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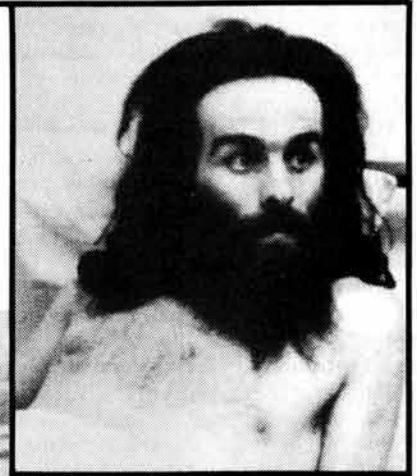
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December 22, 1980

USA \$1

UK 40p

International Protests Needed  
**SAVE LIVES OF THE  
IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS!**



Above: Hunger striker Raymond McCartney.

Left: Thousands march in support of H-Block prisoners on November 29 in Monaghan, Ireland.



An Phoblacht/Republican News

**Behind the  
Shake-Up in  
Salvadoran Junta**

***Imperialism, Stalinism,  
and the  
Afghan Revolution***

**Polish Catholic  
Church Comes to  
Regime's Defense**

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Behind the Shake-Up in the Salvadoran Junta

By David Frankel

Christian Democratic leader José Napoleón Duarte was named president of El Salvador December 13. The reshuffling of posts in the ruling military/Christian Democratic junta was a cosmetic move demanded by Washington following the brutal rape, torture, and murder of four American women December 2.

U.S. Ambassador Robert White hailed the appointment of Duarte, calling the front-man for El Salvador's hated dictatorship a "true democrat" and "an excellent and popular leader, highly respected nationally and internationally."

"Diplomatic sources said the U.S. Embassy is prepared to recommend renewal of recently suspended aid in view of the reorganization," Christopher Dickey reported in the December 14 *Washington Post*.

But not even the imperialist press was able to keep up the pretense that the junta had reformed itself. As Dickey put it, the reorganization of the junta "has several aspects that appear to favor governmental conservatives."

Col. Adolfo Majano, who was not right-wing enough to please his colleagues in the military, was booted off the junta and will reportedly be given a foreign diplomatic post to get him out of the way. The other four junta members will remain in their posts, with Col. Jaime Abdúl Gutiérrez being named vice-president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, according to a government communiqué.

Col. José Guillermo García has been maintained as defense minister. As one Latin American diplomat told Dickey, "If the president is not the commander-in-chief and can't give the orders, he's not in command. These civilians are just being kept as figureheads."

### Mad Dogs Run Wild

The fact that the Carter administration was able to come up with nothing better than this transparent charade indicates how narrow are the forces it must rely on in El Salvador and how limited is its room for maneuver. Washington is unable to control even those forces it itself has encouraged and nurtured.

For many in the Salvadoran military, even Duarte is too liberal a figure, and there have been persistent rumors that a coup is planned by the most fanatical sector of the armed forces. This layer has already caused Carter big problems.

Carried away with enthusiasm by the election of Ronald Reagan to the U.S.

presidency, the mad-dog ultrarightists that are Washington's only dependable allies in El Salvador celebrated by going on a killing spree. On November 27 they tortured and murdered six leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), which unites the mass organizations struggling against the U.S.-backed dictatorship.

Less than a week later they murdered the four American women—three nuns and a social worker, who had been on their way to attend the funeral of the FDR leaders.

Brutal murders of this type are a daily occurrence in El Salvador. More than 9,300 people have been killed this year by the ultrarightist gangs, which include uniformed members of the police and military, which are commanded by top military officers, and which act in close coordination with the Salvadoran high command.

From the point of view of the ruling junta—and of its imperialist backers in Washington—such institutionalized terrorism is essential. The junta's base of support is narrower than ever, and it faces massive opposition from workers, peasants, students, and the urban poor. Its only hope is to break the resistance of the masses through repression and terror.

However, once a regime is so isolated and hated that it must rule in this way, no amount of reformist tinsel can hide its true character. The very methods required to maintain the regime increase its isolation, further discredit it, and cut across the ability of the imperialists to aid it. This process was evident in Vietnam, with the exposure of the Saigon regime's "tiger cages" for example, and in the last days of the Somoza dictatorship, as when Somoza's National Guardsmen were filmed while executing a U.S. television reporter.

In El Salvador, the latest murders brought the political crisis of the junta to a head and ripped away the propaganda cover used by Washington to justify its policy.

### Impact of Murders in USA

Within the United States, the latest killings generated a broad wave of protest. Demonstrations took place around the country, including protest meetings of 450 in Cincinnati, and 250 in Minneapolis; a picket line of 150 in Milwaukee; and one of 50 in San Antonio.

In New York City, 2,000 people gathered at St. Patrick's Cathedral December 4 for a memorial mass in honor of the six FDR leaders as the evening newspapers head-

lined the brutal murder of the four women. New York Cardinal Terrence Cooke, the highest-ranking Catholic prelate in North America, unexpectedly presided at the mass and issued a strong statement against U.S. backing for the Salvadoran regime.

In Cleveland, where two of the victims were from, a special memorial mass was attended by 3,000 people. Bishop-delegate Anthony Pilla spoke, quoting slain Salvadoran Archbishop Romero's statement demanding a halt to U.S. military aid to the junta.

Protest activities among Catholics, Marjorie Hyer reported in the December 10 *Washington Post*, have been "unmatched by few—if any—reactions to past issues, including the controversy over abortion."

A banner in San Francisco cathedral proclaimed: "U.S. Dollars Kill U.S. Nuns," and Hyer reported: "Less than a month after he was elected president of the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis sent telegrams to both the outgoing and the incoming administrations and released a public statement to the press."

Interviews with relatives of the slain women were featured in the U.S. media. The mother of one of the victims, Jean Donovan, made public a letter by her daughter protesting U.S. military aid to the junta, and remarked December 13: "The bullet that killed her was an American bullet."

Eighty-four-year-old Mary Clarke, whose daughter was another of those killed, said: "If people could be told one thing out of this, it is that we must stop sending things to these governments. We were sending to Somoza for ages and all he did was steal from the poor. Now we're doing the same thing in El Salvador."

Clarke added: "Reagan should say something about this immediately. His silence says he condones killing down there from now on."

International protests also flooded in. An especially important problem from Washington's point of view is the stance that the main Social Democratic parties in Europe have taken. This was reflected at a conference on "Eurosocijalism and America" held in Washington, D.C., December 5-7.

Attending the conference were leaders such as former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme; François Mitterrand, head of the French Socialist Party; Tony Benn, leader of the British Labour Party's left wing; former Netherlands Prime Minister Jood den Uyl; and former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. These internationally known figures denounced the Salvadoran junta and Washington's policy toward it. (See page 1360.)

### Carter 'Investigates'

Such pressures forced Carter to suspend U.S. aid to the junta December 5 and send



a commission to El Salvador, supposedly to investigate the murder of the four women. Former State Department official William D. Rogers arrived in El Salvador December 7 and returned to Washington December 9. William G. Bowdler, Carter's top Latin American expert, arrived December 7 and was back in Washington December 11. Obviously, their investigation was not exhaustive.

Following Bowdler's return, the U.S. press reported the shifts that would be made within the junta before it was announced in El Salvador. Working out these changes was the real purpose of the commission.

Giving the official U.S. line, Ambassador White told reporters in San Salvador December 9: "Progressive elements in the government, with our solid backing, have sought to defeat the violent left by instituting profound reforms designed to improve the terrible social conditions that foster insurrection."

Although the U.S. State Department is still trying to keep the fantasy of a junta of progressive reformers alive, this has been completely discredited internationally, within El Salvador, and increasingly within the United States itself.

As the Rev. Fabián Amaya Torres of the San Salvador archdiocese said recently, "The repression we are living under now is worse in cruelty, sadism, and the number of victims than during the last days of Gen. [Carlos Humberto] Romero," the dictator who preceded the junta.

#### Thieves Fall Out

As is always the case when a corrupt ruling class finds itself confronted with the specter of defeat, the thieves have begun to turn against each other. Thus, the *New York Times* revealed December 4 that advisers to Ronald Reagan had submitted a report blaming some of Washington's problems in Latin America on "social reformers and advocates of new theories of social change" within the U.S. diplomatic corps. The report singled out White and Lawrence Pezzullo, the U.S. ambassador in Nicaragua, among others.

White struck back December 9, accusing Reagan's advisers of "weakening my authority to carry out the policy of [the Carter] administration."

On December 12 a top Reagan aide accused White and Pezzullo of making "reckless accusations," while on the same day the State Department warned that "unofficial statements and news leaks" by Reagan advisers could add to unrest in Latin America. One State Department official even suggested that comments by Reagan aides had contributed to the killing of the four women in El Salvador.

Summing up the impact of the controversy, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* remarked December 11: "Two months from now [White] will not be conducting U.S.

policy in El Salvador, and he should not be undermining those who will."

The editors of the *Washington Post* made a more basic point about what is undermining U.S. policy in El Salvador.

"What strikes us most about the argument in the United States, however," they said December 13, "is that once you trim away the ideological embellishments, administration and mainstream Reagan people end up agreeing that the junta is El

Salvador's best hope. The real argument comes down to questions of tactics and timing: Do you help or hurt by jiggling aid? Is it enough for the Reagan people now to denounce terrorism or should they also endorse reform? Or is reform now irrelevant and armed struggle the only plausible way? Will the center hold until Jan. 20 [when Reagan assumes office]? That last question is the most troubling one." □

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## Support for Hunger Strikers Sweeps Ireland

By Gerry Foley

The campaign in support of the political prisoners on hunger strike in Northern Ireland is growing into the most powerful mass movement in Ireland since the war of independence of 1918-21.

On December 6, an angry crowd of 40,000 marched to the British embassy in Dublin.

According to the organizers, the mood was similar to that of February 1972, following the murder of thirteen Irish civil-rights demonstrators in Derry by British troops.

In 1972, more than 50,000 persons marched to the British embassy and burned it to the ground. This time, the feelings ran as high but they were contained, disciplined.

The tens of thousands of marchers understood that the way to win was to broaden the mobilizations, to bring out the entire country, and therefore any diversions had to be avoided. The crowd was calm, determined and conscious of its power.

On December 10, workers walked out across the country. In Catholic west Belfast, all major business halted.

In the towns along the border of the British enclave of Northern Ireland, the shutdown was 100 percent effective and major rallies were held.

In Cork, at the southern tip of the island, the entire workforce at the Irish Steel Mill walked off the job. They were joined by the entire workforce building a new steel plant in the city. The head of the local trades council addressed a major rally in the downtown area.

Such protests are a new phenomenon in Cork. Up until now it remained untouched by the protests against imperialist repression initiated in 1968-69 by the Northern Ireland civil-rights movement.

All the dams that neocolonialist and proimperialist politicians have tried to put in the way of the growth of the movement are being washed away.

Even Fine Gael, historically the most openly proimperialist of the Irish capitalist

parties, has found its county councillors voting in large numbers for resolutions of support to the hunger strikers. This is despite statements of the party leader, Garret Fitzgerald, calling on the British not to give an inch to the prisoners' demands.

The position of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions opposing support for the hunger strikers stands in more and more acute contradiction to the support for the political prisoners by the ranks, the local leadership, and the leaders of the largest unions in the country. The right-wing labor bosses are wringing their hands about the trade-union movement being "torn apart."

For some time now the National H-Block Committee in Dublin has been getting complaints from the management of factories across the country that the campaign in support of the hunger strikers is interfering with production.

Even Sinn Féin/the Workers Party (SFWP), the Stalinized rump of a republican organization that has systematically set itself against any national struggle by arguing that the Irish liberation movement divides the Protestant and Catholic sections of the working class, has found it impossible to prevent its county councillors and local leaders from supporting the H-Block Committee.

The campaign in support of the hunger strikers gained momentum first in rural areas of Northern Ireland, where the broad movement against imperialist repression began to rebuild about two years ago. This was marked by a statement issued November 4 by Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, the public relations officer of the National H-Block Committee:

"The National H-Block Committee congratulates those District Councillors in Fermanagh and Tyrone who have withdrawn from their respective Councils. The support for the prisoners' five demands by the Mid-Ulster Branch of the SDLP [Social Democratic and Labor Party] and the fact that the Councillors who withdrew represented the Independents, the IIP [Irish Independence Party], SDLP, and SFWP indicates clearly that concern and support for the prisoners transcends our political differences and unites us in their defence.

"We earnestly hope that those Councillors who have not yet left the Councils will now feel confident that it is the correct course of action, to demonstrate to [British Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher that her 'not an inch' policy will not be tolerated, and that they will leave their Council



Jean Vertheim/Militant

New York City, November 22.



Chambers forthwith and join us in the streets."

There are already 188 H-Block action committees throughout Ireland, most of them elected local bodies. In Dublin alone, there are thirty-three.

This swelling mass movement that is beginning to mobilize the country faces an intransigent British government and a terrified neocolonialist ruling class. With the dramatic worsening of the condition of the hunger strikers, all the ingredients are there for an explosion.

The Irish neocolonialist ruling class is trying to hold a rigid line against the movement. The police figure for the December 6 demonstration was 12,000—a figure that was not accepted even by the conservative Dublin press. The U.S. news-weekly *Time* estimated the demonstration

at 25,000, more than twice the police estimate.

Yet a movement of this size, one increasingly the focus of national politics, cannot find a single Irish national daily that will allow it to place a paid advertisement.

Clearly, the Irish ruling class is terrified that if a hunger striker dies it might face a major explosion. And deaths are clearly imminent.

The hunger strikers have been removed to the hospital. The orderlies have to rub their bodies with cream every four hours to keep protruding bones from breaking the skin. The hunger strikers are reportedly in constant pain and able to move or speak only with difficulty.

These political prisoners are prepared to die rather than continue to endure the humiliation, brutality, and deprivation the British government has inflicted on them

in an attempt to force them to accept criminal status.

In face of this situation, after the December 6 demonstration, Thatcher callously remarked:

"If those people continue with their hunger strike, it will have no effect whatsoever. It will just take their own lives, for which I will be profoundly sorry, because I think it's a ridiculous thing to do."

Thatcher may think that the struggle of the Irish political prisoners to be treated as human beings is ridiculous, but their courage and the justness of their demands has won support from working people all over the world.

International protests, demonstrations, meetings, telegrams, are essential. The British rulers must be made aware that the fate of these freedom fighters is an issue that will not go away. □

## International Protests Say: 'Save Lives of Irish Prisoners!'

The British government's campaign to break the nationalist prisoners in Northern Ireland morally and physically is becoming an international scandal.

When British Minister of State Peter Blaker denounced the USSR at the Madrid conference for violating the national rights of the Afghans, the Soviet news agency TASS responded by throwing the issue of the Irish prisoners back at the British.

TASS said that in Northern Ireland the Catholics are denied human rights and that "thousands of people have become victims of cruel repressions." It went on to ask:

"Is Mr. Blaker familiar with the facts of brutal torture which were exposed and condemned at the European Court of Human Rights or the terrible conditions in which patriots are held in British prisons?"

New York City mayor Ed Koch also could not resist throwing the issue of the mistreatment of the Irish people back at the British media when it gave an unattractive picture of conditions in New York after the murder of musician John Lennon.

All sorts of U.S. politicians are finding it advisable to identify themselves publicly with the cause of the Irish political prisoners and the hunger strikers in Long Kesh and Armagh.

The rightist U.S. senator from New York, Alfonse d'Amato went to Long Kesh immediately following his election. On his return, he spoke on a major radio program along with members of the New York Smash H-Block Committee.

The legislatures of five U.S. states, with

a total population of over fifty million, have passed resolutions expressing sympathy with the Irish political prisoners.

The statement passed by the Pennsylvania legislature called on the U.S. government "to petition the prime minister of Great Britain to cease their grievous mistreatment of these brave men and women, and promptly return them to their previous status as political prisoners."

The California affiliate of the AFL-CIO labor federation, with a membership of nearly two million, has sent a telegram to other unions around the world asking them to use their influence to promote the restoration of political status for the Irish prisoners.

In Belgium, trade union leaders, members of the Senate, the chairman of the Communist Party, and prominent individuals have spoken out in support of the Irish hunger strikers' demands.

Sympathy has been particularly strong in Flanders, where support for the hunger strikers has been expressed by twenty-five Socialist Party senators, the chairman of the Flemish regional government, the chairman of the Flemish Nationalist Party, and the Bishop of Limbourg.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees has passed a resolution supporting the five demands of the H-Block prisoners, which is to be submitted to the convention of the Ontario Federation of Labor.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic bishops has sent the Irish primate Cardinal O Fiaich a telegram expressing its "solidarity with your positions and ac-

tions in favor of the Long Kesh prisoners."

On November 14, the president of the Basque regional parliament in Spain met with representatives of the republican prisoners.

The Human Rights Commission of the Catalan regional parliament has also expressed support for the Irish prisoners' demands.

In West Germany, a delegation of former H-Block prisoners has spoken to rallies throughout the country, including one of 500 persons in Frankfurt.

Three prominent West Germans have come out in support of the prisoners' demands. They are the internationally-known writer Heinrich Böll; Peter Chotzewitz, vice-president of the German Association of Writers; and Jakob Moneta, editor of the newspaper of IG Metall, the country's biggest union.

In France, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) has come out in favor of the restoration of political status to political prisoners in Northern Ireland. Since the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and Force Ouvrière have also declared support, all three of the major French trade union confederations have now expressed solidarity with the prisoners.

Street demonstrations in support of the Irish prisoners have begun to grow in the United States. On December 6 one to two thousand people rallied outside the British consulate in New York and marched in a spirited procession several blocks long to the United Nations.

Such protests are urgently needed in every part of the world.

## Polish Bishops in New Attack on Antibureaucratic Fighters

By Gerry Foley

Along with the Kremlin's mounting threats against Poland, the Polish Catholic hierarchy has stabbed the antibureaucratic workers movement in the back for the second time. The first was when the Polish primate, Cardinal Wyszyński, called on the workers at the height of the August strikes to go back to work.

On December 12, the council of Polish bishops issued a statement, which said among other things:

"It is forbidden to undertake actions that could raise the danger of a threat to the freedom and statehood of the fatherland. The efforts of all Poles must be aimed at strengthening the initiated process of renewal and at creating conditions to fulfill the social contract between the authorities and the community."

The spokesman for the bishops, Father Alojzy Orszulik, left no doubt that the statement was directed against antibureaucratic fighters who are the focus of attacks by the Kremlin and the Polish bureaucracy.

He said that it was aimed specifically against the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) and the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN).

The very coupling of these two groups was treacherous. The KPN is a nationalist group that indulges in provocative anti-communist and anti-Russian phrases. It has not played a notable role in the workers movement.

The KPN leader, Leszek Moczulski, was arrested following the publication of an interview with him in the September 15 issue of the West German magazine *Der Spiegel*.

The KOR and independent union leaders have called for Moczulski's release on the basis of their stance in favor of freedom of speech and consistent opposition to the bureaucracy's political repression.

Furthermore, it was obviously not the KPN, which is favored in Catholic anti-communist circles, that the bishops had in mind.

### Kuron Singled Out

Orszulik said: "We have in mind mainly those noisy and irresponsible statements made against our eastern neighbor."

A dispatch in the December 13 *New York Times* noted:

"Asked to cite specific examples, Father Orszulik mentioned a statement attributed to the spokesman for KOR, Jacek Kuron, that said opposition elements would try to gain power gradually, not immediately, out of fear of provoking Soviet interven-

tion. Father Orszulik said the statement had 'irritated the whole bloc.'"

This remark obviously refers to Kuron's document "What Next?" since it has been the focus of attacks in the Soviet and Czechoslovak press in particular. (For the text of the Kuron document, see *IP*, November 17, p. 1203.)

The same day that the bishops leveled their blast at Kuron, he came under attack from the most truculent organ of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy, the military paper *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, which said:

"His [Kuron's] directions, aimed at sabotaging the authority and crushing state structures, are particularly dangerous."

### 'Antisocialist Forces'?

In fact, the campaign of slander and provocation mounted by the Stalinist rulers against the workers movement in Poland has focused largely on the KOR. Kuron and the KOR are supposed to be the "antisocialist forces linked to foreign anti-communist centers" that are trying to take advantage of the country's problems to "undermine the bases of People's Poland."

The Kremlin tends to make these attacks under the cover of quoting Polish publications and leaders. For example, this was done in the November 27 *Izvestia* in the form of a purported summary of an article in the Polish CP magazine *Ideologija i Polityka*.

The Soviet newspaper began:

"The Polish journal . . . draws attention to the activation of antisocialist forces in Poland, which are stepping up their attacks on the Polish CP and the gains of the workers. . . ."

"In particular, the journal notes, the KOR has become activated. This and other anticommunist grouplets have long been trying to take advantage of the party's mistakes, as well as those of the organs of people's power, in order to infiltrate the ranks of workers and introduce antisocialist slogans."

The statement of the Polish bishops gave the Kremlin another opportunity to quote a source in Poland as saying that the KOR represents a danger to the peace and security of the country.

This opportunity is all the more valuable to the bureaucracy because the Catholic church is seen as a force independent of the government and Communist Party. It is also respected by the Polish masses as a result of its identification with Polish nationhood, its persecution by the Stalinist authorities, and to the extent that it has spoken out in the past against some as-

pects of the totalitarian regime.

Since early on in the Polish crisis, it has been clear that the bureaucracy sought to drive a wedge between the Catholic wing of the opposition movement and the wing represented by Kuron. *Der Spiegel* published a circular sent out to local party propagandists advising them to stress the atheistic and Jewish backgrounds of leading KOR members.

The KOR and independent union leaders confronted the problem of the conservatism of the forces grouped around the Catholic hierarchy in an effective way. They did not give an inch to the cardinal's appeals for giving in to the regime. But they strove to safeguard unity and avoid offending the religious sentiments of the Polish masses.

However, the increasing pressure of the Kremlin's threats impelled the Catholic hierarchy to break the unity of the movement. This was almost certainly the immediate objective of these various menacing moves.

Before the Kremlin intervenes in Poland it will try to use threats to frighten the more conservative elements in the opposition, stiffen the backs of the local bureaucrats against making concessions, and to reassure those most directly responsible for Stalinist repression who are afraid of being dumped—in short, to create division in the opposition and reinforce the bureaucracy. In military terms, this is equivalent to the preliminary shelling to soften up the target.

The betrayal of the Polish bishops thus does not make a Soviet intervention less likely but more likely in the long run. The bishops cannot reassure the bureaucracy that its rule in Poland will be preserved. There is no force in Polish society that can do that, and the local bureaucrats and their counterparts in Moscow are well aware of this fact.

### Danger of Selective Repression

Since the rule of the bureaucracy stands in such acute contradiction to the interests of the working people and has such shallow roots, once it begins to falter nothing can restore it but massive repression, and the Polish bureaucracy cannot do that without heavy backing from outside.

The Polish bureaucracy, however, is still capable of selective repression against the most militant and most conscious elements of the opposition. And the Soviet threats and the bishops' betrayal strengthens its hand for that.

The immediate objective of the Polish



bureaucracy and its Kremlin backers, in fact, is probably to strike at the most conscious elements in order to head off the development of political discussion and an alternative political leadership.

In this respect, the heads of the bureaucracy face two major problems—the growing influence of Kuron and the KOR and the political breakup of the party. According to *Le Monde's* Polish correspondent Bernard Guetta, 60 percent of the working-class members of the CP have already joined Solidarity.

#### Radicalization of CP Workers

In the December 2 issue of the Paris daily, Guetta reported that “a strong radicalization of party activists emerged in the regional meetings in early November, which were attended by members of the national leadership.

“From that time on violent attacks began to be launched at the lack of democracy in the party and the isolation of the CP that resulted from this. The press gave only a toned down version of this. In mid-November, the first coordinating committees arose in several cities that linked party members horizontally across party bodies outside the hierarchical channels. These were formed spontaneously by rebel party cells and developed into such strong nuclei that the intermediary leadership was forced to accept them or was outright ousted by them.”

Guetta noted: “The development of these coordinating bodies was very uneven in the seventeen districts of the country. Last week there was an expulsion of a leader of the Torun committee for ‘factionalism and clericalism,’ which aroused opposition within the party.

“A new spectacular step was taken in Lodz last Friday [November 28] with the publication by the local party paper, *Glos Robotniczy*, of factory cell motions that went far beyond what is permitted.”

Guetta cited the motion of the Fonica factory cell which called for a purge of the party and a break from its past symbolized by renaming it “The Polish Socialist Workers Party.”

The Lodz activists argued that the CP could not claim an exclusive leading role and called for free elections at all levels of the organization.

#### ‘Stormy’ Discussion at CP Plenum

In a subsequent article in the December 4 *Le Monde* Guetta wrote that the decision at the CP plenum, in effect to try to ride with the mass workers movement and eventually wear it down, represented a dangerous gamble.

“This is a great risk if you consider the intensity of the discussions going on in the party, the unions, the institutions, the offices, and the schools. The risk is still greater if you consider the growing popularity of the opposition, especially its most prominent representative Jacek Kuron,



Polish workers: stabbed in the back by church hierarchy.

who every day emerges as a more popular figure for the workers, and that the unity of the party is very far from being reestablished.

“The discussions at the plenum, in General Moczar’s own words, were ‘stormy.’”

The tight spot the bureaucracy is in was also shown by the fact that although the Polish press version of First Secretary Kania’s report to the plenum contains many bows to Solidarity and the need for more democracy, these expressions were entirely omitted from the version published in the December 3 *Pravda*. Thus, it is obvious why the sale of Polish publications has been banned in Poland’s Stalinized neighbors.

#### Bishops Offer Their Services

In this situation, the Catholic bishops came forward to offer themselves to the bureaucracy as a prop of the status quo, as a defender of the very regime that has persecuted Catholicism in Poland.

This attitude of the Catholic bishops is not unusual in Eastern Europe; it is typical. Everywhere the church seeks to serve the state in order to be able to survive as a wealthy, influential institution. And the increasingly uneasy bureaucracies are generally prepared to make a certain accommodation. However, the strength of Polish Catholicism does not derive essentially from this, as Kuron himself pointed out in his first programmatic document after the 1976 general strike.

The Polish church is in a far stronger position than its counterparts elsewhere in

Eastern Europe because in Poland Catholics stood up against the state’s attempts to deny them their rights—they did exactly the opposite of what the church is now counselling. That fact explains both the strength of the church’s influence and its limits.

#### Workers Ignore Church Appeal

The cardinal’s attempt in August to get the workers to go back got no visible support at all. It backfired completely, touching off a crisis in the church. Paralleling the developments in the CP, groups arose among Catholics to discuss what was wrong with the church.

In August also church officials defended the primate’s move on the grounds that it was motivated by the fear of Soviet intervention. There is no reason to suppose that the latest statement of the bishops will prove any more successful than the last one in dividing the Polish masses.

In fact, since the bishops’ statement, the speaker of the Polish parliament Stanislaw Gucwa felt obliged to declare at a forum where Kania was present that no outside interference in Polish affairs could be accepted. This is in the face of statements by party officials that they might be obliged at some point to appeal for “brotherly aid” from Moscow. Apparently the pressures from the united mobilization of the Polish working people are still rising.

Thus, the effect of the bishops’ statements may only be to discredit the conservative Catholic forces and politically strengthen the KOR. □

## Why Moscow is Threatening to Invade Poland

By Fred Feldman

Faced with the growth of Poland's multimillion-member anti-Stalinist union movement, the Soviet bureaucracy is pressing the Warsaw regime to take stronger repressive moves against the Polish workers. At the same time, it is stepping up its own threats of massive military intervention.

Recent days have seen an escalation of news leaks about Soviet and East German troop movements near Poland's borders. Reservists were reportedly called up for military service in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union.

The latest moves followed a December 5 meeting of the Warsaw Pact governments (the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Romania). They declared that "the Polish people can firmly count on the fraternal solidarity and support" of the Warsaw Treaty countries.

In the twisted vocabulary of Stalinism, such "solidarity" comes on bayonets. Similar threats preceded the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The Polish army's high command has been issuing almost daily communiqués threatening to take action against the union movement.

The Polish Communist Party itself is deeply divided, however, with many members favoring broader concessions to the workers.

### Workers Respond

The leaders of Solidarity have called on workers to avoid strikes for the time being. They are determined to maintain the unity of the movement and to give the bureaucracy no pretext for attacking.

But the workers are far from having been intimidated in face of the threatened crackdown. More than 300,000 people reportedly gathered outside the Gdansk shipyard December 7 to commemorate workers who were killed in previous struggles for democratic rights and equality.

On December 8 union leader Lech Walesa responded to the growing threats. "If the government does not stop its provocations," he warned, "then Solidarity will strike a very serious blow. The entire country will be involved."

"We don't want strikes at all, but solutions will be adapted to circumstances."

And he added, "You can't use force to make people work efficiently. Force is not the solution."

The unions reiterated demands for the release of four political prisoners, and for an end to the suppression of a film about the August strikes.

And in a sign that Poland's workers do not stand alone, an organization claiming to represent 500,000 private farmers called December 9 for a meeting to discuss means of forcing the government to register them as an independent union.

Poland's 3.5 million private farmers account for three-quarters of the country's agricultural production. Leaders of the group said they would be consulting with the leaders of the unions about what action to take.

### Blow to Workers of World

Like the Kremlin's invasions of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Hungary in 1956, a Soviet military move against the Polish workers would deal a brutal blow to the entire world revolution. It would strike at the interests of working people not only in Poland but around the world.

In particular, a Soviet invasion would hand the U.S. rulers a priceless propaganda weapon in their drive to overcome domestic opposition to their own war plans. It would give them cover to step up U.S. military intervention on the side of the murderous dictatorship in El Salvador.

Nothing could do more harm to the cause of socialism in the eyes of workers around the world than the sight of Soviet tanks rolling in to crush the Polish working class in the name of "protecting socialism." But as in the invasions of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the Kremlin's goals in threatening Poland are totally contrary to "protecting socialism."

To justify moves against Poland the Kremlin suggests that Poland's workers have become "counterrevolutionaries" who are plotting to restore capitalism.

This is hogwash, and Brezhnev and his cohorts know it better than anyone else. Far from wanting to turn the economy over to private corporations, the Polish workers want the nationalized and planned economy to be devoted to meeting the needs of working people, farmers, and youth. They want democratic rights and a voice in government decisions. The things they are fighting for are what socialism is all about.

The Kremlin bureaucracy will also pay a high price for an invasion. It will arouse the hatred of working people all over the world. The U.S., European, and Japanese imperialists are already using Moscow's threats against Poland as a pretext for stepping up the arms race and preparing economic and political sanctions against the Soviet Union.

The Polish working people are certain to

put up strong resistance. In 1956, Moscow prepared to invade Poland in response to an earlier upsurge, which brought to power a wing of the Communist Party that was thought to be too independent of Moscow. At that time mass demonstrations, strikes, the formation of workers councils, and moves by a section of the officials to arm the workers forced Moscow to retreat.

Today the anti-Stalinist unions have taken deep root in Poland. The movement today is at least as broad, better organized, and far more independent of the bureaucratic regime than the movement of 1956. It is finding sympathy among working people in the rest of Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union (especially in the Baltic states and the Ukraine).

Moscow knows it would not be able to wipe out the workers movement in Poland without a long, difficult, and costly struggle—one which would further undermine Stalinist rule throughout the Soviet bloc.

### Power at Stake

Yet, despite the great risks, the Kremlin bureaucrats continue to move inexorably toward an attempt to crush the Polish workers.

That is because the risks of such action are far outweighed by the threat the Polish struggle poses to the power and privileges of the Soviet bureaucracy itself.

The privileged bureaucratic castes that run Poland, the Soviet Union, and the other East European countries can survive only by depriving workers of all rights to organize and express themselves.

Once the workers begin to feel their own power and assert their right to rule, the bureaucratic caste crumbles rapidly—a process that is under way in Poland and was seen earlier in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Past experience has indicated that it can be propped up only by the intervention of an outside force—the Soviet army.

A success for the workers in one country like Poland will find many imitators in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. If a movement of similar scope were to take place in the USSR, the bureaucratic caste would find itself in free fall with little prospect of regaining its footing.

The fact that the bureaucracy requires totalitarian methods is a sign of its social *weakness and vulnerability*. It lacks the stability and the economically rooted power of a ruling class like the American capitalists.

In bourgeois democracies such as the United States, private ownership of the



means of production allows the capitalist class to exploit the workers and to make all key political and economic decisions—regardless of elections and the limited freedoms of speech and press that exist.

In a capitalist country the daily economic relations—the fact that *we* can survive only by working for *them*, and that *they* own what *we* produce—continually reinforce the capitalists' political power. Increased productivity increases the wealth of the ruling class, and gives it more instruments with which to exploit working people. Every car and ingot of steel *we* produce contributes to the bosses' profits, making them richer and stronger.

#### Workers States

Matters are different in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The elimination of capitalism in the Soviet Union after 1917 and in Eastern Europe after the end of World War II created an economic structure—nationalized industry and planned economy—that is in the interests of working people.

The consolidation of bureaucratic rule in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death in 1924, and in Eastern Europe under Soviet occupation in the late 1940s, did not eliminate this progressive economic structure. That is why revolutionary socialists call these regimes *workers states*.

The nationalized and planned economies make possible unprecedented advances toward ending want and inequality. But the rule of the bureaucratic caste stands in the way.

Like the capitalists, the bureaucrats wallow in luxury skimmed off the top of what the workers produce. But the bureaucracy *owns* no factories, mines, or farms. It cannot pass them on to its children or dispose of them as it wishes.

The bureaucrats play no necessary role in the economy—they are parasites. They disrupt the economy by their search for privileges, by corruption, by sheer incompetence and mismanagement, and, above all, by silencing the voice of the producing classes.

Since the bureaucracy can assure its privileged position only by totalitarian control of the state apparatus, it cannot allow free elections, parties that are not under the Stalinists' thumbs, a free press, free unions, or other means by which the working people might challenge them.

#### Fundamental Challenge

But the effect of rising wealth and productivity in a workers state is the opposite of its role under capitalism. The fact that Poland has risen from being a relatively backward country before World War II to a modern industrial power with a highly productive working class has undermined the power of the bureaucracy and strengthened that of the workers.

These advances help account for the organization and confidence of the Polish



Soviet bureaucrats: willing to invade Poland to defend their privileges.

workers—their conviction that they can lead society.

The formation of strong trade unions in Poland represented a direct, massive, and conscious challenge to bureaucratic rule by millions of workers.

The fact that Poland is a workers state helps account for the fact that this movement operates on a vastly higher political and social level than the unions in capitalist countries. Under conditions of private ownership of industry, our unions have largely been restricted to bargaining over wages, hours, and working conditions with no say over what is produced or why. But the anti-Stalinist unions in Poland directly pose the right of working people to determine production priorities and government policies.

Lech Walesa put the difference well in a recent interview: "In our country, things are more simple than they are in the West, because we all form the state and we are closer to the responsibility. There is no one between us and the state, no factory owner."

#### A Fight For Socialism

A December 8 dispatch from Tass, the Soviet news agency, describes the union movement as in the hands of "counterrevolutionary groups" that seek to overthrow "socialism." That is Orwellian doubletalk.

The Polish workers and their allies are the only real guardians of the conquests of the Polish revolution, including the nationalized, planned economy. It is the bureaucrats—in Poland and Moscow—who undermine and endanger these gains.

It is the Stalinist rulers who stand for privilege, inequality, and government by a minority. It is they who use repressive measures to try to transform the workers

into unthinking tools at the service of high-living managers. This is the opposite of socialism.

The Polish workers are fighting to end all that, and the Kremlin bureaucrats know it. Their talk about the Polish workers seeking to restore capitalism is just bait for suckers, and a voluntary contribution from the bureaucrats to Washington's anticommunist propaganda.

The Kremlin rulers are moving toward invasion today because they know that the Polish workers' struggle for socialism is inspiring others well beyond the Polish borders.

Hands off Poland!

#### Correction

The article "Iranian Masses Press for Arms and Democratic Rights" in the December 8 issue of *Intercontinental Press* erroneously reported that Mujahedeen leader Mohammed Reza Saadati was sentenced to life imprisonment on frame-up charges of spying for the Soviet Union.

It has since been learned that Saadati was sentenced to ten years in prison, not life.

#### European Subscribers

Subscriptions to Europe are now being processed through New York. Please address all correspondence to:

Intercontinental Press  
410 West Street  
New York, New York 10014

## A U.S. Steelworker's Impressions in Poland

By Jon Hillson

[The following article appeared in the December 19 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

\* \* \*

CHICAGO—Gary Fields, a machinist at Danly Machine Corporation here, like most workers, wanted to take his two weeks vacation somewhere he could get to cheaply and stay at inexpensively.

He also wanted to learn something.

So he got a bargain-basement flight to Poland, stayed with friends, and got more than a change of pace from his second-shift job.

He saw history in the making.

Fields, a twenty-five-year-old member of the Young Socialist Alliance and United Steelworkers Local 15271, stayed in Bydgoszcz, a major industrial city of 450,000 people.

He also visited Gdansk, ninety miles north, the political center of Poland's labor upsurge and national headquarters of Solidarity, the country's independent union.

### 'Solidarity Is Everywhere'

The friends who put him up, Fields told the *Militant*, are like many of the people building Solidarity.

Iza, a community college teacher, is a delegate elected by co-workers to Solidarity's regional committee. She's twenty-five.

Her husband, Andrew, is a soldier who has been in the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP)—the Communist Party—for four years. He's twenty-seven and backs Solidarity too.

"I asked him about the support Solidarity has in his party cell [neighborhood branch] and the army," Fields said. "He told me his entire platoon supported Solidarity, that 'everybody in my cell thinks like me.' That's twenty or so people.

"That's what Solidarity is like," Fields said, "it's everywhere."

Huge banners deck the train stations, plant gates, buses, high schools, and colleges. "People even have signs in their windows at home," Fields said.

When he went into the big train station in Posnan, Fields saw a gigantic banner that said, "We order the government to register Solidarity," a reference to the fight waged by the union to have its charter accepted by the state.

"I saw no visible signs of the government-dominated trade unions anywhere. They exist in name only," Fields said.

"There are no progovernment banners, nothing. And the police are afraid to touch the Solidarity banners. In fact, you don't



Meeting of Solidarity members in Krakow.

see police on the street that much, only near the plant gates."

### 'From the Bottom Up'

Fields's friend Iza introduced him to numerous Solidarity activists, translating their conversations.

The people he met were "overwhelmingly young, in their early twenties," Fields said.

A twenty-five-year-old electrical worker, a central leader of Bydgoszcz Solidarity, "told me Solidarity wants, in his words, 'to transform the socialist system in Poland from the bottom up.' They want an extension of democracy, starting with greater decision-making in the factory," Fields said. "He told me he was a supporter of the socialist system."

Naturally, Fields found that the level of political consciousness varies among different workers.

"But I didn't meet anyone, anywhere, who said they wanted capitalism," he said.

Because the PUWP exercises dictatorial control over every aspect of society, working people identify its tyrannical practices with communism.

"So, if you say you're a socialist, it's as if you're saying you're in the party. And there is nothing but hatred for the party—or, more precisely, the party leadership," Fields said.

"You can be talking with a Solidarity

member about the struggle for workers' democracy and workers' control in the factories and then they'll say, 'But I'm not political,' because to them 'politics' means the party and the government," Fields said.

### Different Views

In his discussions, Fields found different views of what Solidarity should be and should do. Some workers favor Solidarity maintaining itself as an independent union, with a program of increased workers' control over factory conditions and production quotas, higher wages, and an end to government censorship.

Other militants he talked with "see a dynamic unfolding that goes beyond unionism—a dynamic which, if they seek a major say in economic planning on a regional and national level, leads to a major showdown with the government," Fields said.

One leader said he thought Solidarity has become an alternate "center of power" already.

But these leaders, Fields said, "are very cautious. They kept saying they wanted to take one step at a time, even though they see big developments coming."

This caution is prompted by deep concern about a Soviet invasion.

"Everyone I talked with saw that as a real possibility," Fields emphasized.



Despite the domination of the media by the PUWP and the government, Solidarity gets its message out.

The union publishes a national daily newspaper, and its regional affiliates publish weekly journals. In many cities, daily bulletins are posted on walls, "and people just line up to read them on street corners," Fields said.

Breaking the media monopoly is important to Solidarity, Fields said, "because everybody knows the government lies. No one believes the official press."

He described a case in point.

The government claimed the country's potato production quota had been exceeded by 50 percent, and thus it was going to export that surplus. But Solidarity members discovered that the quota had fallen short by 20 percent, which meant the proposed export would result in a massive shortage.

Solidarity had won the demand that exports could only be made on the basis of surplus through the Gdansk general strike last summer.

The fight to gain access to information is necessary in the workers' battle to force implementation of that demand.

This is all part of Solidarity's response to the crisis in Poland's economy produced by the misrule of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

"Poland exports ham, but you can't buy it in the stores. Sometimes it takes five days to get potatoes. People start lining up in the middle of the night for stores that open the next day," Fields said.

#### Aid for Farmers

"Solidarity has a program to help the farmers," Fields said, which calls for government credits to finance the purchase of modern equipment.

Students are also rallying to Solidarity, he said, organizing new, independent university and high school organizations.

Even small shops, from bakeries to grocery stores, display Solidarity's placards in their windows.

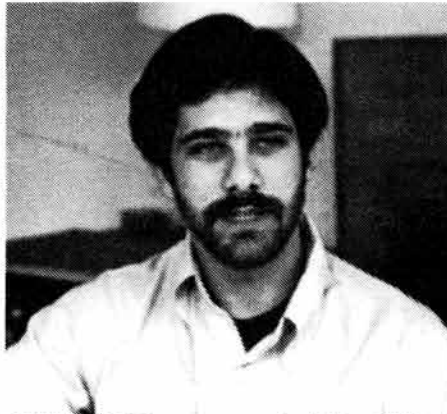
Thus, Fields said, "Solidarity has become a pole of attraction for all the pent-up anger and frustration in society."

He had visited Poland in 1975 and 1977. The difference between then and now struck him.

"People have a sense that change is possible. There is exuberance, enthusiasm. People discuss things waiting in line. People are a lot more alive, energetic, because there is hope," he said.

"I went over thinking a lot about religion," Fields said, "but it's not such a big thing. Poland is overwhelmingly Catholic, but the church didn't come up much in discussion. I see more pictures of the Pope in Chicago than I saw in Poland."

Because of the totalitarian rule of the bureaucracy, Fields said, the church is like a haven. But among the militants in



GARY FIELDS

Jon Hillson/Militant

Solidarity, "religion wasn't a big factor in doing things."

His friend Iza, the Solidarity provincial committee delegate, "goes to church pretty much," while her husband, the pro-Solidarity soldier and PUWP member, "doesn't have anything to do with religion." It isn't an issue between them.

In Solidarity, "there's a close connection

between the rank and file and the leadership. The leadership is completely accountable to the members," Fields said.

In Gdansk, Solidarity members introduced Fields to Lech Walesa, the union's central national leader.

"We didn't talk long because he had to go somewhere, but we chatted and he was very friendly. I asked some workers who Walesa usually talked with. They said 'everybody.'"

"Now, no steelworker in the United States can just pop into [United Steelworkers of America president Lloyd] McBride's office and say, 'Hi Lloyd, I just wanted to talk to you and tell you a few ideas I have about how to build the union.'"

What Fields saw convinced him that "a whole new form of unionism, open, with everybody participating" is emerging in Poland. It's a workers movement leading the struggle for socialism.

In the big struggles that lie ahead, Solidarity's strength is deeply rooted. That's because, as Gary Fields saw, "the leaders are the workers." □

## A Little Bit Late

### U.S. Court Admits Wilmington 10 Were Framed

On December 4 a U.S. appeals court overturned the 1972 arson and conspiracy convictions of ten civil rights activists in North Carolina who came to be known as the Wilmington 10. The court ruled that the prosecution's main witness, the only person to link the activists to the acts for which they were convicted, "perjured himself in his repeated, unfounded testimony . . . and this fact was bound to be known to the prosecutor."

While the federal court's ruling is a vindication of their innocence, the ten had in fact spent up to four years in prison.

Their case attracted worldwide attention when Amnesty International classified the nine Black men and one white woman as "political prisoners."

The prisoners began serving their sentences in 1975 when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review their conviction. In 1976, three of the prosecution's key witnesses recanted their testimony, but the state appeals court refused to grant the Wilmington 10 a new trial.

As a result of the international defense campaign in their behalf, the governor of North Carolina, James Hunt, reduced some of their prison sentences, but refused to pardon them, claiming that their trial had been fair.

In their original trial the nine men were sentenced to prison terms of twenty-three to thirty-four years, while the one woman received a nineteen-year sentence. The longest sentence went to Rev. Ben Chavis, a civil-rights activist, who was sentenced to twenty-five to twenty-nine years in prison for firebombing property and four to five years for conspiracy to assault emergency personnel.

At a December 7 rally in Louisville, Kentucky, Chavis stated "we have won a victory but we must go on to organize the new victories." He reminded his audience that "the oppressor never relaxes."

The *New York Times* tried to put the federal court ruling in the best possible light in a December 12 editorial arguing that the ruling shows "that the nation at large is able to acknowledge its own injustices."

The *Times* editorial conveniently neglected to mention that seventeen days before the conviction of the Wilmington 10 was overturned, another jury in North Carolina brought in a not guilty verdict in the murder trial of four Ku Klux Klansmen and two members of the Nazi Party who had gunned down five participants in an anti-Klan rally in Greensboro on November 3, 1979. □

# DOCUMENTS

## Resolution of U.S. Socialist Workers Party

### Upheaval in Afghanistan

[The following two documents, a resolution and an introduction, are from the December 1980 issue of the *International Socialist Review*, monthly magazine supplement to the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.

#### Introduction

A few days after the Kremlin sent tens of thousands of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, the Socialist Workers Party National Committee discussed this event and adopted a position on it as part of a report on the world political situation.

The central axis of this position was condemnation of the U.S. government's intervention in Afghanistan on the side of the landlord-backed guerrillas and the Carter administration's attempt to use the Afghanistan situation as an excuse to step up its militarization drive. The SWP launched a campaign to tell the truth about the scope and nature of Washington's involvement and its anti-working-class foreign policy. Along these lines, the SWP opposed the boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and economic sanctions against the Soviet Union. The SWP denounced greater military spending and more bases in the Indian Ocean. And, the SWP actively participated in the struggle against reinstating draft registration.

Some radicals, including in the antidraft movement, adapted to the pressure of Washington's militarist propaganda. They argued that the Soviet Union bears partial, if not equal, blame as the imperialist powers for the threat of war in the world today. Members of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, for example, insisted that antidraft coalitions make condemnation of the USSR one of its principles. The radical weekly, *Guardian*, which immediately condemned the Soviet Union and called for withdrawal of Soviet troops, proclaimed that the main danger to world peace was "superpower contention." Their main concern was that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan jeopardized "détente between U.S. imperialism and Soviet hegemonism," which posed "an enormous danger to world peace and progress."

The SWP rejected all these arguments and explained how they only serve to add fuel to the imperialists' anticommunist campaign. The quenchless profit drive of imperialism, not the Soviet bureaucracy, is

[The resolution was adopted November 15 by the National Committee of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP); the introduction was adopted November 26 by the SWP Political Committee.]

the source of the drive toward war. The party also explained why it is new victories in the world revolution, not class-collaborationist ideals like détente, that mark the road to peace. The responsibility of class-conscious workers in the imperialist countries is to concentrate their fire on the real warmakers and aggressors, the capitalist rulers in their own countries.

In the eleven months since Moscow sent its troops into Afghanistan, the imperialists have not let up in their reactionary campaign. This was demonstrated most recently at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Madrid and in the United Nations General Assembly.

At the Madrid conference in November, the U.S. representatives hypocritically decried the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops. Meanwhile, the U.S. government was pouring in more arms and "advisers" to prop up the repressive junta in El Salvador, and staging a mock invasion of the Middle East by its Rapid Deployment Force. By attempting to get international publicity for its attacks on Moscow, Washington hoped to take some heat off its record as the worst violator of human rights and self-determination both at home and abroad.

On November 20, Washington pushed another resolution through the United Nations General Assembly, much like the one adopted last January, demanding a pull out of "foreign troops" from Afghanistan. The vote was about the same as in January: 111 for, 22 against, 12 abstentions, with nine countries either absent or not voting. As in January, the representatives of the revolutionary governments in Cuba and Grenada voted against this imperialist-initiated measure, and the representative of the revolutionary government in Nicaragua abstained.

At a meeting on November 15-17, the SWP National Committee again discussed the events in Afghanistan and adopted the resolution "Upheaval in Afghanistan," which appears below. The central axis of

the party's response to the moves of U.S. imperialism was reaffirmed. At the same time, the National Committee came to the conclusion that it had been in error on a number of other aspects of the Afghan situation.

The initial report adopted by the January 5-9 National Committee meeting had said, "The presence of Soviet troops, by barring the road to the counterrevolution, creates a new and more favorable situation. . . . if Soviet troops help the new regime score victories over the reactionaries, this takes pressure off the Afghan revolution and encourages and inspires the struggle for social revolution in that country."

This was wrong. The November resolution corrects this by looking at the Soviet intervention within the framework of the overall policies of the Kremlin and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan [PDPA] regime. It says, ". . . the Soviet bureaucracy's occupation, like all of its preceding actions to prop up this government, did not give an impulse to independent initiative by the city workers or by the peasants. . . . The Soviet troops were not greeted by the workers and peasants as reinforcements in the fight to advance their social and political goals.

"To the contrary, the Kremlin's policy in Afghanistan has set back the revolutionary process opened in April 1978, and has had a dampening effect on the class struggle."

The January report also incorrectly stated that the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan "strengthens the hand of the anti-imperialist fighters in Iran. And it even buys time for the revolutionary government in Nicaragua, halfway around the world. Needless to say, the impact will be great in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Turkey."

The correction in the November resolution says, "Moscow's role has also negatively affected the class struggle in Iran and Pakistan.

"The hopes of the masses in Pakistan, first kindled by the Afghan upheaval, have been dimmed as the social revolution has been blocked. . . .

"Instead of becoming a revolutionary example for the Iranian masses, the Kremlin-PDPA policies are grist for the mill of the clergy's anticommunism."

This error reflected a confusion of two quite different phenomena. The January



report correctly recognized that the fact that Moscow thought it could get away with sending Soviet troops into a capitalist country was a result of the post-Vietnam War shift in the world relationship of forces against Washington and other imperialist powers. But that report incorrectly equated this result of the changing balance of forces with a factor, such as the Nicaraguan and Iranian revolutions, that tipped the scales still further in favor of the world's toilers. The current resolution untangles this confusion, recognizing:

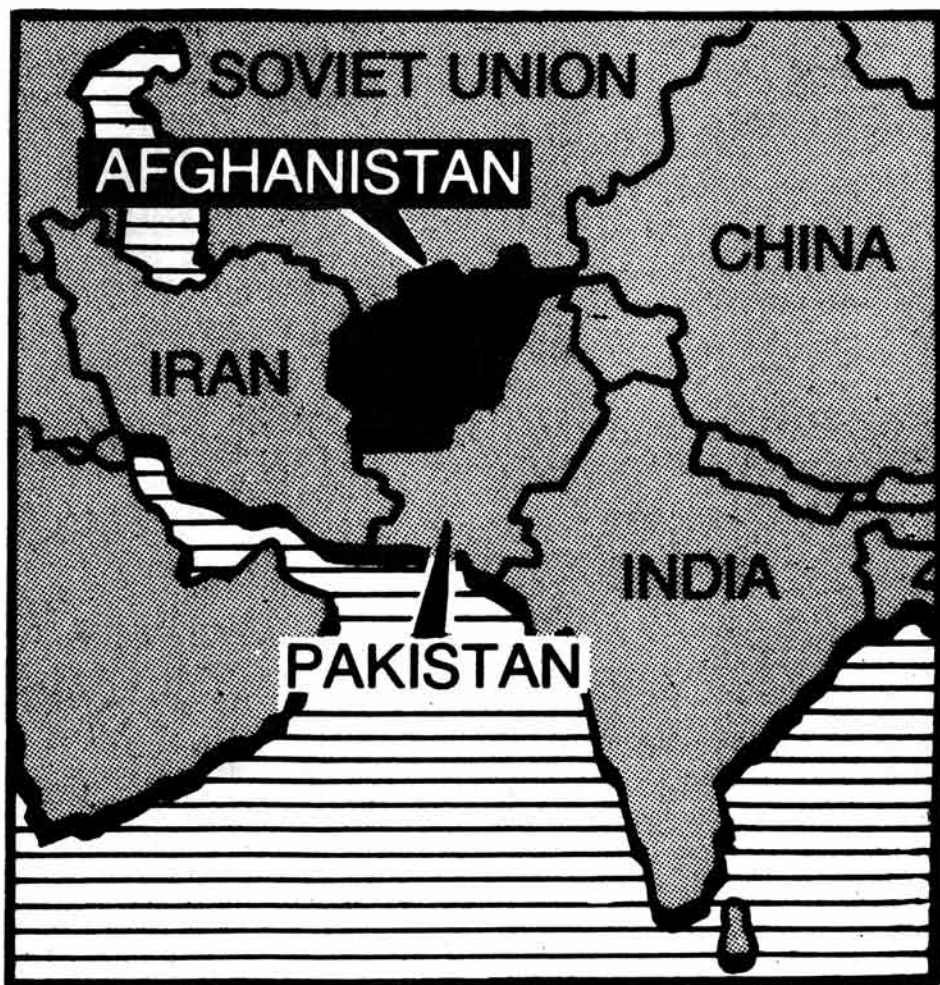
"In the context of the change in the world relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism, the Kremlin was more easily able to get away with the use of troops to attempt to stabilize a regime Washington sought to undermine, without any real fear of a direct military response by imperialism. But the Kremlin's counter-revolutionary policy in Afghanistan, including its use of troops, has had an adverse impact on this relationship of forces from the point of view of the oppressed and exploited of the world."

As part of the education campaign around Afghanistan conducted by the party, a pamphlet was published called "The Truth About Afghanistan" by Doug Jenness. It was based on the line adopted at the January meeting. The explanation for the Soviet intervention presented in this pamphlet is incorrect. "When the Kremlin sent Soviet troops into Afghanistan," the pamphlet argued, "it did not do so out of revolutionary motives, but as a defensive measure. It saw the U.S.- and Pakistani-backed guerrillas as a threat to the Soviet workers' state, which is their base of power and privileges."

The Soviet troops "were not sent to crush the Afghan revolution in the interests of détente or SALT II," the January report stated. "As much as the Soviet bureaucracy wants and presses for agreements like SALT II, it has interests that are more important; one of these is self-defense against direct imperialist moves to tighten the military encirclement of the Soviet Union."

The new resolution explains that defense of the Soviet workers state was not really at issue, nor was it a significant factor in the Kremlin's calculations.

The resolution states "that the dispatch of massive numbers of Soviet troops to Afghanistan was a consequence and continuation of the general policy the Kremlin had been carrying out since the PDPA government came to power. The failure of everything the Kremlin and the PDPA had done to establish a stable regime capable of governing the country left no other alternative, from the standpoint of their policy, to massively using Soviet troops as another attempt to accomplish this goal. This action signified the weak and worsening position the Kremlin found itself in after nearly two years of influencing,



intervening in, and shoring up the PDPA government."

In correcting its initial evaluation of these important aspects of its position on Afghanistan, the SWP's National Committee had the benefit of ten months experience in carrying out its line—the central axis of which was against imperialism's moves—in the unions and the antidraft movement. It was also able to observe the consequences of the Soviet occupation both

in Afghanistan and throughout the world, and to study more closely how other revolutionary currents, such as the Castro leadership, have assessed the situation there. In addition, the accumulation of new information from a growing number of sources (although obtaining accurate and timely information on Afghanistan remains a problem) about the results of the policies carried out by the Afghan regime and Soviet occupation forces facilitated a process of rethinking its position.

## I. Revolution in Afghanistan

A revolutionary upheaval began in Afghanistan following the April 27, 1978, overthrow of the regime of President Mohammad Daud by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). In one of the most impoverished and economically backward countries in the world, the hopes of millions of toilers were awakened. In neighboring Iran, Pakistan, and the USSR millions more were inspired by this development.

Western and Central Asia, embracing more than 130 million people in Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, has been the scene of general upheaval for more than a

decade. The recent developments in all three countries are very much interconnected.

In the late 1960s workers' protests and strikes, large student demonstrations, and actions demanding women's rights, occurred in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The students were affected by the international student radicalization, particularly the worldwide opposition to the Vietnam War.

In Pakistan, the protests led to the downfall of the Ayub Khan dictatorship in 1969. In Afghanistan they were part of a process that led to the overthrow of the

monarchy in 1973 and the establishment of a republic headed by Mohammad Daud.

### **Pakistan**

The boundary lines that define Pakistan were drawn by imperialism in 1947 when the Indian toilers forced the British rulers to withdraw their colonial overlordship from the subcontinent and recognize the independence of India. The former colony was partitioned to weaken independent India and to institutionalize religious and national divisions as a buffer against revolution. At that time, Pakistan's borders were drawn to include the majority of Muslim peoples from former British-ruled India—millions of Bengalis, Baluchis, Sindhis, and Pushtuns, as well as the dominant Punjabis. Ever since, the struggles of the urban masses and the oppressed nationalities have been threatening to tear apart imperialism's artificial creation.

In 1971 the oppressed Bengalis of East Pakistan, responding to a ferocious military crackdown, deepened their struggle for national independence from Islamabad. In December of that year, they established the independent state of Bangladesh.

Fearing the possibility of a similar development in Baluchistan in West Pakistan, in early 1973 the central government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto organized a coup that ousted the provincial Baluchistan government headed by the opposition National Awami Party. The Baluchis fought back in a war that lasted four years. More than eighty thousand Punjabi troops were moved into Baluchistan, killing thousands of Baluchis and driving thousands more across the border into Afghanistan, where they received sanctuary among the large Baluchi population there.

In 1977 widespread discontent with the Bhutto regime erupted into massive demonstrations, general strikes, and revolts in Lahore, Karachi, and other major cities. To head off an even bigger upheaval, the military, in July 1977, deposed Bhutto and declared martial law. General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq became the new ruler.

Another explosive issue in the region has been the Pushtun question. The Pushtun people are divided by the boundary line between Afghanistan and what is today Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. This arbitrary boundary was drawn when the area now called the Northwest Frontier Province was taken away from Afghanistan by British imperialism at the end of the last century.

Historically the Pushtuns, many of whom are in nomadic tribes that travel back and forth across the border, fought British rule. The formation of Pakistan gave new impetus to the struggle of Pakistani Pushtuns for the right to self-determination, including the freedom to determine their relationship to Afghani-

stan where the Pushtuns are the dominant nationality.

This has been a popular struggle in Afghanistan placing pressure on succeeding Afghan regimes to support it; and it has been the source of continuous friction between the Afghan and Pakistani governments. On three occasions since 1947, Pakistan, to protest the Kabul regime's support to the Pakistani Pushtuns, has closed its border with Afghanistan, cutting off trade.

In order to build up Pakistan as a strong military ally in the region, Washington has poured \$5 billion of aid into the country in the last thirty years.

### **The Role of the Shah**

The area was also deeply affected by the expansionist policies of the Iranian ruling class headed by the shah. After British imperialism withdrew its troops from the Persian Gulf area in 1971, the U.S. government poured in hundreds of millions more dollars and thousands of additional advisers to build a powerful armed forces in Iran. Washington considered the shah of shahs its most reliable ally in the area after Israel.

The Iranian capitalists signaled the broader influence they intended to exert in the region when, in 1971, Iranian troops occupied three islands in the Persian Gulf near the Strait of Hormuz to establish military bases. Then, in 1973 Iranian armed forces helped the sultanate of Oman crush revolutionary activity in its oil fields. In 1975 the shah's regime signed a treaty with Baghdad, agreeing to cut off aid to rebelling Kurds in Iraq in return for the Iraqi regime's acceptance of Iranian sovereignty over the Persian Gulf islands, as well as over the eastern half and shore of the Shatt al-Arab waterway.

The Iranian bourgeoisie's military thrusts paralleled the establishment of closer relations with the Pakistani regime, its fellow member in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), an imperialist-created military alliance. Tehran assisted Islamabad in countering insurgent activity by the working class and oppressed nationalities. Prodding from the shah's government was partly responsible for Bhutto's decision to take harsh action against the Baluchis. The Iranian ruling class totally backed the drive to crush the Baluchi freedom fighters, and the shah issued bellicose declarations pledging that Iran would not stand by and watch Pakistan collapse. The fear of an autonomous regime in revolutionary upheaval in Pakistani Baluchistan, which is located along the Gulf of Oman, impelled the Iranian government to dispatch tens of thousands of troops into Iranian Baluchistan and establish two big military bases there.

The shah also began using Iran's increased military and economic weight to influence the government in Kabul. By increasing loans and direct investments,

including the construction of better transportation routes to Iran, he attempted to get the Afghan monarchy to take a greater distance from Moscow. Growing suspicions in Afghanistan, including in the government, of Iran's influence and imperial intentions was a factor behind the support for Daud in overthrowing the monarchy in 1973.

Among the masses in Iran, discontent and opposition to the hated shah and the policies of his government also grew. In the mid-1970s protests increased, and the opposition burst forth in a qualitatively larger way with the February 1978 uprising in Tabriz. This gave momentum to the movement that led to the massive urban insurrection that overthrew the shah's regime a year later, and to the deepgoing revolution that kicked out American imperialism and is still unfolding. This revolutionary overthrow of the shah registered a major shift in the relationship of class forces in the region favorable to the victims of imperialist oppression.

### **Daud and the Republic**

In Afghanistan, the radicalization of students and workers begun in the mid-1960s converged in the early 1970s with large-scale discontent of peasants who were suffering from a severe three-year drought and famine. Dissatisfaction with the ruling monarchy was compounded by common knowledge that wheat imported by aid agencies was being appropriated by corrupt officials and sold on the black market. Furthermore, in the wake of this devastating dry spell, Mohammad Zahir Shah's government signed an unpopular agreement to divert water to Iran from Afghanistan's Helmand River water system.

The social tensions building up in Afghanistan fostered divisions in the government and undermined support for the monarchy. Seeking to head off a mass upheaval, Mohammad Daud seized power in July 1973, while Zahir Shah was abroad. He abolished the monarchy and declared Afghanistan a republic. Daud, the prime minister under the monarchy between 1953 and 1963 and the king's cousin, came to power with the aid of nationalist, "modernizing" military officers, some of whom had been trained by Soviet advisers.

Daud promised a series of democratic measures, including land reform, and loudly proclaimed support for the struggles of Pushtuns and Baluchis in Pakistan. He appointed to his cabinet four members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), all from the party faction headed by Babrak Karmal, the current head of state. However, Daud failed to deliver on his promises. In the context of mounting combativity of the oppressed and exploited masses in the region, he pursued a course of trying to maintain stability. This led him to seek closer rela-



tions with the staunchly proimperialist regimes in Iran and Pakistan.

In October 1975, Daud closed the border dividing Afghan from Pakistani Baluchistan, which guerrillas fighting Bhutto had been crossing. In late 1977 he agreed to expel Pushtun and Baluchi political activists from Afghanistan. He was attempting to negotiate a settlement of the Push-tunistan conflict with Bhutto that would have indicated support to Islamabad's antiautonomy position.

He permitted SAVAK agents from Iran to act as advisers inside the Afghan armed forces in order to seek out and dislodge pro-Moscow officers. He ratified the unpopular Helmand Waters Treaty with Iran, which he had previously opposed. He endorsed the shah's proposals for an Asian common market. He removed PDPA members from positions of authority and reneged on his commitment to permit independent political activity. Those who protested government policies were severely repressed. Matters were coming to a head when six thousand Baluchi refugees made clear they would refuse to leave the country by the government-imposed deadline of April 30, 1978.

#### The PDPA-Led Coup and Uprising

The April 17, 1978, police killing of Mir Akbar Khyber, a prominent university professor and popular leader of the PDPA, was the spark that ignited the tinderbox. The funeral procession in Kabul for this radical leader turned into a demonstration of more than fifteen thousand people, very large for Afghanistan. They marched to the U.S. embassy to protest CIA and SAVAK complicity in the murder. Other mass demonstrations followed, as broader layers of the Afghan people stepped forward to express their demands.

On the crest of these actions, the PDPA—whose top leaders had been rounded up and jailed by Daud—organized a successful coup on April 27. They were able to use a substantial section of the military since part of the officer caste was under PDPA influence. Colonels Abdul Qader and Aslam Watanjar, who led the armed uprising against the Daud regime, were both PDPA members.

Virtually all accounts indicate that the new regime was popular during its first months in power, especially in the cities. Rallies, processions, and meetings were held in many towns and villages to hail the overthrow of Daud and express support for the new regime. Soldiers were given garlands of flowers.

Daud's palace was thrown open to the public, and according to a *Le Monde* reporter on the scene, "hundreds of thousands" flocked to the palace "often coming from the interior of the country" to see for themselves how lavishly Daud had lived.

The PDPA government announced a program of social reforms. It purged most of the generals in the army and abolished



Land reform was the cornerstone of the PDPA's program of reforms. Above, land being distributed to peasants in Alingar.

Daud's Republican Guard. It released more than twelve thousand political prisoners and burned police files. It announced plans for a literacy campaign and construction of six hundred schools. It declared the bride price reduced and outlawed child marriages. It proclaimed certain cultural and education rights for Turkomens, Uzbeks, Baluchis, Nuristanis, and other nationalities, enabling them to legally publish materials and produce radio programs

in their own languages for the first time. Trade unions were legalized for the first time in Afghan history. Freedom of religious worship was proclaimed.

The cornerstone of the proposed social program was the land reform. All debts of peasants to landlords were declared cancelled. And a plan to expropriate large landowners and distribute land on a massive scale to landless peasants was announced.

## II. The Erosion of the Revolution

The urban workers and peasants of Afghanistan had been promised many things before, including land reform, by newly installed regimes. But they had always been disappointed. So it was with cautious hope that they viewed the proclamations of the PDPA government.

The PDPA promised a lot. Its proposals directly challenged those who profit from exploitation both in the cities and the countryside. Their implementation would necessitate a massive social revolution in the lives of the majority of Afghanistan's nearly twenty million people. For this reason, it was essential to win the support and confidence of the peasants by demonstrating in practice that they would have the full support of the government against the exploiters, and by promoting the organization of the poor peasants to implement the program. But this was not the course the PDPA followed.

#### The Character of the PDPA

The PDPA is a petty-bourgeois party in origin, social composition, program and perspectives, and mode of organization.

Heavily influenced by a mixture of nationalist, Stalinist, and liberal notions of "modernization," its base has been in the bloated government bureaucracy, created by thirty years of foreign aid, and among students, teachers, intellectuals and sections of the officer corps. For example, eleven of the twenty-one PDPA members named to the first cabinet held government appointments at the time of the coup, including doctors, professors, engineers, and three military officers. The other ten included writers, lawyers, teachers and one landlord. Most received academic or military schooling in the West and knew English. These included Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, who each spent some time in the United States. Only four were Soviet-trained and knew Russian.

The working class is very small in proportion to the total population, and the number of industrial workers, including those employed in construction, is even smaller. The PDPA has few roots in this class, small as it is. The PDPA also has few links with, little knowledge about, and

no established organizations among the peasants.

The party was formed at its first and only congress in 1965 by petty-bourgeois radical intellectuals, several of whom—such as Nur Mohammed Taraki and Babrak Karmal—were well known figures, who had been involved in democratic struggles since the late 1940s. A larger layer of the founding leadership came out of student protests in the early 1960s.

Two years after the party was founded it split into two factions around the newspapers *Khalq* (masses) and *Parcham* (flag). Amin and Taraki led the *Khalq*, and Karmal and Mir Akbar Khyber the *Parcham* faction. In addition to internal power struggles, there were a number of political differences. For example, the *Khalq* disagreed with the *Parcham*'s decision to support Daud's bid for power in 1973 and to participate in his government.

Relations between the two groups were often vitriolic, and included charges and countercharges of leaders being CIA agents. A fragile unity was reestablished in 1977, but it lasted only three months after the April 1978 coup. Although no official links between the PDPA and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were made public, both factions had ties to Moscow and to pro-Moscow parties in the region.

No Afghan Marxist party exists, nor is there evidence of a Leninist current inside the PDPA. But revolutionary-minded workers and students were attracted to the PDPA as the only radical pole of opposition, and because of its reform measures and promises. At the time of the coup, the PDPA claimed fifty thousand members, but most other evaluations place it between five thousand and ten thousand.

The PDPA assumed power as the result of an urban-based coup, which had popular support. The coup had been precipitated by large protests in Kabul. Although discontent existed in the countryside where 85 percent of the population lives, there was no peasant war or uprising.

The demonstrations in the cities did not lead to the masses destroying the old capitalist state apparatus, and replacing it with a revolutionary government that represented their historic interests. Rather, the PDPA purged primarily top officers from the military and leading authorities from the government apparatus, leaving many other officers and lower-level government administrators in place. It put its own people into the top positions in the existing structure of the military, police, and civil bureaucracy.

Furthermore, the PDPA did not issue a call for a constituent assembly which would bring together representatives, elected on the basis of universal suffrage, to discuss and decide what kind of government they wanted and how to implement the proposed social reforms.

Corruption and special privileges were

also allowed to continue, including the practice of nepotism, in making important government assignments.

#### The PDPA Regime and the Rural Toilers

A thirty-five member "Revolutionary Council" and a twenty-one member Cabinet were set up composed exclusively of PDPA members. Taraki, secretary-general of the party, was designated president of the council and prime minister of the country.

Immense social and economic backwardness confronted the toiling masses as a result of decades of imperialist oppression. More than 90 percent of the people are illiterate. Health conditions are appalling and half the children die before they reach the age of five. Communications with and transportation to the country's nearly twenty thousand villages, where the vast majority of people live, are very primitive. Traditional patriarchal tribal relations still determine the status of women, the organization of the family, and the manner in which all social questions are approached.

Most people in the countryside are landless or own very small plots of land. To rent land, buy seeds and fertilizer, and pay for the use of water and horses or tractors, the peasants sell shares of their next crop to the landlord. They are further exploited by taxes and high interest payments on loans. Around 15 percent of the population are nomads. The economic livelihood of many of them is interlinked with that of settled farmers, especially concerning the use of grazing lands. The gradual development of a market economy in Afghanistan during the last several decades has begun to alter social relations and hastened the migration of poor peasants toward the towns. Some are absorbed into the small working class. But most swell the semi-proletarian layers in the urban areas. Tens of thousands emigrated to Iran, Pakistan, or the Persian Gulf states to seek work.

More than 95 percent of Afghans are Muslims, 80 percent are members of the Hanafi Sunni sect. And the Islamic hierarchy wields great power in upholding the abominable social conditions in the country. There are about 250,000 mullahs, some of whom own large tracts of tax-free land, many of whom control educational institutions, and most of whom wield local political influence.

Many of the landlords cultivated opium poppies as their main cash crop, serving as a major source for the world narcotics trade.

Under such circumstances, a radical land reform program could have provided a powerful impetus to the revolutionary process in Afghanistan—if carried out under a revolutionary leadership that understood the pressing need to politically educate and win the confidence of the peasant masses and actively mobilize them against the landlord class. But the

attempt by the PDPA regime to establish a new dictatorship of the city over the countryside was not that of the revolutionary proletariat seeking ways to forge and consolidate an economic and political alliance with the peasantry and rural poor. Thus when the PDPA began to carry out its proposed land reform in January 1979, it did so from its urban petty-bourgeois base with the goal of consolidating its dominance within the bourgeois state apparatus. There is no evidence there was ever any serious attempt to draw the peasants into determining the content or implementation of the land reform. Rather than organizing and massively mobilizing the peasants to carry out the new measures, the PDPA relied on the army and government apparatus. And they wielded this authority with a heavy hand.

Feroz Ahmed, an editor of *Pakistan Forum* and a sympathetic eyewitness of the revolution, stated in an interview with *MERIP Reports* (July-August 1980) that:

"When land reforms were announced and implemented, it was mainly by city people: party cadres, government functionaries, youth organization people. They were going out in the countryside and demarcating lands, telling people this land belongs to you. They had a lot of difficulty. The masses didn't know them. What would happen after they left to go back to the cities? A feudal system is very entrenched, and is all-encompassing. It is not just a question of ownership, it's a whole system in which credit, patronage, all these things are tied up. If you break one major link, then the whole chain gets upset, and you must be ready to handle all the problems arising out of the disturbance you have made.

"The *Khalq* Party [PDPA] was not in a position to do that. Many peasants were not convinced that they should have land. I can't say that this has been the reaction of the majority of the peasants; there has been a lot of enthusiasm about the land reforms which I have witnessed. But some young people who went out in the countryside to carry out land reforms later told me that sometimes they would go and give a document to the peasant and say 'This land belongs to you.' The peasant would be embarrassed and say, 'No, how can we do that? This is *khayanat* [usurping someone else's right or property].' Many peasants *did* feel it was their right to have the land, but what after they get the document? They had been dependent on the landlords for management, for seed, for implements, for marketing credits. When the landlords struck back, there was nobody to protect the peasants. And the same sort of thing is repeated with implementation of other reforms.

"Abolition of usury was a very popular measure: Millions of Afghani peasants and city people were indebted to money lenders, their properties were mortgaged. When the government issued its proclama-



tion writing off debts and ending usury, this had a liberating effect and was welcomed by the people. But the Party and the government were not able to mobilize the people against the reaction of the vested interests and usurers. They relied on state power rather than on people's power."

Issuing tens of thousands of property deeds to landless peasants and declaring cancelled the debts owed to usurers were important decrees, but they did not mean that the land reform had been carried through and secured. For the peasants to reap benefits from these decrees required action by the government to make water, credit, seed grain, work animals, and machinery available to them. Above all, the peasants, especially the poorest, needed to be mobilized and organized to defend themselves from the attempts of landlords and other vested interests to sabotage the land reform.

The implementation of other measures was handled in a similar manner. For example, participation in the literacy campaign—unlike in Cuba or Nicaragua—was made compulsory rather than voluntary, and physical force rather than persuasion was sometimes used to assemble the populace.

The bureaucratic and arbitrary methods of the PDPA engendered little confidence and, after initial enthusiasm and expectations, left the peasants politically and physically disarmed in the face of the landlords' reaction, which was swift in coming. Many were terrorized into opposing the government's measures; others over time accepted the landlord and mullah arguments against the "atheistic communists."

The PDPA's initial decrees and proposals would have required a government mobilizing the support of the workers and peasants to carry them out. This is how the agrarian revolution was carried out in Cuba, and is being carried out in Nicaragua and Grenada today. But this is not the kind of government that exists in Afghanistan.

To quell the growing resistance of the landlords, tribal chiefs, and usurers, the PDPA government stepped up its repressive measures. But this, too, was done without politically mobilizing the regime's potential supporters. Far from a revolutionary policy in growing civil war conditions, it was a military operation in which the armed forces struck out not only at the counterrevolutionaries, but also at villagers who may have been confused or misled, or who simply lived in areas where reactionary resistance was strongest. At times, entire villages were bombed. In Kabul some families, originating from the areas where the counterrevolutionaries were active, were detained. Such actions alienated even more people and played into the hands of the landlord-organized guerrilla forces. Popular support for the government was further undermined.

On top of this, violent factionalism and punitive purges in the PDPA divided the government at its highest levels. A few months after taking power, the majority Khalq faction purged members of the Parcham faction from the government. Many of them were sent abroad for unimportant assignments, some were arrested, and public "confessions" were forced from others. Karmal was gotten out of the way by sending him to Czechoslovakia as ambassador. Amin used his position as head of the secret police to consolidate a personal base of power in the government, taking over the post of prime minister from Taraki in March 1979. In September 1979 Taraki, still president, was murdered. Thousands more were jailed.

These brutal power struggles further clarified the real character of the regime. The progressive, reform-oriented image of the government during its first months in power was rapidly tarnished, and more people turned against it.

A telling sign of the government's unresponsiveness to the struggles of the oppressed was shown by its failure to hail and solidarize with the Iranian revolution that was unfolding in 1978 and 1979.



KARMAL: Head of Parcham faction was packed off to Czechoslovakia.

### III. Counterrevolution and Civil War

The government's course eroded the popular support it gained when it first took power and led to its growing weakness in the face of the resistance spearheaded by the landlords, moneylenders, merchants, opium smugglers, and other mainstays of the old social order in Afghanistan.

A counterrevolutionary guerrilla struggle was organized under the banner of waging a Muslim "holy war" against "atheistic communism." This banner is designed to camouflage the class lineups and social character of the civil war.

#### The Reactionary Resistance

There are many organizations fighting the PDPA government, including forces that propose restoring the monarchy. Some estimates put the number as high as sixty. At least fourteen maintain offices in Peshawar, Pakistan. Despite several attempts, these organizations have been unable to wage a united struggle. This is rooted in the fact that the groups are based on different tribal groupings from different regions of the country with separate and often conflicting interests. Some have long traditions of feuding with each other.

For example, in May 1980 more than nine hundred tribal chiefs, mullahs, and other provincial authorities from every part of Afghanistan gathered in Peshawar. According to the *New York Times* reporter on the scene they established a 110-member "revolutionary council" as "the first step toward forming a government-in-exile." However, the six principal

organizations leading the guerrilla struggle refused even to accept seats on the council.

Afghanistan is not a modern, centralized, national state. It has never had a bourgeois revolution. The country was established by the Durrani confederation of the Pushtun tribes, under the leadership of Ahmad Khan, who in the 1740s defeated Persian invaders and proclaimed himself Amir (King) of the Afghans. Next to the Ottoman Empire, the Durrani Empire was the largest Muslim empire during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Economic changes have occurred during this century so that most production is now for the market. But the monarchial form of rule—in which an amir was chosen by the Pushtun tribal leaders—survived until 1973.

Authority traditionally has been a matter of negotiation and compromise between the central government and the tribal leaders. This meant significant restrictions on the central government's power of taxation, as well as limits on conscription to a standing army, especially among the stronger, more dominant tribes. The bureaucracy in Kabul, built up in the last decades, was financed heavily from foreign aid and not primarily tax collections. Even under the last monarch, who proclaimed a constitution and established the façade of a parliament, the more authoritative body remained the Loya Jirgah. This traditional council was weighted heavily

by tribal leaders and was convened by the monarch when he so decided.

Afghanistan is composed of a number of nationalities with different languages and cultures. Many of them have closer ties with people living in Pakistan, Iran, or the USSR than with others living in Afghanistan. These national divisions also find their reflection in the guerrilla organizations.

The PDPA sought to centralize authority when it took power. The traditional decentralization is what each of the guerrilla groups are attempting to maintain, either by forcing the removal of the present government, or forcing it to establish a live-and-let-live relationship with local, tribally dominated authorities.

The Pakistani government, which fears the impact of the Afghan revolution in its own country, has provided the counterrevolutionaries military aid as well as sanctuaries from which to conduct their operations. Without this assistance, the rightists, who are divided and poorly armed, would have found it difficult to maintain their struggle.

The rightists are permitted by the Zia ul-Haq government to freely move about in Pakistan's western provinces and intimidate the local population. Whereas democratic rights for Pakistanis are denied by the government, Afghan counterrevolutionaries maintain open headquarters, hold news conferences, and carry arms. There have been many armed clashes with the local people, the biggest in Baluchistan.

The Zia regime is not at all adverse to the Afghan oppressors some of whom brought a lot of money with them and are buying land and houses, terrorizing the rebellious Baluchi and Pushtun workers and peasants.

#### Washington's Reaction

The Pakistani operation has the full backing of imperialism. From the beginning, U.S. imperialism was bitterly hostile to the Afghan revolution and its possible effects throughout the region. It was one more in a series of blows from Southeast Asia to Southern Africa, from Iran to the Caribbean, that have altered the relationship of forces in favor of the tens of

millions struggling against imperialist exploitation and oppression.

On May 5, 1978, a few days after the PDPA came to power, the *New York Times* ran an editorial headlined "The Communist Coup in Afghanistan." It warned, "A revolutionary Afghanistan will make its neighbors nervous. Its very existence will intensify separatist sentiment among the Baluchi tribesmen in Pakistan and Iran." The editorial advised neighboring capitalist countries to do what they could to help Afghans who fled from the revolution and to aid whatever opposition might arise against the new government.

In June 1978, two months after the overthrow of Daud, some 270 senior generals, admirals, diplomats, State Department functionaries, "think tankers," and others gathered at the NATO Atlantic Command at Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss the potential threat to imperialist interests throughout the region posed by the upheaval in Afghanistan.

Washington cut off all aid agreements and trade, moved to have loans blocked from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and began to step up its aid to the rightist leaderships, which it primarily funnels through the Pakistani government.

After the revolution that ousted the shah of Iran in early 1979, the imperialist powers became even more concerned. They stepped up their support to the Afghan reactionaries in the hope that this would also put rightist pressure on the Iranian revolution.

Imperialism's goal was to take advantage of the growing discontent with the PDPA government in order to help undermine the revolution.

The Peking bureaucracy, as part of its traitorous obeisance to U.S. imperialism, has also sought to maintain stability in the region, diminish influence from Moscow, and energetically opposed all revolutionary developments. It backed the butcher Bhutto in his wars against Bengali and Baluchi freedom fighters, and hailed the shah while millions of Iranians were mobilizing to overthrow him. In concert with imperialism and the Pakistani regime, it has also provided military aid to reactionary Afghan guerrilla fighters.

## IV. Soviet Bureaucracy Opposes Revolution

Since the mid-1930s, the bureaucratic caste that governs the Soviet Union has placed the achievement of lasting agreements with imperialist powers as its central foreign policy objective. This strategic search for stability has led it to oppose revolutions, especially on its borders.

Having strangled independence and initiative in the working class and among the poor peasants at home by setting up a totalitarian political structure, the bureau-

cracy does not dare stimulate critical thought and revolutionary activity on the world arena. Moreover, as a ruling and privileged petty-bourgeois stratum, it values infinitely more the help and friendship of those to whom it is socially akin—bourgeois nationalists, reformist parliamentarians, trade-union bureaucrats—than of the rank-and-file workers who are separated from it by a class line. Like these types, it seeks to establish a class-col-

laborationist policy of nonaggression between the oppressed and exploited masses and the capitalist rulers. That's its objective in Central Asia, as elsewhere. But the massive upheaval in that region today prevents the realization of this goal.

That's why, for example, the Soviet government opposed the struggle to overturn the shah of Iran until shortly before he was ousted. Today, along with the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party in Iran, it supports the efforts of the capitalist government headed by Khomeini and Bani-Sadr to stabilize the situation and freeze the status quo. That's why it voted with Washington in the United Nations Security Council in December 1979 to condemn the taking of U.S. hostages by Tehran students as a "violation of international law."

#### Moscow and Kabul

Moscow has been successful in maintaining friendly relations with the various Afghan regimes, no matter how reactionary, since World War II. During the 1950s, representatives of the Afghan regime sought military aid from U.S. imperialism comparable to what it was giving Pakistan. Washington refused unless Kabul joined CENTO and dropped its support to the demand for a united Pushtunistan. Rejecting this blackmail, the monarchy turned to the USSR, which became its major trading partner and source of military aid. Between 1954 and 1976, Moscow gave the Kabul regime \$1.3 billion in aid, the largest per capita amount of Soviet aid to any capitalist country.

When Daud overthrew the monarchy in 1973, Moscow immediately reaffirmed its relations and made clear its support for the Parcham faction's legal participation in the government.

Even as the Daud regime moved to establish closer ties with Iran and Pakistan, and as SAVAK agents helped purge the Afghan army of many pro-Moscow officers, the Kremlin made no moves to alter its relations with Kabul.

Moscow's immediate response to the government established by the April 1978 coup—for which there is no evidence it had any responsibility—was to use its influence on the PDPA to help stabilize the regime, control it, and put a lid on the class struggle. From the outset, it spent millions of dollars and sent increasing numbers of military and civilian personnel to help shore up the PDPA regime and the capitalist state apparatus on which it rested. As popularity for the regime dwindled and the various oppositionists and right-wing rebels grew bolder, the Soviet government stepped up these efforts.

During this period, the Kremlin was worried by the gigantic steps forward for the class struggle throughout the region. Most important was the overthrow of the shah and the mammoth social upheaval in Iran. In Pakistan there were numerous





Cindy Jaquith/Militant

Demonstration against shah in January 1979. Moscow opposed Iranian revolution until last minute, and it also opposed revolution in Afghanistan.

workers' strikes and demonstrations by students and peasants during 1979 in spite of severe repression. The U.S. embassy in Islamabad was burned down in November 1979 during protests against Washington's threats against Iran.

In April 1979 a high-level Soviet delegation led by General Alexei Yepichev, first deputy minister of defense and president of political affairs of the Soviet army and navy, was sent to Kabul to review the functioning of the regime. Vassily Safrontchuk, a top Soviet functionary, was assigned overall responsibility for coordinating Russian policy. He set up an office next to Taraki's in the People's House in Kabul.

By the end of the summer up to five thousand Russian "advisers" were moved into the government apparatus to help fill the gap unable to be met by the depleted, demoralized, and unreliable ranks of the PDPA or its supporters.

The equivalent of millions of dollars in rubles were being sent each day to prop up the government apparatus, and Moscow's responsibility for military operations became more direct. Soviet forces took over the principal air fighter base at Bagram, north of Kabul. Helicopter guard units were sent in to defend military bases. Soviet officers were posted down to the company level.

Under the Kremlin's guiding hand, the PDPA forged a policy whose consequences would deepen its growing alienation from the masses and further obstruct initiatives by any who sought to drive the class struggle forward. One feature of this counterrevolutionary policy was increased use of the air force and Russian pilots to strafe and level rural settlements where there

was believed to be resistance. With growing rebellions and desertions in the army, indiscriminate air power became the central means of combating any suspected resistance.

In July and August 1979, brigades of the Afghan army crossed over to opposition to the regime, some joining the right-wing rebels. Many other soldiers deserted or could no longer be trusted by the government. Opposition in the army, including among PDPA members, was also expressed in clashes with Russian officers.

The Kremlin-PDPA policy also sought to cut the guerrillas off from food by burning crops in areas where the rebels had established control, such as the Kunar Valley. Far from helping politically divide the peasants from their exploiters, brutal measures of this sort only made them more antagonistic to the government.

These measures, moreover, did not stabilize the situation. Rather, they fueled the mounting dissatisfaction of the urban workers and the peasants with the government. Together with the growth and increasing confidence of the landlord-led opposition, this posed the possibility of the disintegration of the Kabul regime.

In addition to the groups known to be under counterrevolutionary leadership along the Pakistan border, other rebel formations emerged in the rural areas. Sections of the Hazara people rose up. The Karmal government now charges that its predecessor was waging a war of extermination against the Hazaras.

Some of these rebel groupings claim to be influenced by the Iranian revolution and to advocate an "Islamic Republic" for Afghanistan. But the real social goals and

composition of these forces is far from evident.

#### Taraki's Murder and Kremlin Escalation

The Kremlin representatives in Kabul directly intervened in the factional conflicts in the PDPA. Exactly what role they played in the clash between Taraki and Amin in September 1979 is still not clear. However, Taraki was murdered at the instigation of Amin shortly after Taraki returned to Kabul from a high-level reception in Moscow where he met with Brezhnev and other Kremlin officials. And it was to the Soviet embassy in Kabul that Taraki's closest associates in the government fled when he was killed.

Following Taraki's murder, General Ivan G. Pavlovsky, Deputy Minister of Defense, was sent on a mission to Kabul.

Then, in the last two weeks of December, Moscow airlifted several thousand Soviet troops to Afghanistan and on December 27 helped overthrow President Amin. Babrak Karmal, who had been living in Czechoslovakia, was flown in and established as the prime minister and president.

On December 28 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that, "The action came as Soviet troops—about 6,500 by Washington's count—and military equipment poured into Afghanistan in a major airlift. News agencies reported fighting in Kabul involving tanks, artillery and automatic rifles and said the Soviet troops were participating. Tass, the official Soviet news agency, carried a statement from Mr. Karmal that denounced the former regime of Mr. Amin as a dictatorship and an arm of 'American imperialism.'"

The *Journal* further reported that, "Radio Kabul monitored in London said that

Mr. Amin had been executed after being convicted by a revolutionary trial court of 'crimes against the Afghan people.'"

Amin was posthumously accused of being a "CIA agent" involved in a "sinister plot" to strangle the Afghan revolution. He was made the scapegoat for all the unpopular measures carried out by the PDPA government—a government that the Kremlin had backed and become deeply committed to.

Karmal reorganized the cabinet to include ministers from both factions, released thousands of political prisoners jailed by Amin, and announced face-lifting measures that would give the regime the appearance of appealing for broader support. He brought back into the government figures such as Colonel Abdul Qader, a central figure in the April 1978 toppling of Daud who had been subsequently purged in the factional battles.

Following Karmal's installation, tens of thousands of Soviet troops were sent into the country to secure air bases, road crossings, and key towns. The objective was to establish a defense perimeter in order to help the Karmal regime consolidate itself and stabilize the situation in the country.

In the ten months that Soviet troops have occupied key points in Afghanistan, wider mass resistance has developed to the regime and its Kremlin backers than previously existed. This has made it impossible for Moscow to accomplish its goal of consolidating a stable regime.

This resistance is broader than the original landlord-usurer-backed opposition to the land reform in the countryside. It now also includes substantial opposition in the cities, including among sectors of the population that once were a base of support for the PDPA.

For example, there were significant anti-government protests of university and high school students in Kabul in April and May. According to an official Radio Kabul broadcast on June 8, 140 persons were killed and thirty schools destroyed during the demonstrations.

The initial moves by Karmal to patch up relations with the Khalq faction have not met with much success. Many Khalq figures were sent to distant embassy posts and all but two were removed from the cabinet. The continued factionalism has led to increased desertions and rebellions in the Afghan army which in its great majority had been aligned with the Khalq faction. These elements in the Khalq faction have become one of the forces in opposition to the Soviet occupation and the Karmal regime.

In evaluating the role of the Kremlin from the standpoint of the toiling masses, there are several important points to keep in mind.

One is that the dispatch of massive numbers of Soviet troops to Afghanistan was a *consequence* and *continuation* of the general policy the Kremlin had been carry-

ing out since the PDPA government came to power. The failure of everything the Kremlin and the PDPA had done to establish a stable regime capable of governing the country left no other alternative, from the standpoint of their policy, to massively using Soviet troops as another attempt to accomplish this goal. This action signified the weak and worsening position the Kremlin found itself in after nearly two years of influencing, intervening in, and shoring up the PDPA government.

Had the Kremlin been closer to achieving several of its most important diplomatic aims internationally, it might not have decided to open itself up to a massive imperialist propaganda campaign and economic sanctions by sending a large number of troops into Afghanistan. But the price demanded by the imperialists for further deals with Moscow has gone up because of the failure of the 1972 détente agreements to halt the outbreak of new revolutionary upheavals from Indochina to Iran to Central America. This has led to a series of diplomatic setbacks for Moscow that may have convinced the bureaucracy that its need to try to stabilize the Afghan situation outweighed other factors, since it was getting so few results on its key diplomatic objectives. For example, Western European governments had voted to take NATO cruise missiles. It seemed clear the U.S. Senate would not ratify the SALT II agreements. And Moscow's talks with Peking had made no apparent progress in normalizing relations between the two countries.

By the time of the massive Soviet troop movement into Afghanistan, the PDPA government was no longer popular and its practices were making it increasingly alienated from the toiling classes.

Therefore, the Soviet bureaucracy's occupation, like all of its preceding actions to prop up this government, did not give an impulse to independent initiatives by the city workers or by the peasants. It did not inspire them to drive the land reform forward, to struggle for a constituent assembly, to implement workers' control in industry, or to mobilize against the counterrevolutionary guerrillas. The Soviet troops were not greeted by the workers and peasants as reinforcements in the fight to advance *their* social and political goals.

To the contrary, the Kremlin's policy in Afghanistan has *set back* the revolutionary process opened in April 1978, and has had a dampening effect on the class struggle. From the beginning, it has sought to freeze social relations—not on the basis of a successful agrarian and social revolution, but on the basis of a reform program that barely got off the ground before it floundered. The Kremlin-PDPA policy of holding back the implementation of even the originally announced reforms, let alone educating and mobilizing the population to drive the revolutionary process forward, has inevitably strengthened the hand of

the property owners and weakened the toilers. It has hurt, not helped, the struggle against the exploiters. These results make unambiguous the fact that the policy pursued by the Kremlin has been counter-revolutionary.

If a major imperialist military offensive had been underway in Afghanistan, the employment of Soviet troops to help defeat the attack would likely have inspired the Afghan masses. Furthermore, to meet such a serious threat, the Soviet bureaucracy might have been forced to rely in part on the oppressed masses, even taking steps to organize and mobilize them.

However, this was not and is not the situation in Afghanistan. The imperialists and the proimperialist Pakistani regime are providing aid to the counterrevolutionary guerrillas, but there has been no imperialist or imperialist-backed invasion of Afghanistan with either air attacks or troops. Nor has the threat of this been posed.

Consequently, the Afghan masses do not see the Soviet troops as strengthening a national liberation fight against foreign invasion. Rather than being liberators, the Soviet troops *are* the foreign occupiers. Soviet planes have bombed their villages. Both the Soviet troops and the rightists more and more appear as evils to growing layers of the population. The massive Soviet military presence has generated deep hostility and resistance, which is far more widespread than the landlord-backed guerrilla bands. It has put the vanguard of the toiling masses of Afghanistan in a worse, not a better, position to mobilize mass opposition to their exploiters.

#### Kremlin's Role in Region

Moscow's role has also negatively affected the class struggle in Iran and Pakistan.

The hopes of the masses in Pakistan, first kindled by the Afghan upheaval, have been dimmed as the social revolution has been blocked. The Baluchis inside Pakistan, for example, at first hoped that the Afghan events, and even the Soviet intervention, would lead to new allies for their struggle, but this hope has proved unfounded.

Instead of becoming a revolutionary example for the Iranian masses, the Kremlin-PDPA policies are grist for the mill of the clergy's anticommunism.

In the context of the change in the world relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism, the Kremlin was more easily able to get away with the use of troops to attempt to stabilize a regime Washington sought to undermine without any real fear of a direct military response by imperialism. But the Kremlin's counter-revolutionary policy in Afghanistan, including its use of troops, has had an adverse impact on this relation of forces from the point of view of the oppressed and exploited of the world. This has been ob-



secured to a certain extent by the fact that the overall world relationship of forces has continued to evolve against imperialism.

Where will the Kremlin's policy in Afghanistan ultimately lead? We must assume that Brezhnev means it when he holds out the option of a deal with Washington to secure his objective—a stable Afghan regime friendly to the USSR. Moscow's objective is not the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a bureaucratically deformed workers state of the type it was finally forced to countenance in most of Eastern Europe. This would stand in the way of Moscow's attempts to reach a deal with Washington. For Moscow to turn toward this variant, it would have to see all other roads closed, discount the possibility of a deal with the U.S. government, and calculate that Afghanistan was a necessary buffer against a new major imperialist offensive against the Soviet Union such as that marked by the opening of the Cold War after World War II. Given the world relation of class forces, the revolutionary upsurge especially in the Caribbean and Central America and the resistance among the American workers to the capitalist remilitarization drive, this variant is at present the most *unlikely*.

Moreover, all the evidence is that the Kremlin is *not* moving toward permitting the formation of an Eastern Europe-type bureaucratically deformed workers state in Afghanistan. The Kremlin's aim is to help establish and maintain a friendly capitalist government, as it did in Finland and Austria following World War II. Its goal is to preserve stability and the world status quo, not to increase the number of countries in which the bourgeoisie has been expropriated. The *possibility* that a workers state governed by an undemocratic and privileged bureaucratic caste *might* be the eventual outcome in Afghanistan is not a justification for supporting the Kremlin's bureaucratic methods, reactionary policies, and massive military intervention.

The workers of the world were and are repelled by Stalinist totalitarianism in Eastern Europe. The brutal bureaucratic methods used in the establishment of those deformed workers states were employed because of the Stalinists' deep fear of the independent mobilization of the toilers. These methods and practices harm the world struggle for socialism, and must be taken into account in evaluating the effects of the creation of bureaucratically deformed workers states. The interests of the world revolution come first.

Leon Trotsky, one of the principal leaders of the Russian revolution, in assessing the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland in 1939, explained: "The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world



Soviet military camp outside Kabul. Afghan masses see Soviet forces as foreign occupiers, not as allies.

proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution." (*In Defense of Marxism*, Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, 1973, p. 19.)

Of course, in the development of the class struggle, other workers states like those in Eastern Europe can come into being. Marxists defend their progressive property forms against all attempts by imperialism to overthrow them, while at the same time defending the struggles of the working people, like the 1980 movement of the Polish workers, against bureaucratic rule.

Trotsky, in discussing the relationship between defense of the Soviet workers state and the world revolution, put it this way:

"We must formulate our slogans in such a way that the workers see clearly just what we are defending in the USSR (state property and planned economy), and against whom we are conducting a ruthless struggle (the parasitic bureaucracy and its Comintern). We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 21.)

#### Indochina

A situation very different from the one in Afghanistan has developed in South-

east Asia over the past several years. The Vietnamese revolution, emerging triumphant against more than a decade of brutal U.S. aggression, resulted in mobilizations in South Vietnam leading to the expropriation of big exploiters and thus the extension of socialist property forms over the whole of the country, even though this transformation was carried through under the control of a privileged bureaucracy. U.S. imperialism then orchestrated major military aggression against the Vietnamese revolution, utilizing the anti-Vietnam military actions of the reactionary capitalist regime of Pol Pot and the Peking bureaucracy. Responding to this aggression, Hanoi helped the Kampuchean toilers overthrow the reactionary regime in Kampuchea, and drove forward the social revolution in Laos.

The fundamentally progressive character of Vietnam's intervention in Kampuchea is measured by the fact that the class struggle has been advanced from the point of view of the workers and peasants in Kampuchea and Laos. They have been inspired to push further in Laos; and can once again see a future for themselves in Kampuchea, a prospect literally blocked by the counterrevolutionary terror of the Pol Pot regime. Imperialist moves against the Vietnamese revolution have been dealt a blow. These actions have improved the world relation of class forces.

On the subjective level, they have caused divisions and ferment in the pro-Peking Communist Parties in the region, leading sections of them to reject Peking's proimperialist line, and providing openings for influence by revolutionary forces, including the Cubans. The advanced workers have been inspired, not repelled, by the Vietnamese actions.

## V. Imperialist Response

The imperialist response to tens of thousands of Soviet troops going into Afghanistan was to prop up other reactionary governments in the region and significantly step up aid to the rightist guerrillas. During the first period after the April 1978 coup, imperialism's objective had been primarily to undermine the possibility of the masses following through on the revolutionary opportunity that had opened up. Following the erosion of the gains that had been made and the Soviet occupation, the goal turned more toward making it as difficult as possible for the Kremlin and the PDPA to stabilize the situation, and to utilize the situation for stepping up its militarization campaign.

President Carter announced on January 7, 1980, that the White House would help form an international "consortium" to provide aid to the Pakistani government that would be partly financed by the Saudi regime. The Pentagon announced on the same day that modern arms and equipment would also be funneled to the Afghan guerrillas. The CIA was assigned to carry out the gun-running mission, which was, according to the *New York Times*, "the first operation of this nature and scope since the Angola civil war ended in 1976."

The Sadat government in Cairo quickly added its support to this reactionary effort.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown announced that Peking had agreed to respond with "parallel action" to that of Washington in stepping up aid.

British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington, on behalf of NATO and British imperialism, which still maintains strong economic and political interests in the region, toured Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Pakistan to discuss ways to aid the Afghan rightists and shore up defenses against upheavals in neighboring countries.

The West German government, a big donor to the reactionary Zia regime in Pakistan, increased its aid. The West German imperialists also have investments, particularly in electric power plants, in Afghanistan and maintain close ties with the Afghan counterrevolutionaries.

In addition to justifying increased aid to the rightists, Washington utilized the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan to grind out a massive volume of anti-Soviet and anticommunist propaganda.

It falsely branded Moscow as an expansionist aggressor, and raised the spectre of its troops rolling into other countries, including Yugoslavia, Pakistan, and even Iran.

According to the *New York Times*, the State Department officially "relaxed" its "accuracy code" on news reporting from Afghanistan, and the U.S. embassy and proimperialist press churned out one lie after another. They concentrated on exag-

gerating the scope of the war and the number of Soviet casualties, and competed with each other for inventing the worst atrocities committed by Soviet troops. The web became so tangled that the lies began contradicting each other, and bits and pieces of the truth were exposed.

By attempting to discredit the Stalinist regime in the Kremlin, which claims to be socialist, the imperialists were also trying to tarnish the image of socialism in the eyes of the toiling masses around the world. Steeped in hypocrisy, they said, "Look, here's a country that claims to be the 'natural ally' of the oppressed peoples. Yet it tramples on the sovereign rights of Afghanistan and took it over with tens of thousands of occupation troops. That's what socialism is, and if you ask for aid from 'socialist' countries, that's just what you'll eventually get."

Washington went on a drive to line up its imperialist allies and the governments of the semicolonial countries to join its campaign and denounce the Soviet Union. It saw this as a big opportunity to take the heat off itself from the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In an emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly in January 1980, only the sixth in its thirty-five-year history, Washington rammed through a resolution condemning foreign troops in Afghanistan and calling for their withdrawal. Washington was successful in getting it adopted by 104 votes to 18 (with 18 abstentions).

It got a similar resolution adopted by a big majority at the conference of foreign ministers of Islamic countries held January 27-28 in Pakistan. The conference was engineered by the Saudi Arabian monarchy and the Pakistani military dictatorship, with the open support of Washington.

However, many government representatives who voted for this resolution weren't willing to do more, and were reluctant to openly associate themselves any further with Washington's goals and hypocritical championing of the interests of Muslims. Even the proimperialist stalwart, President Zia of Pakistan, publicly turned down a \$400 million offer of direct military aid from President Carter. He claimed that this sum was too small, but the real reason was pressure exerted by the mass hatred of U.S. imperialism in his country.

Carter launched a campaign to boycott the World Olympics in Moscow; postponed conclusion of the SALT-II treaty; and curtailed trade to the USSR including slapping an embargo on certain forms of technology and the shipment of grain, 17 million tons of which had already been ordered.

While the imperialist campaign to discredit Moscow and tar the image of social-

ism chalked up a few points, the Olympic boycott was largely a failure. Most of Washington's imperialist allies and most countries in the colonial world participated in the Olympics. The grain embargo, which is a cruel use of food as a weapon, is a blow to Soviet working people who are suffering shortages from bad harvests. In one sense, however, the curtailment tended to backfire, as American farmers protested Carter's action, which led to the loss of this big customer.

But Washington's main goal in using the events in Afghanistan has been to gain acceptance for accelerating its militarization drive. It is trying to get agreement from countries in the Middle East and Western Asia to establish more military bases and the use of airstrips and ports. It has made headway toward stationing a large number of surface-to-surface nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

Most important, it is taking advantage of the Kremlin's occupation of Afghanistan and the American hostages in Iran to try to convince the American people to get over their "Vietnam syndrome," so that the first steps can be taken to prepare for the use of U.S. troops abroad. The form this is taking is to reestablish draft registration.

This is why Washington has exaggerated the scope of the war in Afghanistan, and why it portrays the Soviet Union as inherently aggressive and expansionist. But the American people not only have developed the "Vietnam syndrome"—they also have a "Soviet syndrome," that is, an understanding that adventures by Washington could go too far and bring down a nuclear catastrophe upon the world.

The Soviet Union is not imperialist. Unlike the imperialist countries, the economic foundations of the workers state, which still remain, contain no inherent drive to invest in other countries, to control and warp the economies of the semicolonies and dominate their raw materials, or to control access to their markets for imperialism's exports.

The Kremlin's foreign policy is essentially defensive, including in Afghanistan. Its need to maintain the status quo at home leads it to try to establish stable relations with imperialism and, therefore, oppose the extension of the world revolution.

### Carter and the Registration Fiasco

Carter's biggest defeat came when he tried to reinstitute draft registration. Hundreds of protests throughout the United States expressed the widespread antiwar and antidraft sentiment that exists in the working class and among students. Finally, after months of debate, Congress adopted a bill to register nineteen and twenty-year-old youth. But this law was ruled unconstitutional by a three-judge



federal court on the eve of the two-week period designated for registration, reflecting divisions in the ruling class on how to proceed in the face of the widespread opposition to the draft. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan put a stay on the lower court's injunction holding up registration. A decision by the Supreme Court on the constitutional questions has not yet been made.

Registration was opposed by the big majority of draft-age youth. Many expressed their opposition by not even registering; more than the government's inflated figures would indicate. The failure to win support and legitimacy for even draft registration was a defeat for the capitalist rulers. They will have to wage a new campaign if they are going to reintroduce the draft.



Zbigniew Brzezinski at the Khyber Pass. Washington's campaign around the Afghan invasion misfired.

## VI. Cuba's Policy on Afghanistan

The Cuban government hailed the revolutionary upheaval in Afghanistan from the outset, explaining that it was an advance for toiling people throughout the world. The January 14, 1979, issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, as part of its year-end round-up of the main events in 1978, pointed to the Afghan revolution. It "was a big blow to imperialism and the forces of international reaction," *Granma* stated. It was a "really popular government for the first time" in Afghan history.

On the first anniversary of the April 27 coup, *Granma Weekly Review* carried a feature article headlined, "In spite of all the attacks by world reaction—Afghanistan will win out." The concluding paragraphs expressed the Cubans' sentiments: "The Cuban revolution feels the cause of the people of Afghanistan to be its own cause.

"The Cuban revolution reiterates its firm support for and solidarity with the Afghan revolution, fully convinced that the heroic

Afghan people can never have taken from them the right to free themselves from the exploitation of man by man and the right to achieve total victory."

At a June 1979 meeting of the coordinating bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca reaffirmed this stand. He stated, "Cuba reiterates its staunch support for the revolutionary process taking place in Afghanistan and condemns the imperialists and reactionaries for their actions aimed at blocking the revolutionary course that the people have chosen."

Afghan President Taraki attended the conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in Havana in September, a few weeks before he was murdered. Castro, in welcoming the delegations, noted that "Ethiopia and Afghanistan now accompany us with a new revolutionary character. . . ."

Cuba's approach to the Afghan revolution was consistent with its policy toward

all such developments: welcome it, embrace it, offer aid to it, respect its indigenous character, and condemn all attempts by imperialism to undermine or crush it.

The Cuban government's stand toward the massive entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan is most clearly expressed in the statement made by Raul Roa Kouri to the January 1980 special session of the United Nations General Assembly. His address was in response to the resolution pushed by the United States government which "strongly deplores the recent armed intervention" and "calls for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan."

The Cuban statement, which appeared in the January 27, 1980, issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, was a blistering attack on U.S. imperialism—its hypocrisy, its record of brutal intervention into other countries, and its "gross manipulation of the events in Afghanistan." The Cuban statement was also notable in that it did not present any defense of the Soviet action or point to anything positive about the Soviet troops being in Afghanistan. It, instead, referred to a "historic dilemma."

Roa began his address blasting Washington's hypocrisy. "This sixth emergency session of the General Assembly has been convened under the doubtful mark of a self-serving uproar. The rulers of the United States rend their garments to come before international public opinion and demand respect for institutions which have traditionally been violated either by armed intervention or plots cooked up by the administrations of the United States ever since the end of the last century."

Then he pointed to the reactionary scum that were eagerly signing up for Washington's campaign.

"The outcry is joined by the Pinochets who have butchered their peoples, the Peking traitors who recently shed the blood of heroic Vietnam, and others of their ilk whose reactionary and pro-imperialist positions are well known."

He also noted that, "Of course, there are also those, including some of our very esteemed friends whose politics are undoubtedly progressive, who—not seeing through the imperialists' tricks—genuinely feel that issues that have a true bearing on the sovereignty and independence of the peoples are at stake here."

He then ran through some examples of Washington's support to reactionary actions throughout the world.

"The Israeli attacks on Lebanon and the almost daily bombings of Palestinian refugee camps have not aroused and do not arouse the concern of Yankee rulers, nor do the attacks by the South African and Rhodesian racists on the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana.

"The government of the United States has repeatedly threatened the oil-producing Arab states with military action and

even speaks of setting up special intervention forces and military bases in the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf to replace the Shah of Iran—reinstated by the CIA after overthrowing the nationalist government of Mossadegh—in the role of gendarme.

"That is why that Government's present remarks, which attempt to portray it as a defender of that which it has never respected and has repeatedly violated, are totally repugnant."

The next section leveled a scathing attack on Washington's reactionary policy in relation to Afghanistan and its anti-Soviet propaganda offensive.

"The Government of the United States, which advocates intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and is trying to push the nations of the region back to the status of pawns of imperialist policy, asked for an urgent meeting of the Security Council and unleashed a tremendous propaganda campaign amidst renewed drum beating for a new cold war and flagrant threats against another UN member state.

"As far as Cuba is concerned, this debate poses the need to take a stand in the face of a historic dilemma. The gross manipulation of events in Afghanistan by the U.S. imperialists and their efforts to capitalize on events there to conceal their cynical backing for the worst forces on the international scene, to promote their warlike policy and throw up a smoke screen around their own political and moral crisis, while once again giving vent to their primitive hatred for socialism, leaves no room for niceties."

In relation to the vote on Washington's United Nations motion, he explained that, "It is not the peoples' right to sovereignty which is at stake here. This is a right which Cuba will always uphold, as it has done at the cost of its own blood. But when an effort is made to use such a right to give a cloak of respectability to imperialism, which has brought death, oppression, backwardness, hunger, disease and ignorance to humanity, Cuba says 'no.'"

"We will never bring grist to the mill of reaction and imperialism. We will never align ourselves with the butchers of Vietnam; those who invaded Mexico and seized a large part of its territory; those who landed in Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic to safeguard the interests of their monopolies and who returned to the latter country not so many years ago to block the people from achieving democracy.

"We will not vote against socialism and with the accomplices of Zionism, which murders Palestinians and seeks to dismember the Arab nation; we refuse to stand on the side of those who support South Africa and are trying to deploy an additional 572 nuclear missiles against the Soviet Union. We are well aware of what both socialism and imperialism mean, and

we fully appreciate the historic roles of the Soviet Union and of U.S. imperialism. We therefore cast our vote today against that imperialism and its politics and, by so voting, we reaffirm our absolute faith in the peoples' right to sovereignty, in internationalism and in socialism, which is the definitive future of humanity."

Coverage in *Granma* on the Afghan situation, including Tass and Prensa Latina dispatches, has continued to concentrate on condemning imperialist intervention and Washington's anticommunist propaganda offensive.

The People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada also cast its vote against the U.S.-sponsored resolution. An article reflecting the views of the New Jewel Movement, published in the January 19, 1980, issue of its organ, the *New Jewel*, stated, "We believe that every country must have the right to seek military assistance if it faces a threat of invasion, especially when that invasion is intended to overthrow a popular Government or turn back a people's revolution."

Explaining the Grenadian government's position several months later in an interview with *Intercontinental Press*, published in the August 4 issue, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop said:

"On the Afghanistan question, we have been pointing out here in Grenada that what we are really concerned with there was the April 1978 revolution, not so much the December 1979 events. And in the intervening eighteen months, what was happening—in terms of the attempts at destabilization, the armed attacks from Pakistan and elsewhere, the plans of imperialism. And that what requires solidarity and support, therefore, is the right of the people of Afghanistan to build their revolution. And people can relate to that over here, because they see it happening to us too. They know we can have a similar type of problem."

Bishop, like the Cubans, places the emphasis on the threat from imperialism and the sovereign right of nations to seek aid to defend themselves.

The Nicaraguan United Nations delegation, representing one of the "highly esteemed friends whose politics are undoubtedly progressive" that Roa refers to, abstained on the U.S. resolution. The statement of its representative pointed to the threats to world peace posed by imperialist moves—"the conflict in Iran, the attitude of international reaction to Afghanistan . . . the maneuvers by American naval forces in the area, the dangers inherent in the recent supplying of weapons to Pakistan, and in general the postponement of the adoption of the SALT-II treaties."

At the same time, he also stated that world peace is threatened by "the presence of Soviet forces" in Afghanistan. Clearly indicating that this criticism was based on

concern for national sovereignty and the effect of abusing it, he stated:

"As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Nicaragua reiterates its support for the principles of nonintervention. We believe that no decision can be reached on proposals which do not reflect the interests of the nonaligned countries, and that a partial approach to the problem does not represent a solution."

As in *Granma*, the axis of the coverage in *Barricada*, the FSLN daily published in Managua, has been to condemn imperialist aid to the Afghan rightists and the Zia regime in Pakistan and to oppose the reactionary imperialist propaganda campaign.

This line was clearly expressed in a paragraph in the Soviet-Nicaraguan joint communiqué issued in Moscow on March 22. It stated, "The Soviet Union and Nicaragua strongly condemn the campaign, launched by the imperialist and reactionary forces, to whip up international tension in connection with the developments in Afghanistan, which is aimed at undermining the inalienable right of the people of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and other peoples of the world to follow the road of progressive transformations."

Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua repeated their votes when the UN General Assembly adopted a similar resolution on November 20.

#### **Cuba's Proletarian Internationalist Policy**

In order to more clearly see the implications of Cuba's stance in regard to Afghanistan, it is helpful to review how they explained their use of troops in Angola and Ethiopia and the stand they took in regard to the Vietnamese troops' move into Kampuchea.

Fidel Castro outlined the form and circumstances in which Cuban troops were sent to Angola in a speech April 19, 1976, in Havana. At the time of the speech the South African invasion of Angola had been defeated by the combined forces of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and Cuba.

He first explained the importance of this victory and blasted President Ford's attack on Cuba as an "international outlaw." He then said:

" . . . the United States invested several million dollars from the Spring of 1975 on to supply arms and instructors to the counterrevolutionary and separatist Angolan groups. Instigated by the United States, regular troops from Zaire entered Angolan territory in the summer of that same year, while South African military forces occupied the Cunene area in the month of August and sent arms and instructors to the UNITA bands.

"At that time there wasn't a single Cuban instructor in Angola. The first material aid and the first Cuban instructors reached Angola at the beginning of October, at the request of the MPLA, when





Cuban fighters in Angola. Their role in turning back South African invasion inspired anti-imperialist fighters all over the world and dealt a blow to reaction.

Angola was being insolently invaded by foreign forces. However, no Cuban military unit had been sent to Angola to participate directly in the fight nor was that projected.

"On October 23, also instigated by the United States, South African regular army troops, supported by tanks and artillery, invaded Angolan territory across the Namibian border and penetrated deeply into the country, advancing between 60 and 70 kilometers a day. On November 3, they had penetrated more than 500 kilometers into Angola, meeting their first resistance on the outskirts of Benguela, from the personnel of a recently organized school for Angolan recruits and from their Cuban instructors, who had virtually no means for halting the attack by South African tanks, infantry and artillery.

"On November 5, 1975, at the request of the MPLA, the leadership of our Party decided to send with all urgency a battalion of regular troops with antitank weapons to help the Angolan patriots resist the invasion of the South African racists. This was the first Cuban troops unit sent to Angola. When it arrived in the country, the foreign interventionists were 25 kilometers from Luanda in the north, their 140 millimeter artillery was bombing the suburbs of the capital and the South African fascists had already penetrated more than 700 kilometers into the south from the Namibian border while Cabinda was heroically defended by MPLA fighters and a handful of Cuban instructors.

"I do not mean to relate the events of the Angolan war, the later development of which is generally known to everyone, but

rather point out the occasion, the form and the circumstances in which our aid began. These facts are strictly exact." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, Fidel Castro, Publications Office, State Council, Havana, 1979, pp. 121-22.)

The Cuban troops were sent to Angola to help repel an imperialist military invasion. Fidel thinks that this fact is important and merits detailed explanation. It is precisely Cuba's role in *defending* Angola from *direct massive military attack* that won it broad support for this action and enhanced its prestige among class conscious workers and oppressed nations throughout Africa and the world. This was clearly demonstrated later in 1976, when a meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo, Sri Lanka, "commended the Republic of Cuba and other states which assisted the people of Angola in frustrating the expansionist and colonialist strategy of South Africa's racist regime and its allies." ("Evolution of the Non-aligned Movement," William M. Leo-Grande, *Problems of Communism*, January-February, 1980, p. 43.)

Fidel's insistence on being clear on the form in providing military aid flows from the Cuban government's acute sensitivity to the sovereign rights of oppressed nations and that interference in the affairs of other nations is not the road to independence and socialism. This is seen not as an ahistorical, moral question, but as an essential prerequisite to uniting the working class and advancing the socialist revolution.

Even in its relations with its closest allies, Cuba honors this principle. In his

speech in Nicaragua on July 19, 1980, Castro pointed out that, "there are those who seek to teach the Sandinistas what to do, but we will never try to tell the Sandinistas what they should do or offer you fortuitous advice. We are ready to give you all of our support, all the solidarity of our people without conditions and without advice. We do not come here to teach or to influence. We come humbly to learn and to be influenced." (*Intercontinental Press*, July 28, 1980, p. 780.)

Cuba's employment of volunteers in Ethiopia in 1977-78 was motivated along the same lines as in Angola.

Fidel explained this in a speech on March 15, 1978. He first indicated that Cuba had in early 1977 sought to negotiate a settlement of the differences between Somalia and Ethiopia. "We organized a meeting in Aden between the leaders of Ethiopia, Yemen and Somalia and ourselves in an effort to solve the problems between Somalia and Ethiopia, precisely to avoid a war; to avoid a development which would constitute a betrayal of the international revolutionary movement; to prevent the leadership of Somalia, with its territorial ambitions and aggressive attitude from going over to imperialism. We weren't able to prevent it. . . .

"But, at the Aden meeting the leaders of Somalia solemnly pledged, solemnly committed themselves not to invade Ethiopia ever, not to attack Ethiopia militarily. In fact, they already had everything planned, and the attack began in July.

"Ethiopia is a big country, it has a large population, it has soldiers and very good soldiers at that. That's why, in answer to their request, we initially decided to send them a few dozen instructors and advisers—the figure might have come to a few hundred—to train units and teach them how to handle modern weapons of a type they weren't familiar with. . . .

"We felt that helping them to train their army would be a provisional measure, because when the Ethiopian army has been trained and well armed you can be sure that nobody—nobody—will bother them. You can be sure of that!

"Why did it become necessary for us to send fighters? Because of the scope and magnitude of Somalia's aggression. Somalia had been preparing itself for a number of years. It had even been upholding the banners of socialism; it claimed to be a progressive country, an ally of the progressive world—I'm talking about the Somali Government—and all along it had been building up an army. Somalia had hundreds of tanks, hundreds of artillery pieces, planes, many motorized infantry brigades, and nearly all those weapons and units were used during the invasion of Ethiopia."

Fidel pointed out that Ethiopia also had a lot of modern military equipment that it had received from Washington before relations were broken in early 1977. But there

wasn't sufficient trained personnel to utilize it.

"Ethiopia was faced with a very difficult situation, with no time to spare. If the Ethiopians had had a little more time, they would have learned how to handle all those tanks, artillery pieces and other modern weapons. We, along with other socialist countries, would have contributed to training personnel. But the critical situation created by the invasion in late November led the Ethiopian Government to make an urgent request that we send tank, artillery, and aviation specialists to help the army, to help the country, and we did so.

"As *Granma* explained, our specialists started arriving in Ethiopia in mid-December and early January. We sent tank, artillery and aviation specialists, since the Ethiopians didn't have the time to learn how to handle that weaponry in view of the situation. They really didn't need infantry; there were plenty of infantrymen." (*Twenty Years of the Cuban Revolution and Selected Speeches of Fidel Castro, "Fidel Castro's Account of Cuba's Role in Ethiopia,"* Education for Socialists publication, Pathfinder Press, April 1979, pp. 126-27.)

"The Somalian aggression," Fidel explained in another speech a month later, "employing many well-armed forces, became a serious danger to the integrity, the revolution and the very existence of Ethiopia. Without the firmest internationalist support, the revolution could have been crushed."

Cuban fighters, he said, went to Ethiopia "to support its people in the just struggle against foreign aggression" and will remain there "for whatever length of time is agreed to by the governments of Ethiopia and Cuba, in order to support the Ethiopian people against any outside aggression." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 169-70, 172.)

Cuba's stance toward the deployment of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea and China's invasion of Vietnam last year help to illuminate further how they look at the use of troops in other countries.

The Cuban government has had a long and notable record of defending the Vietnamese revolution against imperialism. From 1963 when they established the Committees for Solidarity with Vietnam, the first such committees in the world, until today, the Cubans have consistently and energetically expressed their solidarity, including sending medical personnel and supplies and large donations of blood. They also offered to send troops to help repel U.S. aggression.

Fidel, in his July 26 address in 1978, noted the step-up in imperialist-backed military pressure against Vietnam and indicated that "we should offer the people of Vietnam our most determined solidarity and support. Our party proposes to reactivate the Committees of Solidarity with

Vietnam in the face of the threats of imperialist aggression, this time orchestrated—absurd as it may seem—by imperialism's brand new allies in the field of the counterrevolution." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 203-4.)

Ten days later the Vietnam Solidarity Committee got going again and waged an extensive educational campaign about the increasing border violations by both Peking and Pnompenh troops, and the reactionary nature of the Pol Pot regime.

So when Vietnamese troops and exiled Kampuchean oppositionists moved into Kampuchea in late December 1978 to help overthrow the hated Pol Pot regime, the Cuban people were politically prepared for it. Fidel immediately sent a telegram to Heng Samrin, printed in *Granma Weekly Review* January 21, 1979, recognizing the new government and hailing this event as a "great revolutionary victory of the sister people of Kampuchea." The role of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea was seen as one of aiding a liberation movement. This unambiguous stance sharply contrasts with the "historic dilemma" they saw in Afghanistan.

The Cuban press carried dozens of reports from its journalists in Kampuchea describing the atrocities that had been committed by the Pol Pot regime. At the same time they continued sounding the alarm about the danger of the Peking bureaucracy launching an invasion of Vietnam. When this attack occurred in February, a massive rally was organized in Havana to solidarize with Vietnam and condemn Peking's aggression.

In his speech to the rally, Fidel blasted the imperialist efforts to brand Vietnam as the aggressor in Indochina. "The moment that genocidal regime was overthrown a violent world campaign was launched against Vietnam because of its solidarity with the Kampuchean revolutionary movement, a campaign that tried to present Vietnam to the world as an aggressor country, a country that had violated the independence of another people, and to deny the truth: that the regime in Kampuchea had been intolerable."

He went on to say that "solidarity with Vietnam is the most imperative solidarity there is . . . ."

"This is a moment of definition for all who call themselves revolutionaries and progressives, for all those who say they want peace. This is no time for vacillation and ambiguity, for half-hearted measures, for viewing Vietnam and China in the same light. This is the time to define who is who. No one who loves peace, no one who considers himself a revolutionary or a progressive, can fail to condemn as energetically and categorically as possible this criminal adventure on which the Chinese government has embarked." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 217, 221-22.) Castro clearly differentiated the interests of the Chinese people,

including the soldiers, who he said had nothing to gain from this war, from the reactionary Peking leadership.

It is clear from these examples that the Cubans see the use of troops by workers states as a means of defending revolutions from imperialist attack, not organizing revolutions in other countries. The defeats for imperialism in Angola and Ethiopia, of course, created a more favorable situation for workers and peasants to carry forward their struggles against capitalism and, in this way, advance the goal of socialist revolution. But, this is different from the illusion that a revolution can be forced on a country from the outside. Only free men and free women can build socialism.

Fidel made this crystal clear in his April 1976 speech on Angola quoted earlier. Answering Washington's hysterical campaign of whipping up fear in Latin America and Africa about the threat of Cuban invasion, he said:

"No Latin-American country, whatever its social system, will have anything to fear from the Armed Forces of Cuba. It is our most profound conviction that each people must be free to build their own destiny; that each people and only the people of each country must and will make their own revolution. The Government of Cuba has never thought of taking revolution to any nation of this hemisphere with the arms of its military units. Such an idea would be absurd and ridiculous. . . ."

"No country of black Africa has anything to fear from Cuban military personnel. We are a Latin-African people—enemies of colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, apartheid, which Yankee imperialism aids and protects." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, pp. 125-26.)

### The Ultraleft Tough Guys

Some ultraleftists, like the Spartacist sect, have the opposite point of view. The Spartacists, for example, justify their enthusiastic cheering for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan on the basis that a "revolution from without" is being organized. In their opinion, revolution from within is impossible because of the small size of the industrial working class and large number of mullahs. They call on the USSR to "impose a social revolution on backward and mullah-ridden Afghanistan." This is a false position in general, over and above the fact that the Kremlin does not seek revolution in Afghanistan at all—whether from "within" or "without."

Cuba's policy outlined by Fidel is a model of the Marxist approach to this question. It was foreseen by Marx and Engels and is totally consistent with the policy carried out by the Bolshevik government led by Lenin and Trotsky in Russia.

In a letter to Karl Kautsky in 1882, Engels wrote, ". . . the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing. This



does not of course exclude defensive wars of various kinds. . . ." (*Selected Correspondence, Marx-Engels*, Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 331.)

At the eighth congress of the Bolshevik party in 1919, Lenin presented his views on this question in a debate with Bukharin. Bukharin's position was that the Soviet government should not honor the right of nations to self-determination because that was a concession to the capitalists in those countries. Instead, under the slogan of "the self-determination of the working people," the Bolsheviks should use their military forces to overthrow bourgeois regimes. Lenin's view, which was the majority opinion in the party, was that this was ultraleftist nonsense with reactionary implications. He argued:

"What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? Here, in Russia, the population, having had a long experience of the priests, helped us to overthrow them. But you know how badly the decree on civil marriage is still being put into effect. Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place."

He added, "As long as the bourgeoisie, or the petty bourgeoisie, or even part of the German workers, are under the influence of this bugbear—the Bolsheviks want to establish their system by force—so long will the formula 'the self-determination of the working people' not help matters. We must arrange things so that German traitor-socialists will not be able to say that the Bolsheviks are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be brought into Berlin on Red Army bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied." (*Collected Works, Lenin*, volume 29, Progress Publishers, 1965, pp. 172-74; also *Speeches to Party Congresses*, Progress Publishers, 1971, pp. 89-91.)

Trotsky, on the same subject, wrote in 1939: "Robespierre once said that people do not like missionaries with bayonets. By this he wished to say that it is impossible to impose revolutionary ideas and institutions on other people through military violence. This correct thought does not signify of course the inadmissibility of military intervention in other countries in order to cooperate in a revolution. But such an intervention, as part of a revolutionary international policy, must be understood by the international proletariat, must correspond to the desires of the toiling masses of the country on whose territory the revolutionary troops enter. The theory of



CASTRO: 'It is our profound conviction that each people must be free to build their own destiny.'

socialism in one country is not capable, naturally, of creating this active international solidarity which alone can prepare and justify armed intervention. The Kremlin poses and resolves the question of military intervention, like all other questions of its policy, absolutely independently of the ideas and feelings of the international working class." (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 28.)

Like these Marxist predecessors, the Cuban leadership weighs very carefully the question of national sovereignty in relation to sending troops to another country, even for defensive purposes. As Fidel explained, the "occasion, form and circumstances" are evaluated closely from the standpoint of whether national rights will be violated or could be seen by the masses as being violated. They especially consider whether such action can be politically explained and justified to the working classes and oppressed nations throughout the world. They also take a look at whether other forms of aid—weapons, ammunition, instructors, advisers, medical supplies, etc.—would be adequate to help repel imperialist aggression or assist revolutionary struggles.

The sovereign right of the Afghan government to seek aid from the USSR or any other country to fight off the imperialist-backed guerrillas is indisputable. However, the Kremlin's decision to violently oust the head of state and occupy the country with tens of thousands of troops is not an

example of respecting Afghanistan's national sovereignty as part of an *internationalist proletarian* foreign policy. It was the reactionary continuation of a *narrow nationalist* foreign policy of a bureaucratic caste.

As important as the Cubans view military assistance in combating imperialist aggression, they place even greater importance on the more than fifty thousand Cuban doctors, nurses, teachers, skilled construction workers, agronomists, engineers and technicians who have volunteered to help in more than thirty countries, including Angola, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Grenada, and Vietnam. Cuba alone, for example, has 1,500 doctors in other countries, more than all those from countries organized by the World Health Organization.

In his July 26, 1978, speech Fidel noted that "twenty times as many teachers and professors graduated as there were officers for our Armed Forces, even though it is a very high honor for a Cuban to be a soldier or an officer, because the arms borne in our homeland and even outside it are used in the most noble cause of the Revolution and internationalism. When it comes right down to it, we are all soldiers of the Revolution, but it is more difficult to teach than to die. More than once, our men fought and died for this right, for men must also know how to die so that mankind may live. . . ."

"We will live on what our technology, natural resources and sweat can create, and we won't be egoists like a snail closed in its own shell; we will give the world everything within the reach of our revolutionary and internationalist generosity." (*Current Problems of Underdeveloped Countries*, p. 189.)

The Cubans are very consistent in their foreign policy, and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we assume that they have approached Afghanistan with the same considerations that they did Angola, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Grenada. The conclusion they have reached in regard to the situation there is that it is a "historic dilemma."

Faced with this situation, Fidel, in his capacity as the chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, has offered to mediate discussions between the Afghan and Pakistan governments.

In late March, Fidel sent messages to this effect to President Babrak Karmal of Afghanistan and General Zia of Pakistan. They were personally delivered by Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca who visited Moscow, Kabul, and Islamabad.

According to the report in the April 13, 1980, *Granma*, Fidel "offered the good offices of Cuba to try to contribute to arrange for a political solution to the complex situation existing in the region of Southwest Asia, which seriously threatens world peace and security." This initiative was apparently unsuccessful.

## VII. Tasks of American Workers

In the wake of the Kremlin's occupation of Afghanistan, U.S. imperialism mounted a massive international propaganda campaign designed to disorient the working class. It utilized the presence of Soviet occupation troops in Afghanistan to try to whip up fear about the threat of "communist aggression." It continues to lie about the origins of the revolution and the class character of the civil war in Afghanistan, while attempting to cover up the extent of Washington's reactionary involvement in the region.

This is all aimed at creating a climate more favorable to winning acceptance from American working people for increased war spending and military intervention, including the use of combat forces, against the struggles of the oppressed throughout the world. Washington is driving forward with the expansion of its nuclear weapons program including the cruise, MX, and Trident missiles; and it is stepping up its production of weapons-grade plutonium. As the first step toward using troops, they are attempting to reintroduce draft registration and get agreement for a draft when they want it.

Washington and its allies also responded to the Kremlin's occupation of Afghanistan with stepped-up military aid to Afghan rightists and the military dictatorship in Pakistan. They have taken punitive measures against the USSR and Afghanistan and increased their war preparations.

The key task of class-conscious workers must be to combat this reactionary campaign. We must oppose all imperialist intervention in Afghanistan. Not one penny should go to maintaining the CIA and military advisers, nor to financing the landlord-backed counterrevolutionary guerrillas. We must demand the withdrawal of all imperialist forces from the region, including naval forces, and the dismantling of all their bases. We must explain the responsibility of imperialism for the worldwide militarization drive, combating "third camp" currents in the petty-bourgeois left that seek to place "equal blame" on imperialism and the government of the Soviet Union.

We must condemn imperialism's aggressive actions, which hurt the working classes here and abroad, such as the suspension of grain deliveries to the Soviet Union and the cutoff of food aid to Afghanistan by the European Common Market.

We must explain the truth about the situation in Afghanistan, detailing the scope and nature of Washington's reactionary intervention and exposing the anticommunist lies fabricated by the bourgeois press. We must oppose its military build-up of the Pakistani and Turkish regimes, which is solely aimed at our

fellow working people in the region.

It also means explaining the economic and social backwardness suffered by the majority of the population in Afghanistan as the result of decades of imperialist oppression. It means explaining the revolutionary opportunity that opened up for the workers and peasants with the April 1978 coup, the popular actions of the masses that took place immediately following it, and the importance of these gains for the Afghan people. Political consciousness has been changed and social relations challenged. Afghanistan will never be the same. We are unambiguously on the side of the Kabul regime in any clash with the imperialist-backed rightist guerrillas and must explain the importance of defeating the rightist opposition.

We have to show how this opening and the fight against the reactionary landlord resistance was obstructed and stifled by the government headed by the PDPA and by the Stalinist policies of the Kremlin. Their disastrous policies led to the unpopular and reactionary occupation of the country by tens of thousands of Soviet troops—an occupation that has harmed and continues to make more difficult the struggle to win and mobilize the toilers against the exploiters and oppressors.

The working masses of Afghanistan must be able to take initiatives to advance their own interests. The Soviet occupation makes this qualitatively more difficult. For revolutionary Marxists in the Soviet Union, this means denouncing the antiworking-class policy of the Kremlin and demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops. However, in the imperialist countries campaigning on the slogan of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan today would only serve to add fuel to the imperialist propaganda campaign, militarization drive, and intervention in Afghanistan. Our job is to concentrate our fire on the militarist and aggressive policies of the employing class and present the working-class alternative to this policy.

One way we can help counter Washington's anticommunist campaign is to explain Cuba's revolutionary internationalist foreign policy, which stands in sharp contrast to the Kremlin's counterrevolutionary line. This will also help make more clear to our fellow workers what we mean by internationalism.

Millions of Polish workers, fighting for their own organizations in order to move toward a democratic *workers* state, are exposing the imperialist lie that the only alternative to Stalinism is capitalism. We solidarize with this historic struggle and help to get its lessons to American workers. We fight to reverse the current American trade union officialdom's policy of backing Washington's imperialist foreign

policy which is directed against the Polish workers.

Washington's militarization campaign is aimed at trying to secure a better position to deal blows to and reverse the revolutions in Iran and Central America and the Caribbean. We must reaffirm our solidarity with the revolutionary masses there and condemn all threats by imperialism against them.

We must condemn the counterrevolutionary attack by the Iraqi regime against Iran which only aids the imperialist objective of undermining and reversing the Iranian revolution.

Finally, a central, ongoing campaign is our participation in and initiation of protests against nuclear weapons and power and the draft.

We are for unilateral nuclear disarmament by Washington and its imperialist allies, the true aggressors and warmakers in the world. We are against all attempts by imperialism to develop a first-strike capability, including the beefing up of its nuclear arsenal in Western Europe, increasing research and production of chemical and biological weapons, and the construction of the MX missile system. We condemn the hazards created by the production, transportation, storage, testing, and disposal of nuclear weapons.

The fiasco suffered by the Carter administration in the face of the response of American youth to its draft registration law this summer means that the capitalist rulers will have to take further measures to try to win support for registration and conscription. The deep antiwar and anti-draft sentiments in the working class and among students mean that such moves will be met with significant protests.

No Draft, No War!

### Havana Denies Presence of Cuban Troops in Afghanistan

Replying to claims in a French news agency dispatch from Islamabad, Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically denied that there are any Cuban troops in Afghanistan in a document released November 30.

The dispatch, according to a November 30 report on Radio Havana, quoted western diplomatic sources as saying that there were Cuban combat units in Afghanistan and that their presence had been confirmed in various parts of the country.

Branding the report "totally false," and a "pure invention, a dirty trick," the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs charged that its purpose, among others, was to disrupt the mediating role that the Cuban government, as head of the Non-aligned Movement, is playing in the conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan and between Iran and Iraq.



## How Revolutionists Viewed Soviet Occupation of East Europe

[The following resolution, which was adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International in June 1946, sheds light on some of the questions raised by the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan today.

[The resolution dealt with the stand to be taken by socialists in face of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and part of Austria) after the defeat of Hitler in World War II.

[The Fourth International fully supported the defense of the first workers state against the Nazi invasion during World War II. But after the defeat of Hitler, the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe served as an obstacle to the struggle of the East European workers for socialism. It became necessary to raise the demand for withdrawal of Soviet troops.

[Stalin began the occupation by ordering the suppression of anticapitalist struggles that broke out after the collapse of the Nazi occupation. Instead of helping the working people to set up governments of their own choosing and to get rid of capitalist exploitation, Stalin imposed coalition regimes of Communist party leaders and local bourgeois figures.

[Stalin's goal was a deal with Washington. He offered to preserve capitalism in Eastern Europe, and to support capitalist regimes elsewhere, in exchange for the continuation of friendly diplomatic and economic relations with the imperialists, and for guarantees against a new invasion of the Soviet Union.

[When the Truman administration and its European allies launched the cold war, Stalin was forced to change course. Following Moscow's lead, the East European Communist parties organized the overturn of the weakened capitalist system that they had previously defended. Tightly controlled mobilizations, including by trade unions and workers committees in the factories, were staged for this purpose.

[Once this was accomplished, Stalin launched a brutal purge of the East European regimes, jailing or executing Communist leaders who he feared might be tempted to lean on the workers and peasants as a base of support against domination by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

[The turn toward overthrowing capitalism was not applied everywhere. In Soviet-occupied Austria, Soviet troops continued to help prop up the capitalist government. In 1955 they were withdrawn after an agreement was signed on the neutralization of Austria.

[While the Fourth International (like the workers in the countries involved) de-

fended the social gains made through the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe, it completely opposed the antidemocratic and anti-working-class methods through which this was accomplished. The crimes of Stalin in Eastern Europe helped soil the name of socialism among big layers of the world working class for years to come.

[The turn by the Kremlin from supporting capitalist governments in Eastern Europe to ordering their overthrow did not lead the Fourth International to drop the demand that Soviet troops be withdrawn. The Fourth International recognized that Soviet occupation remained, as it had been from the start, an obstacle to the advance of the working people of Eastern Europe toward socialism. This remains the position of the Fourth International today.

[Of course, not everything in this resolution is applicable to the situation in Afghanistan, which occurs under a very different set of circumstances in the international class struggle. For example, military defense of the Soviet Union, which at that time had no nuclear arms, against the threat of imperialist attack was posed in a qualitatively sharper and more direct fashion than in Afghanistan today.

[But the 1946 resolution nonetheless sheds light on the proper method to use in addressing such questions. It began with the needs and line of march of the oppressed and exploited masses of Eastern Europe, and did not separate the role of the Soviet occupation from the overall counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy. It drew a correct distinction between the political stance of a Marxist internationalist toward the occupation and the equally important—often much more important—question of how that stance is implemented differently by revolutionists in imperialist countries, in the workers states, and by those directly on the scene. A political campaign in the United States and Western Europe around the demand of Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe, for example, would have been dead wrong, adding fuel to the Cold War propaganda machine the imperialists were in the process of cranking up.

[Using the same method today, socialists reject campaigning in the imperialist countries on the slogan of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. With U.S. and other imperialist backing for the rightist guerrillas and the Pakistani dictatorship; with the institution of draft registration by the Carter administration and efforts to build up the NATO nuclear force in Europe; and with propaganda efforts such as the Olympic boycott—with factors such as these, the

clear responsibility of revolutionists in the United States and other imperialist countries is to concentrate fire on the militarist and aggressive policies of the employing class and present the working-class alternative to this policy.

[The resolution on the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe is reprinted from the August 1946 issue of *Fourth International*, which was the theoretical journal of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.]

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Held one year after the end of the second world war, the Big Four conference at Paris in May 1946 has again clearly shown the inability of the victors of this war to establish a stable peace and to enable Europe to rise up again from its ruins, to make progress and to live in freedom.

The complexity of the antagonisms between the American and British imperialist interests and the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, as well as the opposition between these interests and the elementary needs of the masses, are such that the victors fear public discussion before world opinion and prefer to engage in the greatest secrecy in sordid deals made arbitrarily and cynically concerning the fate of millions of human beings in ruined Europe and the oppressed colonial countries.

The Paris Conference was not able to solve any of the principle questions concerning the peace treaty with Italy and the other satellite countries nor above all the essential questions of Austria and Germany. Its failure has just brought about the breaking of the Potsdam agreements concluded between the defeat of Germany and that of Japan. More than ever the partitioning of Germany and Austria into zones continues with disastrous results for the workers of all Europe.

At the Paris Conference American diplomacy for the first time undertook a strong offensive against Soviet diplomacy and declared itself ready to call the latter before the United Nations Organization.

If the servants of American imperialism have once again been able to pose as the champions of peace, of the right of self-determination of peoples, etc. . . . despite their policy of looting both in Europe and in the Far East, it is because the spokesmen of the Soviet bureaucracy have been seen not only to abstain from taking positions, even platonically, for the right of free self-determination of peoples, but on the contrary, become the "realistic" defenders of reparations, annexations, of the military occupation of Europe and the

imperialist guardianship over the colonial countries and engage in bartering among the claims of the different powers at the expense of the vanquished.

If the champions of Wall Street have been able to brandish the threat of calling on the UNO, it is because the Soviet bureaucracy is in practice unable to win over to its cause, as the foreign policy of the October revolution did, the sympathy of the oppressed masses of the imperialist nations, and the small nations, victims of the imperialists.

In this period of tension, in which compromises ensuing from the recent world war are adjusted, the military occupation of spheres of influence in Europe and in the world serves the imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy as pledges in their current policy of a trial of strength. Meanwhile, the reactionary effects of this occupation are becoming more and more obvious.

The military-occupied countries, already ruined by the war, are growing even more exhausted, crushed under the weight of the occupation costs and of foreign control over their resources and their economy; at the same time the free development of the mass movement is fettered by the reactionary military apparatus of the imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy.

The continuation of military occupation entails an accentuation of the economic decomposition of Europe and the colonial countries and the strangling of their revolutionary movements.

Moreover, prolonged military occupation results, within the victor countries themselves, in the maintenance of a burdensome and costly military apparatus and permits the building and selection of cadres and troops designed to be used eventually against the workers of those countries.

The maintenance of important military forces, the occupation of territories in Europe and throughout the world, and the holding of millions of Japanese and German workers as prisoners of war, utilized as an extra-cheap labor force, are the direct continuation of the war. Consequently the continuation of the struggle which the Fourth International and its sections have carried on throughout the war for the disintegration of the armed forces of capitalism, for the fraternization of the workers of all countries, "Allied" or "Enemy" in uniform or out of uniform, must find its expression in a struggle against the maintenance of the military apparatus, against military occupation, for the liberation of all prisoners of war, and for the international solidarity of the proletariat.

In this struggle the Fourth International denounces any and all pretexts which cover up this reactionary policy of the imperialists and of the Soviet bureaucracy. In opposition to the machinations of their secret diplomacy, it sets up the slogan of the right to self-determination of the peo-

ples of the European and colonial countries.

The Fourth International demands the withdrawal of all foreign armies, including the Red Army, from all occupied territories. It opposes all annexations, reparations, forced transfers of populations and the detention of millions of German and Japanese workers as prisoners of war, either by the imperialists or by the Soviet bureaucracy. The Fourth International recognizes no other frontiers than those drawn by the culture and freely expressed preferences of the populations concerned.

To the impasse into which the policy of the imperialists and of the Stalinist bureaucracy has led, to the bankruptcy of the peace conference and of the UNO and to the threat of the Third World War, the Fourth International counterposes the revolutionary struggle of the exploited masses of all countries for the triumph of the world socialist revolution and the Federation of the Socialist United States of Europe and of the world.

In demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army from the territories it occupies, the Fourth International nowise abandons its slogan of unconditional defense of the USSR. The Fourth International likewise defends the progressive economic measures carried out in the territories occupied by the Red Army. But the defense of the planned state economy of the USSR as well as that of the progressive reforms carried out in Eastern Europe cannot be assured by purely military means, and especially not by the occupation of territories for a strategical purpose. Real defense is based first of all on the free revolutionary activity of the masses which must assure the total victory of the proletarian revolution. The masses of the countries at present must feel absolutely free, without any pressure, to determine their own fate. The occupation of these countries by the Red Army, the burdens imposed upon them, their treatment as defeated countries, can only harm the fundamental interests of the world socialist revolution and dangerously compromise in the eyes of the masses the defense of the USSR against imperialist attacks. Examples in this sense are already numerous (elections in Hungary, Austria, Germany).

Consequently, the unconditional defense of the USSR cannot, in the zone occupied by the Red Army, lead to any policy of support even provisional or temporary, with this or that bourgeois or petty-bourgeois clique or organization which banks on the bureaucracy, as against bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties which bank on imperialism. It can be applied only by an energetic carrying out of uncompromising class struggle of the proletariat against its own bourgeoisie. That is why the slogan "immediate departure of the occupation troops" and an energetic

campaign against the barbarous methods of the bureaucracy are alone capable of rehabilitating the policy of the defense of the USSR by clearly indicating that the defense of the USSR nowise justifies the crimes of Stalin.

Where, however, reactionary movements arise which, with the backing of the imperialists, attempt to overthrow the more or less stultified economy and restore landlordism in order to establish a base for attack against the Soviet Union, we oppose such a movement and fight alongside the Red Army for the defeat of the imperialists and their agents, until the workers in that country are able to stand alone against the bourgeois counterrevolution.

In the application of this general policy, the sections of the Fourth International will emphasize it differently according to the position of their own country.

The British and French sections as well as the American Trotskyists put forward the slogan of the withdrawal of the troops of their own imperialism from all the countries which they occupy (Europe, India, Indonesia, etc., etc. . . . for England; Europe and the colonies, for France; Europe, Philippines, China, etc., for the USA). The Bolshevik-Leninists of the USSR denounce the anti-working-class policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the occupied countries and demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops, but the sections in the occupied countries will emphasize especially internationalist and revolutionary fraternization with the soldiers of the occupying armies, fraternizations to which they will subordinate the campaign for the withdrawal of these troops. Our comrades in all zones of occupation must present the policy in such a way that it cannot be used against the Soviet Union to the advantage of the imperialists. □

### Repression in Cyprus

Over the past few months there have been a series of arrests of leftist activists in Cyprus. On November 7, 8, and 9, for example, seven activists were detained, including Simis Soukiouoglou, a supporter of the Greek Cypriot Trotskyist group.

The seven were arrested while they were circulating a petition calling for the release of two Greek Cypriots jailed in Athens, who had gone on hunger strike to protest their imprisonment.

Those arrested with Soukiouoglou were Georgios Georgiou, Konstantinos Evthimiou, Andreas Kyriakou, Elli Agathagelou, Lazaros Mavrou, and Vasos Stokhopoulou.



## Italian Government Denounced After Earthquake

By Janice Lynn

The earthquake that devastated large areas of southern Italy at the end of November was Europe's worst in decades, leaving more than 3,000 dead, and an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 people homeless. And the death toll is expected to climb upwards.

This disaster revealed the callousness and corruption of the Italian government which did close to nothing in the days following the November 23 earthquake. Thousands of villagers were left buried alive under rubble. And those who survived went for days without food, water, or shelter, resulting in scores more deaths from pneumonia and exposure to the bitter cold.

The earthquake was centered in a mountainous area where some 7 million of Italy's poorest rural population live. The last concern of the Italian government was with the lives or well-being of these workers and peasants.

The government's inaction set off a furious reaction among the earthquake survivors, whose relatives lay crying for help under the debris—the help that in most cases never came or came too late.

Immediately after the earthquake, Pope John Paul II and Italy's figurehead president Alessandro Pertini were dispatched to the ravaged area. But they quickly discovered that the enraged villagers wanted to see rescuers instead.

"How dare you stroll through here?" shouted one man to Pertini's immaculately dressed presidential party. "This is not a spectacle, you shits!" the Laviano resident exclaimed, digging through the rubble. "My wife is down there. She has been screaming for two days."

Pertini was berated at every stop on his tour.

Nor did the pope, confronted by angry survivors desperate for help, receive a warm welcome. Hundreds of local officials were mobilized for his visit, detracting from the crucial tasks of organizing the needed relief.

By the third day, thousands of homeless villagers were still without tents, mattresses, or blankets. Temperatures reached below freezing at night, and snow, driving rain, and high winds swept across the area, increasing their misery.

The Italian press agency ANSA reported how the mood quickly turned from grief to anger at the slowness of the government's response.

The government tried to make excuses: it underestimated the force of the quake and the size of the area affected; the terrain of

the stricken area was hilly and difficult; rescue efforts were hampered by heavy fog and traffic jams. One Italian daily wrote that rescue operations might have been delayed because the entire Cabinet was dining with visiting British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

But the villagers did not accept these excuses. "Our relatives working in Germany got here before the police or army," one angry survivor said.

Frustrated by the government's inaction, thousands of volunteers began to arrive on their own—students, doctors, nurses, workers—from all over Italy. In some cases these volunteers arrived days before any official rescue operations even began. But most did not have the necessary equipment needed to rescue those still buried under the ruins.

Contingents came from the Young Communist League and other leftist youth groups. Donations were taken up by labor unions. Community organizations began to collect funds and clothing for the victims.

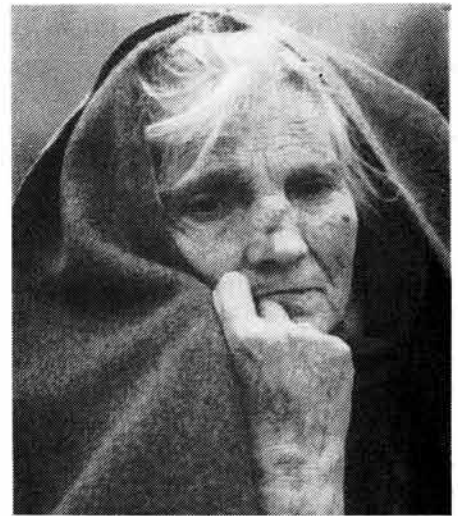
One factory donated truckloads of desperately needed earth-moving equipment. A team of electricians and mechanical workers from a factory near Milan arrived in one town and were able to get a generator working to provide lights and warmth in several tents.

A French team of surgeons had offered to come to Italy, but were told by the government they were not needed. The Swiss offered medicine, the West Germans, a military field hospital—the offers were not accepted.

The villagers pointed out over and over that if the government had acted immediately and had brought the necessary equipment, many of the people now dead and buried might have survived. The most telling figure is that after eight days only 113 people had been rescued alive from the ruins of some 150 towns hit by the quake. And rescue teams had still not reached all of the affected towns.

Angry protests took place. Irate survivors from the town of Nocera Inferiore blocked trains to draw attention to their plight. The mayors of ten towns sent an angry telegram to Italian president Pertini protesting the fact that after five days not one bit of aid had been received from the central government.

Homeless survivors began to occupy vacant apartment buildings, schools, and monasteries. Hundreds of women and children left homeless in Naples attempted to take over empty homes in several parts



Earthquake victim in Balvano.

of the city, only to be repulsed by the police.

The angry mood was compounded by recollections of how official funds earmarked to relieve past earthquake victims had disappeared into the pockets of politicians and speculators. The mayor of one town in Sicily, which had suffered an earthquake in 1968, denounced these governmental thieves, pointing out that 40,000 homeless were still waiting for government housing promised *twelve years ago*.

The corruption was in evidence again. It could be seen in the growing black market in coffins that were selling for as much as \$1,800. It could be seen when sixteen out of forty-four trailers in a relief column destined for the destroyed mountain town of Calabritto disappeared en route.

Villagers frustrated by the slow pace of relief distribution began helping themselves to food from supply trucks.

"We are treated worse than animals," one old man declared, summing up the government's attitude towards the earthquake victims.

The disaster in Italy and the role of the Italian government is reminiscent of that of the Somoza dictatorship following the earthquake that devastated Managua in December 1972. Somoza and his cronies profited enormously from the funds that had been earmarked for reconstruction, while thousands of Nicaraguans suffered, remaining homeless and without food.

Food, medicine, and clothes sent as relief donations were later found on sale in Managua.

In the case of Italy, an industrialized capitalist country with a bourgeois-democratic government, the scandal surrounding the earthquake relief cannot be blamed on a corrupt dictator. Rather, it is inherent in the nature of capitalist rule—a system that puts the profits and interests of the rich ahead of the human needs of the working people. □

# 150,000 Marchers in Britain Demand Right to Jobs

A digital population clock over the speakers platform ticked off the relentless rise in unemployment as 150,000 marchers gathered in Liverpool on November 29 to protest the policies of Britain's Conservative Party (Tory) government, which have caused unemployment to rise above 2.1 million people, well over 8 percent of the British workforce. Every fifteen seconds the clock added another worker to the jobless toll.

The march for the right to work was one of the largest political demonstrations in Britain in years. Special trains and buses, bearing slogans such as "Save Jobs—Sack the Tories," came from all over Britain, especially from the hard-hit industrial North of England and Scotland. Large contingents of marchers came from the Liverpool area itself, which is suffering 15 percent unemployment.

According to Pat Kane, writing in the December 3 issue of the British weekly *Socialist Challenge*, "it was a different world from the normal labour movement march." On the march were "thousands of ordinary people . . . who would never come to London marches."

Michael Foot, the newly elected head of

the parliamentary Labour Party, told the demonstrators:

"We're going to carry this campaign from one end of the country to the other, to mobilize the power and strength of the people to destroy this Thatcher government and build a real socialism."

Labour Party member of Parliament Eric Heffer stated that "the next Labour government must not go down as another one that tried to administer capitalism better than a Tory capitalist government, but as one that began the rebuilding of British industry, along socialist lines. . . ."

Jo Richardson, a member of the Labour Party's national executive, pointed to the way unemployment is being used to drive women out of the work force. She declared, "we mustn't forget that women have a right to a job as well as everyone else."

The crowd was more militant than the speakers. When Alan Fisher, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees, demanded a general election, the crowd responded with a chant for a general strike.

The Trades Union Congress-Labour Party liaison committee is planning a

series of regional demonstrations against the policies of the Thatcher government. This perspective was echoed by Alan Fisher, who called for demonstrations in the industrial Midlands and Northeast.

One group of demonstrators showed concretely how the rising unemployment could be fought. After a seven week factory occupation in the Gardner diesel engine plant in Manchester, workers there forced Gardner's management to drop plans for the immediate layoff of 590 workers.

The Gardner sit-in received tremendous support from the labor movement in Britain. This was reflected on the placards that Gardner's workers carried on the Liverpool march—"Gardners sacked us, the nation backed us, and WE WON!"

The day's most popular chant, soaring above the marching bands and bag pipes was "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out! Out! Out!"

Coming on the heels of an October 26 London demonstration of 80,000 against the Tory government's plans to place nuclear-armed Cruise missiles in Britain, the Liverpool demonstration shows the potential for mass demonstrations against the right-wing policies of the present British government. □

## Urge Solidarity With Nicaragua, El Salvador

### Social Democratic Leaders Hit U.S. Policy

By Fred Feldman

WASHINGTON D.C.—The growing breadth of the international movement for solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution and the struggle of the people of El Salvador was indicated at the conference on "Eurosocialism and America" held here December 5-7. The conference attracted more than 2,000 people.

Sponsored by the Institute for Democratic Socialism and strongly supported by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, the meeting featured leaders of Social Democratic parties from around the world.

The meeting heard speeches by such figures as Olof Palme, former prime minister of Sweden; Tony Benn, leader of the British Labour Party's left wing; François Mitterrand, head of the French Socialist Party; former Prime Minister Joop den Uyl of the Netherlands; and former Chancellor of West Germany Willy Brandt, who now

heads the social-democratic Socialist International.

The conference also included workshops examining political and economic problems in the United States.

In his keynote address Olof Palme sharply denounced the repression in El Salvador and called for solidarity with the freedom fighters.

Tony Benn told a December 7 news conference following adjournment of the conference that the British Labour Party, through its international committee, has voiced support for the Revolutionary Democratic Front of El Salvador.

"We are going to be watching the American government's attitude toward civil rights in Latin America very closely," he said. "The credibility of your government's support for civil and human rights will be judged by what it *does* in Latin America, and particularly in El Salvador, as well as

by what it *says* about Poland."

Hundreds of signatures were obtained on petitions demanding that Washington stop all assistance to El Salvador's brutal junta.

The first meeting of the International Committee for the Defense of Nicaragua, projected by the Socialist International at its recent congress in Madrid, was held during the conference.

The committee is chaired by Felipe González, head of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

According to a news release issued after the meeting, the committee "received an account of the present situation in Nicaragua by Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto."

The committee's stated aim is to work "for international solidarity and assistance for Nicaragua's development program" and "to avert foreign intervention in Nicaragua's internal affairs by outside powers."

At the December 7 news conference, Willy Brandt expressed concern that pro-Somoza forces might attempt a comeback if Nicaragua did not receive strong international support.

This aspect of the conference may help explain the nearly complete blackout of its proceedings in the U.S. media. □