

# Intercontinental Press

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Capitalist Recession  
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**Interview with  
Salvadoran Leader:  
'Threat of  
U.S. Intervention  
in El Salvador  
is Very Real'**

## Halt CIA Broadcasts Into Iran!

By Janice Lynn

U.S. officials recently admitted that the CIA has been behind clandestine radio broadcasts aimed at undermining the Iranian revolution.

A published report in the June 29 *New York Times* said that these Persian-language broadcasts emanate from transmitters in Egypt with the personal approval of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat.

The nightly broadcasts feature music by a popular Iranian singer and then news from "The Free Voice of Iran."

According to the *Times*, the broadcasts contain "appeals to the Iranian Army not to engage in combat with Kurdish rebels"; call for the "liberation of Iran"; describe Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as a "racist and fascist"; and appeal to Iranians to "take guns into your hands" to prepare for the overthrow of the government and the "Republic of Ayatollahs."

Some broadcasts openly indicate support for Shahpur Bakhtiar, the shah's last appointed prime minister. Bakhtiar recently met with two of the shah's former army generals, Gholam Ali Oveissi and Ahmed Palizban. According to the June 19 *Christian Science Monitor*, Bakhtiar, Oveissi, and Palizban reached agreement on military moves based in Iraq aimed at overthrowing the present Iranian government and establishing a military regime. Oveissi also met with U.S. officials recently while in the United States, and he has conferred with Sadat and received aid from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, as well.

"We know there are military units inside Iran which will support any serious move to restore order," said Ali Akhbar Tabatabai, spokesman for the U.S.-based Iran Freedom Foundation, which has ties to Bakhtiar and Oveissi. These counterrevolutionaries claim they can muster a 90,000-strong force, led by the officer cadre in the Iranian army, to take over the country. Many of the CIA radio broadcasts are aimed specifically at the Iranian army, whose pro-shah officer corps has remained fairly intact.

The idea for the CIA radio broadcasts, one of a number conducted by the agency's "unconventional broadcasting" section, was reportedly developed at a special meeting of the Special Coordination Committee. This body, set up by U.S. President Carter, is responsible for "authorizing" and "overseeing" covert CIA operations and other espionage activities.

State Department officials quickly de-

nied that Washington has anything to do with these anti-Khomeini broadcasts, although acknowledging their existence.

The new revelations around the CIA broadcasts reinforce the well-founded suspicions of millions of Iranians regarding Washington's aims in Iran. These broadcasts, openly intended to fuel counterrevolutionary activities and sabotage, are further confirmation that Washington's aborted raid last April had nothing to do with saving the lives of the U.S. hostages.

## An Attack on Abortion Rights Worldwide

By Janice Lynn

The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a cruel blow to women on June 30. By a 5 to 4 decision, it upheld the constitutionality of the Hyde Amendment, a congressional ban on government funding for most abortions. (The law's wording exempts abortions to save a woman's life or in cases of "promptly reported" rape or incest.)

By its decision, the top U.S. court condemns unemployed and poor women, especially young women and Blacks and Latinas, to a choice between unwanted pregnancy or the danger of being maimed or killed in back-alley operations. It is estimated that the ruling will directly effect some 250,000 to 300,000 women each year.

The denial of abortion funding is both a blow to women's rights and a further assault on the living standards and democratic rights of all working people.

Along with a recent defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the Illinois state legislature, this ruling shows the determination of the U.S. rulers to roll back the gains won by women over the past decade. (The ERA must be ratified by three more states in order to become part of the U.S. Constitution.)

The ruling comes at a time of mass layoffs, plant shutdowns, and soaring prices, especially of medical costs—just when more and more working-class women need government aid for abortion.

The Supreme Court ruling is part of the capitalist rulers' offensive aimed at demoralizing the U.S. working class, lowering expectations, and preparing the way to insist on even greater sacrifices in the future.

This example of ruling-class "justice" is a particularly flagrant confirmation of the

"Everybody here thinks the Americans will try and replace the revolution," one young Iranian told *Washington Post* reporter Stuart Auerbach, reflecting the pervasive sentiment in Iran. It was these sentiments that led to the occupation of the U.S. embassy last November following the shah's admission to the United States. Most Iranians saw through Washington's claim that the shah was let in for medical treatment. Auerbach writes that "Many here believe it was a way to arrange a clandestine meeting between him, his old generals and United States military and intelligence authorities to plan a replay of the 1953 coup" that restored the shah to power.

These CIA radio broadcasts must halt, and Washington must stop all its plotting and destabilization activities aimed at reversing the gains of the Iranian revolution. □

rulers' need to reinforce class inequalities. The court decision maintained that rich and poor women have an equal right to choose abortion. But if poor women can't afford an abortion, well, that's too bad.

Inability to afford an abortion, the court said, is "the product not of governmental restrictions on access to abortions but rather of [the woman's] indigency."

The decision was also a direct blow at the right to abortion for all women. It explicitly lent credence to the pseudoscientific claims of the "right to life" bigots by arguing that government has a "legitimate interest in protecting the potential life of the fetus."

The court also expressed the reactionary view that "abortion is inherently different from other medical procedures, because no other procedure involves the purposeful termination of a potential life."

The ruling was immediately condemned by Eleanor Smeal, president of the National Organization for Women, the largest U.S. women's rights organization, and by Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the largest U.S. civil-rights organization.

Several civil liberties organizations and pro-abortion groups are planning to petition the Supreme Court to rehear the case.

The Supreme Court ruling is not only a defeat for U.S. women, but for women throughout the world. It comes in the context of an international capitalist offensive against working people.

The landmark 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion gave impetus to the fight for abortion rights in many other countries. A number of important victories were won.

Today, that international struggle is continuing, with victories on some fronts and defeats on others.

The May 1980 newsletter of the International Contraception, Abortion, and Sterilization Campaign (ICASC) reports on the status of abortion rights in various countries. ICASC, formed in 1978, initiated the March 31, 1979, international day of action that was supported by pro-abortion rights forces in more than twenty countries.

- In *Australia*, an important victory was won this May with the defeat of a government-sponsored anti-abortion bill in the state of Queensland. The Women's Campaign for Abortion had mobilized mass opposition to the bill, which was also opposed by the Queensland Trades and Labor Council.

- In *Britain* the anti-abortion Corrie Bill was defeated in Parliament this spring. Several mass marches and rallies drawing up to 40,000 people were organized to defeat the bill. A key factor in the success of this campaign was the involvement of the trade-union movement and the British Labour Party.

- In *Holland*, an abortion bill has been pending in the Dutch parliament since mid-1979. A recent amendment to the bill recommends that abortion remain a criminal offense and proposes severe punishments. The bill is expected to be discussed this October, and Dutch women are organizing protests.

- In *France*, women are campaigning against a restrictive abortion law passed last November. The Veil-Pelletier Law contains a ten-week time limit and prohibits abortion to minors without parental permission and to immigrants without papers. As a result of this law, doctors who perform abortions are being prosecuted and even imprisoned.

- In *Spain*, abortion has been illegal since 1939. Recent trials of women in Madrid and in the oppressed Basque country for having had abortions or helping women obtain them have brought the issue to the fore and spurred new attempts at organizing for legalized abortion.

- In *Brazil*, a campaign to legalize abortion recently began, following a January police raid on a clandestine abortion clinic in Rio de Janeiro. A demonstration, the first of its kind, took place in front of the police station where the arrested women were being held. Meetings are taking place to plan future abortion rights actions and to win the release of those arrested in the raid.

- In *Israel*, a clause that had allowed at least some Israeli women to get legal abortions was repealed last December. The clause had enabled abortion boards to approve an operation for family and social reasons.

- In *Colombia*, abortion is completely illegal. Approximately 250,000 back-alley abortions are performed each year. At the

end of December, a limited abortion bill was defeated. However, women, trade unionists, students and others have been meeting and demonstrating for the legalization of abortion.

- In *West Germany* a national campaign is under way for repeal of a restrictive section of the 1976 abortion "reform" law, and abortion rights activists are responding to stepped-up anti-abortion activities by the church hierarchy and related groups.

ICASC is also preparing to put an international spotlight on abortion rights dur-

ing events surrounding a United Nations women's conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, July 14-24. Abortion rights supporters from many countries will be participating in these activities.

The reactionary U.S. Supreme Court ruling shows that defenders of women's rights must redouble their efforts worldwide. The power of the international labor movement must be brought into this vital struggle to prevent further setbacks and win further victories for women's basic right to safe, legal, and government-funded abortions. □

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## 'The Danger of U.S. Intervention is Very Real'

[The following is an interview with Fabio Castillo, a representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a broad coalition of Salvadoran groups opposed to the junta. Castillo is the former rector of the University of El Salvador. The interview was obtained in Brussels and appeared in the June 26 issue of the weekly *La Gauche*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers League (LRT), Belgian section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

*Question. What is the current level of foreign intervention in El Salvador?*

*Answer.* The foreign intervention is basically U.S. intervention. It takes various forms.

It is, of course, reflected on the level of international diplomacy, but also through providing important military and police aid. This equipment, composed of armored cars and counterinsurgency helicopters, among other things, arrives in the country under the guise of communications equipment.

American troops have also begun to be directly involved in the fighting. In fact, thirty-six American military advisers are stationed at three antiguerrilla bases in El Salvador.

*Q. American imperialism is certainly not the only foreign power intervening in El Salvador?*

A. Obviously not. Other countries are also intervening and aiding the military junta. Venezuela, for example, is actively aiding the junta under the pretext that it is aiding a Christian-Democratic government, as in Venezuela.

Guatemala is also involved. Following the decree last November banning ORDEN, the extreme right-wing movement, Guatemala provided the group with sanctuary and allowed ORDEN to train its forces within Guatemala.

*Q. Do you think that the American government is prepared to intervene directly in El Salvador to try to turn the situation in their favor? What would be the consequences of such an intervention?*

A. The danger of such an intervention is very real. The United States has clearly expressed its willingness to intervene directly if other alternatives fail. Zbigniew Brzezinski himself stated, "The United States will never permit a new Nicaragua, even if it must take the most reprehensible measures to prevent it."

The United States hopes that it can obtain a quick political victory. It thinks that it will be possible, through its intervention, to rapidly pacify the country in order to cut off the process under way there.

We think they are fooling themselves. The popular resistance will become such that only a military victory would work. That would cost them a lot politically, since it would run the risk of spreading the process throughout the region.

Even though they are aware of this danger, they are prepared to try anything—even the establishment of an open military dictatorship—to achieve their goals. They are now already considering such a possibility and are ready to give such a dictatorship all the means and aid necessary to maintain itself, even if it leads to a massacre—as in 1932—of 10 percent of the population.

*Q. Why such a hard stance by imperialism toward El Salvador, when it followed a more cautious approach toward Nicaragua?*

A. Everyone agrees that El Salvador occupies a strategic place in the region as a whole. A defeat for El Salvador would mean a defeat for Nicaragua, which would become encircled, and for the entire region, where reaction would regain the initiative. A victory in El Salvador is thus one of the prerequisites for a success of the revolution in Nicaragua, as well as in Guatemala and Honduras.

Washington is thus confronting a different situation than in Nicaragua. It fears a chain reaction and sees its strategic interests threatened. It has not forgotten that Alaskan oil and U.S. naval forces both use the Panama Canal. It will not abandon this region.

In Nicaragua, the United States had no choice but to accept the political defeat resulting from Somoza's overthrow. Somoza was completely discredited and had no international support.

Despite all that, Washington supported Somoza indirectly until the very end and even negotiated with the FSLN [Sandinista National Liberation Front] to try to keep the National Guard, with the aim of eventually regaining power in Nicaragua. Tactically, it was better to concede a defeat on the political level in the hopes that the extremely personal character of the Somoza dictatorship had sufficiently obscured the class lines to allow the bourgeoisie to retain some influence over the situation and to control the FSLN.

In El Salvador, the lines are more sharply drawn. All those who joined the Revolutionary Democratic Front did so with a clear understanding of the social changes that will most likely come. In this regard, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements who have joined us are perhaps more sincere than those in Nicaragua.

For us, the dictatorship is not a personalized one. It has been institutionalized for forty-eight years. In El Salvador, as well as Guatemala, the class struggle is

### El Salvador's Main Opposition Groups

On January 11, 1980, a *Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses* (CRM) was established. The CRM now encompasses five political organizations in El Salvador. They are: the *Revolutionary People's Bloc* (BPR); the *February 28 People's Leagues* (LP-28); the *United People's Action Front* (FAPU); the *Nationalist Democratic Union* (UDN); and the *People's Liberation Movement* (MLP).

Four of these organizations maintain links with political-military organizations. These are: BPR—*Farabundo Marti People's Liberation Forces* (FPL); LP-28—*People's Revolutionary Army-Party of the Salvadoran Revolution* (ERP-PRS); FAPU—*Armed Forces of the National Resistance* (FARN); MLP—*Central American Revolutionary Workers Party* (PRTC). The UDN is linked to the *Salvadoran Communist Party*.

On April 3, 1980, forty-nine trade unions, professional organizations, and political groups that were not in the CRM joined together to form the *Salvadoran Democratic Front* (FDS), which pledged support to the CRM's program.

On April 16, 1980, the FDS formally joined with the CRM to form the *Revolutionary Democratic Front* (FDR), on the basis of the CRM's program.

On June 10, 1980, a *Revolutionary Military Coordinating Committee*—made up of the FPL, the ERP-PRS, the FARN, and the Communist Party—was formed to coordinate the military struggle against El Salvador's ruling military-Christian Democratic junta. On June 25 the formation of an integrated joint general command, made up of one representative from each of the four groups, was announced.

deeper and the repression much greater than it ever was under Somoza, except, of course, during the period of the insurrection.

In contrast, the army is not as solid in El Salvador as it was in Nicaragua. The National Guard in Nicaragua was ready to fight to the end. But we have already seen signs of hesitancy among the Salvadoran army in face of the repressive tasks it has to carry out. Of course, the soldiers will not rally to the popular forces until they can prove that they constitute a real alternative to the regime.

*Q. Do you see a quick victory?*

A. What we want is a political victory. We feel sure that the popular armed forces are able to stand up to even the harshest repression and can put an end to it before it degenerates into a bloodbath. However, we are also looking for a political victory that will flow from the relationship of military forces.

It is useful to remember Vietnam. In 1954, France was still far from losing the war militarily. The French army was still strong while the guerrillas, forced to live for many years in the jungles, were weakened by hunger and disease. The outcome of the military conflict was not necessarily in their favor. It was still possible for France to send major reinforcements and hope for a military victory. But for political reasons, France could not send one more soldier to Vietnam. Twenty years later Washington had to withdraw 500,000 troops from Vietnam for the same reason, after having ravaged the country and having sent more than 2.5 million troops into combat. As a result, the victory of the freedom fighters was a political victory.

*Q. You have just said that a defeat in El Salvador would be fatal for the political situation in other countries in the region. Does that mean that you intend giving a regional dimension to the struggle you are leading?*

A. The struggle against colonialism and imperialism in Central America always takes place in a regional context. To be successful, the struggle must unfold at least on the level of Central America. The new regimes that are thrown up by this liberation movement must take this basic factor into account. What can several small and isolated countries do in face of various powers that claim to be interested in their affairs?

To follow the road of genuine nonalignment, as we now intend, is possible only within a regional perspective.

*Q. What is the aim of your visit and what do you think the most important tasks are in Europe?*

A. We want to inform all the political parties, all the trade unions, and the public in general about what is really happening

in El Salvador. We also want governments and international organizations to recognize the justice of our struggle.

Public opinion must be awakened to the very real danger of U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

It is also very important to demonstrate that the junta does not have the support of the Christian Democracy. In fact, there are only two former Christian Democratic leaders still in the government to give it a democratic façade. The ranks and most of the leaders of the Christian Democracy have rallied to the FDR. The junta is

completely isolated within the country. It must be isolated in the same way internationally.

The popular movement today represents more than 85 percent of the living forces in the country. We are confident that the people are determined to lead our struggle to victory.

What we need most in this phase of our struggle is effective material support. We need arms, medicine, medical equipment, and money to help bring our struggle to victory. □

## Cooperates with Colombian, Venezuelan Regimes

### U.S. Plans 'Peace-Keeping' Force for El Salvador

MANAGUA—Fearing that armed forces of El Salvador alone will provide insufficient to prevent "another Nicaragua" in El Salvador, Washington is readying plans for outside military intervention.

Citing "diplomatic sources," journalist Patricia Lara wrote in the Bogotá, Colombia, daily *El Espectador* June 30 that the U.S., Venezuelan, and Colombian armed forces are collaborating to set up a "peace-keeping force" for use in El Salvador. A *Prensa Latina* dispatch from Bogotá summarized Lara's article:

"The utilization of this Andean military force, according to Patricia Lara, seems to be the most convenient way for the United States to intervene in El Salvador, although this does not rule out direct U.S. intervention.

"The other alternative reserved by the United States for preventing the revolutionary victory in El Salvador would be the intervention of forces from Guatemala and Honduras on the pretext of any border incident with the small Central American country, the commentary notes.

"Patricia Lara called attention especially to Venezuela, indicating that the country is in the process of increasing the armed power of its military forces. . . .

"Recently, according to the journalist, Venezuela received a mobile Special Forces training group sent by the Pentagon. Besides being alert for action in Central America, that group also has responsibility for training forces for special operations" (*Barricada*, July 1). □

## Extends State of Siege

### Salvadoran Junta Unleashes New Wave of Killings

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—The military/Christian Democratic junta that rules El Salvador declared July 3 that the state of siege the country has been under since March is being extended for another thirty days. The announcement confirmed the U.S.-backed junta's intention to pursue the fresh wave of repression unleashed after the two-day general strike that shut down virtually all commerce, industry, transport, and government activity June 24 and 25.

The campus of the National University

in San Salvador, the capital, was invaded by army, police, and National Guard troops on June 26 during a news conference being held on the campus by the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM). While CRM leaders and journalists managed to escape, some thirty students were killed during the attack and hundreds were wounded or captured. In subsequent days the military occupiers thoroughly ransacked the campus.

According to university rector Félix Antonio Ulloa, troops had destroyed or car-

ried off "laboratory equipment, typewriters, mimeographs, sound equipment, vehicles, and many other valuable items of university property" (Associated Press, July 3).

The National University functioned under military intervention from 1972 until the end of last year. University authorities say they will refuse to resume classes until all military personnel have been unconditionally withdrawn from the campus.

The other main center of higher education in El Salvador, José Simeón Cañas Central American University, has also come under attack. On June 29, two powerful bombs partially destroyed the university's printing plant. The right-wing paramilitary White Warriors Union (UGB) claimed credit for the blasts, saying "subversive propaganda was printed there." The UGB is widely believed to be a cover for elements of the armed forces themselves.

*El Independiente*, the only daily newspaper that has refused to submit to government pressures for self-censorship, had its printing plant destroyed by dynamite and incendiary bombs on June 27. Two days later, publisher Jorge Pinto narrowly escaped death in a machine-gun attack outside the paper's editorial offices. *El Independiente* has continued to circulate by contracting other printing facilities.

Meanwhile, killings and kidnappings by right-wing paramilitary groups and the armed forces (which in most instances are indistinguishable from each other) go on unabated. An average of thirty corpses a day are abandoned on Salvadoran roadsides, often mutilated beyond recognition.

The overwhelming success of the CRM-called general strike clearly demonstrated



the absence of mass support for the ruling junta. At the same time, it showed the strength, organization, and discipline of the mass revolutionary organizations. The regime rests only on naked military force backed up by arms and advisers from the United States, Israel, and Venezuela.

Washington's preparations for stepping up its intervention in El Salvador have coincided with ominous statements by top Salvadoran officials against alleged Nicaraguan aid to the armed revolutionary groups in El Salvador.

Sandinista leaders here have categorically denied such charges. They stress that the most important solidarity Nicaraguans can offer the Salvadoran people is to consolidate and strengthen the Nicaraguan revolution. They have also made

clear, however, that Nicaragua will not stand idly by if El Salvador should become the victim of imperialist military aggression.

In recent days, Nicaraguan citizens traveling through El Salvador have been subjected to lengthy searches and detentions by Salvadoran police and customs officials.

On July 2, the Nicaraguan Council of State heard testimony by Ricardo Jara, a Nicaraguan held for several days without food or water in a jail in the Salvadoran port of La Unión. He was tortured repeatedly by police, who accused him of being a military trainer and demanded to know where he had hidden weapons. Jara was finally released, following several inquiries into his whereabouts by the Nicaraguan embassy in San Salvador. He later learned that the bodies of eight of his cellmates had been discovered on the outskirts of La Unión shortly before his release.

After hearing Jara's account and reports of the situation in El Salvador, the Council of State adopted a statement strongly condemning the repression in El Salvador (see box). □

### **Nicaragua's Council of State: 'No Intervention in El Salvador!'**

To: the people of Nicaragua and the world.

From: the Council of State of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Considering:

That the sister people of El Salvador are undergoing repression that is reaching genocidal levels;

That every day innumerable bodies of workers, intellectuals, aged persons, women, and children are discovered in cities, towns, and villages of El Salvador;

That students are murdered and the university campuses are violated, as occurred on June 26;

That all those who try to cross the border in a desperate attempt to save their lives are indiscriminately at-

tacked, something that has even affected Nicaraguan citizens;

That representatives of the Catholic Church who have accompanied the Salvadoran people in their struggle are also persecuted;

That this genocide against an entire people that is struggling for its liberation is directed by those who seek to maintain the privileges and interests of a few to the detriment of the majority;

The Council of State resolves:

1. To condemn the repression unleashed against the sister people of El Salvador;

2. To condemn as well any attempt at intervention that would go counter to the self-determination of the Salvadoran people.

### **Somozaist Parasites to Stay in United States**

U.S. immigration officials announced June 30 that as many as 20,000 Nicaraguans connected with the regime of former dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle would be allowed to stay in the United States until September 28. The three-month extension is supposedly intended to give Somoza's thugs and parasites "an opportunity to put their affairs in order."

Those who apply for political asylum in the United States, saying that they can demonstrate "a well-founded fear of persecution" if they return to Nicaragua, will not be asked to leave at all unless their applications are denied.

# AROUND THE WORLD



## British Marchers Protest Cruise Missiles

Despite pouring rain and thunder, thousands of people marched through London June 22 to show their opposition to nuclear arms and to demand that the British government stop the deployment of nuclear-tipped cruise missiles on British soil.

"Nearly 20,000 people from all over Britain turned out for the largest anti-nuclear arms demonstration in Britain since the ban-the-bomb marches of the 1950s and 1960s and the first peace rally sponsored by a major political party since Suez in 1956," Leonard Downie Jr. reported in the June 25 *Washington Post*. "The Labor Party's deputy leader, Michael Foot, called it 'the beginning of a new campaign in which we can give the lead to the people of Europe and the world.'"

The British weekly *Socialist Challenge* noted that "there were several thousand Labour Party members and supporters" marching in organized contingents behind various Labour members of Parliament and other Labour leaders. According to *Socialist Challenge*, this was "the largest mobilisation by the Labour Party on a national demonstration for many years."

Although Downie viewed the demonstration as a rerun of earlier days, snidely remarking that the protesters "marched out of the past and through the streets of

central London," *Socialist Challenge* reported:

"One of the most striking features of the demonstration was the high proportion of young people who turned out. Groups of friends carried home-made placards calling for an end to war: 'Fall in against fall-out'; 'Education not missiles'; 'Wage war on weapons'; 'Germ warfare means nightmare'."

A contingent calling for Britain to get out of NATO was organized by the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, and Revolution Youth, the recently formed Trotskyist youth organization. The contingent attracted more than 300 marchers.

## Leningrad 'Left Opposition' Leader Joins Workers' Rights Group

Recent reports from the Soviet Union contain information about Aleksandr Skobov and Aleksei Khavin, two leading figures in the Leningrad "Left Opposition" group.

According to *USSR News Brief* No. 10 1980, a bimonthly newsletter put out by exiled Soviet activist Kronid Lyubarsky, Khavin was hospitalized after receiving a serious head injury as a result of a fight that broke out in the labor camp where he was being held. In late 1979, following his release from a prison hospital in Leningrad, he was transferred to a Leningrad prison to be questioned as a witness in a case arising from the fight. In March 1980, he was returned to the labor camp. There is no report on his current condition.

Skobov, in whose flat the "Left Opposition" group met before it was crushed in October 1978, is undergoing compulsory psychiatric treatment in Leningrad Psychiatric Hospital No. 3, according to the February-March 1980 issue of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*. This happens to be the same psychiatric hospital prison where Vladimir Borisov, a leading figure in the Free Inter-Trade Association of Workers (SMOT), was confined after he was seized from the street by the KGB on March 27, 1980. Borisov was subsequently transferred to another such hospital in Leningrad and later sent into exile in Austria.

Issue No. 9 of *USSR News Brief*, dated May 15, 1980, reports that Skobov has announced he is joining SMOT. Borisov advocates that the democratic opposition in the USSR must turn to and make links

with the Soviet working class if it is to win. The SMOT group was seen as a step in that direction.

## South African Police Murder Protester

Another Black youth was gunned down by police while protesting against the apartheid regime on July 1. The seventeen-year-old demonstrator was killed when police attacked a demonstration of about 300 persons in a Black township near Uitenhage, the center of South Africa's automotive industry.

The killing comes shortly after a series of police massacres in Cape Town and other areas in which scores of Black protesters were cut down by police gunfire.

Fearing a renewal of the large-scale demonstrations, marches, and labor strikes that swept South Africa through much of June, the regime on June 30 extended a ban on political meetings for another two months. The ban prohibits all gatherings "of a political nature" involving more than ten persons. It covers forty-five districts, including every major center of political unrest in the country.

The next day, thirty-five religious figures who had been arrested in late May for participating in an unauthorized anti-apartheid march in Johannesburg were found guilty under the Riotous Assemblies Act. All were fined, but three elected to go to jail for fifty days rather than pay the fines. Among those found guilty was Bishop Desmond Tutu, the general secretary of the anti-apartheid South African Council of Churches.

## Kenyan Students Protest U.S. Military Presence

Hundreds of university students marched through central Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, on June 28 to condemn a new agreement between Washington and the Kenyan government of Daniel arap Moi allowing an expansion of U.S. military facilities in the country.

The announcement of the agreement was made in Washington by a State Department representative June 27. U.S. officials said the agreement would involve greater American use of Kenya's air and port facilities and the probable expansion of the American military and training missions stationed in the East African country.



Geoffrey Sheridan/*Socialist Challenge*  
June 22th London march protests deployment of cruise missiles and nuclear arms.

## 'We Are Ready in Grenada to Stand Up and Fight'

[The following are major excerpts from a telephone interview with Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. It was obtained by Arnaldo Coro of Radio Rebelde in Havana, Cuba, on June 20, the day after the terrorist bombing of a mass rally in Grenada that killed two persons. The interview has been taken from the June 29 issue of the English-language weekly *Granma*.]

\* \* \*

*Question. First of all, what's behind this terrorist attack in Grenada? What were the causes? Why do you think the imperialists tried to destroy the leadership of Grenada's Revolution?*

*Answer.* I think their main concern was, as you say, to try to destroy the leadership. Also to try to frighten the masses, to try to intimidate them. The fact is that imperialism has been trying for several months, the last 15 months, to organize local counterrevolutionaries, local opportunists, local reactionary elements to try to build a popular base in the country. They have been trying to create this popular base for the last 15 months and have always failed. In fact, last month when they tried to organize demonstrations they only were able to have about 100 people in the street.

So imperialism faces a serious problem. They have been unable to organize a popular base of support in the country, so now they have one of three options open to them: assassination of leaders, terrorist acts and a direct mercenary invasion. We feel that what happened yesterday was a combination of an attempt to destroy the leadership of the government and the party and at the same time a case of direct, naked, terrorist activity destined to force the masses into submission, to frighten the people.

I think you will agree that the very fact that they have had to go over to terrorist activity is in itself the best recognition of imperialism's failure, they are recognizing that they have been unable to build a popular base of support against the Revolution and therefore the only choice for them is this kind of activity.

*Q. How did the people of Grenada respond to the terrorist attack yesterday?*

A. The reaction has been a combination of anger, really really serious anger and increased determination by the people to build the Revolution and to fight imperialism. There were tremendous marches in the country today. There were seven marches held in the six main parishes of mainland Grenada and another huge march on the offshore island of Carriacou.

These seven marches together had something like 20,000 people, that is, a little under one fifth of our entire population was in the streets marching today. I must point out that it is the very first time in the history of our country that we have ever attempted, that anybody has ever attempted to hold seven marches together on the same day; marches of course have been held in the past but usually in one place. Today we are able to hold seven of these marches and in each of them the mood was really, really very good; the anti-imperialist feeling, the anti-imperialist consciousness, the fighting spirit of the Grenadan masses was really very obvious for all to see. This was particularly so among the women of our country, because the two sisters who died, were murdered, were both women, and two more on the critical list are also women. I think this has had to really inflame the women of our country.

The mood among the youth and students and among the working people of our country is very high.

Imperialism is certainly going to have a lot to think about. They must now realize, if they haven't already done so before, that the people of free Grenada are in fact prepared to die to defend the country and to defend their rights.

*Q. Comrade Bishop, we have heard that many people have registered to join the militia. . . .*

A. A call was made last night, in a national broadcast I made, because the time had come to greatly increase our militia forces. Therefore we announced the start of a massive recruiting drive that began today. The response of the people has been tremendous. Several thousand people have registered today. I don't have the exact figures yet, because this has been done by 200 groups moving from place to place. People also signed up to join the militia after the marches in support of the Revolution. So we don't have the exact figures yet, but we know several thousand more people have joined the militia.

Our goal is to get at least another 20,000 new members in the militia. 20,000 comrades who join the militia.

As we see it now, the most important thing so we can fight imperialism in the event of any external aggression is to prepare our people to carry out people's war, so that in the event of mercenary invasion or an attack inspired by the CIA, our people would be in a position to defend the country on their own.

Imperialism has made a big mistake with this attack yesterday. It has only

served to further unite our people, making them much stronger and firmer, more determined and more conscious of what imperialism stands for.

We are certainly ready in Grenada to stand up and fight.

*Q. Comrade Bishop, would you like to send a message to the Cuban people who have expressed their solidarity with your country in these difficult moments?*

A. Yes, the Cuban example is one which we have all been using at this period. We have been telling our people today, as I did in the radio broadcast last night, that the example of the Cuban Revolution is what we must look towards at this time because everything that is happening in our country and has been happening for the last 15 months has been faced by the Cuban people for the last 20 or 21 years. We have recalled the explosion of *La Coubre*, the struggle in the Escambray, Girón, the sabotage of the Cubana plane off Barbados. We have recalled the many sacrifices, the criminal blockade, the Guantánamo base, the attempts to murder the leadership, especially Comrade Fidel, and I have said that the only way for our country to advance is that if we are conscious that imperialism will always try to crush any progressive revolution or any progressive movement in this region or any other region, if it tries to benefit the people and combat the international exploiters.

So the Cuban Revolution has been very important and we have reminded our people of the tremendous debt of gratitude which we in Grenada have with the Cubans for having been the first Revolution in America in 1959.

As I always say, without the Cuban Revolution there could not have been a Revolution in Grenada. And therefore what again I would like to say to our Cuban comrades is to thank them for their fine example, to thank them for their solidarity, for their fraternal assistance, for the tremendous areas of cooperation which they have helped us with over the past 15 months. So I want to tell you that together we will win, Grenada and Cuba united we must win. □

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## Vladimir Borisov: 'Soviet Workers Must Organize'

By Anna Libera

[The following article appeared in the June 27-July 3 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

VIENNA, June 23—Vladimir Borisov is a small man, his head closely shaven, wearing over-sized jeans rolled up several times to his ankles. He warmly welcomed the several people who had come to a Vienna apartment to ask him some questions.

First, he clarified the conditions of his detention and expulsion. "After my arrest several weeks ago," Borisov explained, "I was placed in solitary confinement. It was impossible to meet or speak with any other prisoners. Of course, this time it only lasted a short time. This was nothing compared to my stays in psychiatric hospitals, first from 1965 to 1968, and the second time from 1969 to 1974."

Borisov explained that a barber had come to his cell early Sunday morning, June 22. "He tried to fix my hair so I would look presentable," Borisov said. "Immediately I thought they wanted to put me on display somewhere. But, I certainly didn't think it would be in Vienna. . . ."

"Then several KGB members put me in a car, and, without the slightest explanation,



VLADIMIR BORISOV

brought me to the airport. It didn't take me long to realize they were going to expel me. That is why I refused to get off the airplane in Vienna. I consider being expelled the worst thing for a human rights fighter. You are cut off from those with whom and for whom you are fighting."

In response to a question about why he had been "freed," Borisov vehemently answered, "I was not freed, I was expelled. It is important to stress the difference."

Borisov's expulsion is, of course, a move aimed against SMOT [Free Inter-Trade Association of Workers—an unofficial trade union he helped to found]. By arresting or expelling its leaders, the Soviet officials think they can decapitate SMOT.

Borisov explains that his expulsion is part of the pre-Olympic wave of repression that has already victimized many others.

Does he think that the repression he has experienced—especially him, a founder of a group concerned above all with defending workers' rights—is tied to the recent workers' strikes in Gorky and Togliatti? [See *IP/I*, June 30, 1980, page 685.]

Borisov had not heard about these strikes. But he explained, "In the provinces there are a number of relatively big strikes, but in general, the rest of the country is not informed about them. Up to now, these strikes always took place around the lack of supplies in stores. That was the case in Minsk several months ago—and after a total one-day work stoppage, the stores were full, as if by magic."

Borisov then talked about how his group functions and about the difficulties they are encountering in face of the repression plaguing its members. "There are about 200 members of SMOT," he said, "organized into eight or ten groups. The members are not publicly known. Only one representative in each group is public. Each group has a large amount of autonomy. Only questions of a general character that cannot be resolved by any one particular group are taken up by everyone."

"The aid that we can provide workers is not material, because we don't have the means to do this. The aid we provide is

### Covering the Upsurge in Southern Africa—An Expensive Task

The massive student demonstrations and workers' strikes against the apartheid regime in South Africa, Zimbabwe's attainment of a Black majority government after years of arduous struggle, the growing fight for independence in the South African colony of Namibia, all underline the political explosiveness of this key area of the world.

To keep our readers informed of these momentous developments—and to analyze what they mean for the world revolution as a whole—*Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* has paid particular attention to our coverage of southern Africa.

In addition to news articles on the most important political events, *IP/I* has sought to make available documents, speeches, and interviews that throw light on the political thinking of the individuals and organizations lead-

ing the southern African freedom struggle.

In the past four years alone, our coverage of South Africa has included interviews with such leaders as Thozamile Botha, Drake Koka, Tsietsi Mashinini, and Khotso Seatlholo; articles by Steve Biko, the leader of the Black Consciousness movement who was murdered in police custody in 1977; and a recent statement by Nelson Mandela, who is serving a life sentence on Robben Island.

In preparing our reports, we follow numerous publications that deal with the region: *Africa*, *Sechaba*, *Johannesburg Star*, *Facts and Reports*, *Demain l'Afrique*, *Southern Africa*, *New Africa*, *Focus*, *Afrique-Asie*, and others.

When possible, we also try to provide our readers with first-hand reports. In late 1978, *IP/I* staff writer Ernest Harsch visited South Africa, Botswana,

Zambia, and Kenya, obtaining interviews with Black activists and sending in articles from South Africa on labor strikes, political repression, conditions in Soweto, and the struggle of shantytown dwellers near Cape Town.

All of this, of course, takes money. Harsch's trip alone cost several thousand dollars, and the subscription and postage expenses for the publications we receive amount to several hundred dollars a year.

In these days of rising inflation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide you with the kind of coverage of southern Africa that we know you expect. To ensure that we are able to meet this challenge, we are asking for your help.

Please send your contributions to: *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014.

judicial, providing information on workers' rights, and publishing and distributing material. We are certainly in a paradoxical situation, because the repression that is hitting us means we are confined to simply trying to defend our members."

Then Borisov reaffirmed the perspectives that make movements such as his unique and powerful: "Our perspectives are closely tied to those of the Soviet workers movement, and we think that in

the coming period, given the economic difficulties, the workers will be the first to react one way or another. Our line is resolute: we are fighting so the workers can organize themselves independently. If the Soviet workers are organized, the government will not be able to hit us like it is doing now."

It is this idea that Borisov—whose wife is still in Moscow—wants to continue defending during his forced exile, even

though, having just landed in Vienna, he does not yet have any precise plans.

And it is this same idea that French workers should also take up, defending the right of their Soviet comrades to freely organize themselves, and defending those who are the victims of repression because they have begun to carry this out.

Why not discuss this with Borisov himself, by inviting him to workplaces and union meetings? □

## Poor Peasants Must Be Organized and Mobilized

# Congress of Islamic Peasant Shoras Held in Khuzestan

By Sayed Mutamed

[The following article appeared in the June 17 *Kargar* (Worker), weekly newspaper of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

An important gathering took place in Ahwaz at the end of May—the Congress of Islamic Peasant Shoras of Khuzestan Province. After three days of debate and discussion about the innumerable problems facing the peasants of Iran, it concluded with the adoption of a resolution.

Some 250 peasant delegates attended this congress. Also present were Hojate'islam Sayed Ahmad Khomeini and Professor Reza Isfahani, deputy minister of agriculture.

Professor Reza Isfahani sharply criticized feudalism and capitalism. He pointed out that unless the grip of the big landlords on the peasants' land was broken, the desired results could not be achieved. He said that the peasants still have not gotten their rights.

He noted, as well, that the feudalists—whose influence in the countryside declined for a time after the revolution—had, as a result of decisions made by some government authorities, been regaining their power.

The deputy minister of agriculture added that the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) and the Jihad for National Reconstruction had an important part to play in informing and mobilizing the people. So far, these two organizations had distributed some 300 hectares of land among the peasants.

At the final session of the congress, a thirteen-point resolution was read. It called for official recognition of the Islamic peasant shoras, the eradication of feudalism, and for land reforms to be carried out by the state. Referring to the cultural revolution, one of the points in the resolution says:

"Now that the cultural revolution has begun in the universities, we want the

Muslim students, the student organizations, and all Muslim intellectuals to come into the countryside to bring the cultural revolution to the furthest reaches of the country and into the heart of the villages."

At the Congress of Islamic Peasant Shoras, most of the speeches were given in both Persian and Arabic, and the resolution was read and printed in both languages as well.

In a message sent to the congress, the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line expressed their solidarity with the peasant shoras. They also reaffirmed the need to struggle uncompromisingly against U.S. imperialism and to hold the spy hostages until the traitor shah is extradited along with his money. They added:

Just as during the revolution, unity is essential among all classes, strata, and peoples of Iran. It was through such unity that we succeeded in overthrowing an oppressive regime that lasted 2,500 years, defeating the might of the Great Satan Reza Shah, who was armed to the teeth. In the same way, this struggle must be carried forward on the basis of the unity of the Islamic shoras.

The Islamic peasant and village shoras must unite in Islamic centers and work together. We must all work together as brothers to propagate Islamic and revolutionary cultural programs and common agricultural programs in order to achieve self-sufficiency and to promote production and distribution, and to solve the difficulties and problems.

### Causes of Poverty and Backwardness of the Khuzestan Peasantry

The Jihad for National Reconstruction and the Revolutionary Guards did notable work in organizing this congress. Moreover, the Jihad for National Reconstruction, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Islamic Students Council of the University of Ahwaz, along with several other organizations in the city, took the initiative in organizing a group called the Islamic Shora for the Study of Rural Problems. One of the manifestos issued by the bodies

founding this shora says:

While the revolution is going into its second year, the harmful effects of exploitation and colonialism can be seen in various degrees and in various forms throughout the length and breadth of our land. Among these, we could mention the continued existence of the feudal landlords and the inhuman tyranny they exercise over an afflicted and enchained peasantry. . . .

If we agree that this revolution is to remain Islamic, it must be able to respond to the needs of the oppressed peasantry.

The manifesto mentioned the following as the main tasks of the Islamic Shora for the Study of Rural Problems:

Defense of the spiritual and material rights of the peasants. Fostering a favorable climate for defending the well-founded demands of the peasants. Raising the living standards of the peasantry. Promoting the development of genuine Islamic culture among the peasants. Coordination of the Islamic peasant shoras in order to assure the security of the region. Militarily disarming the counterrevolutionary forces. And finally creating favorable conditions for the implementation and development of the Islamic Republic's plan for land reform.

The creation of a body such as this shora by the militant urban youth can play a major role in linking up the peasants' struggles against the landlords in Khuzestan with the general anti-imperialist struggle being waged by the industrial workers and other working people who live in the cities of this province.

Likewise, the revolutionary students who will be sent into the countryside in particularly large numbers during the summer to help in reconstruction will be able to aid their peasant brothers and sisters in a better coordinated and most effective way through the organization of such bodies.

The poverty and backwardness of the peasants in Khuzestan are among the bitterest facts in our country. These peas-

ants are deprived of the most elementary amenities. For example the resolution of the Congress of Islamic Peasant Shoras mentions the lack of water:

Women and their small children still have to walk for kilometers in the intolerable heat of Khuzestan to get a drink of water (that is, to find potable water). And they have to do this several times a day, traveling far from their homes. And even this potable water is just rain water collected in ditches.

Poverty also results from the feudal relations that prevail in the countryside. These are discussed in an informational pamphlet published by the shora, which is entitled, "A Brief Analysis of the Feudal System."

Khuzestan is a vast desert area suffering from extremes of temperature. Because of the cold in winter and the lack of rain in the summer in particular, most farming is done in the spring and fall. Some farming is also done in the winter.

The pamphlet gives the following description: "A large and important part of agriculture in this region is dry farming. Since this type of agriculture depends on a narrow margin of rainfall, it is particularly vulnerable to droughts, which are one of the commonest causes of peasant poverty in the region."

In fact, this natural cause is not at all sufficient to account for the poverty of the peasants, since Khuzestan is traversed by relatively large rivers.

But since most of the arable land near the rivers is owned by the feudal landlords, the peasants do not get even a minimal share of the land with access to water. Usually, a good proportion of the land held by peasants is far from any river. The pamphlet says:

"The peasants find themselves far from the rivers because they lack the economic means to stand up against the feudal landlords. So, in this area where feudalism prevails, they are powerless."

On the other hand, as a result of the prevailing conditions, scanty rain fall, and the presence of large rivers, agriculture depends essentially on an irrigation network that belongs to the big landowners. With respect to this, the pamphlet says:

"By buying irrigation pumps and obtaining licences through illegal means and through bribery and favoritism, groups of capitalists established themselves in the countryside. They provide water to the peasants, from whom they take one third to one half their harvest by way of water charges."

This is another way in which the arrogant feudal landlords and capitalists suck the blood of the peasants, who depend on irrigation because their land is far from the rivers.

The pamphlet has the following to say about another cause of the peasants' poverty:

All the agricultural means of production are in the hands of the big landlords. On the basis of

the concessions that the Department of Agriculture and other top authorities in the old regime gave them, the big landlords got control of everything. Thus, only the lands of these almighty lords were always arable and well-watered and mechanized.

After they supplied water to the vast choice lands belonging to the feudal lords, the irrigation bodies sold what water was left to the peasants who worked small undesirable plots next to the estates of the big landlords. In return for their water they took a third to half of the peasants' crops.

### **The Peasants Must Be Mobilized to Carry Forward the Revolution in the Countryside**

Just as it says in the manifesto issued by the Jihad for National Reconstruction, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Islamic Students Council of Ahwaz, a year and a half after the February revolution, the big landlords are continuing their parasitic way of life and conspiring with the American imperialists against the Islamic revolution.

The problems of the Khuzestan peasantry are more or less the same ones facing all the peasants of Iran. The peasants are demanding the implementation of a revolutionary land reform that would break the grip of all the big landlords.

The government has announced a program of land reform. In order for it to be successfully carried out, the peasants must be organized in shoras. It is through such

organization and mobilization that the peasants will be able to confront the plots of the feudalists.

Through the shoras, the peasants will be able to exercise direct and precise control nationwide over the distribution of interest-free state loans and the utilization of the agricultural means of production, as well as over the distribution of seed and fertilizer.

Organizing the shoras is also the best way to get the maximum benefit for the peasants from the literacy campaign.

Experience in revolutions has always confirmed that unless the working people organize and mobilize, none of the basic problems of society can be solved. For this reason, mobilizing and organizing the poor peasants is also an important question in a revolution. It is the only way to solve the land question in a revolutionary way and to eliminate the poverty and backwardness of the peasants. This problem was well defined in the message sent to the congress by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line.

On the other hand, solving the land question and taking a step forward in the struggle against poverty and backwardness in the villages of Khuzestan is the best way to combat the threats of the reactionary capitalist regime in Iraq, which is constantly seeking to exploit the poverty of the peasants of this region in order to strike a blow at our revolution. □

## **Entire Executive Committee Abducted**

## **Guatemalan Regime Strikes At Union Federation**

By David Russell

Trade unionists in Guatemala were the victims of a savage attack June 21, when the headquarters of the National Workers Federation (CNT) were raided and the entire executive committee was abducted. Between twenty-five and thirty union leaders attending a meeting at the headquarters were taken and are still missing.

Those arriving at the scene shortly afterwards found blood on the floor of the CNT headquarters, which is in a crowded area in downtown Guatemala City. The streets in the area were cordoned off just before the attack, making it evident that the government was behind the raid on one of the main trade-union bodies in Guatemala.

According to a June 26 report by the Toronto-based Latin American Working Group, the CNT meeting that was attacked had been called to discuss the murder of two union leaders. On June 20, the day before the raid on the CNT office, Edgar

René Aldana, secretary of the organizing committee of the workers at the Coca Cola plant, was shot down as he left work. Besides the twenty-three-year-old Aldana, five other unionists at Coca Cola have been killed, and two are missing as a result of the raid on the CNT headquarters.

Also on June 21, the badly tortured body of Oscar Amílcar Patuaca was found. He had been kidnapped on June 17, along with Guillermo Hernández, as they both left work at the Incesa Standard Co. Hernández is still missing.

The kidnapping of the CNT leadership is the boldest attack yet against the organized trade-union movement in Guatemala. It indicates that the military regime of Romeo Lucas García, in light of events in Nicaragua and El Salvador, is moving to wipe out any potential center of working-class opposition to the dictatorship. □

### Vietnamese Military Action Jolts Thai Regime

By David Frankel

Military action by Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea has given the Thai military dictatorship a sobering jolt. The Bangkok regime has been forced to call an indefinite halt to its infiltration of Pol Pot's counter-revolutionary forces into Kampuchea.

U.S. officials claim that two companies of Vietnamese infantry, backed up by larger forces on the Kampuchean side of the border, crossed into Thailand June 23 and briefly occupied one of the areas where about 8,600 people had entered Kampuchea as part of a "repatriation" program undertaken by the Thai government.

But as *Washington Post* correspondent John Burgess admitted in a June 28 article, "Reporters covering the first repatriations found that many of the returning refugees were men of military age. Some admitted openly they would rejoin the fight against the Vietnamese."

In this case, "repatriation" is a code word for the invasion of an imperialist-backed exile army.

Washington, Peking, and Bangkok all recognize the deposed regime of Pol Pot as the legal government of Kampuchea, despite its genocidal record. Backed by these governments, Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces loyal to Pol Pot continue to operate in Kampuchea.

Thai military forces have stood by while organized Khmer Rouge units numbering in the thousands have crossed Thai territory.

Burgess points out that "foreign journalists repeatedly have seen armed Khmer Rouge in Thai territory. Khmer Rouge wounded routinely have been sent across the border for treatment in Thai hospitals.

"Recently, I visited a point on the Thai

side of the border where relief agencies turn rice over to Khmer Rouge porters."

While claiming to be feeding Kampuchean peasants, the imperialists, along with the Thai regime, are in fact acting as quartermasters for the Khmer Rouge army. Burgess notes:

"Official Thai sources have on occasion admitted to giving the Khmer Rouge ammunition. Last winter, foreign journalists watched as a column of Khmer Rouge women porters crossed a stream into Thailand and returned laden with ammunition."

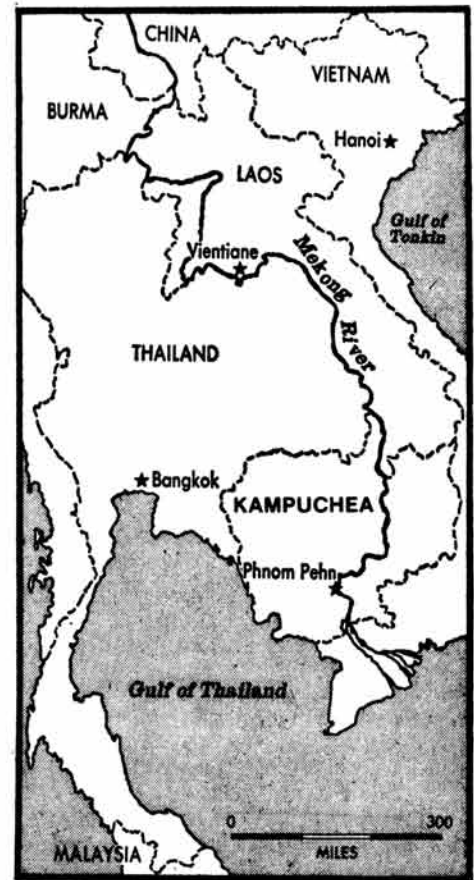
The military confrontation between Vietnamese and Thai forces was accompanied by artillery duels and the shooting down of a Thai spotter plane and a helicopter gunship. U.S. officials reacted with typical hypocrisy.

Secretary of State Edmund Muskie expressed outrage over the violation of "Thai territorial integrity," and warned June 27 that "it may represent an expansion of the conflict and exacerbates the suffering of the Thai and Khmer peoples."

Muskie's concern for the Thai and Khmer peoples would ring more genuine if Washington was not so busy trying to keep the war in Indochina perking along. While expressing concern for the people in the area, Muskie promised the Thai regime new military aid as a sign of Washington's support. And on July 1, the White House announced that some arms and ammunition would be airlifted to Thailand.

Peking, which has also been providing arms to the Khmer Rouge, followed Washington's lead, denouncing Vietnam's "gross violation of Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

One "Western diplomat" expressed the



hope that Peking might do more than denounce the Vietnamese and send arms. According to *Los Angeles Times* reporter Linda Mathews in a June 26 article from Peking, the diplomat argued, "China's credibility and its reputation as a dependable ally will be shattered if it stands by idly."

However, the Chinese regime is still licking its wounds from the last time it tried to make itself useful to imperialism by invading Vietnam. In the meantime, the Vietnamese have put Washington and its Thai clients on notice that the game they are playing in Kampuchea is not without risks. □

### Brazilian Workers Party Holds First National Congress

[The following is based on an article by Daniel Bensaïd that appeared in the June 27-July 3 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The first national congress of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) took place at the end of May in São Paulo (see last week's *IP/I* for background of the Workers Party).

The 400 delegates represented 26,000 members, according to statistics reported at the Congress. The Workers Party has

branches in twenty-three out of Brazil's twenty-six states and territories. It has fulfilled the legal requirements in twelve of these states, despite the restrictions imposed by the dictatorship.

Achieving legal recognition for the Workers Party before the 1982 elections no longer seems such an impossible task, providing the process of "liberalization" is not reversed. (Of course, nothing is certain, especially since the dictatorship just cancelled the municipal elections originally scheduled for the end of this year, and proposed that the current 4,000 mayors either remain in office or be replaced by

appointees).

The largest number of delegates at the Workers Party congress represented some 6,000 members from the state of São Paulo who constitute 23 percent of the total membership. There are 3,000 members each in the states of Goiaz and Ceará; 2,300 in Minas Gerais; and about 1,000 each in Rio de Janeiro, Amazonas, and Rio Grande do Sul.

Following the forty-one day ABC metalworker's strike in São Paulo's industrial suburbs, which at its peak involved some 150,000 auto and metalworkers, the Workers Party gained in membership. But along

with this growth in membership came more moderate and vaguer positions on the character of the Workers Party.

The Worker's Party's founding documents clearly characterized the Workers Party as a party "solely for workers" that "seeks to win political power and establish a workers government based on representative bodies created by the working masses themselves" and as a "party without bosses." It advanced a number of radical demands, including nationalizations of all foreign enterprises, banks, public utilities, etc.

The programmatic document adopted at the national congress on May 29 was much vaguer. It defined the Workers Party as "a party different from those that the power structure imposed upon us in the past and is trying to impose upon us today, a party created by us in order to carry out our struggles, a party of workers."

The formulation "a party without bosses" disappeared, and no references were made to socialism. The central objective stressed was winning democracy: "A mass party, broad and open, based on the workers in the cities and countryside, the Workers Party is also different in its political objectives: we are fighting for a democracy that will guarantee that workers will be in the leadership at every level, making the political and economic decisions of the country on the basis of their interests and through their rank-and-file structures."

Although the perspective of a united workers federation was maintained in the platform for struggle amended to the program, demands for nationalization and workers control were omitted, as was the call for a Constituent Assembly.

Also the slogan "for a worker's government" was replaced by a more diluted formulation—"a government that advances on the road towards a society without exploiters or exploited."

Despite these developments, the fact that the Workers Party congress successfully took place is a big step forward in the building of a political party based on the Brazilian working class. The Workers Party is still characterized as a party of workers, built through workers' struggles, that is confronting the dictatorship, struggling for an alternative government of the workers and the oppressed. The recent growth of the Workers Party is indicative of the awakening of the young Brazilian working class and demonstrates the possibilities for the future.

The fact that one or another slogan or formulation was deleted from the Workers Party program does not in itself constitute a capitulation. But the formulations adopted tend to blur the class nature of the Workers Party, especially at a time when the Workers Party will have to confront various attempts to further dilute its character. Some of the parliamentary deputies and careerists politicians are already op-

enly raising the idea of fusing with the Democratic Party of Workers (PDT).

The PDT came out of the old Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), a populist organization led by Leonel Brizola, which was in power

for many years before 1964, and includes employers and other well-known figures. Such a fusion would mean the liquidation of an independent working-class formation inside a multi-class populist movement. □

## Using Army of Dominican Republic

### Washington Lays Plans for Proxy Invasion of Haiti

In the event of an uprising against Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier, the army in the neighboring Dominican Republic would be prepared to intervene directly, with U.S. backing.

The text of an agreement between the Haitian and American governments authorizing such an intervention was published recently in Mexico City by *Haiti Information*, the organ of the Haitian Democratic Committee. It was signed by Duvalier and Gen. Robert L. Schweitzer, the head of the U.S. Army's strategy, planning, and policy division, during Schweitzer's visit to Haiti January 30-31.

The text of the agreement, as published in the June 22 issue of the Cuban English-language weekly *Granma*, reads:

"Considering the current difficulty of U.S. armed forces intervening in Latin America and, particularly, in Haiti, where a situation of political and military tension can break out at any moment,

"Considering the material, technical, tactical and fighting numerical weaknesses of the Haitian armed forces, that lack a navy, air force and artillery,

"The Haitian and U.S. Governments propose that, in the event of a true guerrilla front emerging in Haiti, the Dominican Government and armed forces are to intervene directly in Haiti and become the main force fighting against the Haitian

guerrillas.

"Consequently, the U.S. Government firmly declares that it is willing to help the Dominican Government and armed forces



in all fields (political, military, economic) to fully carry out that role should the situation arise."

After visiting Haiti, General Schweitzer went on to the Dominican Republic on February 1 to discuss the matter with the Dominican government.

On April 15, Lieut. Gen. Mario Imbert McGregor, the head of the Dominican armed forces, announced that twelve new military camps would be built near the Haitian border. He also announced that a new military garrison, housing, and training fields would be built for the troops in Mecasi and that forts in the towns of Pedro Santana and Elías Pina would be enlarged.

The Dominican army also launched a military maneuver called "Border Fraternity," which *Haiti Information* characterized as a rehearsal for intervention into Haiti.

The agreement has been denounced by the Haitian Democratic Committee, the United Party of Haitian Communists, and others opposed to the Duvalier tyranny. □



JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER

## Rising Militancy in New Zealand Labor Movement

By Brigid Mulrennan

AUCKLAND—The new mood of militancy in the New Zealand labor movement was reflected at the annual conference of the Federation of Labour (FOL) held in May. The FOL embraces most of the country's unions outside the state sector.

Symbolizing the FOL's shift to the left was the role played by newly elected President Jim Knox, who replaced Sir Thomas Skinner. During his many years as president, Skinner had developed a reputation as a close collaborator of both National and Labour party governments in their efforts to dampen the class struggle.

Knox has announced that he is against any "back-room deals" with the government, and boasts that he has not even met with the prime minister for many months.

The FOL conference launched a nationwide campaign—in conjunction with the Combined State Unions—of rallies, marches, and work stoppages for a minimum living wage for the low-paid and an immediate wage adjustment to keep pace with inflation. It is predicted that inflation will hit 20 percent later this year.

The conference also adopted the Working Women's Charter, a wide-ranging list of demands for women's rights, which includes the right to abortion and the right of women to work in all areas of the work force. The FOL's adoption of the charter paved the way for its adoption by the NZ Labour Party conference the following week.

Most FOL unions are affiliated to the Labour Party, and they have the decisive weight within it, although for many years nonunion elements in the party have been to the fore. There were increased calls at the FOL conference for the unions to exercise their strength in the party to guarantee that the demands of the unions are represented by the Labour Party leaders.

At the conference, Jim Knox also hit out against the government's red-baiting of the union movement. The second most important official of the Federation of Labour, Secretary Ken Douglas, is a member of the pro-Moscow Socialist Unity Party (SUP). Despite its small size (about 200 members), the SUP has a number of leading union officials in its ranks. Knox also blasted the Labour Party leadership for failing to invite Douglas to address the party conference. The Labour Party president apologized and ascribed this to "an administrative blunder."

Behind all this militancy was the victorious strike by workers at the New Zealand

Forest Products Kinleith mill, in Tokoroa, earlier in the year. After a three-month strike, these workers at the country's largest factory forced the company and the government to back down completely.

The strike began on January 6 over demands for a 22 percent wage increase. After two months the company agreed to pay the increase. At this point, however, the government stepped in, using its Remuneration Act to cut back the settlement.

Regulations under this act were introduced in 1979, allowing the government to intervene against wage increases in excess of 10 percent. The use of these regulations last year had already provoked a one-day general strike on September 20.

But the workers held firm against this government intervention, and within three weeks it backed off. Almost every demand was won.

At the height of the strike, 2,500 workers were either on strike, or laid off by the company as a result of the strike. The massive job of feeding families and covering other expenses was provided by an FOL campaign throughout the country. Money and food poured into Tokoroa.

An important new feature of this strike was the role of women. Strikers' wives and girlfriends were invited to the mass union meetings where the action was discussed, and they set up a "drop-in center" in the town, which became the focus of the strike. It was here that aid was distributed, and workers and their families could come for a meal.

This involvement of women gave a tremendous boost to the strike effort, and undercut the attempts of the bosses and news media to use the frustration and hardship suffered by housewives during such disputes as an antiunion weapon.

Another important feature was the failure of the government's efforts to undermine the strike by red-baiting. National Party Prime Minister Robert Muldoon threw out accusations that strike leaders were SUP members; made threats to ban the SUP; and published a list of thirty-two alleged SUP members who were trade-union officials throughout the country.

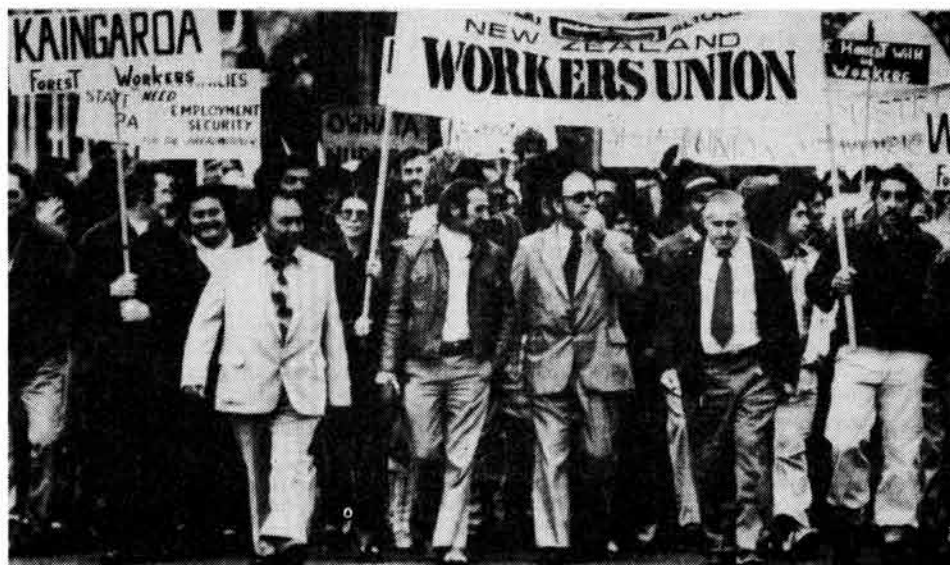
But the red-baiting fell flat. As one of the strike leaders put it, Muldoon's accusations about the SUP "have been laughed out of Tokoroa and generally laughed out of New Zealand."

Under the considerable pressure of the wave of solidarity with the Kinleith workers, the Labour Party leadership was forced to publicly endorse the strike.

The victory generated a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and confidence, which has since been reflected in other union actions and at the FOL and Labour Party conferences.

This was symbolized by the response of one worker who stopped to buy a copy of *Socialist Action*, the newspaper of the Socialist Action League. The issue had as its headline, "Kinleith Workers Defeat Muldoon." He commented:

"That's wrong. It was all the workers who defeated Muldoon." □



Socialist Action

Timber town labor support demonstration for Kinleith workers.

## By Defending the Kurdish Revolution We Defend the Iranian Revolution

[The following statement was issued June 14 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Since April 15, the Tehran government has launched, on the command of the Council of the Islamic Revolution and Ayatollah Khomeini, its second large-scale military offensive against the Kurdish revolution.

The previous offensive, which lasted from August to October 1979, ended with the political and military defeat of the forces under the command of the Council of the Revolution. Then, the Ayatollah Khomeini personally asked the "Kurdish brothers" to "pardon those who had unjustly slandered them," and the Tehran regime concluded a ceasefire and started up negotiations with representatives of the Kurdish resistance.

The Kurdish resistance organizations asked for a statute giving broad autonomy to all the Kurdish regions, within the framework of the Islamic Republic. They demanded the withdrawal of the Pasdars and the Persian police from Kurdistan and elections in Kurdistan for a representative body which would deal with questions under its competence.

It was the rejection of this autonomy plan, the sabotage of negotiations, and the reinforcement of the government military forces (Pasdars, army, and police) that led to the launching of the new military attack.

Kurdish leaders have stated their approval several times for the occupation of the American embassy. They have restated, even after the fighting had restarted, that they would defend the regime, born out of the February 1979 insurrection, against any imperialist intervention or reactionary coup d'etat. However, the central Tehran government has used the tension stirred up on its frontiers by the reactionary Iraqi Baathist regime in order to justify sending significant military forces into Kurdistan, and it also laid the provocation which was used to unleash the second offensive.

The Ayatollah Montazeri and the president of the republic, Bani-Sadr, explained that the struggle in Kurdistan will be continued until the "final victory"—until the army and the Pasdars have "cleaned up the whole region."

The Kurdish resistance organizations have been outlawed. They have not been allowed to stand candidates in elections. An economic blockade, which includes foodstuffs and medicines, has been erected against Kurdistan. Outside of any little cover-up maneuvers, all this shows the aims of the central Tehran government.

The military attacks concentrated against the towns in south Kurdistan have already resulted in several thousand dead and wounded. Some towns such as Sanandaj and Baneh have been devastated by artillery shells and air attacks. At the time of the Sanandaj siege the numbers of refugees were counted in the dozens of thousands.

### The Stakes Involved in the Civil War

The Kurdish question crystallizes two central problems for the future of the Iranian revolution.

First of all, the deepening radicalization of the Kurdish mass movement is expressed just as much in the peasant mobilizations, the occupation and distribution of land, as in the massive arming of the population, and the appearance of various types of committees (shoras and baqehs—neighborhood committees).

Secondly, the Kurdish people's struggle directly puts into question the ability of the bourgeois nationalist Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership to reconstruct and consolidate the bourgeois state.

For these two reasons, the Iranian government has made the Kurdish question the touchstone of its ability to govern the whole of Iran. That relates above all to the efficiency of the Iranian army and the Pasdar corps, as well as to the maintenance of "territorial" integrity faced with the demands of the oppressed peoples of the Iranian state.

The experience of the first August-October 1979 war and the extremely strong defiance of the Kurdish population to the central Tehran government are factors which consolidate even more the very large popular support enjoyed by the Kurdish political organizations (Kurdish Democratic Party, Komaleh, Fedayeen, Political Bureau of the Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini). This is particularly expressed in their increased military capacity to resist such an important and long offensive. Therefore, the Kurdish national movement appears as the most advanced point of the movements mobilizing the different oppressed nationalities in Iran.

The latest confrontations in Kurdistan have not had all the effects hoped for by the Tehran regime. Even if the besieged towns in south Kurdistan have been finally taken after the Peshmergas [guerrilla fighters] and the Kurdish militia had decided to retreat to the mountains, the fighting has accentuated the crisis in the heart of the army and police force whose basic cadre, nostalgic for the old regime, remain hostile to the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr government.

Given the political and social instability

in Iran, given the precedent of the February popular insurrection, and given the execution of several dozen officers guilty of torture and assassinations, the officers still refuse today to commit themselves too closely to a regime whose future to them doesn't appear completely guaranteed. In addition, there are many soldiers who have shown some sympathy with the Kurdish people's struggle.

If the multiplication of cases of insubordination, desertion, and lack of zeal in carrying out of orders hasn't resulted in a real decomposition of the regular army, it does explain why Tehran has chosen to present itself much more discreetly in the pursuit of its military operations in Kurdistan.

Faced with a government which explains that the Kurds play the game of imperialism, if not being its direct agents, it is necessary to recall the fundamental positions of revolutionary Marxists.

The Fourth International reaffirms its solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people to liberate itself totally from the shackles of imperialism.

It denounces and struggles against all the economic, military, and political measures that imperialism takes against the Iranian revolution to attack the legitimate aspirations of the working masses.

Throughout the world, members of the Fourth International will organize mass solidarity with the Iranian people to paralyze the arm of imperialism. In Iran, they participate in the struggle of the workers, peasants, and oppressed masses for the defense, *by their own methods of action and organization*, of the present Tehran government faced with the threat of a reactionary coup d'etat or an imperialist military intervention.

But one of the best means of defending the Iranian revolution is precisely to support the Kurdish revolution. To refuse to recognize the rights of all the oppressed nationalities of the Iranian state is to divide the ranks of the workers and oppressed masses against imperialism.

To refuse to recognize the rights of poor peasants to the land, the right of the Kurdish people to arm themselves and to organize their struggle independently and to guarantee and deepen the gains of the Iranian revolution, is to play the game of imperialism and of all people nostalgic for a return to the old regime.

By attacking nationalities mobilizing for the recognition of their rights or peasants occupying their land; by threatening workers who are trying to push forward their demands while multinational trusts maintain their interests in Iran; by organizing the sacking of universities and physical

attacks against the Iranian left organizations; and by threatening democratic rights for which the Iranian people paid a rather heavy price—the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership is serving the counterrevolution and is in contradiction to an effective struggle against imperialism.

That is why the Fourth International reaffirms its fullest solidarity with the struggle of the Kurdish masses.

Immediate withdrawal of the Pasdars and army from the whole of Kurdistan!

For the immediate satisfaction of all the political, economic, and social demands of the Kurdish movement!

For the liberation of all Kurdish and progressive militants who are imprisoned!

For the unconditional, immediate recognition of the right to self-determination—including the right to the separation of the Kurdish people and other oppressed nationalities from the Iranian state!

Long live the Kurdish revolution!

Support the revolutionary struggle of the Iranian masses!

them about what they had experienced. Afterwards, they were transferred to the Acapulco penitentiary in Guerrero.

#### What Has Happened in Prison?

In April 1979, Juan and Arturo were taken from the Acapulco prison and transferred to the Santa Martha Acatitla penitentiary in the Federal District [Mexico City]. They had asked for protection of their lives, since relatives of Margarita Saad Valenciano had offered some Acapulco inmates half a million pesos to murder them. They found out about this through a declaration made by Jaime Segismund, a convict who had been made such an offer.

However, their conditions worsened after their transfer to the Santa Martha penitentiary. They are without the right to sunlight, to reading material, to write, to receive visits, and now they are being given rotting food.

For about six months, Juan Islas Martínez has been ill and asking the prison authorities for medical attention. What happened was that he was given an injection that nearly caused his death. At the same time, they have psychologically tortured Juan Islas, simulating his execution.

Recently they have also denied the Revolutionary Workers Party, of which Juan and Arturo are members, the right to visit them. This situation makes us fear for the physical safety of Juan and Arturo.

#### The Case of Aquilino Lorenzo

Aquilino Lorenzo Avila was abducted by the Judicial Police of the State of Guerrero in the first days of February 1978. He was held incommunicado and subjected to brutal tortures for seventy-two days, at the end of which he was publicly presented as the murderer of Nicolás Salinas Sotelo, director of the Superior School of Tourism of the Autonomous University of Guerrero (UAG).

Faced with the lack of evidence against the accused, the judge in charge of the case found himself in a difficult situation, especially since the defense demanded that the accused be immediately declared innocent. However, three months went by without the verdict being announced. Suddenly, the judge was removed and replaced by Serafín Palacios, who within twenty-four hours of taking charge of the case declared Aquilino Lorenzo Avila guilty of murder, sentencing him to eighteen years in prison.

All indications are that in face of the other judge's resistance to finding Aquilino Lorenzo Avila guilty, Serafín Palacios was transferred to the port of Acapulco expressly to carry out this task.

Arturo Gallegos Nájera, Juan Islas Martínez, and Aquilino Lorenzo Avila joined the Revolutionary Workers Party as prisoners in 1978. In this way, despite the merciless brutality of the Mexican capitalist regime, the three revolutionaries remain faithful to their principles. □

## Free Lorenzo, Islas, and Gallegos!

# Mexican Political Prisoners in Danger

By Pedro Valderrama

[The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, is carrying out a campaign for the release of three of its members who are currently political prisoners. The PRT fears in particular for the lives of Arturo Gallegos Nájera and Juan Islas Martínez. On May 23 Gallegos told a delegation from the PRT, which was allowed to visit Islas and him after more than a month's delay, "do not accept that we are suicides. We are not going to commit suicide."

[The following article, which describes the cases of the three PRT members, appeared in the June 9 issue of *Bandera Socialista*, the PRT's weekly. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

Juan Islas Martínez, Aquilino Lorenzo Avila, and Arturo Gallegos Nájera were part of the armed movement that grew up in Mexico after the great student struggle of 1968 was defeated.\*

In 1971, Arturo Gallegos Nájera decided to join the Party of the Poor as a sympathizer. In 1973, when there was a small split in the Party of the Poor, Arturo Gallegos Nájera joined in the construction of the organization that became known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR).

Juan Islas Martínez, a first-year medical student in the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, decided to join the FAR in May 1974.

\*On October 2, 1968, the Mexican government ordered a massacre in which troops with tanks and machine guns opened fire on tens of thousands of student demonstrators who had gathered to peacefully protest in Mexico City's Tlatelolco Plaza. The October 1968 massacre convinced a layer of activists in the student movement that it was necessary to take up arms against the government.—*IP/1*

From the moment that Juan Islas Martínez and Arturo Gallegos Nájera became active in the same organization, their fate has also been the same.

They were arrested and imprisoned on September 20, 1974, in the city of Acapulco, in the state of Guerrero, accused of assassinating Acapulco political boss Margarita Saad Valenciano. The charges that were brought against Juan and Arturo were: criminal association, storing of arms, conspiracy and threats, kidnapping, and homicide.

However, it was not until April 20, 1977, three years later, that they were each sentenced to thirty years in prison on the basis of these charges. This means that if they complete their sentences, they will not be freed until 2004.

In reality, their guilt was never proved in a legal proceeding. However, as a result of the monstrous tortures they were subjected to, they signed a blank sheet of paper that later led to their sentencing.

Arturo Gallegos Nájera told us:

"Several times they tied me hand and foot and threatened me with a razor, saying they would castrate me if I did not confess to the assassination of Margarita Saad. Also, they threatened to kill my whole family as well as me if I did not confess. They applied electric shocks all over my body, particularly on the genital organs. Also, they tied cables to the testicles and hoisted me. Hanging in this way, they beat me. . . ."

Juan Islas was also tortured. After tying him hand and foot, they left him hanging with lime in his eyes.

Following these atrocities by the paid torturers of the governor of Guerrero, Islas and Gallegos were presented in public, with the warning that they would be tortured even more severely if they should tell the journalists who were to interview



# Twenty-Four Activists Released in Algeria

By Will Reissner

A defense campaign inside and outside Algeria has won the release of twenty-four people jailed in connection with demonstrations by Algeria's Berber-speaking minority in April. Their release was announced on June 25.

The ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) had accused the twenty-four, who include students, teachers, workers, and doctors, of acting as agents of imperialism. The minister of justice charged they were members of "clandestine groups," although he never specified which groups.

Since March, a number of demonstrations and strikes by Algeria's Berbers have demanded official recognition of their language and encouragement of their culture. There are some 3 million Berbers in the country.

According to a 1966 census, some 18 percent of Algeria's population speaks a Berber language as their native tongue, with the remainder speaking Arabic.

On March 18 a demonstration supporting Berber language rights took place in the town of Azazga, and from there the movement spread to other areas. At the university of Tizi-Ouzou, some sixty miles east of Algiers, a student strike over recognition of Berber began on April 7. Tizi-Ouzou is the largest city in the Kabylia, the mountainous Berber area near the Mediterranean Sea. It has been the leading Berber cultural center since the university opened there in September 1977. A solidarity demonstration with the Tizi-Ouzou student strike occurred the same day in Algiers and was forcefully put down.

The Berber demonstrations spread rapidly following the government's decision on April 10 to ban a lecture on ancient Berber poetry in Tizi-Ouzou. By April 16 the entire city was shut down by a massive general strike, which also involved other towns in the Kabylia.

### Support from Workers

Many striking workers came to the university campus to show their support for the demands of the students. One worker explained to Daniel Junqua, a correspondent for the Paris daily *Le Monde*, that recognition of Berber language and cultural demands was of special interest to workers, many of whom do not speak any other language. "We are simply supporting the cultural demands of our brothers because they are just," he explained.

On April 19, security forces moved in to occupy the university and the Tizi-Ouzou hospital, which was also on strike, leading to pitched battles with protesters and

hundreds of arrests. After taking the university, authorities kept it closed for nearly a month.

On May 18 a second general strike shut down Tizi-Ouzou, as people demanded freedom for the twenty-four people still being held in jail.

The struggle of the Kabylia Berbers for their language rights received support in other parts of Algeria, as well. During May there were a number of demonstrations, student strikes, and marches in Algiers and other cities protesting the "repression of Berber culture" and demanding the release of those arrested in the Kabylia and Algiers demonstrations.

### Demands for Arabization

The struggle initiated by Berber students is the second major outbreak of student protests in less than a year. For several months beginning in November 1979 universities throughout Algeria were shut down by students demanding full and rapid "Arabization" of the educational system.

Under French colonial rule, which only ended in 1962, all education was conducted in the French language. With the victory of the Algerian revolution, parallel Arabic-language and French-language school systems were established. But students in the Arabic-language system have long charged that upon leaving school they face severe employment discrimination, even in government posts.

During the student strike for Arabization of education, banners at Ben Aknoun University asked "Is Algeria a French Colony?" and stated "The Arabic Language Was Part of the 1954 Revolution!"

The solidity and duration of the strike by students in the Arabic school system forced the government to agree to speed the Arabization of Algerian society. For example, a meeting of the FLN Central Committee in the first week of May decided that steps should be taken to make Arabic the language of work in all government and party offices.

### A False Argument

The government has tried to use its recent moves toward Arabization as a weapon against the Berber population's demands for the right to education and cultural facilities in their own language. Officials have argued that demands for an official status for Berber cut across the moves to convert the educational system to Arabic and are a threat to Algeria's national unity.

Playing on the fact that the French colonialists continually tried to divide Berbers and Arabs in Algeria and Morocco (where Berbers are a majority) in order to maintain their colonial rule, the FLN charged that the Berber language campaign is the result of "colonialist plans that aim to strike a blow against the unity of the nation."

Along these lines, on May 3 President Chadli Benjedid attacked those abroad who defended the Berbers as "colonialists who assume the right to protect and preserve one segment of this nation."

While the government's attempts to pit the students favoring Arabization against Berber students has had some success—with the Arabic-language universities less involved in the solidarity struggle than the French-language schools—the two struggles in fact have a great deal in common.

While the language of the Algerian Arab masses is colloquial Arabic, the language of instruction chosen for the Arabization program is classical Arabic, which differs markedly from what is spoken in the streets and homes of Algeria.

The Berber students have recognized that they and the Arabic-language students have the same basic goal: the right to education in their native language, as *spoken in their native land*. In Tizi-Ouzou, for example, the striking students demanded "recognition of the Algerian colloquial languages, especially colloquial Arabic and Berber."

A similar point was made by the Revolutionary Communist Group (GCR) of Algeria, a sympathizing section of the Fourth International, in a May 15 statement on the language struggle.

The GCR noted that "the struggle for Arabization and the struggle for recognition of Berber are part of the framework of national democratic tasks of the Algerian nation, which is still oppressed by imperialism. The French language, which is the language of the neocolonial elite and of a big segment of the ruling classes, is a foreign language for the working masses," both Berber and Arab.

"If the Algerian masses are no longer to be foreigners in their own country," the GCR maintains, "Arabic must be expanded and developed—and Arabic that is based on the spoken language of Algiers, Oran, and Annaba, and not the elitist Arabic they are imposing upon us."

"It is also necessary," the GCR continues, "to teach Berber for those in Tizi, Béjaia, Batna, and elsewhere for whom Berber represents a part of their national identity."

The provisional release of the twenty-four prisoners is a victory that bodes well for further struggles for freedom of expression and democratic rights in Algeria. It is significant that demands for these rights, in addition to language rights, were raised in Tizi-Ouzou and in the solidarity actions at other campuses as well. □

## 'Facts Too Eloquent to Be Refuted by Anyone'

On Saturday, June 14, Fidel Castro spoke to a crowd of 50,000 citizens of Las Tunas province at a ceremony marking the opening of the new Ernesto Che Guevara Health Complex there. Built at an overall cost of more than 21 million pesos [US\$1 equals approximately .72 Cuban peso], the new health complex includes a hospital with surgical, clinical, gynecological, and

obstetric facilities, as well as a polytechnic institute, and old people's home, and a home for the handicapped.

Castro called the complex "one of the most complete in the entire country. This is one of the advantages of starting from nothing. Everything can be planned and coordinated the way it should be. . . . All that's missing is the School of Medicine,

but the earthmoving operations for its construction have already begun."

In his speech, Castro compared the health-care situation in the Tunas area today to that before the revolution.

"Public health in Tunas was identical to that of the rest of the country," he said. "There was no such thing as a national policy for developing medical services and,

### LATIN AMERICAN HEALTH AND NUTRITION INDEXES

(Data from international health and food indexes, as reprinted in June 22 English-language weekly *Granma*.)

Infant Mortality (rate per 1000 live births)		Child Mortality (rate per 1000 children 1 to 4 years old)		Maternal Mortality (rate per 10,000 live births)		Infectious and Parasitic Diseases (percentage of deaths)	
Paraguay	94.3	Guatemala	24.2	Paraguay	47.8	Honduras	44.5
Guatemala	80.7	Ecuador	13.9	Peru	23.2	Guatemala	62.5
Peru	72.4	El Salvador	9.5	Colombia	17.1	El Salvador	38.6
Chile	63.3	Honduras	9.2	Guatemala	14.5	Chile	24.5
Colombia	52.5	Peru	7.5	Chile	13.1	Costa Rica	21.4
Venezuela	43.7	Paraguay	5.6	El Salvador	9.5	Venezuela	24.6
CUBA	19.3	Colombia	4.9	Venezuela	6.8	Peru	54.2
		Dominican Rep.	4.8	CUBA	4.7	Ecuador	50.7
		Venezuela	3.8			CUBA	2.1
		CUBA	1.0				
Deaths from Measles (rate per 100,000 inhabitants)		Acute Poliomyelitis (reported cases)		Malaria (reported cases)		Calories (per capita per day)	
Guatemala	79.9	Brazil	2502	Brazil	89,959	Haiti	1700
Ecuador	48.1	Colombia	558	El Salvador	83,289	Colombia	1802
El Salvador	12.9	Peru	131	Colombia	37,306	Bolivia	1858
Paraguay	11.8	El Salvador	73	Peru	18,463	Dominican Rep.	2156
Honduras	8.1	Bolivia	32	Haiti	15,087	Ecuador	2084
Venezuela	6.2	Venezuela	28	Guatemala	9,616	Guatemala	1988
Dominican Rep.	4.0	CUBA	1	Venezuela	4,759	Peru	2350
Colombia	2.4			CUBA*	298	Honduras	2049
CUBA	0.1					Venezuela	2388
				*Cases of workers returning from abroad. National cases, none.		CUBA	2728
Life Expectancy at Birth (in years)		Deaths from Tuberculosis (rate per 100,000 inhabitants)		Deaths from Tetanus (rate per 100,000 inhabitants)		Proteins (grams per capita per day)	
Bolivia	48.3	Chile	19.1	Ecuador	11.9	Haiti	41.0
Haiti	52.2	Guatemala	18.3	Paraguay	7.0	Colombia	46.1
Guatemala	55.7	Paraguay	16.9	Dominican Rep.	4.8	Bolivia	48.4
Honduras	56.2	Colombia	11.7	El Salvador	4.8	Dominican Rep.	44.8
Peru	58.1	Venezuela	7.8	Costa Rica	3.8	Ecuador	47.3
El Salvador	60.7	Puerto Rico	7.6	Colombia	3.1	Guatemala	52.7
Colombia	63.4	Costa Rica	5.2	Venezuela	1.6	Peru	64.0
Brazil	63.6	CUBA	1.8	CUBA	0.2	Honduras	52.1
Venezuela	63 or 64*					Venezuela	62.6
CUBA	70.4					CUBA	70.1

\*Cited from memory.

consequently, the province was lacking in them. The concept of preventive, therapeutic medicine was not applied in health services; there was no such thing as health education, nor did the masses take part in any health programs. There wasn't even the minimum number of doctors for the territory.

"No integral health plans were put into effect; specialized service was nonexistent. There were no programs for the control and eradication of major diseases; neither were there any pre- and postnatal programs, school health care or work medicine. There were not even the minimum conditions for tending the sick, no training scheme for general or specialized health personnel. There weren't enough doctors, dentists, nurses, technicians, or other public health personnel; and there was no such thing as special institutions for the care of the aged or the handicapped."

In 1959 there were only fifty-eight doctors in the region, Castro explained, and almost all of them were private doctors. "You're familiar with the history of the peasants," he said. "When one of a peasant's family was sick, the peasant had to sell a pig or some chickens or whatever to pay the doctor's fee—that is, if he managed to get to the doctor on time."

Castro then went through a point-by-point comparison of health conditions in Tunas in 1959 and today, along with a comparison of health conditions in Cuba as a whole compared to the rest of Latin America. This information is summarized in the accompanying tables.

"... this is only possible with a socialist revolution," Castro said, "there's no other way; under capitalism and under imperialist domination this is simply impossible to achieve."

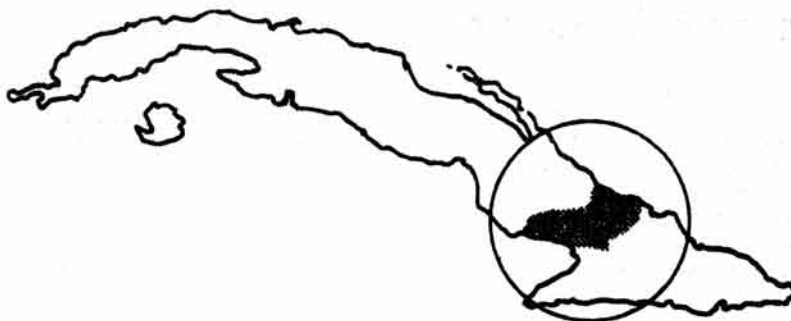
"This is how our Revolution has progressed in these 20 years," he said. "What have the remaining Latin American countries achieved? . . .

"They are unable to make any headway because the society that champions egoism, the society where man is exploited by man, the society where the human being counts for absolutely nothing, is unable to solve these problems, nor will it ever succeed in solving them, for it doesn't even worry about them.

"That's why in spite of the thousands of millions of dollars invested by imperialism in its attempts to destabilize our country, block our plans, campaign against our Revolution, to fool the peoples, these facts are too eloquent to be refuted by anyone."

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## PUBLIC HEALTH IN LAS TUNAS PROVINCE



	1959	1980
Doctors .....	58	311
Dentists .....	5	76
Nurses .....	22	226
Nurse's aides .....	0	465
Middle-level technicians .....	8	543
Hospitals .....	4	9
Polyclinics .....	0	17
Dental clinics .....	0	4
Rural hospitals .....	0	1
Rural dispensaries .....	0	7
Nurse's training schools .....	0	2
Health Polytechnics .....	0	1
Homes for expectant mothers .....	0	6
Homes for the aged .....	0	6
Blood banks .....	0	3
Hospital beds .....	310	1,451
Beds on social assistance .....	0	380

Las Tunas is, under the new political and administrative division of the country, one of the five new provinces of what was Oriente province. It covers an area of 6,373 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 400,000.

### 'Los Angeles Times' Cites Huge Gains

## Cuba's Health Care Reaches Its People

[The following article by Harry Nelson, the medical writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, appeared in the June 16, 1980, issue of that daily, which has a circulation of 1,043,028.]

\* \* \*

HAVANA—Twenty-one years after revolution drove half of its medical manpower into exile, Cuba today has reached a level of health that exceeds that of nearly every other country in Latin America.

And whatever the problems of Fidel Castro's Socialist regime—more than 100,000 people have fled it in recent months—Cuba has shown other develop-

ing countries that enormous gains can be made in a relatively short period of time when top priority is given to health care.

A recent visit to the island revealed that unlike virtually all of the other 100 or so developing nations, Cuba has carefully planned and executed an approach to health problems that it believes reaches every one of its 9.8 million residents.

As a result, its mortality rates have dropped sharply, especially among infants and children, and great progress has been made in reducing the incidence of malaria, tuberculosis, polio, typhoid fever, typhus, venereal diseases, dysentery and a number of other infectious and parasitic diseases

that incapacitate large numbers of people in other developing countries.

The percentage of Cuban children who have been vaccinated against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and polio exceeds that in many areas of Los Angeles. (Measles are an exception because the vaccine was only recently developed.)

The incidence of tuberculosis in Cuba has dropped from 63.5 cases per 100,000 population in 1965 to 13 cases per 100,000 people today. By comparison, the rate for Los Angeles County as a whole is 19 cases per 100,000, and in some parts of the county the rate exceeds 100 cases per 100,000.

Although Cuba's mortality rate for infants under 1 year old still exceeds that of the United States, the island country has made great advances. Today there are 19.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in Cuba; according to Cuban officials, the rate before the revolution was about 70 per 1,000. (Today in the United States there are 14 deaths per 1,000 live births.)

Two major reasons for this decline in infant mortality in Cuba are improved sanitation and better water, both of which have reduced deaths from diarrheal diseases that plague nearly all developing nations.

In 1962, three years after the Cuban revolution, the rate of children's deaths caused by diarrhea was 50 per 1,000 live births. By 1977, Cuban health officials reported, that rate had plummeted to 1.6 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Better nutrition, which enhances immunity, is also cited as a reason for the decline in children's deaths from diarrheal diseases.

"A child with diarrhea doesn't die here because he is well nourished," Dr. Daniel Joli, the World Health Organization's representative in Cuba, said.

Joli, an Argentine physician, said that biostatisticians from the World Health Organization, which is based in Geneva, had verified the Cuban statistics.

"There is no question that Cuba has the best health statistics in Latin America," Joli said. (Actually, some other Latin American countries, particularly Argentina, have made equally impressive strides in some areas of health care.)

"Cuba is poor but its health organization is that of a very much developed country," Joli said.

Coincidentally, at the same time that it has been lowering infant mortality rates, Cuba has also been lowering its birthrate. In a region that has a higher birthrate than either Asia or Africa, Cuba now has the lowest birthrate. In 1978 there were 15.3 live births per 1,000 population; in 1957 the number of live births was 26.1 per 1,000 population.

Cuban officials said the decline in the birthrate has been accomplished without an official government program. Instead, according to Dr. Celestino Alvarez Lejonchere, a gynecologist responsible for infant

protection and women's equality, the birthrate has dropped as the educational level of the population increased and as the Cubans improved their ability to solve their health and social problems. Another factor is the increasing number of Cuban women who work full time.

The key to Cuba's success in health care, according to Cuban officials and to U.S. public health authorities who have visited the island, is the way the government has integrated health care into the nation's overall development.

That means not only making sure everyone has equal access to care and that doctors, hospitals and other resources are available, but also improving nutrition, housing, water, sewage, disposal, reading levels and jobs. The island's national health program does not appear to have been stunted by its periodic agricultural and economic crises.

The main difference between the Cuban and U.S. health systems is the government's role in planning health care and delivery of medical services in Cuba. In the United States, the location and magnitude of medical resources such as doctors, nurses and hospitals, is largely determined by the professions themselves, based on market demand.

From an American's viewpoint, Cuba's health and medical care system may have the impersonal aura of a large clinic, but its availability to everyone and its demonstrated success in recent years cannot be denied.

The Cuban government is obviously proud of its health care system and for that reason, perhaps, was extremely cooperative in showing a *Times* reporter its various facilities.

A World Bank report issued this year showed the contrast of Cuba's health care system to those of other developing countries. According to the World Bank report, government expenditures on health in low-income countries seldom exceed 2% of the gross national product, and much of the money goes for curative medicine, medical personnel and maintenance of hospitals.

The overwhelming majority of people in the developing countries, especially the poor, have no access to the services that are offered, the report says. The efficiency of those services is generally poor and there is little attention paid to prevention.

Furthermore, the medical delivery system, which is generally private, is usually separate from the public health and sanitation system and from whatever government-provided care that may be offered.

But in Cuba the goal has been to develop a single, integrated preventive and curative system whose services are free to everybody.

An urban dweller who becomes ill in Cuba goes first to an outpatient clinic—called a polyclinic—that is staffed primarily with specialists in internal medicine, obstetrics and pediatrics. Polyclinics handle about 70% of all medical needs. They

are open about 12 hours a day—from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m.—and are each designed to care for about 3,000 people, although some serve more people.

If the patient needs to be hospitalized—or if the ailment happens when the polyclinics are closed—he is referred to a hospital or hospital emergency room.

According to government statistics, 65% of the hospital beds used to be in Havana, but a major effort has been made to extend services into other urban regions and rural areas.

Of Cuba's 255 hospitals, 44 are in Havana, 56 are in the countryside—often surrounded by sugar cane fields—and the rest are in other provincial cities and towns. Except for the rural hospitals, each has between 300 and 600 beds.

In the countryside, the 56 hospitals serve primarily the same function as the polyclinics in addition to having beds for non-surgical cases. Before construction of a road system in rural areas, rural hospitals did surgery. Such patients are now referred to the local provincial hospital.

More than 95% of all births are said to take place in the 26 maternity hospitals scattered around the country. In order to reduce the rate of premature births (which is about 10%) and infant and maternal deaths, all rural mothers are supposed to be hospitalized during the last month of pregnancy.

The government at first pushed the development of maternity hospitals but failed to reckon with the rapidly declining birthrate. Today these hospitals are operating at only a fraction of their capacity and plans are under way to convert some to other uses.

Patients who require heart surgery, neurological surgery, kidney transplants, cancer treatment or certain other specialized care are sent to one of the 22 regionalized speciality hospitals.

The provincial hospital at Cienfuegos, a principal port city about 140 miles southeast of Havana, is the pride of the Cuban hospital system. It is only 14 months old and cost \$26.4 million to build.

It has 624 beds, 19 operating rooms, an eight-bed intensive care unit, a kidney dialysis unit, physicians of all specialties—including psychiatry—and an outpatient clinic that sees 500 patients a day. It is also a teaching hospital.

The wards are three- or six-bed units, plain but neat and clean. There are no TV sets or telephones in the rooms but each bed is equipped with its own oxygen, suction and voice communication with the nursing station.

The most common cases in the medical wards are heart and lung ailments—problems common to developed countries. Asthma is becoming an increasing problem in Cuba, doctors say, and so is diabetes.

Although Cienfuegos is in a major agricultural area (sugar cane) where there is extensive use of pesticides, Dr. Raul Fer-

andez, the hospital's deputy director, said there have been no cases of pesticide poisoning of workers because care is taken to protect the workers.

"In the 12 years that I have been in this area I have not seen a single case," he said.

The hospital has recently installed elaborate X-ray equipment of the latest design manufactured by a British company. But much of the accessory equipment has been made in Japan, Sweden, and East Germany.

The Soviet Union is now subsidizing Cuba at a rate of \$8 million a day, according to recent reports. As far as could be determined by a *Times* reporter, this aid appears to be in non-medical areas—airplanes, automobiles and farm tractors, for example.

(According to Dr. Milton Roemer, a UCLA public health authority who has prepared reports on Cuba for the World Health Organization, much aid to Cuba from Russia has been in the form of indirect material subsidies.

(In recent years, he said, the Soviet Union has, for example, been buying Cuban sugar at triple the world price of sugar and selling oil to Cuba at less than one-third the world price.

(Roemer said Cuba's medical education system more closely copies the Czechoslovakian system rather than the Soviet model.)

Fernandez admitted that there is a serious problem in trying to mesh complex pieces of equipment into a single system when each has a different origin.

"The American blockade on Cuba causes many problems for the hospital," he said, "but we learn to live with them."

A number of physicians interviewed during a 10-day stay in Cuba said the blockade often delays medical supplies, medical journals and drugs.

Professor Zoilo Marinello, director of the Cuban Cancer Institute in Havana, a surgeon who trained at Memorial Hospital in New York in the 1940s, displayed a plastic material for breast prosthesis made in Santa Barbara.

"We must buy it from Spain," he said.

"The same thing with anti-cancer drugs, medical books and journals. We eventually get all of these things but we must use many different ways to get them."

An hour's drive from Cienfuegos, Dr. Francisco Izquierdo and Dr. Adelaida Rodriguez run a 12-bed rural hospital in the village of San Blas.

San Blas is a mountainous farming community that only recently was connected with Cienfuegos by road. Before the road, horseback was the only way to get to the big city.

About 10,000 people live in the surrounding mountain valleys, which belong to the rural hospitals trust. According to Izquierdo, more than 99% of the local children have been vaccinated against the common infectious diseases.

"If they don't show up for shots, the mass organizations go to their homes and give them shots," the physician said.

So-called mass organizations are encountered all over Cuba. The three leading ones are the Committee for the Defense of



Cuban physician treats burn.

the Revolution, the National Association of Small Farmers and the Federation of Cuban Women.

These volunteer organizations perform all sorts of social functions, one of which is to form "sanitarian brigades" in each community. In San Blas and in the nine small settlements in the area, sanitarian brigades dispense the Sabin oral polio vaccine, give lectures on where to get vaccinations, do population surveys and get in touch with people who do not show up at the rural hospital for doctor appointments.

Izquierdo, who is an internist, and Rodriguez, an obstetrician and pediatrician, see about 70 or 80 patients a day each. Their hospital has no X-ray or blood bank and they do no major surgery. Those cases would be referred to Cienfuegos.

Most of the hospitalized patients are male chronic cardiovascular cases. There was a 17-year-old country girl spending the customary last month of pregnancy in the hospital before going to the maternity hospital in Cienfuegos for delivery. The rural hospital has its own ambulance.

Izquierdo also said that auto accidents are a major problem in the area, probably because traffic has picked up on the area's new roads. And there was one case of

tuberculosis and three cases of leprosy at the hospital.

The hospital's annual budget is only \$151,800, including the salaries for the two physicians, a dentist (who is Izquierdo's wife), six nurses, a clinical laboratory technician and 14 others. The drug bill—\$96,000—is the largest single item.

Drugs in Cuba are free to patients in the rural areas but not in the cities unless the patient is hospitalized.

Dr. Eloisa Espinosa, chief of the Provincial Department of Dentistry in Cienfuegos, says that all children between the ages of 5 and 12 years see a dentist at least once a year. The average number of cavities for children up to 14 years is 2.5, which is considered low.

Cuba, she said, has adopted a dental program similar to New Zealand's, which trains medium-level technicians in a three-year course to fill cavities and clean and pull teeth. (A similar training program attempted a few years ago in Los Angeles at [the University of Southern California] caused the dental profession to force the dental school dean's resignation.)

Physicians, university professors, dentists, and engineers in Cuba all make about the same amount of money, according to Dr. Moises Jaime Baly-Baly of the Department of Control of Medical Doctors and other technicians.

For physicians, there is a pay differential between those trained before and those trained after the revolution. A specialist trained since the revolution makes \$600 a month, a general practitioner makes \$563 and a resident physician in training makes \$400. Those trained before the revolution make about 15% more. There are plans to give both groups substantial pay increases, Baly-Baly said.

The government does not believe in training physician's assistants or other kinds of physician-extenders who in parts of the United States and other parts of the world are seen as a way to deliver primary health care.

"Barefoot doctors could be a solution for China but we believe primary care could be organized better in Central and South America," said Dr. Cosme Ordonez Carceller, director of the Plaza de la Revolucion Polyclinic.

The government has also tried—without complete success—to stamp out the native traditional healers or *curanderos* that were once common in Cuba as they are all over Latin America.

"The revolution fought the *curanderos* because they exploited the ignorance of our people," Ordonez said.

Approximately 50% of the 6,000 doctors who were in Cuba before the revolution left the country soon after Castro came to power in 1959. However, the Castro government's heavy emphasis on health and education has resulted in the sharp rise in the number of doctors being trained.

Instead of the one medical school before the revolution, Cuba now has three medi-

cal schools plus four affiliated medical faculties that teach in training centers situated mostly in provincial hospitals. There are plans to have at least one medical faculty in each of the country's 14 provinces.

As of January, 1979, Cuba had 13,247 physicians, or 153 for every 100,000 persons. The U.S. rate is 193 doctors per 100,000.

The medical training emphasis in Cuba is on specialists (internists, obstetricians, pediatricians) to give primary care, rather than on family practitioners, as is now the case in the United States. The Cuban Ministry of Public Health believes it is essential to train doctors who are capable of practicing either in specialized hospitals or in outpatient clinics in the city or country.

After graduation, all physicians must spend three years in rural hospitals and clinics, which is how Cuba assures a continuous supply of doctors for remote areas. According to Dr. Fernando Llerdo, dean of the Institute of Basic and Clinical Sciences in Havana, it was common before the revolution for a new graduate never to have worked in a hospital.

(The Cuban Medical Association in Exile has a different view of the present Cuban medical system. According to Dr. Enrique Huertas, president of the 3,000-member organization based in Florida, "sectarian, inadequate and arbitrary study plans have fed on students selected for their affinity and militancy with Cuba's sole party, the Communist Party, organized under the directives set forth by the Soviet Union and not for their level of preparation or their vocation for a career in medicine.")

("The Cuban physician did not abandon his patients (but) . . . marched into exile with his people," Huertas said.)

A half-hour drive inland from Havana is a novel health facility called the Institute for Health Development. It was once a 1,200-bed tuberculosis hospital, but its main structure now houses economists, biostatisticians and various kinds of theorists whose chief job is to do research.

Their research is not biological, but rather is directed at finding ways to improve the manner in which health care is delivered to the people. Another function is to teach health administration.

"We educate to change the already established system," Prof. Mario Escalona said in an interview. "We teach people who will become the leaders of health administration in their countries."

Besides Cubans, the health administration class currently has five students each from Mexico and Spain and one each from Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Mozambique. Escalona said there may be an American student soon.

Dr. Ordonez offered an example of the kind of change triggered by the institute's research:

Until recently, he said, doctors working



"Cuba's health care system reaches every resident."

in polyclinics were not sufficiently oriented to the psychosocial needs of the patients. They were overspecialized and too much concerned with the diagnostic and curative aspects of medicine.

The new approach is what Ordonez called "the social conception of medicine—holistic and a better way to handle psychosomatic patients."

In line with Socialist thought, it stresses the social causes of biological problems—poor housing, discrimination and exploitation. (Cuban officials define holistic medicine as taking in the whole environment and not just what doctors do.)

Medical students spend part of their time working as nurses or sanitarians, according to Ordonez, in order "to create workers with knowledge, skill and human attitudes—in other words, to develop the service mind."

In 1978, 579 new doctors were graduated from Cuba's medical schools and the output has been increasing sharply, according to Escalona. Plans call for 1,000 graduates a year in the near future.

About 10% of these graduates are expected to go to underdeveloped countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America with which Cuba has medical collaborative programs.

According to Ministry of Public Health figures, Cuba now has 2,626 health workers abroad, 1,316 of whom are doctors.

Cuban health officials seem unconcerned about overproducing doctors or building too many hospitals—topics that are of major concern in the United States.

Prof. Escalona stated the thinking this way: "In a Socialist country where the government is responsible for the people and where the needs of the people rather than the wants of the people are taken into account, the government has established that there is a need for a lot of doctors."

When the domestic need for doctors has been met, he continued, there will still be an international need. "It is a revolutionary duty," he said, "to meet the needs of other people." □

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## 'The Question of Palestine': Good History, Bad Politics

Reviewed by David Frankel

Since the October 1973 Mideast war, it has become more widely accepted than ever before that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not merely a dispute between governments, that the dispossession of the Palestinian people is at its core.

This shift in popular perceptions, as Edward W. Said points out in *The Question of Palestine*, did not come about primarily because of intellectual arguments. "Nothing was as important in my opinion," Said writes, "as the sheer persistence of the Palestinians; they would not go away, not even after they had been dispersed, driven out, conquered. They still called themselves Palestinians, they still believed that they had the right to return

*The Question of Palestine*, by Edward W. Said, New York: Times Books, 1979. 265 pp. \$12.50.

to Palestine, they still felt uncomfortable with the idea of an Israeli (or even an Arab) overlord, no matter how many rewards were offered."

Of course, giving lip-service to the idea that the Palestinians exist and have to be taken into account is still a long way from supporting their rights. Said asks: "Is there not an astonishing irony in a state of affairs by which the United States does not permit members of the Palestine Liberation Organization to speak or travel freely in this country, while at the same time saying that the Palestinian question is at the center of the whole Middle East conflict?"

### A Plea to Intellectuals

Nevertheless, the shift in the climate of opinion is palpable. As Said argues, "It is no exaggeration to say that for the first time in our struggle against Zionism the West appears ready to hear our side of the story. Therefore we must tell it; we must stand in the international theater created out of our struggle against Zionism, and there we must diffuse our message dramatically."

This Said attempts to do. As a member of the Palestine National Council, he is an

active partisan of the Palestinian cause. At the same time, as a professor of English at New York City's Columbia University and the author of several widely acclaimed books, Said is considered respectable in American intellectual and academic circles. And it is to these circles that he makes his plea.

"Any self-respecting intellectual is willing today to say something about human rights abuses in Argentina, Chile, or South Africa," he notes, "yet when irrefutable evidence of Israeli preventive detention, torture, population transfer, and deportation of Palestinian Arabs is presented, literally nothing is said."

In fact, Said says, "practically the *only* ethnic group about whom in the West racial slurs are tolerated, even encouraged, is the Arabs." (Emphasis in original.)

Here, Said's liberal politics get the better of him. Racism against Blacks, Latin Americans and Asians is systematically encouraged—and practiced—by the ruling classes in the United States and Western Europe. However, it is certainly true that the relationship of class forces has made it harder for the rulers to be as flagrant in this as they once were. In this sense, it is true that Arabs are an exception. If the kind of anti-Arab (and anti-Iranian) cartoons that regularly appear in the international press were aimed at Blacks or Jews, they would surely provoke a political uproar.

### Colonialist Ideology

The strongest part of Said's book is his convincing explanation and documentation of how the origins and ideology of Zionism—and the support for Zionism today—are rooted in the ideology of nineteenth-century European colonialism.

A particularly cold-blooded example of this is Lord Balfour's 1919 memorandum in which the British foreign secretary explained that:

in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting wishes of the present inhabitants of the country, though the American Commission has been going through the forms of asking what they are. The four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism,



be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.

What counted was the wishes, desires, and prejudices of white Europeans. Palestine was to be transformed, the rights of its inhabitants denied, as Said points out, in order to bring about a "higher" (or better, more worthy, more modern, more fitting: the comparatives are almost infinite) interest, cause, or mission."

Repulsive as it is, Balfour's blend of cynicism and smug self-righteousness is not any surprise, coming as it does from a top official of the British Empire in its unlamented heyday. But Said shows how the racist, colonialist attitudes of Lord Balfour have permeated American intellectual circles.

For example, Said quotes a November 1947 letter to the *New York Times* signed by the prominent liberal theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and six other notables. According to the letter:

Whoever approaches the Middle East with even a minimum of objectivity has to admit that thus far there is only one vanguard of progress and modernization in the Middle East, and that is Jewish Palestine. A second factor for progress is Christian Lebanon. . . . But for these two islands of Western civilization, Jewish Palestine and Christian Lebanon, the Arab-Moslem Middle East presents a hopeless picture from an American viewpoint.

Two "islands of Western civilization"—colonies is a more accurate term—which represent "progress," something that those millions of Arab-Moslems supposedly cannot understand. In Niebuhr's view, it was the job of the West to bring civilization to the backward East.

Objections by the Arab masses to this "civilizing" mission, in Niebuhr's view, could be discounted. As he put it in an article in the August 6, 1946, *Spectator*, "the miserable masses are in such abject poverty that an opinion is an impossible luxury for them."

Edmund Wilson, one of the most prestigious American intellectuals of his day, deploring some of the more brutal treat-

ment accorded the Palestinian Arabs, commented, "It is not that a certain contempt for the Arabs is not natural for anyone trained in the West, nor is it that any ruthlessness of Israel is not matched by the rather stupid obstinacy of the Arab refugees in Jordan, who . . . continue to insist on returning to their villages and farms in Israel."

But mostly, Wilson simply ignored the Palestinians and their expulsion from the land. After 1967, however, this stance became impossible to maintain. Taking up the accounts of Israel written in this period by writers such as Saul Bellow, Stephen Spender, Francine Du Plessix Gray, Renata Adler, and Gary Wills, Said notes:

In each case the Arabs are dealt with through an Israeli Arab expert, usually a worldly wise colonial officer, sometimes an academic figure with a background in military intelligence. In this respect, Bellow and Spender were exactly alike. Their liberal humanity, their concern for the "possible" violation of Israeli democracy by military occupation, was demonstrated by a talk with an expert who represented the Arab "reality" to them, alleviated their concern for humane values, and reassured them about Israeli democracy. . . . It would be exactly like sending a white "black affairs" officer to tell a visiting Western intellectual what the South African black majority *really* was, really wanted, really felt.

In this regard, it is worth taking note of the April 28, 1980, *New York Times* television listing, which I happened to look at shortly after reading the passage quoted above. Among the programs of special interest was "What's Happening America?" The blurb said, "Yitz[h]ak Sha[m]ir, Israeli Foreign Minister, and farm co-op members, discuss Palestinian politics."

#### Said's Political Views

Lately, some Zionists have sought to give their movement a progressive veneer by referring to it as the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. But as Said rightly points out, "in joining the general Western enthusiasm for overseas territorial acquisition, Zionism *never* spoke of itself unambiguously as a Jewish liberation movement, but rather as a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient."

It takes more than a belated verbal claim to make a liberation movement. Said points to the attitude of those who have really engaged in anti-imperialist struggles. He notes that "every single state or movement in the formerly colonized territories of Africa and Asia today identifies with, fully supports, and understands the Palestinian struggle."

Said quotes liberally from the writings of Zionist leaders—from Herzl, to Weizman, to contemporary figures such as Moshe Dayan—to document the racist and colonialist character of the Zionist movement.

However, having established the character of the Zionist movement—and of the racist, colonial-settler state that it built—



Palestinians demonstrate in Nablus. Said fails to see the anti-imperialist struggle in class terms.

Said retreats from the political conclusion that should follow. He stands for the recognition of the Israeli state by the Palestinian liberation movement. As he puts it:

Unlike the Israelis, I think, most Palestinians fully realize that their Other, the Israeli-Jewish people, is a concrete political reality with which they must live in the future. . . . In having undergone the change from a goal of general liberation to particular liberation—that is, from the hope of a secular democratic state in all of Palestine to a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza—the Palestinian community has retained its goal of self-determination as well as its values.

Elsewhere, Said says: "On occasion after occasion the PLO stated its willingness to accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza." He claims that this stance included the "implicit recognition of Israel as a neighbor."

Detailing the diplomatic overtures of the PLO leadership, Said expresses bitter disappointment at the lack of any U.S. response. He implies that this lack of response is a result of a somewhat irrational U.S. commitment to the Israeli regime. Thus, Said says:

According to the terms of Sinai II and the agreement made between Henry Kissinger and the Israelis, the United States will not recognize or speak to the PLO unless the latter accepts Resolution 242 and recognizes Israel. This extremely academic and rigid condition, which ties a major power indecently to the petulant whims of a client state, and restricts the Palestinian matter exclusively to a refugee problem has withheld legitimacy for the PLO, and consequently for the Palestinians, in the American political arena.

Later on, Said says: "At odds with one another, the United States, Egypt, and the PLO struggle to Israel's advantage."

But this view of what has been happen-

ing in the Middle East turns things on their head. Whatever tactical annoyances Washington may express over Israeli provocations—for example, over the expansion of settlements, or the deportation of Palestinian mayors—the U.S. imperialists see the Israeli state as a bulwark for their interests. It is these material interests—not "the petulant whims of a client state"—that determine U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Of course, the Zionist regime tries to maneuver its backers in Washington. But the U.S. rulers allow such maneuvers because they stand for the continued subjugation of the Arab masses. In this, Israel is their instrument.

The adoption of a racist and colonialist ideology by liberal intellectuals, which is so ably described by Said, certainly made it easier for American capitalism to pursue its interests in the Middle East. But it was precisely the development of American imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century that provided the receptive ground for the flowering of antidemocratic and antihumanist ideas among the American intellectual establishment.

#### A Deal With Washington?

Like many liberal opponents of U.S. foreign policy, Said accurately describes the reality of the policy followed by Washington, without recognizing the fact that the policy is *necessary*—an organic outgrowth of the economic and social system.

Said is aware that U.S. policy in the Middle East is based on "getting oil and setting up armed alliances in opposition to popular and/or national currents. . . ."

Moreover, he sees that "the United States actively identifies itself as an opponent of any effort to transform client regimes (no matter how oppressive and unpopular), despite the much-touted offi-



cial interest in human rights."

Said also knows that in practice the struggle for Palestinian self-determination has become a focal point of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles in the entire Middle East. He says:

There is a larger inter-Arab and international (to say nothing of an inter-Palestinian) dimension to Palestine as a rallying cry. No one who has given his energies to being a partisan has ever doubted that "Palestine" has loosed a great number of other issues as well. The word has become a symbol for struggle against social injustice: During the Egyptian student demonstrations of the early seventies a frequent slogan was: "We are all Palestinians." Iranian demonstrators against the shah in 1978 identified themselves with the Palestinians.

Yet despite all this, Said suggests that if only Washington would take a softer line, collaboration with the PLO could be established. And he warns what could happen if Washington continues to reject diplomatic feelers from the PLO, saying:

... there is now the possibility that for the first time since 1967 a genuinely popular Arab nationalist response might develop to the United States and its allies in the [Camp David] treaty, and that portends a wave of extraordinary upheaval in the area. The Palestinian issue, as I suggested earlier, has become far more than an irredentist question: it has turned into the symbolical nexus of nearly every Arab, Islamic, and Third World popular (in the literal sense of the word) issue in the region. One of the main questions now is whether Arafat and the PLO will be willing indefinitely to contain the question. The Iranian response to the Palestinians after February is one index of what I mean; others have been no less powerful. The Kuwaiti parliament was closed down in late 1976 because the Palestinian issue had crystallized there as something uniting opposition to the regime. The PLO did not exploit this situation, but obviously could have.

Said may think that the PLO can advance the cause of Palestinian self-determination by wringing a diplomatic concession or two out of Washington. But such concessions can never be won, and certainly will never be implemented, except by bringing the power of the mass movement to bear.

Said would probably agree with this—but only up to a point. He apparently thinks that the mass movement can be used as a tool in securing advances in the diplomatic arena. If the masses go too far, however, they can become an obstacle.

Thus, in surveying the instability and forces for revolutionary upheaval in the Arab world, Said argues that "the danger in all this is not revolutionary change as such; it is protracted incoherence, and for the PLO, now a concrete national reality, a protracted postponement of achieving its national claims on the question of Palestine." (Emphasis added.)

Put more bluntly, Said thinks that the advance of the Arab revolution is not necessarily in the interests of the Palesti-

nian liberation struggle. As he sees it, Palestinian self-determination can be secured within the framework of continued imperialist domination of the Middle East.

The U.S. ruling class, however, is under no such illusion. Its hostility to the PLO and to Palestinian rights is not a mistake or an aberration. It is the result of a more realistic assessment of the class forces in the Middle East than the one held by Said.

#### Lack of Class Analysis

Perhaps because there is massive opposition within the PLO to Said's view, he states his position with considerable caution and professorial circumlocution. But in arguing for the recognition of the Israeli state and what amounts to an accommodation with American imperialism, Said is not just doing a disservice to the Palestinian liberation movement. He is also striking a blow at the real interests of the Israeli working class.

Revolutionary socialists have always argued that Israel is a key link in the imperialist domination of the Middle East, and that as long as this domination continues, the basic problems facing the Arab masses cannot be solved. The fundamental needs of the toiling masses will continually drive them into struggle against imperialism, and against its most visible and active outpost in the region—the Zionist

state. The Palestinians play a vanguard role, but in struggling against the Israeli state they express the interests of the Arab masses as a whole.

What this means for the Israeli workers is a perspective of endless warfare, and along with war, of economic sacrifice and the erosion of democratic rights.

This is precisely what we are seeing in Israel today. The treaty with Egypt has only resulted in stepped up preparations for war with Syria and perhaps Jordan. Inflation is currently running at a rate of 180 percent. Class polarization has brought forth the beginnings of a fascist movement in the Gush Emunim and the various ultranationalist settler groups.

Meanwhile, the worldwide capitalist crisis is undermining the Israeli economy, and helping to prepare new revolutionary upheavals in the Arab states surrounding Israel.

In this situation, Said remarks that "the state [i.e., Israel] preventing us from having a future of our own has already provided a future for its own unhappy people."

Not only does Said propose a suicidal strategy for the Palestinian liberation struggle. His lack of a class analysis also leads him to accept the dead end of Zionism as a viable alternative for the Jewish people. □

## Unemployment Hits 1.6 Million in Britain

Official unemployment figures announced June 24 put the number of jobless in Britain at 1.6 million—the highest since World War II. Britain is in the midst of a deep recession, with industrial production in the first third of 1980 three percent below the 1979 average.

Although the extent of layoffs, plant closings, and bankruptcies has drawn widespread pleas for government action, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher vowed in a recent interview with American reporters that she would not intervene to save "dying industries at the cost of having inadequate resources for the growth indus-

tries."

Referring to work rules intended to limit speedup and protect the health and safety of workers, Thatcher declared that "overmaning and restrictive practices" have to go. "At a time when we have to be competitive to survive, you can't just go on supporting these things if you're to keep your flourishing industries going."

Inflation in Britain is running at about 22 percent, but Thatcher insists that public workers cannot expect to keep up. "We just do have to stand and say no," Thatcher said. Her aides are suggesting pay settlements of about 10 percent for public workers, who account for nearly 30 percent of the country's labor force.

Widespread strikes by public workers in late 1978 and early in 1979 led to the fall of Thatcher's predecessor, former Prime Minister James Callaghan. Callaghan's Labour government had tried to hold a 5 percent line on wage increases. It remains to be seen whether Thatcher's Tory government will be any more successful.

An article in the June 26 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly sponsored by Britain's International Marxist Group, responded to the new unemployment figures by "calling on every reader to actively build the lobby for jobs at the TUC [Trades Union Congress conference] in September, around the demands: 'For a 35-hour week' and 'Fight now to kick the Tories out.'"



MARGARET THATCHER

# The Impact of the World Capitalist Recession on Eastern Europe

By Ernest Mandel

Since the beginning of the long downturn in which the international capitalist economy finds itself, the Fourth International has pointed out two differences between the countries with planned and socialized economies and the capitalist countries.

The countries with planned and socialized economies *have not* been hit by the same phenomena that have, without exception, marked all the industrialized capitalist countries: a recurring absolute decline in industrial production during the phases of recession; massive unemployment; the shutdown of numerous enterprises and the collapse of whole branches of industry; the accumulation of huge quantities of unsalable commodities.

At the same time, these countries can no longer completely escape the effects of the capitalist economic downturn on their own economies.

They have suffered and continue to suffer numerous consequences from it, consequences that become more obvious as these countries become more integrated into the world market.

These two special features of the economic evolution of Eastern Europe correspond to two structural characteristics of these countries that are different from the bourgeois states. In these states, capitalism has been abolished, and the laws of development of the capitalist mode of production no longer apply (one of which is the inevitability of recurring crises of overproduction).

At the same time, however, the socialist mode of production does not exist in these states; socialism is far from having been established. Therefore, these states continue to *partially* suffer the effects of all the great upheavals of the international capitalist economy.

We could summarize this dual structural characteristic by saying that in these countries there no longer is generalized commodity production, and therefore there no longer is *domination* by the law of value. But there still is partial commodity production, and therefore the law of value still has *influence*, especially working through the intermediary of the pressure of the world market.

The superiority of our definition of the social character of these countries as bureaucratized workers states (transitional societies between capitalism and socialism, which are blocked in their advance toward socialism by the dictatorship of the bureaucracy) over any other definition is clearly seen in the fact that it is the only definition that can take into account this

*dual contradictory relationship* between the economic evolution in Eastern Europe and the capitalist economic crisis.

### Partially Discredited Growth Model

Throughout the 1960s, the theoreticians, politicians, and "economic practitioners" in the "people's democracies" (with the possible exception of those in Bulgaria and Albania, who were more attached to Stalinist "orthodoxy") sincerely believed the neo-Keynesian myths of "full employment and guaranteed economic growth" in the imperialist countries through "regulation by the state and the monopolies." That is, they believed in the cogency of the theory of "state monopoly capitalism."

For that reason, their various plans for economic reform were based on a considerable expansion of East-West trade.

Contrary to the illusions that were widespread in various Western circles, this connection between "economic reforms" and greater integration into the world market did not involve any automatic "political liberalization." And it certainly does not involve fundamental questioning of the noncapitalist character of these economies (which the bourgeoisie saw as a "hope"—and dogmatists saw as a "threat"—of restoration of capitalism).

Quite the contrary. The fundamental aim of the "economic reform" was to *consolidate the bureaucracy's dictatorship*, which is based on the collective ownership of the means of production. That dictatorship was threatened by the growth of working-class discontent in the previous period. They hoped that a rising standard of living and adjustment of the "consumption model" to that of the capitalist countries, in short the enticements of the "consumer society," would stop the politicalization of the masses.

In Czechoslovakia they put forward the formula: "normalization can only be based on well-filled stomachs." This, in short, was the philosophy of the bureaucracy's new growth model.

Through greater integration into the world market it would be possible to import advanced technology and consumer goods from the imperialist countries to satisfy needs of the masses that had gone unfulfilled in the previous period. The connections between this integration into the world market and the "economic reform" would allow the enterprises to better adapt themselves to the needs of consumers and to the need to find increased markets abroad.

But on both fronts, the bureaucracy kept the controls firmly in its own hands. No

one ever raised the possibility of abolishing the state monopoly of foreign trade or giving the enterprises freedom to determine their own prices, much less allowing them to determine their own investment programs. In short, it was an attempt to *rationalize bureaucratic management*, not to replace it with management subordinated to the laws of the market (to the law of value).

Was this new developmental model an "objective" or even subjective attempt by the bureaucracies of the "people's democracies" to further disengage themselves from Soviet hegemony over their economies? Is the Kremlin opposed to this model, and to the growth of its satellites' trade with the imperialist countries? The answer to these questions is not so simple as it might seem at first glance.

Unquestionably from the point of view of the head of the Romanian bureaucracy—following the example of Yugoslavia in this regard—the growing diversification of foreign trade allows greater political independence from Moscow. In the case of the other "people's democracies," however, the situation is less clear. The main motivation for the economic reforms was to enlarge the basis for the population's "neutrality" toward the regime (one could hardly speak of support) along the lines of János Kádár's famous formula that in Hungary, "those who are not against us are with us." The rest is secondary, especially since a large majority of the bureaucracy sees the USSR (and the Soviet army) as the "guarantor of last resort" for its maintenance in power in the event of a political revolution.

Nonetheless we should not underestimate the importance of both the "economic reforms" and the greater integration into the world market in terms of *increasing the bureaucracy's privileges*. In Hungary, for example, towards 1970 the bonuses stemming from participation in the "profits" of enterprises reached a maximum of 25% of the wages of a worker, 50% of the pay of a middle manager, and 80% of the pay of a director. In 1968 in practice this resulted in cash bonuses of 1,300 forints, 5,500 forints, and 13,000 forints per active person in these three categories respectively. This means that a director received a bonus that was *exactly ten times as large* as a worker got (J. Wilczynski: "Differentiation of Income Under Modern Socialism," in *Jahrbuch der Wirtschaft Osteuropas*, Vol. 3, Munich, 1972, p. 478, citing Hungarian sources).

Moreover, the Soviet bureaucracy itself has two reasons for being interested in an

expansion of trade between the "people's democracies" and the imperialist countries.

First, because that trade is an indirect way of increasing imports of advanced technology for the USSR as well (and in the event of international tension, this indirect source could become the principal source).

Second, especially since the explosion of oil prices, the Soviet bureaucracy is interested in reducing its shipments of raw materials to the "people's democracies," since it can obtain higher prices on the world market.

At the same time, the Soviet bureaucracy in no way wants to see the economic collapse of these countries. If they are to increase their purchases on the world market, these countries must also be able to increase their exports there. Therefore, the Kremlin maintains an attitude of benevolent neutrality regarding the new growth model, as long as the ties with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)—and especially the participation in cooperative projects that have greater and greater weight<sup>1</sup>—are not disturbed.

But this whole "new growth model" (which could involve a *limited* utilization of the private sector, especially in the services field, which has nothing to do with the restoration of capitalism) was based on the axiom that a growing wave of exported "socialist" commodities would make it possible to buy a growing wave of machine tools, capital goods, and "sophisticated" consumer goods from the imperialist countries. It was also based on the hypothesis that there would be continued relative stability in the international capitalist monetary system (meaning in a strict sense that the inflation rate would remain moderate, as had been the case in the evolution of prices in the 1950s and 1960s).

This axiom and hypothesis broke down in the early 1970s. What followed was a *special kind of economic crisis* in Eastern Europe, which was different from the crisis in the capitalist countries, but also related to it. This economic crisis was marked by a decline in the growth rate of industrial production, increased inflationary tensions, a serious deterioration in the balance of trade, and the impossibility of following the policy of increasing the standard of living of the masses and changing mass consumption patterns.

We will illustrate the character and specific features of this crisis by using the example of three countries in Eastern



Downtown Budapest. Eastern European regimes hoped rising living standards would stave off unrest.

Europe: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary (the case of East Germany, which is the most industrialized workers state in the world, but has a special relationship with West Germany, is a separate case).

#### Declining Economic Growth Rates

The decline in the growth rate, which can also be seen in the Soviet Union,<sup>2</sup> is clearly seen in these three countries. According to the calculations and projections of the Wharton Econometric Forecasting Association, industrial production rose 5.6% in Hungary in 1978. That rate declined to 2.2% growth in 1979, and the plan projects 3.5% growth in 1980 (a goal that will not be reached), followed by a new decline to 2.2% in 1981.

The tendency is the same in Poland and Czechoslovakia, although slightly less pronounced in terms of the goals contained in the plans (but it threatens to be stronger in real life than in the plans). For Poland, the respective growth rates for the same four years are 5.8% in 1978, 2.3% in 1979, 4% in 1980, and 4% for 1981. For the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic they are 5%, 3.6%, 4.2%, and 4% (*Business Week*, May 5, 1980).

It is amusing to note that these predictions made by a bourgeois institution are more optimistic regarding the countries with planned economies than the predictions made by the experts and functionaries of the bureaucratized workers states themselves. We know that these experts and functionaries participate in the activities of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in Geneva, which published an *Economic Survey* for 1979. That survey stated that "net material

production" in all of Eastern Europe grew 4.4% in 1978, 2.4% in 1979, and would grow even less in 1980. The growth rate for industrial production fell from 5% in 1978 to 3.7% in 1979 for Eastern Europe as a whole (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, April 1, 1980).

Official government communiqués note that in *Hungary* the growth rate for industrial production will decline from 5% in 1978 to 2.2% in 1979 (against the 4% projected in the plan).

For *Czechoslovakia* the growth rate of industrial production has fallen from the 6.8% average for 1971-1975 to 3.2% in 1979. It is supposed to rise slightly to 4% in 1980 (which is highly unlikely).

As for *Poland*, the industrial growth rate, which was still above 5% in 1978, fell to 2.6% in 1979 and is not expected to rise above 3% in 1980. Since there was an absolute decline in *agricultural* production in Poland, the growth rate of the Gross National Product was around zero (some sources even assert that there was an absolute decline in the Polish GNP in 1979). The plan for 1980 projects only 1.4% to 1.8% growth in the GNP, the lowest rate since 1945.

What are the immediate causes of this pronounced slowdown in the growth rate? Basically the causes are the reduction in the total volume of investments, as a result of the higher prices for raw-material and capital-goods imports; the need to avoid excessively curtailing the volume of the population's consumption, which, given the acceleration of inflation, has reduced the budgetary resources available for investments; and delays in completing important investment projects from previous years, which had been expected to begin adding to production in 1979.

In addition to these immediate causes, we must obviously add structural causes

1. One of the biggest weaknesses of COMECON is the absence of a convertible rouble, which means that the multilateral exchanges remain limited compared to bilateral exchanges. Nonetheless, multilateral cooperation projects have steadily grown, especially in regard to investments for the production and transportation of raw materials.

2. In this regard see Benjamin N. Bastida's "The 1979 Soviet Economic Reforms," *IP/I*, February 25, 1980, pp. 177-180.

such as the lack of full and complete utilization of the productive capacity, bureaucratic wastage, the lack of excess manpower reserves that can be incorporated into new production, the gap between anticipated labor productivity and the level actually reached, etc. In this study we cannot expand upon these structural causes, since the study is basically conjunctural in character.

It is important, however, to stress the importance of these structural problems, since the bureaucracy has tried to make it seem that the higher cost of imports alone explains the crisis. This is not true. The workers are fully conscious of the enormous waste that continues to mark bureaucratic management, and they know that in this sense the "economic reform" has been a partial failure—like all the "reforms" introduced successively in the USSR.

The argument about the "explosion of oil prices," while not being totally rejected, is received by the populace with a certain degree of skepticism.

#### Inflationary Pressure

While in previous years the bureaucratic authorities were able to control the inflationary pressures in the three countries in question through a pricing system that was more or less rigidly controlled from above, this control has clearly been shaken in recent years. For example, Poland had an 8% inflation rate in 1978, a rate that no "people's democracy" ever suffered in the course of previous decades. The situation was even worse in Hungary, where the cost of living rose 9%. In Czechoslovakia the price rise was lower.

There are three basic causes for this rise in prices. First the considerable rise in the price of imports, that is, the impact that the generalized inflationary tendency in the world market has on the countries with planned economies. Obviously this is especially the case with the rise in oil prices and prices of some other raw materials. But it also concerns the rise in prices of capital goods and consumer goods imported from the West.

In addition, there are the consequences of a rather pronounced agricultural crisis in these countries, which is expressed in shortages of some foodstuffs leading to price increases.

TABLE II

#### Prices of Fuel, Raw Materials, and Metals (1970=100)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
In world market	108	111	168	243	247	258
Within COMECOM	105	110	113	119	175	177

Source: *Voprossi Ekonomiki*, 1978, No. 8.

In Poland the agricultural crisis has long-standing structural causes, which are linked to the largely private character of agriculture. But it was aggravated by natural disasters: catastrophic floods in 1978-1979, accompanied by a very hard winter and then a pronounced drought in 1979. While the plan had projected production of 22.5 million tons of grain in 1979, actual production only reached 17.5 million tons, 4 million less than in 1978 (*Wirtschaftswoche*, February 15, 1980).

In Hungary, agricultural production was no higher in 1979 than in 1978 (*Economist*, April 5, 1980). There was an overall decline of 3% in crops, which was offset by a rise in livestock production. In regard to Czechoslovakia, agricultural production declined 3.9% in 1979, apparently due to drought (*Rude Pravo*, December 11-12, 1979).

And finally, the bureaucratic leaders are following a deliberate policy of reducing the budgetary subsidies that had made it possible, to a certain degree, to stabilize the prices of basic consumer goods in the past. The reduction of these subsidies was expressed by a rise in prices, the goal of which was to reduce domestic consumption in order to be able to divert part of the basic production toward export markets.

Taking the example of Hungary, while industrial production in 1979 rose only 2.6%, industrial exports rose by 10% (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, November 6, 1979). In Poland the export of industrial goods also rose sharply. In Czechoslovakia the export of industrial products to the West rose by 10%, a rate that was considerably higher than the rate of industrial growth.

The growing deficit in the trade balance of the three "people's democracies" basi-

cally stems from the much greater rise in import prices than export prices, that is, from a deterioration in the terms of trade. This deterioration stems above all from the rise in the price of oil products, which all three countries import in large quantities, as well as the more modest but still substantial rise in the price of other imported raw materials.

This deterioration is also reflected in trade between the "people's democracies" and the USSR, as well as in East-West trade. In regard to mutual trade between "people's democracies," the situation has remained practically stable for Poland, while it has deteriorated somewhat for Czechoslovakia, and more so for Hungary.

In practice this means that in order to purchase the same quantity of oil and other raw materials from the USSR, these countries must export a continually increasing amount of industrial goods, as Table I shows.

In general, the prices of products imported by the three "people's democracies" from the capitalist countries have more than doubled between 1972 and 1977. The price rise for the sum of their imports from the Soviet Union is hard to calculate. It must, however, be on a similar order of magnitude.

We should guard against an erroneous interpretation of this evolution in prices. The links that these "people's democracies" have with the Soviet economy within the framework of COMECON have buffered rather than magnified the economic cost stemming from the explosion of oil prices on the world market. The special character of the planned economy and the state monopoly of foreign trade—with the long-term international-trade plans at preestablished prices—has lessened the shock of world inflation.

But the Soviet bureaucracy has not failed to draw profit from this evolution, even though they have done so in a more moderate manner than some people have maintained.

Until 1975 foreign-trade prices between members of COMECON were calculated on the basis of the average price over the previous five years, and once determined, those new prices remained in force for five years, meaning that they remained practically stationary for five years at a time. For example, between 1970 and 1974 the

TABLE I

	Terms of Trade of USSR (1970=100)				Quantity Exported by USSR (1970=100)	Quantity Imported by USSR (1970=100)
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1976	1976
Hungary	97	106	130	128	125	165
Poland	93	98	115	117	130	147
Czechoslovakia	102	99	120	118	124	137

Source: Richard Portes, *Revue Economique*, November 1979.

1966-1970 average price remained in effect, with minor adjustments.

Beginning in 1975, however, they changed to *sliding five-year averages*. This meant that *each year* the prices in effect were those of the preceding five years (in 1975 it was based on the 1970-1974 prices, in 1976 on the 1971-1975 prices, etc.). In this way, while the price of oil sold by the USSR to its partners remained lower than prices on the world market, it progressively approached world-market prices. This can be clearly seen from Table II, based on Soviet sources.

Concretely, the price of oil the Soviet Union sold to its COMECON partners rose 85.1% in 1975, 9.9% in 1976, 22.7% in 1977, 23.5% in 1978, and 16.7% in 1979. In 1980 it will rise 9.6% (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 6, 1979).

While these increases are smaller than those paid by the countries of Western Europe, they are, nonetheless, substantial increases. The total oil "bill" of the "people's democracies" rose from 33.5 billion rubles in 1975 to 75 billion rubles in 1980. This "bill" is one basis of the crisis.

We should add that the COMECON prices are only reference prices, and the prices actually paid are determined by *bilateral* agreements, taking into account "compensatory effect." This means that in 1976 the USSR sold oil to Hungary for 44.7 rubles a ton, while it charged East Germany only 32.1 rubles per ton, and Cuba paid even less for oil. On the average, the COMECON members paid 16.6% less for Soviet oil than the world market price in 1978, and in 1980 they will pay 30% less than the world market price.

#### Growing Indebtedness to Imperialist Countries

The effects of the 1974-1975 recession on the new growth models of the "people's democracies" caused a considerable increase in their foreign trade deficits. Their actual sales of goods to the West were much lower than the planned sales. The deficit was largely covered by a sharp increase in credits from private Western

## Strikes Protest Meat Price Hikes in Poland

Increases in the price of some meats and meat shortages provoked strikes at a number of major Polish factories July 2 and 3. Government officials admitted that "heated discussions" had halted work at many factories and said there would be a campaign to explain the need for the price rises, according to *New York Times* correspondent John Darnton.

There were reports of work stoppages in shipyard-related industry in the port city of Gdansk, at the huge Ursus tractor factory outside Warsaw, and at other factories in Tczew, Wloclawek, and in the Warsaw area.

Darnton reported in a July 3 dispatch that "at the Ursus facility, some 40 percent of the workers were said to have idled their machines yesterday to back up a demand for talks with the management. The action continued today, when they reportedly won a promise of a 10 percent wage increase by Aug. 15."

Workers at the Ursus plant took the lead in 1976 protests over increases in food prices. Strikes and angry demonstrations forced the government to back down and rescind the price hikes. Sim-

ilar actions led to the fall of former Communist Party chief Wladyslaw Gomułka in 1970.

Meat in Poland is sold at subsidized prices that cost the government around \$3.3 billion a year. Determined resistance by the workers has so far prevented the regime from phasing out the subsidies. However, the authorities have refused to provide enough meat to satisfy the needs of the workers. In some small villages meat is not available, and there are long lines in front of meat stores in major cities.

At a news conference called following the latest protests, Vice-deputy Minister of Internal Trade Edward Wiszniewski insisted: "I don't have any more meat. I won't sell any more. Two million, forty-five thousand tons this year, that's it."

Wiszniewski also expressed the fear the ruling bureaucracy feels in face of the workers. Explaining that staples such as pork and sausage were not included in the increases, he said: "All we're speaking about is pig's knuckles—pig's knuckles, boneless beef and one or two other items."

—David Frankel

banks. The total debt of the "people's democracies" and the USSR to the imperialist countries reached or surpassed \$60 billion according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (*Le Monde*, April 3, 1980). The evolution of the debt for the three countries we are specifically examining is shown in Table III.

The growth in debts has its origin in the growth in the balance-of-payments deficit. That deficit for Poland grew from \$316 million in 1972, to \$2.9 billion in 1975 and \$3.3 billion in 1976, then declined to \$2.5 billion in 1977 and \$2 billion in 1978. But these declines came at the price of a

reduction in imports during the two latter years.

For Hungary the corresponding figures were \$66 million in 1972, \$638 million in 1975, \$473 million in 1976, \$728 million in 1977, and \$1.16 billion in 1978. For Czechoslovakia the deficit grew from \$122 million in 1972 to an average of more than \$700 million in 1976, 1977, and 1978 (same source).

The situation is particularly dangerous for Poland, which, according to the February 15 *Wirtschaftswoche*, must now use more than *two-thirds* of its annual hard-currency income just to service its debt (the hard-currency income comes from exports to the West plus income from Western tourism in Poland, hard currency sent by Poles abroad to their families remaining in Poland, and the net revenues of the Polish merchant marine fleet).

The Polish bureaucracy is now also seeking a big loan from Western banks to be able to refinance part of the debts that come due in 1980. The Poles have put forward the figure of one billion dollars, but according to the imperialist bankers the country might need closer to \$4 billion (*International Herald Tribune*, May 5, 1980).

The Polish bureaucracy's rather lukewarm support for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is not unrelated to its frenetic quest for dollars. That support was much more tepid than that of the Kremlin's other "loyal allies"—such as Bulga-

TABLE III

#### Debts Owed to the West (in billions of dollars)

	Gross Debts						Net Debts*			
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1974	1975	1976	1977
Poland	2.5	4.9	7.8	11.0	13.0	17.0	4.4	7.1	10.2	12.6
Hungary	2.0	2.3	3.2	3.4	4.1	7.0	1.75	2.3	2.4	3.0
Czechoslovakia	0.9	1.1	1.5	2.2	2.9	3.5	0.7	1.2	1.8	2.4

\*Net debt equals gross debt minus gold and Western currencies on deposit with Western banks.

Source: Askanas-Fink-Levcik: *East-West Trade and CMEA Indebtedness in the Seventies and Eighties*, published by the Zentralsparkasse und Kommerzbank, Vienna, September 1979.

ria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and even Hungary in this specific case.

Why, one might ask, do the imperialists continue to provide major credits to the "people's democracies" (and to a slightly less extent to the USSR), with the American banks, moreover, participating in these operations to a significant extent? The answer is essentially economic and not political.

The period of stagnation that the international capitalist economy is going through is a period of overaccumulation of capital. This means that there is surplus capital piling up without a use for it in the imperialist countries themselves, a phenomenon that is particularly pronounced during the recession phases such as 1974-1975 and 1979-1980 (or -1981).

The countries with planned economies thus are seen as outlets for these surplus-capital accumulations, as long as interest is regularly paid and there are no state bankruptcies (inability or refusal to repay the loan when it comes due). In this regard, the "people's democracies," the USSR, and China offer better guarantees—are seen as more "solvent"—than most of the semicolonial countries, which are another major market for excess imperialist capital.

In the final analysis, by granting substantial loans to countries with planned economies, the imperialist banks are simply financing a flow of exports of capital goods produced in the West that would not otherwise find purchasers. *What might at first seem like "aid" to the "socialist countries" is in reality aid to capitalist-goods industries within the imperialist countries themselves.*

The slowdown in the growth of East-West trade that began at the point when the balance-of-payments deficits of the "people's democracies" reached their peak (in 1976 for most of them), means, moreover, that this trade cannot play the same role of a safety valve for the imperialist countries in 1980-1981 that it did during the 1974-1975 recession.

We must also take into account the fierce competition among the various imperialist countries and the main "multinationals" in the arena of the world market for "turnkey" factories, and in the world market for capital goods in general. This competition has been further sharpened by the present economic crisis.

Export credits and credits granted to purchasers are important weapons in this competitive battle. Under these conditions, if the banks of a given imperialist country stop granting credits to one or another workers state, that means that they are objectively improving a rival's chance to seize those markets, and thus they are strengthening the overall competitive ability of this rival in other markets as well.

It remains nonetheless true that the level of indebtedness of the "people's democracies," and especially of Poland, is slowly



Hungary's Kádár, Poland's Gierak.

reaching the danger point, and that its rate of growth will probably have to slow down in the years to come.

### Trade, Barter, and Compensation

Through the vehicle of the world market, the law of value exerts an unquestionable pressure on planning in those workers states that are the most "open" to trade with capitalist countries. It undermines the system of stable and "planned" prices. The bureaucracy may even decide to adjust certain prices so they match those on the world market. That happened in Hungary in January 1980, when the government imposed huge price hikes on enterprises for energy and raw materials: rises of 64% for coal, 22% for electricity, 75% for fuel oil, 30% for basic chemical products (*Le Monde*, March 23-24, 1980).

However, it would be wrong to look at East-West trade relations in terms of a growing dependence of the East on the West, of an increasingly imperative influence of the law of value on the internal evolution of the workers states. In fact, because the imperialist "multinationals" are interested in markets in the East, and because the bureaucracy refuses to go beyond a certain level of indebtedness in order to maintain its freedom of action, the Western exporters are often forced to seek alternatives to "classic" forms of trade.

One of these alternatives is barter agreements, which have increased, especially on the government-to-government level and in the framework of certain private contracts. These agreements have caused severe problems in certain Western markets. For example, the Soviet shipments projected in these agreements are grabbing an important share of these markets at a time when the Western industries in those fields suffer from considerable excess productive capacity (this is especially the case for certain petrochemical products).

The other alternative form of trade is cooperation and compensation agreements, which also project a more-or-less constant shipment of products from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to the imperialist countries.

According to an interesting study by François Gèze and Patrick Gutman in the

May 1980 *Le Monde Diplomatique*, cooperation agreements now involve 25% to 35% of East-West trade. They range from simple subcontracting agreements to various forms of "industrial compensation," where payment for Western factories, machines, or licenses is made with the resulting products.

But we should bear in mind that the imperialist "multinationals" are not making any kind of "concession" to the Eastern countries. They find the *stable markets that are assured by the planning in the workers states* increasingly valuable. These countries do not go through recessions, while the instability of the capitalist markets threatens to become increasingly pronounced.

### An Austerity Policy

Thus, a number of internal and external tensions are working together to force the bureaucracies of the three "people's democracies" that we are examining to change the course of the social policy they followed for the last decade. For all of them, an austerity policy is on the agenda.

Since July 1979 in *Hungary*, there has been a general rise of about 20% in food prices. For 1980 prices for "services" will be freed, which in turn will mean substantial increases. There is official talk of "stagnation" of the standard of living in Hungary. But since that includes "indirect wages" (social expenditures), which continue to rise in price, the real direct wage in fact *declined* in 1979.

Officially the expectation is that there will be an "increase" of only about 0.5% in real wages in 1980 (*Nepszabadsag*, December 8, 1979). It is highly probable that in 1980, for the second year in a row, there will be a decline in real wages.

Speaking to the March 1980 Hungarian party congress, the leaders of the bureaucracy did not hide the fact that the whole 1981-1985 five-year plan will be marked by austerity.

The same is true for *Poland*. At the Eighth Congress of the Polish Communist Party, Gierak insisted that it is "absolutely necessary" to introduce economies all over, including in the consumption levels of the working population. It is true that the plan still projects a modest rise in real wages. But these figures are subject to some doubt.

Regarding Czechoslovakia, on July 21, 1979, a whole series of tremendous price increases went into effect: 50% on gasoline and children's clothing, 100% for telephone and postal rates, and so on (*New York Times*, July 22, 1979).

At the December 1979 plenum of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, there was mention of a 2.9% rise in the cost of living in 1979, "compensated" for by a rise in real income of 2.2% in 1980 (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 19, 1979), meaning that they admitted that there had been a decline in



Thirty-third meeting of COMECON, in Moscow, June 26, 1979.

the purchasing power of the masses. That decline is larger than the official figures would indicate.

These austerity measures are generally accompanied by increased pressure on the workers to speed up the pace of work and increase "labor discipline." In the case of Hungary, the labor code was changed to penalize "lazy" and "negligent" workers. "Infractions in labor discipline" are to be met with wage reductions of up to 20% and even, in serious cases, firings. Fines of up to 50% of wages can "in exceptional cases" be added to these serious penalties.

It is, however, interesting to note that the workers' resistance to these measures remains strong, and is even expressed publicly. In February 1980 the daily newspaper *Nepszabadsag* organized a "round table on labor discipline," during which a worker from the big Csepel factory in Budapest stressed that the reason for the lack of discipline in the factories is the disorganization of production caused by "higher bodies": irregular supplies of raw materials, lack of parts, etc. If production stops for those reasons, "the director does not have many moral arguments to use to demand a more intensive effort by the workers, since it is his fault if continuous production cannot be guaranteed" (*Nepszabadsag*, February 10, 1980).

A journalist present at that round table backed him up. In many cases, the journalist said, the absence of discipline is the fault of the managers and not of the workers. "The example of discipline shown by the directors fundamentally determines the discipline of the workers" (*ibid.*).

We should not take that last statement too literally. When the workers speak of "indiscipline" of the directors, they don't simply mean bureaucratic wastage and squandering. They also mean the exorbitant material privileges, the bribes, the

corruption, the "parallel market." It is an open secret that in the "people's democracies" as well as in the USSR (and now to a growing extent in China as well) a large part, if not most, of the bureaucracy's high standard of living comes from those sources and not simply from higher salaries and bonuses.

In Hungary it is officially estimated that the total of bribes alone amounts to 10 billion forints per year. In addition, from time to time the bureaucracy has to wage a demagogic campaign denouncing "excessive expense accounts" or in favor of the "necessary reduction in administrative personnel" in order to sweeten the pill of the austerity measures imposed on the workers.

At the Eighth Congress of the Polish CP there were a whole string of speeches against "corruption in high places" and the "extravagant" life-style in leading circles (*Trybuna Ludu*, February 14, 1980). Then the authorities decided to reduce the operating budget of the public and economic administrations by 10 billion zloty a year (*Le Monde*, May 8, 1980).

All this obviously costs very little since the bureaucracy, which controls the entire social surplus product, can gain material privileges by another technique of appropriation if the first technique is called into question.

#### Big Social and Political Risks

There are big risks involved in the wholesale revision of the growth model applied during the last decade. Since the Prague Spring, the basic strategy of the bureaucracy has been to raise the standard of living of the consumers and to progressively improve their standing, to bring it up to that of the imperialist countries. This strategy can no longer be applied in the years to come. Will political destabilization

follow the "economic normalization," just as "political normalization" followed the economic stabilization and then accelerated expansion?

At the very least, the bureaucracy is nervous. This is reflected in the decisions made at the two latest CP congresses—the Polish congress in February 1980, and the Hungarian congress in March. On both occasions quite large changes were made in the leading political personnel, without the "chiefs" (Gierek and Kádár) themselves being affected. In Poland four of the fourteen members of the Political Bureau (including Prime Minister Jaroszewicz) were not reelected. In Hungary five of the fifteen members of the Political Bureau bit the dust.

The situation is obviously different in each of these three countries. Therefore we should guard against hasty conclusions and overgeneralizations. In Poland there is a large oppositional milieu, supported by a broad current within the working class itself. On December 18, 1979, the anniversary of the big strikes in the Baltic ports was celebrated in Gdańsk with a demonstration in the shipyards attended by thousands of people. Among the speeches we should note one by a worker demanding the right to set up "free trade-unions that will defend our rights."

In Czechoslovakia there is an audacious and politically more advanced political opposition movement, but it is still isolated from the working class. At present in Hungary, political activity remains quite limited, with the exception of some specialized intellectual circles.

However, we should note that while there were no violent reactions against the 1979 price rises in Hungary, discontent is growing there as well. Zoltan Zsille, an industrial sociologist who was expelled from the party in 1974 for having protested against sanctions applied against critical sociologists and philosophers, notes that the wage increases granted in the early 1970s were the result of powerful working-class pressures.

Other Hungarian "liberals" also stress the rise in discontent with bureaucratic management, although they do so in a more moderate way than Zsille (see, for example, the interesting debate between former prime minister Hegedüs, Zsille, and Földvari, also a sociologist, in the November 1979 *Wiener Tagebuch*).

But the reaction of the working masses is difficult to predict. For years these masses have grown used to regular increases in their standard of living, and they are now suddenly faced with severe austerity measures. Depending on the breadth of their reactions, on how much of an echo there is within the apparatus itself, on whether a more-or-less widespread process of politicalization begins to take effect, followed by growing mass activity, the austerity policy may prove to be far more risky than the leaders of the bureaucracy expected. □

# STOP NUCLEAR POWER!

## Another 'Glitch' at Three Mile Island

By Nancy Cole

[The following article appeared in the July 11 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly the *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

Four minutes after Metropolitan Edison began releasing krypton gas from the damaged Three Mile Island nuclear plant June 28, radiation alarms sounded, forcing a halt to the venting.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of residents of the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, area had already evacuated their homes, dismissing Gov. Richard Thornburgh's pleas to carry on business as usual.

For months, Met Ed, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and government officials at all levels had assured the neighbors of Three Mile Island that the venting posed absolutely no health hazard. Equipment for the decontamination procedure was virtually foolproof, they contended.

Yet as news of the radiation alarm reached the public, officials attributed it to a "malfunction," a "false signal," an "oversensitive monitoring device."

What really happened to spark the alarm remains unknown, adding another chapter to the history of lies and cover-ups that have accompanied every event since the nuclear accident began on March 28, 1979, in TMI's Unit 2.

To Harold Denton, head of nuclear reactor regulation for the NRC, it was just "another glitch" in the effort to clean up the nuclear accident.

Other "glitches" have included an unexpectedly jammed door that prevented the first inspection team from even entering the containment dome in May.

The day before the venting began, 10,000 gallons of radioactive water spilled in the Unit 1 building, which has also been shut down since the accident began.

By the afternoon of June 29, the "oversensitive" monitoring equipment had been "reprogrammed" and the venting resumed.

The monitoring devices that were connected to the alarm measure particulates—specks of dust inside the reactor containing long-lasting radioactive contaminants, such as cesium 134, cesium 137, strontium 90, and cobalt 60.

Unlike krypton, which the NRC and Met Ed claimed was harmless because it emitted beta rays, the particulates emit the extremely dangerous gamma rays.

Just ten days before the venting began, a nongovernment study was released as-

serting that the NRC and other agencies had failed to consider the possible health effects of some seventy other radioactive substances inside the TMI reactor building. *Many of these, the study said, would be released in particles.*

The study, prepared by the Institute of Energy and Environmental Research in West Germany at the request of a coalition of antinuclear groups in the Harrisburg area, was based on Met Ed's own data.

Conceding that it was only a preliminary study, West German scientist Bernd Franke charged at a news conference in Washington June 18 that the NRC had approved the immediate venting plan because it was the cheapest way for Met Ed to dispose of the krypton.

Franke said the venting could result in radiation exposures fifty times greater than those estimated by the NRC and could lead to four additional cancer deaths.

Met Ed Vice-president Arnold charged the report was "obstructionist, entirely uncalled for, and does the people around the Harrisburg area a great disservice." He then admitted he had not read it.

The NRC meanwhile unanimously approved the venting plan and waived the required thirty days' public notice. It ruled that if a public hearing on the plan was requested, it could be held after the venting was over!

The NRC denied a request to reconsider this decision from the Middletown People Against Nuclear Energy (PANE) and the Newberry Township Three Mile Island Steering Committee.

PANE and Steven Sholly of Mechanicsburg then went to court, arguing that the waiver of the thirty-day waiting period was illegal. A three-judge federal appeals panel turned them down on June 26. □

## Australian Rail Union Votes Uranium Ban

By Catherine Barker

[The following article appeared in the June 18 issue of the Australian socialist weekly *Direct Action*.]

\* \* \*

The union movement's struggle against uranium mining and export received a big boost on May 17, when delegates to the national convention of the Australian Railways Union (ARU) overwhelmingly reaffirmed the ARU's anti-uranium policy.

While applauding the decisions by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Australian Labor Party to take a stand against uranium mining, the resolution declared: "We do not believe that these policies go far enough in relation to transport of this deadly metal."

The delegates therefore voted to reimpose a complete ban on the transport by rail of uranium ore, its by-products, or any equipment or material destined for use in the mining, milling or export of uranium. This total ban will come into effect on January 1, 1981.

For the next seven months, until the ban is actually enforced, the ARU is to embark on a campaign of education "to convince the Australian public and those presently working in the industry of the dangers and

consequences of uranium mining."

This policy of militant opposition to the uranium industry bosses reflects a commitment to the anti-nuclear struggle felt by a large number of workers—despite efforts by ACTU President Bob Hawke and other right-wingers to bury the issue.

The ARU was the first union to take industrial action against uranium mining, and for years has been in the forefront of the anti-uranium struggle.

Even if uranium is mined, transport unions can play a vital role in preventing its export. The ARU's militant initiative could be even more effective if it were taken up by the Transport Workers Union.

The TWU's national secretary, Ivan Hodgson, supported the anti-uranium stand overwhelmingly upheld by last year's ACTU congress. □

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