theory of the party, on the organizational perspectives it can provide the working-class members of the CP in particular.

Finally, a current primarily made up of working-class CP members has been organized around the magazine *Luttes et débats*. Their positions are close to those of revolutionary Marxism and their intervention centers on the problems of the united front, the analysis of Stalinism, and of the struggle against repression in the Eastern bloc countries.

- In the SP the problems are more widely known. They basically center on the battle between Michel Rocard and François Mitterrand for the SP's presidential nomination. Mitterrand and the CERES [Centre d'Études, de Recherches et d'Éducation Socialistes—Center for Socialist Studies, Research, and Education, a left-wing formation in the SP], who are more rooted in the factories, have so far greeted the petition favorably, and they are trying to use it to their advantage to pressure the CP.

Rocard, who wants nothing to do with the CP, is opposed to the petition.

- The petition has received its greatest response in the ranks of the trade unions—the CGT and CFDT. The contradictions in the CGT have—for the first time in a long while—caused public divisions in its leadership and apparatus, both on Afghanistan and on the petition, which some national CGT leaders signed. Many CGT unionists who belong to the CP have used the petition to show their opposition to the CGT's tactics in struggle and to its constant subordination to the CP's policies.

In the CFDT, many members are losing the illusions that they previously had in that federation, since they reject the policy of "recentering" the union towards the right on the political spectrum, the increasingly open anticommunism of the Edmond Maire leadership, and the federation's increasingly bureaucratic methods of functioning.

The CFDT leadership, which favors a "radical reshaping of the French left," is having a harder and harder time hiding its real policies behind a smokescreen of talk about self-management and supposed independence from political parties.

In fact, the CFDT lines up with the positions put forward in the SP by Michel Rocard. It is willing to try to manage the austerity programs from the left and do nothing that would in any way hinder the restructuring of industry that is now going on or the application of the plans of the bosses.

It has become more and more obvious that the CFDT is against any alliance with the CP and is, like Rocard, for an exclusive Socialist Party government. In order to get this line adopted, the CFDT leadership recently had to apply repressive measures against its members in the steel

industry (at the Usinor works in Dunkerque), in the post office (in Lyon), and in banking.

These measures are just as bad as the Stalinist practices that Maire takes such pleasure in denouncing. Several directives against signing the unity petitions have also been sent to members.

To Impose Unity on the Working Class Leaderships

More than 15,000 people in the plants have signed versions of the petition that clarify the unity call. These versions express the desire for unity so the workers can go forward toward overturning the Giscard-Barre government through a general strike. Members of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, have played an active part in circulating these petitions.

While the question of unity is now central to the workers' concerns, it raises two other questions. Unity to what end? And how can unity be achieved?

It is to be expected that the bitter experience of the Common Program of the Union of the Left, when struggles were subordinated to the elections, leads the most conscious working-class activists to pose the question of the *content of unity*: in the factories the desire for unity is linked to the desire for centralized struggles.

In the past, militants have seen their struggles taken out of their hands. They understand that the only way a struggle can succeed is by mobilizing the workers and organizing them independently. They want this "unity in struggles" to have a central objective: the fight against the government's unprecedented austerity policy.

There cannot be unity in struggles without a response to the Barre austerity plan. And the struggle against the Barre plan is inseparable from assessing the lessons of the struggles on the railroad, in the health industry, in commerce, in steel, in the long and hard-fought Alsthom strike.

The impact of the proposals for struggling "all together" and for the general strike flows from the distrust that exists toward those who would channel the desire for unity and the willingness to struggle into high-level negotiations from which the workers would be excluded.

It is to be expected that there is a certain distrust of the national trade-union leaders. In the past, these leaders have subordinated struggles to elections and to the Common Program. Today they are signing the petition without having changed that attitude, arguing that there simply are no political perspectives at the present time.

A change of orientation must be imposed on the workers movement. Unity in action must be imposed on it. To do this we must show how unity can be achieved despite the existing differences, despite the diversity of currents.

The first meetings of "collectives" of petition signers are an initial step toward building real united-front committees. For the first time, members of the CP, the SP, the LCR, union members, and unorganized workers are meeting and acting together, without debates and differences that lead to splits. But to preserve this unity there must be real united committees that do not impose any prior conditions whatsoever for membership.

The signers of the "Call for Unity in Struggles" do not all share the same political perspective, far from it. Some of them hope to pressure the CP leadership in order to benefit the SP in the coming presidential elections. Others want to establish a new political current. Still others are looking for a substitute for the union organizations, while unionists say to themselves that it is better not to be separated from a movement that could grow.

None of this is an obstacle to unity, to the dynamic of united action, so long as no one tries to impose preconditions on joining or participating in these committees.

Some of the initiators of the petition seem to think that ideological agreement with the petition itself should be the basis for participation in the committees. Such a demand could only limit the development of the prounity current. Shouldn't the CP or SP workers who support unity but don't agree with the petition have a place in these committees? And what about those who have amended the original text of the petition by coming out for a general strike?

The discussion now taking place should make it possible to clarify these questions without endangering the goal of getting 100,000 signatures. Therefore it is necessary to avoid sectarian conceptions, a desire for exclusiveness that would transform these committees into the property of one or another political current. Much will depend on the initiatives and activities of the signers.

In the short-term, the perspective should be to prepare a united May Day demonstration of all the unions and workers parties. The signers are going into their plants and unions to push for interunion activities and to help prepare a demonstration that could express the working class's rejection of division and its desire to struggle.

On a longer-range basis, a fight that will require time and effort has already begun. This is the campaign to force all the workers parties to sign a pact agreeing that their candidates will automatically step-down in the second round of the presidential elections in favor of whichever workers candidate did best in the first round, so that Giscard can be beaten.

Through this the committees could exorcize both the "shadow of Kabul" and the threat of an exclusive Socialist Party government, and overcome the obstacle in the way of a workers victory.

March 13, 1980