

# international press correspondence

# INPRECOR



**GREECE: only the beginning**

## in this issue...

\*AFTER PORTUGAL AND GREECE: A HOT AUTUMN IN MEDITERRANEAN EUROPE \*CYPRUS: THE FAILURE OF 'ENOSIS' by G. Vergeat \*PORTUGAL: THE SECOND 'PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT' \*FOR THE UNIFICATION OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS IN SPAIN by Carmen Ayesteran \*THE END OF WEST GERMAN STABILITY by Winfried Wolf & Werner Hulsberg \*THE SALT TALKS AND THE DETENTE by Jon Rothschild \*MILITARY FACE-OFF IN CENTRAL ASIA by A. Miles \*PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH: FROM BAD TO WORSE by Tariq Ali \*THE IRAQI COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE KURDISH REVOLUTION \*DECLARATION OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL \*DOCUMENTS: SRI LANKA, THE SITUATION OF THE LEFT AND THE BUILDING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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## contents

<u>EDITORIAL</u>	
After Portugal and Greece: A Hot Autumn in Mediterranean Europe	3
<u>CYPRUS</u>	
The Failure of 'Enosis' -- by G. Vergeat	4
<u>PORTUGAL</u>	
The Second 'Provisional Government'	7
<u>SPAIN</u>	
For the Unification of the Workers Commissions -- by Carmen Ayesteran	9
<u>WEST GERMANY</u>	
The End of Stability -- by Winfried Wolf and Werner Hulsberg	13
<u>SALT</u>	
SALT, MIRV, MAD . . . Détente? -- by Jon Rothschild	19
<u>SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT</u>	
Military Face-Off in Central Asia -- by A. Miles	23
<u>SOUTH ASIA</u>	
Pakistan and Bangladesh: From Bad to Worse -- by Tariq Ali	28
<u>IRAQ</u>	
The Communist Party and the Kurdish Revolution: A History of Betrayal	32
<u>UNITED SECRETARIAT DECLARATION</u>	
On the PST's Joint Support With Bourgeois Parties to the 'Process of Institutionalization'	42
<u>DOCUMENT</u>	
Sri Lanka: The Situation of the Left and the Building of the Revolutionary Party	44

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editorial

## after portugal and greece: a hot autumn in mediterranean europe

The Greek dictatorship, like the Portuguese dictatorship, had to step down because its internal divisions were threatening to bring about the disintegration of the army, the only effective instrument of power left to the decrepit bourgeoisie in both these countries. The dictatorship had to step down because it was becoming a source of embarrassment and crisis for the ruling class and its imperialist protectors.

In both cases, the enthronement of a "man of providence," here Spínola, there Karamanlis, was above all a preventive step. The regime was changed from above to prevent it from being overthrown from below. In both cases, the success of the maneuver is doubtful at best.

To be sure, the Greek Caetanos have not yet been driven out. For the moment, they are sharing power with a team of worn out bourgeois politicians who they had not so long ago insulted and humiliated. Even the chief of the military police, Ioannidis the torturer, is still at his post. It is not yet certain that the generals gave up more than the appearance of power on the night of July 23-24.

But the Greek masses, much more hardened and experienced in political life and popular mobilization than were the Portuguese masses on the eve of April 25, will not remain passive spectators before the sordid intrigues being played out among civilians and military men, monarchists and republicans, among the bourgeois personnel now in power in Athens. It was out of fear of the masses that the king and the army plotted the suppression of democratic rights in 1967. It was out of fear of the masses that the Papadopoulos regime was replaced by an even more obscurantist regime in November 1973. By opening the door to the eruption of the masses onto the political scene, the night of July 23-24 dealt a death blow to the power of the army. In spite of Karamanlis's efforts to solidify the army's "unity" with the people against the "foreign menace," it is only a question of time before the army's power passes from the scene.

The material demands of the workers crushed by inflation, the democratic and anticapitalist demands of the radicalized youth, and the socialist aspirations of the vanguard of the popular masses will all surge to the surface in the days and weeks ahead. Greece will experience a Portuguese-type development.

And in the same sense, the chain reaction touched off on April 25 at the westernmost extremity of southern Europe is bound to spread with growing force along the whole southern

face of the continent. The Francoist regime, last remaining far-right dictatorship in Europe, has been dealt a second powerful blow. The impatient hopes of the Spanish working masses will be accentuated. There too some surprises may be in the offing in the near future.

In Italy an impressive new rise of workers struggles is maturing and developing. Stimulated by the political weakening suffered by the bourgeoisie after the defeat of the opponents of divorce in the May 12 referendum and the thunderous mass response to fascist terror in Brescia and nourished by the proletariat's indignation at the "austerity plan," which hits the workers and leaves the rich untouched, the new rise of workers struggles is heating things up in the big factories. Autumn will be hot in Italy. It will be hot in Portugal. It will be hot in Greece. And the interaction of all these fever-pitches will be felt elsewhere too, of that we can be sure.

Certainly, the risks and threats remain real. The traditional leaderships of the proletariat are disoriented, hesitant, and fearful in the countries involved. They are afraid of mass action that "might provoke" a forceful return of currents favoring reestablishment of right-wing dictatorships. They are prepared to make any compromise and engage in any sell-out to moderate and slow things down and to break the spirit of the masses. Their essential concern is to show the bourgeoisie that they are loyal and reasonable partners in undertakings that are compatible with a "democratized" capitalist system. But by seeking to break the spirit of the masses, they are precisely creating the conditions for a new rise of far-right dangers, which feed on the instability and impossible situation to which are condemned bourgeois-democratic regimes that are too bankrupt to grant substantial reforms and too weak to break the workers combativity.

The revolutionary vanguard as yet possesses neither the necessary strength nor implantation to be considered by the proletariat as a credible alternative to the traditional conciliating and treacherous leaderships. The crisis will therefore persist. There will be a race between the reorganization of the far right and the strengthening of the far left, of its capacity to convince and unite broader and broader layers of the proletariat and toiling masses. It takes time and it will take more time to construct new mass revolutionary parties, powerful sections of the Fourth International. No one can yet say whether the delay opened by the revolutionary crisis in southern Europe will be of long enough duration to attain that goal.

But one thing is certain. The fundamental tendency in coming months will be toward the broadening and not the retreat of the mass movement. The swing of the pendulum favors the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie. It is up to revolutionaries to exploit this opportunity to the fullest by patiently explaining to the masses the great chances for socialist revolution, the risks that threaten those chances if this opportunity is not seized upon, the congenital weaknesses of the reformist pro-

grams of class collaboration, the necessity of building cadres and constructing the revolutionary party, the key importance of pushing for the emergence of organs of dual power, and the way to combine defense of immediate economic and democratic demands with the struggle for the transitional program, for workers power, and for the socialist united states of Europe.

July 25, 1974

INPRECOR

## CYPRUS

# the failure



# of 'enosis'

by G. VERGEAT

The July 15 coup d'etat in Cyprus was inspired and organized by the military-fascist regime in Greece. That regime's brutality and political stupidity was fully revealed by this undertaking.

The Athens military regime could not have hoped to achieve any economic or financial advantages from its Cyprus operation. Apart from the strictly limited profits extracted from the influx of currency brought on by the annual tourist invasion and the subprofits arising from the several thousand British soldiers stationed on the military bases Britain maintains on the island, Cyprus is a poor country. In the future, perhaps, the island's subsoil could produce some economic gains, but capital for this has not yet flowed in, and Greek financial capital is not up to the task. So the July 15 coup cannot be accounted for by any local "imperialist" objective on the part of the Athens regime.

But the attachment of Cyprus to Greece has always been a central theme of ultranationalist and fascist circles and brotherhoods in Greece. The idea of a Greater Greece always remained on the order of the day for Greek military circles permeated by this fascist-like ideology. Holding the reigns of power, the Greek military decided to take a step forward in order to attain its objective. But the political consequences were touched off soon got out of the junta's control. The thought about the overthrow of the Athens regime was carried out before Athens lost con-

trol of events, which went through a chain-reaction development, provoking an international escalation of considerable proportions that illustrated the purely strategic military and political function that the island of Cyprus presently fulfills.

## Why the coup and why now?

It was the most extreme elements among Greek nationalist circles that came to power in Athens last November by overthrowing the regime of Papadopoulos, who was himself the colonel who orchestrated the 1967 coup that installed the Greek dictatorship. The orientation the Papadopoulos regime had taken during 1973 corresponded to the wishes of pro-Western bourgeois leaders who favored a limited internal liberalization and the restoration of a few formal democratic norms like elections. The hope was that this cosmetic operation could give Greece an appearance of modernization and that the Common Market would thus open its doors to Athens. The hardliners, opposed to this surface liberalization and panicked by the popular upsurge of November 1973, liquidated Papadopoulos and took over, manifesting their Nazi- and fascist-loving origins, which go back to the second world war and the postwar Greek counterrevolution.

The military clique had no social base whatever within the country. Contrary to Papadopoulos, who wanted to introduce a few reforms in order to integrate some bourgeois personalities of the opposition so as to gain some credit for his regime,

the ultranationalist generals who took over in November were totally isolated. Several weeks after the resignation of the minister of foreign affairs, for example, the junta had still not found a civilian candidate willing to replace him. The regime, aided by international inflation, had managed to make the country's economic situation even worse. It was holding itself in power solely by the force of its army.

But while it had no social base, the junta did have ideological convictions. It hoped to be able to develop a popular consensus by resorting to the device of xenophobia, especially against the Turks. When the question of oil deposits in the Aegean Sea came up, Athens launched a crude hysterical campaign against Turkey, which naturally intended to exploit the potential resources of the common Greek-Turkish sea. But the Greek people did not line up behind the regime in a patriotic spirit against the "eternal enemy." Cyprus -- like Derouillide's Alsace-Lorraine in the pathologically nationalist France of the pre-1914 period -- was supposed to be an ideal terrain for the realization of pan-Hellenism, even though 20 percent of the island's population is Turkish. But there was no demonstration of popular support when the anti-Turkish general mobilization was announced in Greece. Nor did the manner in which the Greek government presented the Cyprus events create a current favoring its undertaking. The fact that all power was officially concentrated in the hands of the military, even though no war broke out between Greece and Turkey, was another illustration of the regime's isolation. Even more recently, it was announced that anyone circulating information about alleged clashes within the regime would be hauled before military courts and subject to the death penalty on charges of national treason. The evocation of Alexander the Great and the 1821 war against the Ottoman empire generated no response among the youth. The stupidity of the Greek military was fully revealed in all these actions. All this nationalist scenery belongs to a bygone era.

July 1974 was chosen as the time for the Nicosia coup because the Greek regime believed all the conditions were right. There were a number of factors motivating that belief.

First, the junta felt certain of Washington's support and thought that this would leave it a free hand. The recent signature of new agreements guaranteeing Washington an extension of its military implantation in Greece -- land, air, and especially naval bases -- brought the two regimes ever closer together. Second, there was the latent crisis of Turkish-American relations a few weeks ago, after the Turkish government again legalized the growing of opium poppies, which alarmed Washington because of the potential effects on American cities like New York that have been racked by widespread use of heroin.

Third, relations between Cyprus and the United States have never been good. This is amply demonstrated by Makarios's arms purchases from the Soviet bloc and by his refusal to place himself under the direct tutelage of Washington. Makarios's "neutralist" posturing, timid as it was, annoyed Washington, especially after Kissinger's opening of the new drive to impose American hegemony in the Arab East. Even though he had allowed the British to maintain bases in Cyprus that were integrated into the NATO system, Makarios did not fit into American strategy in Europe or the Arab East. He therefore stood in the way of Kissinger, whose whole project is to assert U.S. economic and military power in the world. The American plan involved supplanting Great Britain, the old colonial power in Cyprus, and London was supporting Makarios. The realization of this plan was made more urgent by the prospective signature under U.S. auspices of peace accords between Israel and the Arab states. And finally, Makarios's opposition to the

Athens junta made him a threat to the Greek regime, for he could aid and rally the bourgeois opposition to the military dictatorship. Makarios had become a figure of sorts in political life inside Greece.

Such were the conditions the Greek junta counted on to make its coup d'etat in Nicosia. While the ideological aspect of the enosis operation (the attachment of Cyprus to Greece) was strongly apparent, its most striking feature was its political weakness. In a grotesque way, the operation was not without parallels to Hitler's annexation of Austria (the Anschluss).

## The form of the coup

Cyprus is composed of two nationalities, Greek and Turkish. The latter accounts for about 20 percent of the island's population (which is less than a million) and does not favor the attachment of Cyprus to Greece. The Greek community, while it is a majority, is also not thrilled by the idea of being integrated into the "fatherland." The old British colonial regime utilized, and even deliberately stirred up, the permanent and latent conflict between the two national components to justify its presence. This is the basis on which British imperialism maintained its military presence after it granted Cypriot independence in 1959.

Conflicts between the two communities had calmed down until the Greek junta's coup. Since no social force on the island among the Greek Cypriots expressed support for enosis, which was in any case opposed by the Turks, the attempted attachment could only be carried out in a "substitutive" manner and by force, thus confirming that the Athens regime also lacked a social base in Cyprus itself. The political personnel Athens placed in power in Nicosia demonstrate the character of the coup even more clearly. They are a bunch of gangsters and cabaret scum, agents of all sorts of corrupt trafficking who lack the slightest social base. They are not even well-heeled bourgeois notables. It was a completely open fact that the head of this mafia clique, Nikos Sampson, was a former killer from the terrorist, fascist organization EOKA-B,\* which emerged out of the most ultranationalist Greek and Greek Cypriot circles headed in Cyprus by the madman General Grivas. As soon as he was in power, Sampson started hunting down supporters of Makarios and militants of the Cypriot Communist party (AKEL), which supported the Makarios regime.

The instrument of the coup was the Cypriot National Guard, composed of Greek Cypriots but trained and staffed by several hundred Greek officers sent from Athens and committed to the regime of the Greek junta.

After the installation of the second military junta in Greece, interference in Cyprus by Athens was intensified through the medium of this Greek military and political force on the island. Consequently, the officers of the National Guard began acting independently of Makarios's authority.

On Friday, July 5, during his monthly interview with the press, Makarios made the following declaration: "It is clear that for some time relations between the Cypriot and Greek governments have not been harmonious. There are two principal reasons for this, which is leading toward a test of strength between Athens and Nicosia. A major cause has been the conduct and attitude of certain officers of the general staff of the National Guard, and particularly their in-

\* The EOKA was a clandestine military-fascist organization formed to fight against the British occupation after 1945. It advocated attachment of Cyprus to Greece. The EOKA-B is only a continuation of the old EOKA.



Sampson, professional killer . . .

volvement with the 'EOKA-B,' the support that they are given by it in various ways, and their incitement to terrorist actions by this organization whose aim is to abolish the Cypriot state. It is an undeniable fact that the National Guard, which is controlled by Greek officers, has become the mainstay of the criminal organization that supports it, the 'EOKA-B.' Another reason is the recruitment of prospective officers of the National Guard to the Polemidhia Officers School, which was never approved by the Council of Ministers, which has the absolute right to approve all such appointments according to the law. The general staff of the National Guard was informed of this in writing. A few days later, after receiving instructions from Athens, the general staff answered that the candidates rejected by the Council of Ministers would remain in the school. In my view, the violation of the law by the National Guard and the ignoring of a decision taken by the Council of Ministers was an undesirable interference in Cyprus by the (Greek) dictatorship and an attempt to deflect the National Guard from its role as a state body toward a role as an internal army of occupation." (Cyprus Bulletin, issued by the Public Information Office, Republic of Cyprus, Nicosia, July 10, 1974. Vol. XI, No. 27.)

So there was no surprise for Makarios. He knew the exact details of how the situation was developing. A bit like Allende in Chile. And like Allende, he fully refrained from preparing for the inevitable confrontation by appealing to the masses. Makarios had not learned the lessons of Chile.

Makarios is one of the last survivors of the generation of anticolonialist (and most often Bonapartist) leaders who met with such great ideological and political unity in Bandung in 1955. Sukarno, Nkrumah, and Nasser, Makarios's neighbor, were unable to resist the restructuring of imperialist rule under more and more direct U.S. leadership, which the U.S. undertook after the victory of the Cuban revolution and the development of the Indochinese revolution. Nasser's death in 1970 already sounded the demise of Makarios. His regime was never strengthened by social reforms or by important measures dealing with relations between the two national components of the country. His relations with the Turkish community never generated Turkish confidence in his personality. Makarios did not possess sufficient organized power to oppose either the undermining of his regime from Athens or the pressure exerted on him by Kissinger.

Even if Makarios were to be returned to his former position by the intervention of foreign powers -- above all Great Britain and secondarily the other Common Market countries -- his reconquered power would be vastly weakened and he would more than ever be subject to neocolonial dictates. The old Makarios is finished.

## Consequences

The stupidity of the Greek militarists knows no bounds. To be convinced of this it is enough to examine the answer to a single question: While the Athens junta had reasons for intervening, how could its leaders have ignored the chain reaction that would be touched off by the intervention, thereby overestimating their power to engage in an operation that had a strong possibility of becoming suicidal? Were they so completely divorced from reality that they were unable to grasp the political forces at work in the region? The course of events after the coup provides an answer to this question.

The junta's regime was politically and militarily incompetent. Its essential function was to counteract or repress the rise of Greek worker, peasant, and intellectual forces. It was a police regime. Nevertheless, it would be false to believe that the Athens regime was simply a puppet of Washington, as some of the leftist press suggested, and that the Nicosia coup therefore must have originated directly from the U.S. Defense Department, Pentagon, or even the CIA. The Athens regime could not be reduced to this role. It had its own plans and tried to carry them out within the limits set by the general interests of imperialism, even if this might bring them into secondary conflicts with imperialism. It is most likely because of its strictly localist approach to the situation that the Greek government failed so miserably.

Both internationally and internally the junta failed to carry the day.

In the region of the eastern Mediterranean the junta's plans came to nothing. They fell to pieces even in Cyprus itself. There was no fusion between the National Guard and the Greek Cypriot population. Pogroms against the Turkish community throughout the island were touched off and led by the National Guard in the worst fascist traditions. Ankara was able to justify its intervention by these persecutions, which

Makarios, last of 'Bandung' leaders.



in some cases bordered on genocide. The Turkish intervention was even legitimate on the basis of the 1960 Greek-Turkish-British treaty under which unilateral intervention by any of the signatories is provided for if any of the others break the terms of the treaty. And that was that. The regime of Nikos Sampson was still-born. There is now a Turkish presence on the island and Turkey will not withdraw without a modification of the island's status and the implementation of some guarantees for the minority Turkish community. From the standpoint of both Greece and Turkey, the independent Republic of Cyprus is dead. The preconditions for its existence were the noninterference of the Greek and Turkish states and the peaceful relations between the two communities on the island.

The junta was also totally discredited in the eyes of the European bourgeois governments, which are now in position to implement their plans for a Greek government with an appearance of democracy by bringing civilians back to power. Even Kissinger, who originally kept silent about the coup because he thought he could achieve his local objectives in the framework of the fait accompli, publicly cut loose from the Greek junta. (Immediately after the coup, a spokesman of Kissinger's State Department explained that the United States would wait and see who controlled the territory of Cyprus, in other words, that Washington no longer recognized Makarios.) It was a serious defeat for the leaders of the world counterrevolution that they could not prevent their Turkish allies from invading Cyprus and it was a serious matter for NATO and the Atlantic Alliance to see their allies confront each other with identical weapons that had been provided by NATO itself. There was a camouflaged crisis between the United States and Europe (that is, the nine members of the Common Market), the latter supporting with some hypocrisy the position taken by Britain in favor of Makarios and against Athens. This crisis is not at all new, but it found expression on a new field. The policy of U.S. domination came off very badly during the sudden crisis, and U.S. imperialism may have to pay for this, at least in the short run.

Cyprus occupies a strategic position in the eastern Mediter-

anean, a position that is now controlled by British imperialism and forms, along with Gibraltar and Malta, a military chain along the old route to the Indies. The American fleet has only one base in the region, in Greece. The political personnel that were allied with the United States are in power, while those supported by Britain are in opposition or in exile in London, the old power that had held Greece in its grip. With the new agreements with Egypt and the reopening of the Suez Canal, Washington needs strategic bridgeheads in addition to Israel to support its political strategy in the region.

From the Turkish side, the aggravation of the latent crisis of relations with the United States could provoke a revision of the various military treaties, with serious consequences for imperialism, particularly after the appearance on the Turkish political scene of young officers sensitive about national independence. The Soviet Union is also standing by and is especially concerned with the course of events in that the ability of the Russian fleet to circulate freely in the eastern Mediterranean and to pass through the Dardanelles may be challenged by future developments in Cyprus. Athens and Washington were working seriously to make that challenge a reality. Hence the pro-Turkish attitude taken by the Kremlin when Turkish troops invaded Cyprus.

But it is on the internal Greek situation that the consequences of the Cyprus coup will be the most spectacular and immediate. The failure of the attempt at enosis was an internal defeat for the junta that strongly encouraged the popular masses who had mobilized against the first dictatorship in October and November. After the cease-fire in Cyprus, the European and American regimes were especially concerned to replace the Athens regime with a civilian government as quickly as possible. This had to involve the resignation of the junta. Already during the crisis a new Greek bourgeois leadership was coming to the fore, with many political figures putting out appeals for national unity, for support of the "fatherland in danger," and other such nonsense. It is only nine months since the Athens uprising of November 1973 and the Greek masses are not dormant. Their struggle has only just begun.

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## PORTUGAL

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# THE SECOND 'PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT'

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Less than two months after the appointment of the first provisional government of the second Republic of Portugal, General Spínola fired all his ministers.

### A plebescite against elections

This governmental crisis opened officially on July 3, when Prime Minister Palma Carlos announced his intention to resign. One day later, Palma shed some light on what he was planning. He proposed that the elections scheduled to be held in March 1975 be postponed for two years and that presidential elections -- that is, a plebescite on Spínola -- be arranged in the shortest possible time, preferably within a month. Then, with a "legal" president of the republic in power, going ahead with elections would be more acceptable.

The representatives of the Communist and Socialist parties in the provisional government opposed the maneuvers of Spínola and Palma Carlos and refused to resign. Faced with this refusal, Spínola dumped the whole provisional government.

He then tried to appoint Lieutenant Colonel Firmino Miguel, the former defense minister with whom he had "worked" in Guinea-Bissau, as head of the new provisional government. The military presence within the government was to be strengthened, for purposes that were well described by the correspondent of the Financial Times of London: "It is expected that among the ministries that the armed forces will take over will be that of labour -- to overcome the growing chaos in industry -- and information, which will mean a harder line against the leftist press." (July 12.) It is therefore evident that these military men were not supposed to come from the most "demo-

## PORTUGAL

cratic" wing of the Armed Forces Movement. Under Spínola's project, this introduction of officers closest to his views into key posts did not necessarily involve eviction of the representatives of the CP and the SP. Spínola was certainly prepared to satisfy and soothe the SP and CP by offering them governmental posts, which in any case was the only way to assure the coalition government of a certain social base. The July 10 meeting between Costa Gomes, Spínola, and Cunhal was certainly not unrelated to this maneuver by the chief of the junta.

The desire to dispense with the "electoral test" is explainable by the fear of big financial capital and the junta that they would be confronted by a CP and SP victory in March 1975. The bourgeoisie has not yet been able to construct a political instrument at all capable of opposing the left parties. Their only chance for success would be a plebescite-type operation for or against Spínola. Postponing the elections -- assuming that they take place at all -- was therefore supposed to gain more time for organizing the Peoples Democratic party of Sá Carneiro and Magalhães Mota. But that does not seem so easy, especially since the rise of peasant struggles threatens to loosen the grip this formation might hope to maintain over the rural regions.

SP and CP opposition mounted against what the Socialist daily *República* called "Operation Palma Carlos." On July 11 the SP for the first time demanded the "recognition of Guinea-Bissau," because it thought it had the elements of an agreement in hand. But opposition to Spínola's nomination of Firmino Miguel as prime minister and to the rejection of elections was manifested also (and especially) within the "coordinating committee" of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM). The effectiveness of this opposition was demonstrated when Firmino Miguel was pushed aside and Vasco Gonçalves, one of the most influential members of this "coordinating committee," came forward.

Vasco Gonçalves, who met successively with Cunhal, Soares, and Sá Carneiro, formed a government within which "all the military ministers . . . are AFM members, except for the minister of defense, as Brigadier General Carvalho declared." (*Corriere della Sera*, July 17.) The Socialists lose one post in this government, the minister of information, which had been held by Paul Rego, the minister who passed the law on the press. (See *INPRECOR*, No.3.) Nevertheless, the ministry of education is held by Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, who is known as an SP sympathizer. The CP loses the ministry of labor, which went to an officer, Captain Da Costa Martins. In presenting the government, Vasco Gonçalves declared, according to the July 19 issue of the Italian CP daily *l'Unità*: "The process of democratization of the country must be such that the people can freely elect their representatives to a constituent assembly with equal opportunities for all currents."

It thus appears that Spínola's maneuvers around a plebescite and the nomination of Firmino Miguel, who remains minister of defense, have failed. Opposition to this plan from the "coordinating committee of the Armed Forces Movement" is at the root of this failure. The deep crisis in the army, the fear of combined operations by the most reactionary sectors of the army and their representatives in Angola and Mozambique, and the various options for "solving the colonial question" sparked the intervention of the "coordinating committee," which decided to block Operation Palma Carlos.

The intensified grip of the AFM on the government cannot be interpreted as a take-over by a section of the army opting for a new military dictatorship or as a turn to the right. In the short term, it is rather the expression of the failure of the right-wing operation attempted by Spínola and of an at-

tempt to apply the "democratic" program of the AFM. The measures taken in both Angola and Mozambique against various circles pressing for a solution completely opposed to independence and the adoption of the constitutional law of July 19 confirm this. (The July 19 law affirms the "recognition of the principle of self-determination with all its consequences, including acceptance of the independence of the overseas territories" and entails the "annulment" of article 1 of the constitution of 1933, the article that defined Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau as "overseas provinces.")

Nevertheless, it would be blindness not to consider the contradictory elements of the situation. First of all, illusions in the real nature and function of the army -- and the AFM -- can only be bolstered, all the more so in that the CP and SP are sanctioning and supporting the military more firmly than ever. Secondly, the increased weight of the representatives of the AFM -- especially of ex-Captain Carvalho, who led the military operation of April 25 -- must be looked at through the perspective of future crises. While the AFM has quietly suggested that Cavalho's take-over of the leadership of the Lisbon military region is part of the process of weakening the positions of the most reactionary currents in the army (who had held a strong position in the capital), it is no less true that the task of the now-brigadier-general is none other than "intervening to guarantee respect for order and to maintain it." While the press law was utilized to slap a 150,000 escudo fine on the right-wing newspaper *Economy and Finance* (the first censorship measure taken by the second provisional government), it is no less the case that this law will be used essentially to intervene against any far-left agitation and propaganda in the workers, anticolonial, and antimilitarist struggles. This is all the more clear in that it is certain that the present government will be racked by instability in the medium term. The contradiction between the "democratic" promises of the program of the AFM and the social and economic situation can only generate new crises. Once again the policy of the SP and CP in this context emerges as a factor bolstering the worst illusions.

The crisis of the army in Angola and Mozambique can only intensify. Military units have been signing communiqués affirming that they recognize FRELIMO "as the only organization representing the people of Mozambique." Various demonstrations have taken place in Mozambique. More than 2,500 soldiers have refused to continue fighting. Instances of fraternization are more and more common. This crisis of the army -- especially in Mozambique -- can only make Lisbon's negotiation tactics increasingly difficult. And an agreement with Guinea-Bissau will intensify all these contradictions. Hence, it seems that the "process of decolonization" will have to be speeded up and will have to go further than Spínola predicted it would only a little more than a month ago.

As for the economic situation, it is anything but brilliant. Unemployment is growing more and more rapidly. The unemployment figure given by the press is 150,000. The crisis of the construction industry, the decline in tourism (which has fallen 40 percent), and the closings of small- and medium-sized factories are accentuating the rise of unemployment. Struggles against layoffs are breaking out again. The same is true of certain strikes that have been limited in breadth but high in political level, such as the strike in the Efacec electrical motor factory, where demands were raised not only on wages but on the work pace as well.

Given the inflation, which will not be halted so easily, and the unemployment, the response of the workers could well be an element that will be added in September to the crisis of the army. The road to elections may be less direct than Vasco Gonçalves declared. ■



# FOR UNIFICATION OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS

by CARMEN AYESTERAN

The following article appeared first in issue No. 64 of Zutik, the organ of the ETA-VI (Euzkadi ta Askatasuna-VI -- Basque Nation and Freedom, Sixth Congress), and later in the June 1974 issue of Combate, central organ of the LCR-ETA-VI (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria-ETA-VI -- Revolutionary Communist League-ETA-VI), sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in the territory of the Spanish state. It deals with a problem of great currency in several European capitalist countries: the necessity for trade-union unification and its connection with the struggle for workers democracy, in particular with the right of tendencies to function within the trade-union movement.

To be sure, the workers commissions that have emerged in Spain during the past decade are not trade-union organizations in the strict sense of the term. They grew up within the factories under the impetus of the most combative militants (who tended to constitute their membership) as an expression of the rejection by a considerable part of the working class of the vertical state-controlled "unions." These bodies are not legal, and thus, by the

force of circumstances, they do not encompass the masses of workers during "calm" periods.

But experience has shown that when periods of agitation open up, when struggles are being prepared and organized, the masses rally around the workers commissions, tending to broaden these bodies into strike committees democratically elected during general assemblies. In this sense, unification of the workers commissions in the Spanish state is just as indispensable for preparation and effective conduct of workers struggles against the employers as is unification of the trade unions in countries in which the trade-union movement is legal and has a massive number of permanent adherents.

From this point of view, the struggle of our comrades in the Basque country for the unification of the workers commissions with a concomitant right of tendencies is exemplary. Successes achieved in this struggle would be important not only for the other regions of the Spanish state, but for all of capitalist Europe as well.

**INPRECOR**

On several occasions we have spoken of the role played in the development of the revolution in our country by the workers commissions, unitary bodies encompassing the advanced workers. The preparation for the revolutionary general strike whose task it will be to overthrow the dictatorship means above all preparation of conditions that will allow for the generalization throughout the Spanish state of local explosions like the ones that occurred in Ferrol, Vigo, and Pamplona. Because of the nature of the workers commissions as unitary bodies, they represent the framework best suited to making such a generalization possible.

Furthermore, the daily experience of struggle shows that in spite of strong spontaneous rank-and-file tendencies favorable to unification, many struggles still remain isolated because of the lack of coordination among the various workers commissions. This has been the cause of many defeats. And, conversely, in cases in which coordination of the various workers commissions has been realized on a united platform (as in the metalworkers struggle in Pamplona), even if in a strictly conjunctural manner and on the scale of a single zone or region, the workers have been able to force the employers to yield and have won significant improvements.

This phenomenon is especially notable in the province of Guipuzcoa, which for several years has been in the forefront of the battle. In spite of constant rank-and-file pressure for unification, the division among the various coordinating committees has persisted, often on a sectarian basis, each committee being axised around this or that current in the workers movement. In response to the rank-and-file desire for unification, various organizations, ours among them, have taken the

necessary initiatives to overcome the existing divisions. In view of the lessons that can be drawn from this experience for other Spanish regions where the problem is posed with similar urgency, we are here summing up the analysis made of the Guipuzcoa situation by our Euzkadi (Basque) comrades.

## 1.

1. The "list" of workers commissions and workers committees in the province of Guipuzcoa. There are three coordinating committees that claim to be "province-wide": the "Workers Commissions of Guipuzcoa Workers," the "Biltzar Workers Commissions," and the "Workers Committees."

The first is based on the influence of the Maoist MCE (Movimiento Comunista de España -- Communist Movement of Spain) and, to a much lesser extent, of the ORT (Organización Revolucionario de los Trabajadores -- Revolutionary Workers Organization, a socialist tendency of Christian origin.) This is the body with the greatest implantation in the zone that extends from San Sebastian to Irun (that is, the zone of heavy industrial concentration in Guipuzcoa province). The second is under the hegemony of the Spanish Communist party; it coordinates several workers commissions in various zones, but is numerically weak and has a weak implantation. The third is influenced by sectors of various ex-ETA minorities and the Communist Workers Nuclei. Its influence extends from the zone running from San Sebastian to Irun and to the Andeain-Hernani-Lasarte triangle.

On the margins of these three "coordinating committees"

there are a series of coordinating committees that function in more limited zones; they do not coordinate among each other, nor do they coordinate with the three "federations" mentioned above. Nevertheless, these "zonal coordinating bodies" are all unitary and are supported by all the workers organizations of each zone, with the exception of the Communist party, which maintains its own separate "workers commissions" in a sectarian manner.

Finally, there are coordinating committees that are composed of mixtures of elements belonging to the "Workers Committees" and others that do not belong to any committee. These exist in the Andeain-Hernani-Lasarte zone and in Irun.

It must be added that all these committees, commissions, and coordinating bodies function in the smallest province of the Spanish state. This gives an idea of the reasons why the very militant workers movement and the rather broad vanguard that exist in Guipuzcoa have been unable to find an adequate framework for unifying their struggles.

## 2.

2. First steps toward unification of the workers commissions. Last winter's struggle around the new contracts incontestably posed the necessity of breaking down the prevailing division. Innumerable struggles broke out practically on the same day; often they raised virtually identical demands. But the repression came down brutally (more than 200 workers fired, many arrested), because none of the existing organizations were able to centralize all the partial struggles into a powerful united movement against the employers and the dictatorship.

Paradoxically, the road to unity was first opened by a split (although not, properly speaking, a total rupture) in the Guipuzcoa Workers group between a majority faction led by the MCE and a minority faction led by the ORT. In spite of the evidence of the facts, which cried out for a contrary conclusion, the majority faction maintained its sectarian intransigent position that the unification of the workers commissions could take place only if all the other groups entered the coordinating commission of the Guipuzcoa Workers. This position was graphically described in the journal published by this commission in December 1973: "We call upon the 'Biltzar' comrades wherever they may be, who are voluntarily staying on the fringes of the workers commissions of Guipuzcoa, to abandon their anti-unitary attitude and reincorporate themselves into the struggle to endow our class with solid workers commissions." In other words, the only real workers commissions in Guipuzcoa are ours; all those who refuse to enter our commissions are opponents of the unity of the working class.

Without abandoning the Guipuzcoa Workers coordinating commission, the ORT sector took the initiative of opening discussions with several other bodies and with organizations upholding the necessity for a complete unification of the workers commissions in the province. ORT and the LCR-ETA-VI then held an initial meeting and decided to pool their efforts to unify the workers commissions. This initiative was later supported by a sector of the "ex-ETA minorities," the so-called Leninist faction, and by the LC. A first appeal was issued to all workers commissions and workers committees to meet together to broach the discussion.

The zonal unitary workers commissions declared themselves ready to launch the process of unification immediately. The workers commissions of the Biltzar coordinating committee (which are the least numerous and command the smallest

forces) affirmed that "none of the organizations present here is representative of the workers movement" and decided to withdraw on that basis. As for the Workers Committees, they appeared to be undecided. In practice, one of their sub-factions (the ex-ETA minority) approved the unification, while another sector (the one controlled by the NOC, Communist Workers Nuclei) rejected it. During this first meeting the MCE faction of the Guipuzcoa Workers commission clung in a sectarian manner to its earlier position.

In the course of later meetings, certain initial differences began to become clearer. But the very fact that no agreement was reached for a unitary preparation of Aberri Eguna (the Basque national holiday -- INPRECOR) or for May Day reflects the difficulties and reticences that continue to exist along the road to unification of the workers commissions.

## 3.

3. A central problem. In fact, there is a real and objective basis for these difficulties. That is that Guipuzcoa Workers, Biltzar, and the Workers Committees represent three distinct tendencies in the workers movement, just as the forces that the LCR-ETA-VI includes or influences represent another real tendency in the workers movement.

But this fact should not prevent immediate unification of the workers commissions. Each of the tendencies may think that it is the only "really revolutionary tendency" and that all the others are "revisionists," "spontaneists," "syndicalists," or "ultraleftists." All this is normal. It should lead to a healthy ideological struggle among all the tendencies in the workers movement. But precisely because it is a question of real tendencies within the workers movement, the ideological struggle must not prevent unity in action, nor should it prevent unification of the workers commissions. The only way to reach that goal is to avoid forcing any of these tendencies to disappear by issuing "decrees." The tendencies must have the right to structure and express themselves as tendencies within united workers commissions. That is, the democratic right of organizing tendencies must be institutionalized within the workers commissions.

The problem is clear. These tendencies exist, whether we like it or not. Today they are separated from each other into distinct workers commissions and workers committees. We propose that their existence be recognized, but in the framework of a single and unique network of united workers commissions.

The right of election and recall (from the bottom up) of all bodies and "coordinating" structures of the workers commissions is absolutely indispensable. But that is not enough. The workers commissions would still not be really democratic bodies as long as minority tendencies of the movement were denied the possibility of expressing themselves.

Fundamentally, the right of tendencies to function means three things. First, the tendencies must be able to structure themselves as such and maintain contacts, hold regular meetings, etc., among their members. Second, they must have the right to criticize majority decisions before, during, and after struggles, campaigns, and so on. Third, they must have access to public organs (journals, etc.) of the workers commissions so as to be able to express their points of view within the commissions as minority tendencies. As a final point let us add that the official line of the workers commissions should be the one determined by the majority after a democratic confrontation within the workers commissions. Consequently, the public expression of the minority should preserve a dual

character as that of a minority as such and as a part of the workers commissions.

## 4.

4. The lack of logic in the positions of Guipuzcoa Workers, Biltzar, and Workers Committees. As the unitary meetings began to take place, the MCE faction of Guipuzcoa Workers changed its position in view of the fact that the majority of participants were firmly resolved to set the process of unification in motion even if this important force that concerns a decisive sector of the organized workers movement would not go along. While this faction continued to oscillate between the Yes and No positions, nevertheless in the end it appeared to be rallying to the unification project.

But at that moment the fight around "tendencies" came up. At first, the MCE faction of Guipuzcoa Workers refused to recognize the right of tendencies to be built (probably in the firm conviction that the MCE would in any case constitute the majority faction of the unified workers commissions in Guipuzcoa).

In the end, it agreed to recognize this right on the condition that the majority of the workers commissions on the factory level agreed to that decision. The MCE faction described its position this way:

"All opportunities must be utilized to demonstrate that there is no ideological and political unity in the general movement of workers commissions, that there are various political lines struggling against one another." "The bulletins put out by our militants and our allies . . . should explain that the workers commissions today are divided among different tendencies." "The comrades who find themselves at the heads of various bodies should not seek to stay there by themselves; they should act in a radically different manner. They should make sure that all the currents that have some influence in the base commissions are represented in the leadership." "How can the various commissions be differentiated, how can we strengthen the camp of those that do not accept the policy of Mr. Carrillo (the head of the Communist party -- INPRE-COR)? In the first place by lending a more pronounced tendency character to our work."

These quotations have been taken from various issues of *Servir el Pueblo*, the organ of the leadership of the MCE; the last quotation comes from the issue of December 1973. It is therefore in order to ask the MCE why it persists in denying to other currents the same tendency rights that it claims for itself!

But these comrades add that even if the right of tendencies were accepted, the tendencies should have to express themselves not through the organs and journals of the workers commissions but outside of these publications, not as tendencies within the workers commissions, but in other forms. A recent publication of the Luzuriaga commission of Guipuzcoa Workers summed up this position as follows: "The minority -- which does not necessarily hold a wrong position just because it is a minority -- could assert its independence and express its positions with all the means at its disposal (leaflets, bulletins, assemblies, etc.), but always in a manner outside the factory commission; for example, in the name of the 'workers of the factory,' etc."

This is completely illogical. How do these comrades think it would be possible to demonstrate to the workers that there is



Spanish workers in illegal strike.

but one united workers commission if a publication of the workers commission and another publication in the name of the "workers of the factory" simultaneously appear? How can they affirm that there is a right of tendencies and simultaneously deny the tendencies the right to express themselves as such? And when they themselves pose the necessity of forming a "bloc" or "tendency," do they project expressing their views as the "workers of the factory" and not as a tendency within the workers commission?

We think we have the right to ask these worker comrades and the leaders of the MCE to demonstrate a minimum of reflection and consistency in their ideas, to ask them to set aside this sort of maneuver, which is contrary to the traditions of workers democracy, when they present their positions to us; that is, if they are really prepared to travel the road that leads to the unification of the workers commissions of Guipuzcoa.

Unfortunately, not much can be said about the Biltzar coordinating committee. The Spanish CP is once again reiterating its sectarian and antiunitary positions by imposing the force of its apparatus on the militants and sympathizers that it controls. In spite of the proposal we made both to the leadership and to the rank and file of the CP and all the workers commissions, Biltzar continues to function separately.

At this moment a large step toward the unity of the workers movement in Guipuzcoa is being taken. We are committed to defending with all available means the right of the Biltzar comrades to express and defend what is now their political line publicly and as such within the future unified workers commissions. We are committed to defending the right of the Biltzar comrades to structure themselves as a tendency in the unified workers commissions. The fact that we are in total disagreement with this political line is not and will not be an obstacle to our defending this elementary democratic right. But beginning from that position, we believe that it would be a crime against the interests and unity of the workers movement if these comrades were to maintain the sectarian attitude they have held until now.

We have already indicated that the positions taken by the Workers Committees during the meetings that have gone on have been relatively indecisive and contradictory. This is due to the specific character of these "committees." In reality, they are not open and unitary bodies like the workers

commissions. In a certain sense, they are a mixture of political organizations and workers commissions. In fact, more than any other bodies that have grown up within the factories, they represent a particular tendency within the workers movement: that of revolutionary syndicalism, structured as such but separated from the rest of the organized workers movement. This separation gives the Workers Committees their hybrid character as a cross between political organizations and workers commissions.

On the part of one of the leading factions within these "committees," that of the ex-ETA minority, the maintenance of this contradictory situation is the result of the past, of the manner in which these "committees" were born, and of the survival of syndicalist deviations that marked this organization at the time of its split from the ETA-VI in 1972. But on the part of another faction within these committees, that of the NOC, it is a matter of a position that has been worked out in theory. This faction upholds the thesis that no unity is possible with the reformists and that the unity of the working class can be realized only when the majority of the class has come to revolutionary positions.

Such an attitude appears to us as fundamentally sectarian. On the one hand, it is incontestable that on a historic scale the overthrow of the bourgeois state requires the united action of the broadest masses of workers; this unity must be prepared in advance by the unity of the proletarian front, despite the inevitable division among various workers parties. But on the other hand, on a very concrete level, differences with the reformist organizations should not prevent us from fighting side by side in the day-to-day struggle with the militants of these organizations. When all is said and done, the only way these militants will be led to break with their treacherous leadership is for them to come to the conviction that the position upheld by revolutionaries is better than that upheld by their own leaders; and this they can do through the experience of a united and common battle waged alongside the revolutionaries.

### 5.

5. Our proposal. The first task is to bring about a discussion among the whole vanguard, and especially among the militants of the workers commissions and workers committees themselves, of all the problems that came up during the unitary meetings.

Beginning from there, the process of unification of the workers commissions must be set in motion immediately: There should be democratic elections within each commission for local "coordinating" bodies, and, after that beginning, the same should be done for zonal coordinating bodies and then even for coordinating bodies on a provincial scale.

The support of the Biltzar workers commissions and of all the "Workers Committees" must be won if this unification is to be fully effective. We call upon all political organizations and all "coordinating bodies" and workers commissions that already support the unification project to launch a public and internal campaign with the aim of obtaining the adherence of those various workers currents.

Effective unity must entail real and true democracy within the workers commissions, and this should include the right to form tendencies. We insist that a minority current in the workers movement cannot accept its dissolution as a tendency. Still less can a majority current impose that dissolution. If the majority of tendencies and "coordinating" bodies that today accept the unification of the workers commissions were to reject this elementary democratic right, we would in any case accept immediate unification. But we would do this while criticizing and politically denouncing such bureaucratic maneuvers. We would do it conscious of the fact that this unification would be built on sand and would threaten to collapse at the first conflict provoked within the unified workers commissions by the unfolding class struggle; that is, conscious of the fact that unity would still not be consolidated. We would do it while taking care not to criticize those who despite their desire for unity would be disinclined to accept their disappearance as organized currents or the annulment of minimal democratic guarantees, which would amount to the dissolution of the network of independent commissions.

But we insist that we would accept the unification in any case, for we are convinced that beyond the bureaucratic attitudes of this or that sector, a step forward toward the possibility of providing a united framework for workers struggles would be positive. In the end, it will be the struggle itself that will pose for a vanguard much broader than the one we have been able to reach today the necessity for democracy within the workers commissions and the necessity of breaking with the bureaucratic attitudes that make the progress of the workers movement and the struggle extremely difficult. ■

# THE END OF STABILITY

by WINFRIED WOLF & WERNER HÜLSBERG

The July 15 issue of the leading West German newsweekly, *Der Spiegel*, published an article on Germany that strikingly illuminated the political and economic situation in the country. It was called *The Economic Conjecture: The Great Trembling*. The article said that Chancellor Helmut Schmidt "fears a great crisis. All the people who have spoken to the chancellor during the first few weeks of his government . . . were warned that there was a danger that unstable international financial markets could collapse at any time and that world economic chaos could break out. . . . The chancellor was preoccupied more with plans to avert global economic chaos than with the reform programs of the social-liberal coalition."

How seriously can this be taken? Is there really a threat of grave crisis in the country that until now has been the most stable of Western Europe? Or are the present difficulties of the West German economy short-term ones? Will they be eliminated by Social Democratic reforms? To answer all these questions it is first necessary to briefly discuss the special features of West German imperialism during past decades.

## The West German workers movement: 1945-1965

The continuity of the German workers movement was broken by fascism and the second world war. This fact asserted itself during the struggles of the years 1945-1952. The trade-union bureaucracy and the Social Democracy were able to canalize the workers' demand for the expropriation of big capital, which was responsible for Nazism, into the harmless slogan of "co-management as a first step." During this period, the West German Communist party, once one of the most powerful components of the Third International, was but a shadow of its former self. Slavishly following Moscow's foreign policy, the CP upheld the necessity for a "broad, antifascist popular front," a line that was often to the right of that of the Social Democracy. First the CP supported dismantling industry in the Ruhr in the interest of reparations, then it maintained the line of the "antifascist popular front" -- even after the monetary reform of 1948 and the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, when the consolidation of West German capitalism was already obvious and the postwar boom was being prepared.

Under the leadership of the reformist and Stalinist organizations, the working class was increasingly driven onto the defensive and suffered a serious defeat in 1952 with the adoption of the law on factory councils (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz*). The electoral defeat of the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* -- Social Democratic party of Germany) in 1953 and the establishment of a strong bourgeois government

completely buried the dream of "achieving socialism by the electoral road." The years 1952 and 1953 thus represented a real turning point. Before this turn, there had been many strikes that had a clearly political, even if defensive, character. During the two subsequent decades there were no such strikes.

The history of the West German working class from 1954 until the middle of the 1960s is marked by a pernicious separation between "purely" economic strikes led by the trade unions (of which the most important were the metalworkers strikes in Bavaria in 1954, Schleswig-Holstein in 1957-58, and Baden-Württemberg in 1963) and pacifist political struggles against rearmament. This separation corresponded to the declared line of the trade-union and SPD bureaucracies. After 1953, both these bureaucracies openly declared that they were prepared to recognize as legitimate only those political decisions taken by the bourgeois parliament. In 1959 the SPD took another step by adopting the Bad Godesberg program. This program gave its approval to the existing bourgeois system as a "social market economy" and abandoned the political goal of socialism. The Communist party had maneuvered itself into such isolation that the bourgeois state was able to ban it in 1956 without provoking the slightest actions in its defense by the West German working class.

There were two important factors that formed the backdrop to this whole development: the long economic boom of the West German economy and the development of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

For various reasons that we cannot detail here, West German capital experienced a boom of extraordinary breadth that can be compared only to a certain period of the last century. The growth rate of the West German economy was on the average far higher than that of the international imperialist economy. While the bourgeois class was the main beneficiary of this boom, the real wages of the workers, which had been very low after the second world war and the 1949 monetary reform, went up considerably.

On the other hand, in eastern Germany a bureaucratically deformed workers state was constructed under the protection of the Soviet army and under conditions that were extremely unfavorable at the outset, partly because of the war reparations the Soviet bureaucracy extracted from current production until 1953. The standard of living of the working class was much lower in East Germany than in West Germany. Further, this state oppressed its own workers and crushed the workers insurrection of June 1953 through military action. This situation created an important base for the specific anti-communism of West Germany and for its partial rooting in the working class.



**Schmidt: 'fears a great crisis'**

All this led to a political situation characterized by three features:

1. The class consciousness of the West German proletariat was further lowered. Even the base of reformism began to be shaken. The rare strikes that took place were completely divorced from any political demand.
2. The Social-Christian party, the CDU-CSU (Christlich-Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union -- Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union, the CSU being the Bavarian branch of the CDU), was able to achieve a base among certain layers of the working class even without the participation of the SPD in the government.
3. The SPD conceived its role as that of an oppositional alternative to the social-christian governments on a purely parliamentary level. Because of this, the majority of the working class voted for the SPD, but not out of any great commitment or conviction.

**The beginning of a turn**

The recession of 1966-67 created one million unemployed and caused a 1 percent decline in industrial production. Hardened apologists for the capitalist system were not especially bothered by such figures. Nevertheless, this recession began to shake West German society.

For the bourgeoisie, it amounted to a serious warning. The ruling class understood that the political-economic instru-

ments it commanded were not adequate to deal with the crisis of late capitalism. It found itself obliged to replace its instrument of political rule, the CDU-CSU, with an instrument of classic integration. By orienting toward a "grand coalition" of the SPD and the CDU, it achieved two results at the same time: first, an expansion of the instruments of state intervention into the conjunctural economic situation; second, a greater integration of the working class into the system, thanks to the SPD's participation in the government. The latter result was supposed to serve to make the workers agree to bear the costs of the recession. This strategy met with success in the short-term. The working class remained traumatized by the effects of the recession until the middle of 1969, and this allowed the employers to reap enormous profits from the new boom while wages increased only moderately.

But over the long term, for the working class the recession of 1966-67 meant the end of the illusion that capitalism could assure permanent economic prosperity and constant increases in real wages.

At the same time, the great movement of radicalization of students and youth in general throughout Western Europe began to take hold in West Germany. Between 1965 and 1969 a broad socialist movement -- beginning as a radical-democratic protest movement -- developed in the universities and spread throughout the whole educational system and into sectors of working-class youth. In spite of its political heterogeneity, this movement succeeded in winning direct political influence in West German society, for example during the campaign against the draft state of emergency law, during the February 1968 congress for Vietnam, and during the turmoil caused by the assassination attempt against Rudi Dutschke, one of the leaders of this movement. The student movement was able to develop this political striking force above all because the bourgeois state was not prepared to deal with it either politically or through repression. The tragic aspect of the movement lay primarily in the absence of simultaneity of the radicalization of student youth and the working class. In May 1968 in France the "spark" of the student barricades detonated the combativity of a working class steeled by economic struggles and possessing a much higher level of political education than the West German workers. But in West Germany there was hardly any interaction between the students and the workers (the only exception being the struggles against the state of emergency law, in which the trade unions felt obliged to respond to the initiatives of the student movement in order to direct these initiatives into a few protest actions).

The two factors -- the 1966-67 recession and the radicalization of student youth in 1965-69 -- are of great importance in understanding the evolution of the German Federal Republic. In a certain sense, they created the bases for an economic and political turn in West German society -- the first since 1952. Faith in the permanency of the "economic miracle" was shaken. Initial alternatives to bourgeois society were articulated by the student movement. A radical critique contesting the very foundations of this society began to be heard anew. Although the protest movement was not proletarian in its great majority, it renewed the revolutionary current that had been broken by the victory of fascism. The bases were thus laid for eliminating the negative factors and brakes that had been created during three decades of the history and defeat of the German workers movement.

In fact, several years later, there was a turn in the behavior of the West German proletariat. This turn was expressed above all on the field of economic struggles. The West German working class began to go on strike without the approval of, and

even against, the trade-union bureaucracy. After September 1969, wildcat strikes occupied an important place as a means of working class struggle (the latest wave of wildcats took place in the summer of 1973). These strikes also forced the unions to adopt a more offensive tactic of struggle in order to maintain their hegemony over the working class (the strike in public services at the beginning of 1974 provides an example).

In the political realm, this turn was expressed by a working-class rapprochement with the Social Democracy, or more exactly, by massive and active support to West German Social Democracy and its reformist projects, as well as by a massive and clear break with the Social-Christians as the "employers party." The political turn of the West German working class thus strengthened the traditional mass workers party instead of weakening it. The clearest expression of this intensified support came when the Social-Christians tried to oust the Brandt-Scheel government by means of a "cold coup," by buying a few parliamentary votes (in 1972). Tens of thousands of workers reacted by calling spontaneous strikes and hundreds of thousands massed in street demonstrations to protest against "Barzel's coup." (Ranier Barzel was then the CDU-CSU candidate for replacing Willy Brandt as chancellor -- INPRECOR.)

The legislative elections of 1972 thus had a more clear character as a social confrontation. Frightened by the wave of wildcat strikes, the capitalists overtly supported the CDU-CSU, reversing their policy of 1969. The SPD campaign was waged under slogans that, while demagogic, had very clear social significance, like "millions of voters against the millionaires." The working class voted strongly for the SPD, which also won new votes from middle layers. This led to a clear SPD victory and a new coalition, this time between the SPD and the FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei -- Free Democratic party, the second-largest bourgeois party in West Germany, a liberal formation -- INPRECOR).

Our earlier remark about the radicalization of the youth and working class is appropriate here in an altered form: There was a lack of simultaneity between the workers radicalization on the level of economic struggles and its radicalization on the level of political consciousness. Through their strikes, the workers broke massively in practice with the workers bureaucracies of the SPD and the DGB (Deutsche Gewerkschafts Bund -- German Trade Union Federation), but there was nothing like this break on the political level.

Nevertheless, there was a progressive element even in this "turn" toward political reformism: The workers gradually lost faith in the self-regulating capacities of capitalism. They shed their belief in the superiority of this system over the system of a planned economy. A conviction developed that it was necessary to change this system, and, in the absence of a broad revolutionary current in the working class, this conviction led to hopes that the change could be made by reforms. This indicates the profoundly sectarian character of the attitude adopted by a good number of West German revolutionaries who called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections in 1972. Just as it was correct to denounce the reformist illusions of the Social Democrats during the elections, it was incorrect to present the more active commitment of the working class to the Social Democracy as a primarily negative development. At the time of an active commitment of the organized West German working class against the CDU-CSU as a party of the employers, a call for a boycott of the elections was understood by the most committed workers as a call for indifference, and even as indirect support to the party of the employers.

## Economic difficulties and their generalization

In the meantime, it was proven that the 1966-67 recession was in no way an "accident" or an "error" brought on by an inadequate conjunctural policy, but was instead a characteristic of a new stage that had opened for West German capital. Five factors illustrate the present economic difficulties of West German capitalism:

1. Beginning in the early 1960s, and especially after the 1966-67 recession, the most advanced technology was introduced on a grand scale in the West German economy. Before that, the bases of the economy had been rather outmoded by international standards. The result of the technical innovations was a rise in the organic composition of capital.
2. The pronounced growth in real wages in the German Federal Republic led to a rise in the share of national income going to wages and social benefits during the period 1960-65. The very low level of unemployment until the 1966-67 recession did not allow the employers to put pressure on the workers. These first two factors account for the downward pressure on the rate of profit.
3. Since the beginning of the 1960s, West German capital began to experience growing difficulties in finding outlets for current production. These difficulties were temporarily covered up by a colossal expansion of credit, which imposes a heavy threat on future development. The public debt, which represented 6.1% of the Gross National Product in 1950, represented 13.8% of the GNP in 1970. The volume of the private debt in 1950 had reached 38% of the GNP; it rose to 63% in 1970. These two percentages have grown still higher between 1970 and 1974. The provisional result has been an inflation rate of 8 percent. In a more long-term sense, the result will be either galloping inflation or the open outbreak of overproduction.
4. The West German boom was to a large extent based on crying neglect of investments in the infrastructure, the system of education and health, etc., and on the rapid deterioration of the environment. Today this is being paid for by a worsening of living conditions. This is the real background to the SPD and DGB slogans calling for "improvement of the quality of life." But given the difficult general economic situation, the enormous social investments now needed to make up for their absence during the past twenty-five years cannot be made completely. The result is an aggravated crisis of the environment, transport, the cities, the educational system, and so on. The "reformist" investments that have actually been made are only cosmetic surgery and not a real cure.
5. The West German economy depends in large part on exports. The long boom itself was based on a growth of exports that was more rapid than the growth in sales in the internal market. Branches of industry as important as automobiles, chemicals, and electrical appliances depend on exports for sales of 30-50% of their production. This factor is becoming more and more explosive in view of the recession in the Common Market (see "The Common Market in Crisis," INPRECOR, No. 2), the growing synchronization of economic cycles, and the growing general crisis of the international capitalist economy. The West German employers justly fear that the German Federal Republic's very high balance of payments surplus will no longer be accepted by their "partners" and that protectionist measures will be taken.

Already today the big exporters of the automobile industry are paying 10,000 Deutschemark (about \$4,000) to any work-

er who voluntarily retires. Opel, a subsidiary of General Motors, has cut its employment rolls by 3,000 (at a cost of 30 million DM) by this method. And it will save money in this way, because it allows the company to implement the rules on layoffs, partial unemployment, and so on.

In short, it has turned out that the economic situation in West Germany differs only quantitatively from the general economic situation in the other imperialist countries. The variation results from some remaining reserves that were accumulated during the long boom. In the medium-term the world's second industrial power is heading toward a serious recession. The breadth of that recession and its impact on the world market will be of considerable importance to the world economic conjuncture. Chancellor Schmidt, whom we quoted at the beginning of this article, seems to have understood this.

## The bourgeoisie in search of a solution

For the West German bourgeoisie, an important aspect of the SPD's participation in the government is an attempt to "integrate" the working class through "concerted action" (among unions, employers, and the government) and to obtain the unions' endorsement of limits on annual wage increases. But for the working class, the SPD's governmental participation represents a hope that social reforms will be carried out and that the "quality of life" will be improved. In view of the contradictory nature of the social interests at work, not only the effort to "integrate" the working class, but the policy of the SPD as well is condemned to failure.

During the most recent contract negotiations, the Social Democrats responded to the pressure of the employers by openly opposing the wage demands advanced by the unions. But because of its interweaving with the union bureaucracy, the Social Democracy was incapable of effectively acting against these demands. Nevertheless, effective action is exactly what the bourgeoisie expects of the bourgeois state in the present situation.

For its part, the working class abandoned its hope of obtaining important social reforms, and it thus abandoned its offensive support to the SPD because of the worsening economic situation and the overtly procapitalist attitude of the government headed by the SPD. The workers' euphoric attitude toward the SPD in 1972 gave way to resignation and disappointment. The minimal reactions of the working class to Brandt's resignation as compared to the reaction to the "cold coup" of 1972 testify to this.

The West German bourgeoisie is now intensifying its efforts on two levels to prepare most adequately for a confrontation with the working class. On the parliamentary level, the CDU-CSU is utilizing its possibility of blocking the decisions of the Bundestag by its one-vote majority in the Bundesrat. (The Bundestag is the chamber of deputies. The Bundesrat, second house of parliament, is composed of representatives of the parliaments of the Länder, the West German states, according to the federal structure of West Germany -- INPRECOR.) There is hardly a law proposed by the government that is not challenged and whose application is not delayed on the initiative of the Bundesrat. The aim of this policy is to force the SPD to move increasingly to a line more hostile to the interests of the working class, to eliminate the real (and therefore costly) reforms that have been made, and above all to intensify its "hard line" on questions of "internal security," that is, its actions against the revolutionary left.

In this general strategy, the FDP, liberal component of the governing coalition, often plays the role of the opposition's Trojan horse. When parliamentary means prove insufficient, the opposition resorts to the Constitutional Court with the aim of having the SPD's laws or reforms declared "unconstitutional." This is what happened with the law legalizing abortion in the first three months of pregnancy, for example.

But the bourgeoisie is not restricting its actions to the parliamentary field. Capital is also mobilizing its own "extraparliamentary opposition." Several thousand employers at a big meeting in Cologne listened to inflammatory speeches calling upon them to wage "class struggle." A "national meeting of craftsmen" was organized in Hanover in which government representatives were met by shouts of "Shoot them!" and "Go to the eastern zone!" (eastern zone being cold war language for the German Democratic Republic). During a mass meeting of peasants held recently in Dortmund, the understandable fear of the small peasantry and their anger at the capitalist "restructuration" proposed by the Common Market were "redirected" against the government to the profit of the bourgeoisie. The "virile" words spoken by Franz-Josef Strauss, number one German representative of the "strong state," at the conclusion of the July 1974 congress of the CSU must be placed in this same context. Strauss said that an offensive struggle had to be waged against "the influence of Marxism" to "banish it from Germany and Bavaria" and to stop the "SPD from selling Germany to the GDR." This "extraparliamentary" offensive has not failed to lead to a regroupment of neofascist forces that are characterized by accentuated militancy and pronounced social demagoguery.

## From Brandt to Schmidt

The fall of Willy Brandt, the "peace chancellor," was the first striking result of this offensive by the bourgeoisie. It represented the SPD's acknowledgement of the failure of its "reform policy" and "integration policy." The public service strike at the beginning of 1974 clearly demonstrated that failure. Brandt asserted that wage increases beyond 10 percent would lead to an inflation rate of more than 10 percent and an increase in unemployment. He proclaimed that such increases were intolerable for the government. But the public service union, under rank-and-file pressure, was forced to launch strikes and carried the day, without the government daring to intervene massively against the strikers as the employers were hoping would happen. This trade-union victory had consequences for all the wage negotiations then going on. Everywhere, new contracts included wage increases exceeding 10 percent.

The elections to the Länder parliaments in 1974 also reflected the failure of the SPD's policy. Social Democratic losses were significant everywhere, sometimes running as high as 10 percent. Working class support for the SPD declined. Because of the worsened economic situation, middle layers and backward sections of the working class even began to identify the CDU-CSU with stability and economic prosperity.

The occasion for Brandt's resignation was provided by the Guillaume espionage affair. Brandt seized upon this to admit the failure of his policy. It gave the employers and the CDU-CSU enough ammunition to eliminate Brandt as a "man of weakness," a "security risk," and so on. It may be supposed that the timing of the revelation of the Guillaume affair was not determined fortuitously.

Willy Brandt's successor is Helmut Schmidt, former minister





Brandt, Guillaume. Timing of revelation not fortuitous.

of finances and a friend of Giscard d'Estaing. He knows how to procure a respite, at least a short-term one. Instead of announcing reforms, he proclaimed in a ministerial declaration that the new cabinet "would concentrate on what is realizable." For Helmut Schmidt, what is especially "realizable" is the violation of the electoral promises of 1969 and 1972 on the basis of which the SPD won the support of the working class. As opposed to Brandt, who tried to conciliate the various contradictory wings of the SPD, Schmidt represents the overtly procapitalist wing of the SPD, which does not feel bound by the decisions of the party congress and which is prepared to act severely against the Young Socialists and the left wing of the party.

But Schmidt has even less chance of overcoming the contradictions of the SPD as a governmental party than Brandt did. He has been forced to work toward his own fall in the next legislative elections (1976). He has no chance of satisfying the bourgeoisie unless he can succeed in imposing a "stability accord" on the trade unions. Toward this end, he has made a fiscal reform. Accelerated inflation had resulted in a reduction in the real income of the workers by an accentuated progression of wage taxes. In fact, of every DM won by the workers in wage increases during 1973, nearly half was lost through the increase in wage taxes.

But the fiscal reform will only amount to a small reduction in the taxes paid by workers' households during 1975. Even if the rate of inflation does not rise, the intolerable progression of wage taxes will recommence in 1976. Moreover, this reform involves only one point on which the employers would have suffered a deterioration in their fiscal income compared to the laws now in force. And this point was eliminated under the offensive of the employers and the CDU-CSU. The fiscal reform as finally adopted corresponds even to the short-term interests of the bourgeoisie, since it assures a certain growth in demand on the internal market for the year 1975, which will be a bad year economically.

Obviously, the ideal thing for the bourgeoisie would be for the unions to agree to moderate, or even suppress, their wage demands in exchange for this paltry fiscal reform. Such a success would undoubtedly increase Schmidt's prestige in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, but it would discredit him completely in the eyes of the working class, with corresponding electoral results.

The West German bourgeoisie's search for a solution to its crisis of leadership goes on against a different backdrop from that of the other countries of Western Europe. The bourgeoisie in West Germany has much more room to maneuver because of the disappointment and lack of perspective among the working class and the weakness of the revolutionary left. The West German bourgeoisie can force the bourgeois workers party that is the SPD to drift to the right without paying the price of an immediate push to the left by the proletariat, for there is still no credible revolutionary pole of attraction to the left of the SPD that could be considered by a layer of workers as an alternative to the bureaucracies of the SPD and the DGB.

## Situation in the workers movement

The coming wage negotiations will mark an important stage in the class struggle in the German Federal Republic, since Schmidt has practically adopted the employers' position. It will thus be necessary for the working class to oppose the government's policy openly if it wants to defend its own interests. This implies that the workers will pass from a stage of disappointment and disorientation to a more militant defense of their interests and that they will begin to take their distance from the SPD.

What remains to be seen is whether important layers of the working class will be able to extract themselves from the influence of the trade-union bureaucracy and whether the revolutionary left will succeed in extending its influence within the working class, especially among the new workers vanguard that has been emerging in the factories since 1969.

In fact, since the outbreak of the wildcat strikes in the factories during September 1969 there has been a process of gradual replacement of the workers leaders committed to class collaboration during the 1950s and 1960s by more militant leaders. Nevertheless, these leaders have proven incapable of taking the necessary initiatives to deal with the new tasks posed by partial unemployment, speedups, layoffs, and factory closings. This is a reflection of the small amount of progress in class consciousness that has been made in the past five years -- even among the most advanced workers -- and of the uneven development of the radicalization among the workers, for this same new workers vanguard was capable of leading the wage struggles of 1969 and 1973 independent of and partially against the trade-union bureaucracy.

This bureaucracy has not remained passive. During the past several years it has been trying to strengthen its weakened positions. Until the middle of the 1960s, it tried to base itself on so-called men of trade-union confidence (Vertrauensleute, partially comparable to the British shop stewards or the Belgian trade-union delegates) within the factories in order to neutralize the members of the factory councils (Betriebsräte) who were too inclined to adopt independent class-collaborationist positions identifying themselves with the interests of the employers. These Vertrauensleute were also the promoters of a new workers leadership on the factory level. The trade-union leadership is therefore now trying to put the brakes on the upsurge by imposing new rules and regulations that, among other things, dissolve the interfactory channels of communication of the Vertrauensleute at the local level.

Moreover, the bureaucracy is moving toward more marked disciplinary measures by introducing so-called resolutions of incompatibility alongside the government bans on employing

revolutionaries in public services. These resolutions say that membership in a revolutionary organization, generally defined totally arbitrarily anyway, is incompatible with membership in the trade union. The pretext used to pass these resolutions was the line upheld by the Maoist groups of creating a "Red Trade Union Opposition" (Rote Gewerkschaftsopposition, RGO) independent of the DGB. In practice these disciplinary measures are taken against any attempt to create a trade-union tendency.

Taken together, all this amounts to a not insignificant series of preparatory steps by the bureaucracy. And to this must be added the fact that the bureaucracy has partially increased its prestige in the eyes of a part of the working class by moving to an "active" wage policy that had been imposed on it by the wildcat strikes of 1969 and 1972. The collective bargaining round of 1973-74 and the struggle of the metalworkers of Baden-Württemberg to improve conditions on the assembly lines marked the principal stages of this reactivation of the trade unions. Hence, the trade-union bureaucracy is going into the coming class conflicts extremely well armed. But only the concrete class struggles themselves will demonstrate whether all these preparations are enough to block the process of political maturation within the rank-and-file trade-union bodies.

In order to attain a mobilization necessary for the contract struggles, combative trade-union militants will have to try to rapidly initiate rank-and-file discussions on what demands should be advanced. If they succeed in this there are two possibilities: Either the bureaucracy will yield in advance to the rank-and-file pressure and act openly against the employers and the SPD government, or else a new wave of wildcat strikes will break out and lead to a new loss of prestige for the union bureaucracy.

### The outlook

The economic situation clearly points toward an exacerbation of the recession. Growing dependence on the world market is undermining the economic situation in West Germany. And the aggravation of the recession is loaded with threats to the international imperialist economy. To be sure, Helmut Schmidt is a man who recognizes these threats, but just as certainly he is not the man who can eliminate them. The SPD as a bourgeois workers party has confirmed its ambivalent character during the latest events. This nature does not allow it to impose a policy that is openly and aggressively opposed to the immediate interests of the working class. Such a policy could be applied more effectively by the CDU-CSU or by a military dictatorship. More than ever, the SPD is dependent on the electoral support of the working class.

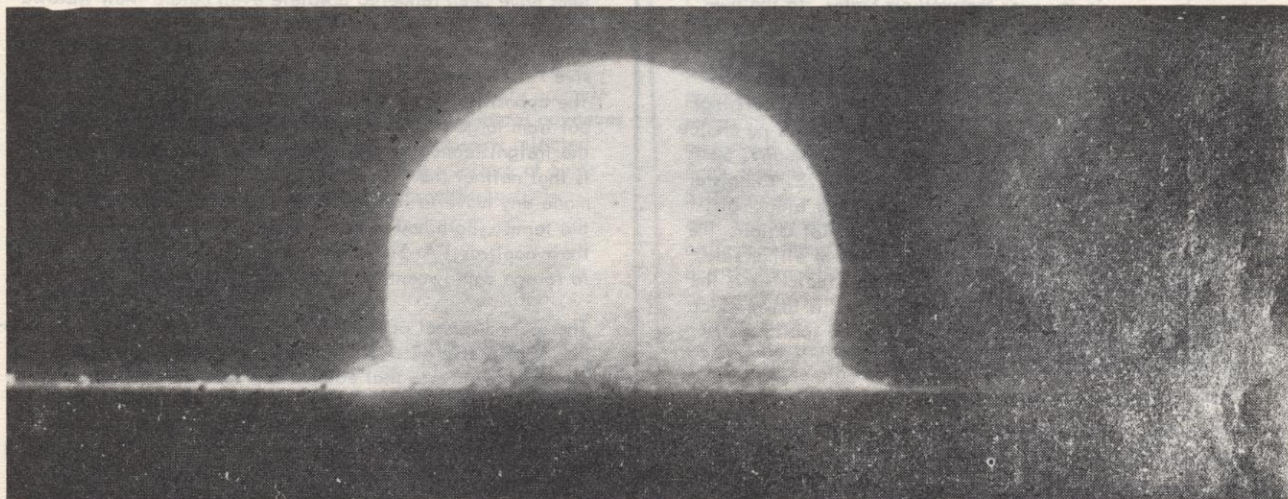
In this situation, the working class appears to lack perspectives for the immediate future. The workers are partially turning away from the SPD without knowing where to go. The most backward sectors are even turning toward the CDU-CSU. This is in part a result of the fact that the revolutionary left does not yet represent a credible alternative to the SPD and that certain sectarian Maoist groups have hegemony in the revolutionary left.

In the coming period, it will be important not only to find a practical alternative to the "moderation" of the trade-union bureaucracy on the level of "pure" wage struggles. It will be even more important to find a response to the key ques-

tions posed by the present situation, that is, an alternative to the "active" trade-union policy based exclusively on wage demands in the boom period, as well as an alternative to the conception that proposes no means of action on the political field other than electoral support to the SPD, the "representative of the interests of the wage earners."

Revolutionaries must try to introduce into the new workers vanguard in the factories and into layers of progressive trade unionists demands that will allow for organizing a solidarity struggle against the reduction of real wages, layoffs and partial unemployment, inflation, and factory shut-downs. If this effort is successful, it will be possible to unify the whole working class and ward off the demoralization and passivity that is threatening the class. In that case, a new outbreak of workers struggles will overturn the plans of the employers, Chancellor Schmidt, and the trade-union bureaucracy. The slogans must be: No support to Helmut Schmidt! For class struggle trade unionism! The working class must defend its interests by taking its distance from the SPD! For a program of transitional demands -- against inflation, for a sliding scale of wages; against layoffs, for a sliding scale of hours; against speedup, for workers control of production. ■

# SALT, MIRV, MAD...



## détente?

by JON ROTHSCHILD

The world capitalist press was virtually unanimous that Summit III, Nixon's third annual grande bouffe with Soviet Communist party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, was a flop. The American magazine Newsweek observed that "for all the hoopla and headlines that attended the summit, Mr. Nixon and Brezhnev failed to solve the main problem before them: further limiting the proliferation of offensive nuclear weapons. And that setback clouded the future of détente with the prospect of an alarming escalation in the arms race." From the other side of the Atlantic, The Economist, which expresses the views of a not insignificant section of British finance capital, was equally blunt: "Mr Nixon achieved just enough in his third meeting with Mr Brezhnev to defend himself against the accusation that he should not have gone to Moscow at all. But he did not bring off what he had most wanted, and not long ago thought he could bring off. The nuclear competition of the superpowers has not been checked. No new agreement to curb it in any effective way emerged from the talks."

What Nixon apparently "thought he could bring off" was a new nuclear arms limitation agreement, or at least a "conceptual breakthrough" on a potential agreement, to extend the one that was signed at Summit I in the Soviet Union in May 1972. That agreement was the product of the first round of "strategic arms limitation talks" (SALT I), which had begun in Helsinki in November 1969 and went on for two and a half years before producing results. In essence, the SALT I accords limited the number of missile launchers that could be deployed by Moscow and Washington. It is to remain in effect until 1977. Recognizing the necessity to work out a follow-up agreement well in advance of the expiration of the May 1972 deal, and aware of the length of time needed to produce such an agreement, the U.S. and Soviet regimes initiated the second round of talks, SALT II, in Geneva in November 1972. Until now, however, the new round of negotiations has made no progress. Neither Kissinger's visit to Moscow in March nor Nixon's in June was able to move SALT II off "square one."

### Why SALT?

It is evident that both the American ruling class and the Soviet bureaucracy have an interest in introducing certain limits on the arms race. In the capitalist world -- and especially in the United States -- massive government spending on military hardware is an important factor in exacerbating inflation. In addition, the ever expanding budget for "defense" makes it more difficult for Washington to increase spending on projects designed to divert the radicalization in the Black community and to grant concessions to the working class as a whole. From the purely economic standpoint, U.S. imperialism would have much to gain by at least stabilizing its military outlays on strategic weaponry.

For the Soviet bureaucracy, the economic gains to be made by reducing the arms budget are even more manifest than for the American capitalists. In the Soviet economy, spending on nuclear arms is a total waste. While a sector of the U.S. capitalist class makes enormous profits from weapons contracts, arms spending in the Soviet Union is purely an economic diversion. No section of society profits by it. Technically, the weapons produced are absolutely useless for the Soviet bureaucracy's policy toward the Eastern European workers states or toward the capitalist world as a whole. Increasing demand for consumer goods on the part of the Soviet working class, which is now a majority of the Soviet population--and an ever growing one at that--puts constant pressure on the bureaucracy to modify its investment policies. The arms race is a major obstacle to that. From the standpoint of the Soviet bureaucracy, the arms race would be better ended outright.

The very existence of SALT, then, is an expression of a mutual desire in Moscow and Washington to do something to put limits on an escalation of spending on instruments of nuclear destruction.

But the mutual desire for strategic arms limitation is mediated by the fundamental clash in the class character of the two states. As the leading imperialist power, the United States needs nuclear superiority over the workers states. In the nuclear age, ability to police the world means ability to utilize, or at least to threaten to utilize, a nuclear striking force. And the bureaucracy that rules the Soviet Union -- however prepared it might be to crush or betray revolutionary uprisings in the interest of preserving its own privileges -- has no choice but to defend itself against American nuclear hegemony. So for each technological innovation made in the U.S. to bolster American imperialism's ability to play at nuclear blackmail, there must be a defensive innovation in the Soviet Union. The inevitable result -- independent of the desires of either side, the so-called détente, or any other secondary factor -- is the nuclear arms race, which, in the last analysis, is the product of the irreconcilable contradiction between the social systems prevailing in the United States and the Soviet Union.

This framework -- essential for understanding the course and importance of SALT -- may seem rather obvious to revolutionary Marxists. Unfortunately, it is not so obvious within the workers movement or even among its vanguard. The bourgeoisie and its spokesmen generally cast discussions on the nuclear arms race in terms of what is generally known as "game theory," one of the most decadent of all theoretical excrescences of the era of capitalism's death agony. The terminology and ideology of that theory as applied to nuclear weapons is prevalent not only in capitalist magazines but in the press of the workers movement. The most common sort of formulation betraying such an approach is the assertion that behind the SALT rígamorale lies the question of "the nuclear balance of terror between the two superpowers." The specialized jargon that has been developed in the United States to refer to this balance of terror is MAD, which stands for the charming phrase "mutual assured destruction." Its meaning was summarized by John Newhouse, author of a book on the history of SALT. He wrote, "The talks were launched not from a common impulse to reduce armaments but from a mutual need to solemnize the parity principle -- or, put differently, to establish an acceptance by each side of the other's ability to inflict unacceptable retribution in response to nuclear attack."

The fact of the matter is rather different. Ever since the American monopoly of nuclear weapons was broken by the Soviet development of the fusion bomb, it has been Moscow's strategy to secure a solemn parity principle as a means of avoiding nuclear holocaust, while Washington's strategy has been to overturn that principle through technological innovations aimed at making nuclear war a realistic policy option for imperialism. To put it another way -- again in the terminology used by the ghouls of the imperialist nuclear think-tank industry -- Washington has always sought to develop a "first-strike capacity," while Moscow's nuclear policy has been to develop sufficient counterattack potential to make it too great a risk for American imperialism to launch a first strike.

## Technology and negotiation

There were two main aspects to the agreement that came out of SALT I. First, limits were put on the number of defensive missiles that could be deployed by each side. Each country was entitled to construct an antiballistic missile (ABM) system around its capital city and around one of its offensive missile-launching sites. The total number of antiballistic missiles was set at 200 for each country. This aspect of the agreement was not very significant. The effectiveness of the

ABM was always in great doubt. Historically, offensive technology has always developed more rapidly than defensive technology, with the result that most defensive missile systems have been rendered obsolete even before their installation. In the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s there was massive opposition to the deployment of an extensive ABM system that had been proposed by the Pentagon. The opposition came not only from the antiwar movement, but from large sectors of the ruling class itself. The proof of the insignificance of the ABM aspect of the SALT I accords is that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union has made any move to install the second system allowed under the terms. (Both had already deployed ABM systems around their capitals.) At Summit III, the two sides agreed formally to forego deployment of the second ABM system.

The second aspect of the SALT I accords was to limit the number of offensive missile launchers to be built by both sides. The agreement was that each side would freeze its number of launchers. The United States now has 1,000 land-based missiles and 710 sea-based missiles, most of them on Polaris and Poseidon submarines. The Soviet Union has 1,410 land-based missiles and 950 sea-based ones. The comparison of numbers of missiles, however, is not an accurate reflection of the destructive power each side commands. In the late 1960s, Washington introduced a technical innovation known as MRV, or multiple re-entry vehicle. The MRV system, based on a sort of shot-gun principle, was capable of landing several bombs a few miles apart in fixed patterns, all the warheads being launched from a single missile.

The MRV was followed by the MIRV, multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles, whose warheads could be directed at targets hundreds of miles apart. Operational MIRVs were installed into the American offensive missile arsenal beginning in 1969. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, did not move seriously into MIRV research until the weapon had already been completely perfected by the United States. The first known Soviet MIRV test took place only in August 1973. SALT I did not place any restriction on the number of warheads either side could deploy, only the number of missiles. So while the Soviet Union has an advantage in the number of missiles available, the United States has overwhelming superiority in the number of warheads. Washington now has about 7,900 nuclear warheads. By 1977, when the SALT I agreement expires, it will have 9,700. The Soviet Union, even if it presses ahead successfully with its own MIRV program, will only have about 4,000 warheads by 1977. Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger estimated in March 1974 that the Soviet Union then had 2,600 deliverable warheads.

The problem with the SALT I agreement, then, was that Moscow saw no reason to allow Washington to limitlessly develop the MIRV, which would allow the United States to continue to add to its offensive missile capability. In 1973 the Soviet Union tested four new missiles, three of which can carry MIRVs. U.S. imperialism responded to the Soviet attempt to catch up by announcing early in 1974 that more Soviet military installations were being added to the list of targets for American warheads. At the same time, Washington let it be known that it was moving to develop the next innovation in the MRV field, the MARV, or maneuverable re-entry vehicle. The MARV incorporates the MIRV system, except that the individual warheads would be able to change course in mid-flight, a qualitative step forward in accuracy.

The "snag" that consequently developed in the negotiations for SALT II was, as the July 15 Newsweek put it, "agreeing to a formula that would equalize the nuclear strength of the two countries by balancing the Soviet superiority in total

missile launchers (2,358 to 1,710) against the U.S. lead in nuclear warheads (7,940 to 2,600). "Washington proposed to find the formula by extending the SALT I agreement by two or three years and arriving at a statement "in principle" limiting further expansion of MIRVs. Since Washington has already equipped its entire arsenal with MIRVs, while the Soviet Union has barely begun to deploy them, this would have left U.S. imperialism with a virtual monopoly on multiple warheads, one of the most important technical advances in nuclear technology. Quite naturally, Moscow rejected that proposal. Hence the deadlock and the failure of Summit III to produce even a "conceptual breakthrough."

## Two strategies

In its July 8 issue, Newsweek examined the importance to U.S. imperialism of preventing the Soviet Union from closing the MIRV gap. "For years," the magazine wrote, "the Soviet Union has favored such heavy rockets as the big SS-9, capable of delivering an awesome 25-megaton nuclear punch (i.e., a fusion bomb with the explosive equivalent of 25 million tons of TNT -- INPRECOR), while the U.S. has relied on smaller, highly accurate missiles that aim to do the same job with fewer megatons of explosive power. But along with MIRVing, the Kremlin will also have acquired a tremendous advantage in 'throw-weight' (the capacity to deliver heavier payloads and bigger clusters of MIRV's), more than offsetting the present U.S. numerical edge in warheads. Pentagon experts expect the Kremlin to deploy about 8,000 warheads over the next decade, giving the Russians a throw-weight advantage of nearly 6 to 1. A surprise blitz from that force, they assert, could wipe out most of the 1,000 Minuteman III ICBM's (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles -- INPRECOR) maintained by the U.S."

The implication, of course, is that given the previous Soviet reliance on heavier missiles, Moscow's development of MIRVs would represent a qualitative shift in the relationship of forces that the United States would have to answer by developing new weaponry, since "parity" would be destroyed by the Soviet Union acquiring a first-strike capacity. The only problem with this theory is that there is not the slightest evidence to support it and there is a good deal of evidence to contradict it.

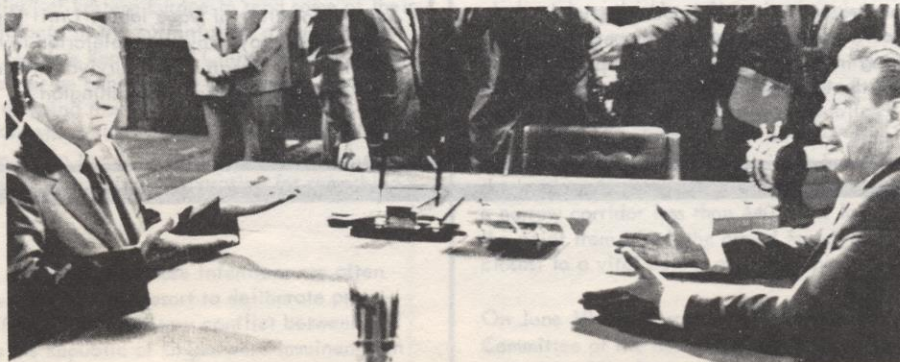
At present, the United States has -- in addition to the 1,000

Minuteman III's -- 41 Polaris and Poseidon submarines and 496 long-range bombers equipped with nuclear weapons. A good part of the bomber fleet is kept in the air at all times ("oil shortage" or not), flying from their bases in the United States to the Arctic circle and back again. Each of the Polaris and Poseidon submarines carries sixteen missiles; each of the missiles has 10 MIRV warheads (throw-weight 1,200 pounds) and a range of 2,750 miles. But that is not all. Secretary of Defense Schlesinger has proposed (and Congress has approved) construction of a new submarine called the Trident. Each Trident will carry 24 MIRVed missiles with a range of 5,000 miles. In addition, there are plans to construct 244 new B-1 superbombers (at \$42 million each), the B-1 being an improvement on the B-52s that were used against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the Christmas 1972 bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. The consequences of all this are obvious enough. Newsweek itself noted: "Even if the Soviet Union were to run the cataclysmic risk of a surprise first strike on American military installations and ICBM sites, enough of this air and sea armada would survive to devastate Russian population centers."

Devastate is not the word for it. Forty-one submarines, each of which has sixteen missiles, means 656 missiles. Since each missile carries ten MIRVs, the total number of warheads in the submarine fleet is 6,560. It takes, according to Newsweek, 100 warheads to kill 100 million people. This means that the missiles in the present American submarine fleet carry sufficient warheads to kill 6,560 million people, which is more than twice the total population of the planet. And this leaves aside the bombers in the air, the new bombers on the drawing board, and the new submarines being developed. So the argument that Soviet development of MIRVs would give the Soviet Union the possibility of making a crippling "first strike" on the United States is simply nonsense. MIRV or no MIRV, even at its present strength, U.S. imperialism would be able to respond to a Soviet first strike by killing everybody in the world -- twice. It is perhaps in order to admit that this constitutes a strong deterrent.

The fact of the matter is that in terms of direct nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, first-strike capacity becomes real only if one country is able in the first strike to cripple the ability of the other country to respond. It is absolutely clear that the Soviet Union has no such ability to cripple American response, nor will it ever have that ability, nor is there the slightest sign that it is try-

**Continuation of the arms race in spite of the détente confirms that conflict will persist -- conflict resting on the basic class difference between the two societies.**



ing to obtain it. The American bombers that are constantly in the air cannot be eliminated by a Soviet first strike. The American submarine fleet, fully mobile and able to strike at the Soviet Union from distances of thousands of miles, could not be disabled by a Soviet first strike. Nor should it be forgotten that U.S. imperialism has a vast network of foreign bases -- some of them in countries that border on the Soviet Union itself -- that are equipped with planes that could retaliate against the Soviet Union even if the United States were totally eradicated by a Soviet first strike. All these things have been true throughout the Cold War, and they continue to be true in the era of "détente."

Looking at the situation from the other direction, we come to rather different conclusions. The American offensive missiles, "smaller," but "highly accurate" and equipped with multiple warheads, are suited to pin-point attacks on targets that are smaller than cities. Specifically, the attempt has been made to fashion missiles that could strike at Soviet missile sites, crippling the Soviet Union's ability to strike back or destroying concentrated industrial centers or other "limited" targets. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, before the extensive development of the Soviet missile-launching naval fleet, the Soviet Union was especially vulnerable to this sort of first strike. (One of the reasons for trenchant Soviet rejection of U.S. proposals for "on-site" inspection of nuclear installations during that period was undoubtedly Moscow's concern that the Soviet Union's vulnerability would be vastly increased if Washington were able to fix the exact location and extent of Soviet bases.) The constant American drive to develop increasingly accurate and virtually invulnerable offensive delivery systems of the MRV type is exactly a product of U.S. imperialism's attempt to endow itself with a first-strike capacity.

In this regard it is of some interest that "scenarios" for "limited" nuclear war are once again being debated in the U.S. press. The April 22 issue of Newsweek described one such scenario. It postulates a Soviet seizure of West Berlin (so "the Russians" are clearly the aggressor), and describes a possible American response: "The President is determined to impress on the Russian leaders that he means business -- that they are risking nuclear war. He orders up a television picture of a hydroelectric plant in a remote Russian region. Satisfied that a mini-nuke blast there will cause minimum civilian casualties, he sends out the signal to launch a single ICBM. Then, on a TV screen in front of him, he watches as the hydroelectric plant is destroyed."

"Impossible? Not at all. By the 1980s, the U.S. will have a network of stationary communications satellites, relay space stations and the Survatcom (Survivable Satellite Communications) system capable of beaming back live television pictures to the President from any corner of the globe."

The difference in the strategy of the two countries is clear. The nuclear arms race was initiated by U.S. imperialism, which at the beginning intended its nuclear monopoly to be the decisive factor in the establishment of Pax Americana

after the second world war. When the American nuclear monopoly was broken, Washington modified its tactics but retained its overall strategy, which was to endow itself with the possibility of making a first strike against the Soviet Union such that resort to nuclear weapons would always be a real policy option for imperialism. The United States therefore led the way in fields like supersonic bombers, missile-launching submarines, MRVs and their derivatives, and all other devices relying on large numbers of small but highly accurate missiles. The Soviet response was to develop massive warheads, some of them as large as 100 megatons, and gigantic missiles capable of delivering these warheads to the United States. While American technology was directed toward small, accurate, and diversified weaponry, Soviet technology was directed to perfecting awesome "doomsday" bombs.

The two divergent directions were not taken as a result of temperament or aesthetic inclination. The American strategy corresponds to attempts to develop first-strike capacity. The Soviet strategy is based on developing means of destruction so massive that Washington would be deterred from a first strike by the certain knowledge that Soviet retaliation could destroy the whole United States. In every case, it has been the United States that has led the way in technological innovations escalating the arms race (missile-launching submarines, MRVs, etc.) with the Soviet Union simply trying to catch up. Then, the Soviet response would be followed by the next American technological development. It is this dynamic that is at the root of the nuclear arms race, and not a mutual attempt to overturn "the principle of parity" or the "balance of nuclear terror."

In this sense, continuation of the nuclear arms race in spite of the international "détente" is confirmation of the fact that whatever conjunctural agreements may be reached by Moscow and Washington based on the former's betrayal of the world revolution, the conflict between the American imperialist state and the Soviet workers state will persist. That conflict rests on the basic class difference between Soviet and American society. And it asserts itself not only in clashes over arms limitation agreements but in constant political and military maneuvering as both Moscow and Washington seek to extend their influence at the expense of the other. (The new American penetration of the Arab East, conducted against the Soviet bureaucracy and to the Kremlin's obvious displeasure, and the continued failure of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation to produce results are two recent examples on widely disparate levels of the fundamental conflict of interest between the American and Soviet states.)

The "détente" has not eliminated that conflict; it has merely modified its form. In that sense, détente is but an extension of the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s. The nuclear arms race -- instigated and intensified by imperialism's determination to preserve its military hegemony -- is thus as integral to the social system prevailing in the United States as racism or exploitation of wage labor. Until imperialism and capitalism are destroyed by the proletarian revolution, nuclear war, with all its threats to the survival of humanity, will remain a "thinkable" option in Washington. ■

# MILITARY FACE-OFF IN CENTRAL ASIA

by A. MILES

Against the background of the famous "international détente" there have emerged many centers of tension in which troop and naval movements reflect the threat of international conflagration. One of the most threatening -- and one of the most tragic from the standpoint of the interests of the international working class -- is the focus of tension in central Asia along the Chinese-Soviet border.

Although the world press does not refer to it often, a feverish activity is going on in diplomatic and paradiplomatic circles in several countries relative to the central Asian tension. Uneasiness has been spread not only by the maneuvers of Maoist and Brezhnevite diplomacy. It is also on the rise in the capitals of Eastern Europe and East Asia.

While in Washington the State Department is rubbing its hands with glee, the leaders of the imperialist countries of Western Europe and Japan are adopting a more hesitant attitude. Their hope of seeing the "Communist countries" tear each other to pieces and thus decisively weaken the international workers movement is counterbalanced by their fear of the side effects, including the military side effects, that would be felt in various parts of the world, even along the frontiers of their own countries.

The preparations for a new international conference of the Communist parties faithful to Moscow are most often made in direct relation to the stirring of the leaves in central Asia. For the Kremlin, it is a matter of condemning in advance the "nationalists" and "social chauvinists" in Peking as "aggressors," a formula that could be used to justify an overt or disguised military intervention and could increase pressure on the "fraternal parties" of Eastern Europe to send some of their own troops to participate in the current show of force along the borders of the People's Republic of China. If this "maximum" objective cannot be achieved -- since many Communist parties draw back at going that far -- it would at least be necessary for the Kremlin to banish the "chauvinist splitters" of the "Mao clique" from the "international Communist movement." That would be ideological preparation for something more sinister.

While alarmists of all stripes -- whose intentions are often far from pure and who sometimes resort to deliberate provocation -- talk as if an all-out military conflict between the USSR and the People's Republic of China were imminent, an astonishing passivity holds sway among broad sectors of the

workers movement, including its revolutionary wing. This is a result of a mixture of ignorance, complacent apathy, and naive faith in the tendency of state conflicts in the nuclear age to "work themselves out sooner or later." The first position exaggerates the gravity of the conflict; the second clearly underestimates it.

## A disturbing escalation

To abandon the realm of speculation and move to the world of facts, it is necessary to begin by shedding some light on two predominant features of the tension that has reigned for several years along the Sino-Soviet border.

First, the Kremlin has gradually assembled a colossal and impressive military force along the border. The deployment of forces has entailed a territorial redistribution of the Soviet army on a grand scale. According to estimates published in the June 13, 1974, *Times of London*, in 1968 there were 16 Soviet divisions on the Chinese border; in 1969 there were 21. The figure grew to 33 divisions in 1971, 44 in 1972, and 45 in 1973. Today it is reported to have reached 50 divisions (and some American sources say even 60).

The Soviet armed forces have constructed some seventy air fields in the region, most of them during the most recent period, as well as many bases for launching tactical and Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles. There have also been reports that tactical nuclear weapons are being stockpiled.

A second significant feature: Although initially (during the clashes along the Usuri River in the winter of 1968-69) the Soviet troops were deployed along the whole frontier, with special concentrations in "hot spots" where Soviet territorial sovereignty is contested by Peking, today the troops seem to be concentrated in the People's Republic of Mongolia, where there are half a dozen Soviet armored divisions with ultra-modern equipment and some missile bases as well. Between the border of outer Mongolia and the city of Peking there is a narrow corridor less than 440 miles long. So Mongolia is the point from which the armed forces of the USSR can come closest to a vital center of the People's Republic of China.

On June 10, 1974, speaking before the plenum of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary party of the People of Mongolia (the CP), Tsendenbal, the head of the party and new

Chinese demonstration at Communist party headquarters in Peking hails successful test of hydrogen bomb.



president of Mongolia, accused the Peking leaders of nourishing "annexationist" aims toward Mongolia and of "openly preparing war against the USSR and the People's Republic of Mongolia." When put in the context of the Soviet troop concentrations, these assertions have a disturbing ring.

From all evidence, the Maoist leadership has remained faithful to its custom of "responding tit for tat" and has assembled forces of nearly equivalent numerical strength to those of the Soviet Union on its side of the border. It is reported that 45-50 divisions of the People's Liberation Army are now deployed in the region. These forces have moved progressively closer to the border. While Chinese air fields are located further into the interior, numerous preparations have been made for "people's war" on a grand scale. Not the least of these preparations has been construction of gigantic "underground cities" beneath many cities in northern and central China. These are intended to serve as refuges for the population, administrative centers, and storage areas for food and even industrial production in the event of massive bombing or nuclear attack. According to an Indian observer who visited the city of Talien (Darien), the entire population (1 million) of this industrial center could find refuge and subsistence in such an "underground city" in case of nuclear attack. (Financial Times, June 19, 1974.)

Moreover, the Chinese leaders are accelerating the development of their own nuclear arsenal. Recently they conducted their sixteenth nuclear test. Already they have a limited number of missiles that are capable of hitting targets in the European section of the Soviet Union. They are said to be in process of dispersing their nuclear forces in order to stop a preventive nuclear attack from being able to destroy their entire arsenal in one blow.

It is clear that these preparations, which on both sides cost the equivalent of thousands of millions of dollars and mobilize (and therefore immobilize!) considerable parts of the resources of the two countries, cannot be considered as simple "propaganda gestures." Clearly, what is involved is a deployment of land forces that indisputably increases the risk of incidents breaking out. And risk of incidents also means risk of uncontrollable chain reactions.

There is a recent example of such an incident. In March 1974 the Chinese armed forces shot down an armed Soviet reconnaissance helicopter that, according to Moscow, had "strayed" over the Chinese border. The Chinese version is that the overflight was deliberate, designed to carry out military espionage, and that the helicopter had "penetrated deeply into the autonomous region of Uighour in Chinese Sinkiang." The Peking government has since refused to return the helicopter crew, which was taken prisoner, to the USSR. Tension grows considerably in the wake of such incidents.

### The ideological justification

The deployment of military forces has been accompanied by a deployment of propaganda that tends to prolong and justify it. But to reduce the military deployment to the propaganda deployment would be to take mere appearances for reality.

From the Soviet side, the propaganda machine is axed around the "social chauvinism" or "great Han nationalism" of the Peking leaders. The oppression of minority nationalities living in northern and western China is denounced. Peking's "annexationist aims" concerning the Mongolian People's Republic are brought up. But the main accusation remains that the Peking leaders are "sowing division and subversion" within the "socialist camp." The Mongolian Soviet leaders have come up with some curious new terms to describe this sort of action: "ideological aggression" and "ideological sabotage."

These terms refer to the content of the Chinese propaganda campaign, which has been no less violent and intense than the Soviet campaign. The most trenchant accusations are raised against the Moscow "social imperialists," who are said to be resorting to "neocolonialist methods" against the "peoples of Eastern Europe and Mongolia who are held under their bloody yoke" and against the "countries of the third world" as a whole. There are also many references to the "oppressed nationalities" in the Soviet Union itself, both in Soviet Asia and in Europe. Powerful radio stations broadcast this propaganda from Chinese territory in the most diverse languages and directions, including toward the Ukraine.





February 1967.  
Effigies of Soviet leaders  
burned on fence surrounding  
Soviet embassy compound.

Given the violence of the tone and the total absence of precision (not to mention scientific Marxist precision) in the vocabulary employed, it is difficult to separate the "defensive" and "offensive" functions of such propaganda campaigns. Manifestly fearing a Soviet military attack -- nobody could conceive of a Chinese invasion of the Soviet Union, independent of the limited operations in the disputed border zones -- the Maoist leaders are prepared to utilize all "ideological" means to weaken the presumed adversary. The scarcely concealed objective of the Chinese propaganda crusade is to provoke rebellion, and even insurrection and guerrilla warfare, in the rear areas of the Soviet army. The campaign would achieve its main goal even if it simply compelled the Soviet high command to utilize a portion of its forces to strengthen the garrisons assigned to keep watch over regions in which the population is considered "unreliable." It would be fully crowned with success if the communications lines of the Soviet troops were to be disturbed or even cut by local or national uprisings.

From their side, the Soviet leaders are using Peking's propaganda preparations to demonstrate to the leaders of the Communist parties (beginning with those of Eastern Europe) that the Maoists have become "objectively and subjectively enemies of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp," and that they are prepared to resort to any method, up to and including supporting "obviously anti-Soviet and anti-Communist dissident movements," "bourgeois nationalism," and "religious and feudal remnants" in their desire to "cling to power." And if it can be conclusively proven that Mao and "his clique" are behaving like "counterrevolutionary saboteurs and diversionists" and "declared enemies of the Soviet Union," then would not a lightning action designed to put the Maoists out of commission and reestablish the "unity of the socialist camp" be justified? And since such lightning action would be considered "fascist imperialist aggression" by the Peking leaders, the Maoists would feel justified in responding with all their power. Thus, the circle is closed.

## The double logic of Stalinism

An honest communist militant ignorant of the history of Stalinism and the Soviet bureaucracy and taking for good coin claims

about the socialist character of Soviet society could only react to this sinister chain of events with appalled consternation. There is less reason for revolutionary Marxists to be astonished.

Ever since the Soviet bureaucracy rose to power in the USSR and bureaucratized -- and thereby destroyed the proletarian essence of -- the Soviet Communist party, one of the principal characteristics of its behavior has been systematic use of police measures, and later of violence and physical terror, to "settle" ideological conflicts and "eliminate" groups or individual cadres of the party that were considered annoying by the faction in power. From the use of spies infiltrated into the Left Opposition to the assassination of Blumkin, from the arrest and deportation of opposition militants to the murderous purges of the 1930s and the assassination of Trotsky, Stalin and Stalinism have become synonyms for blackmail, violence, and terror as the main weapons of political struggle within the Communist movement.

When Communist parties took power outside the borders of the Soviet Union, the transference of these methods to the international arena (which had already been effected during the Spanish civil war and the campaign of assassinating revolutionary militants throughout the world after 1936) inevitably transformed ideological conflicts into state conflicts. This was shown in a spectacular way after the Yugoslav CP was excommunicated by the Cominform in 1948. At that time, the Kremlin leaders did not merely launch a vast ideological campaign (made up mostly of lies and slanders) against the Yugoslav communists. They also decreed an economic blockade against Yugoslavia and massed significant armed forces on the Yugoslav frontier. On several occasions, they came within a hair's breadth of military intervention. Nevertheless, this did not happen.

In the cases of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968, ideological conflict between leading factions of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak Communist parties (under Nagy and Dubcek) and the leading faction of the Soviet bureaucracy were settled by overwhelming military intervention from the Kremlin. (The intervention of the Soviet occupation forces against the workers revolt in East

Germany in 1953 had a formally different character, for the leading faction of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands--Socialist Unity party of Germany--which was the Ulbricht faction, fully supported the intervention.) In all these cases, desire to repress a mass movement that had become uncontrollable and was orienting toward a real regime of workers councils was the fundamental political motivation for the intervention.

It can be asked why there was a military intervention in Hungary and Czechoslovakia but not in Yugoslavia. The most obvious reason is that the interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia were practically military parades, given the existing military and political relationship of forces. In Yugoslavia, however, the Kremlin was convinced that it would have faced a long and hard resistance that would probably have been prolonged by a popular guerrilla war. The military and political price for such an adventure, independent of its short- and medium-term success, seemed too high.

A concomitant but probably not determining factor was that the geographical position of Yugoslavia made the possibility of an active intervention by the capitalist powers much more pronounced than in the case of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which the Yalta and Potsdam agreements had clearly placed in the Kremlin's exclusive sphere of influence. In this regard also the risk was too great for the Soviet bureaucracy.

In light of all this, the show of force that the Soviet bureaucracy has undertaken during the past few years along the Chinese border is not surprising. And taking account of the Yugoslav precedent, it can be concluded that an actual military intervention would be less than unlikely.

In China, even less than in Yugoslavia, the Kremlin leaders could not hope to carry out a "military parade." They would be plunging into a long and costly adventure that could only weaken their power and aid all their internal and external enemies. An attempted intervention by classical means seems pure madness from the military standpoint. A nuclear intervention, which would yield a much greater military payoff, would be even more damaging from the political and social standpoint and would deliver a death blow to the Kremlin's international influence, beginning with its influence in the world Communist parties and the national liberation movements in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

The goal of the Soviet show of force in central Asia is thus essentially political. It is a way of exerting pressure on the Chinese bureaucracy, of forcing it to consign a considerable part of its resources to military ends, of demonstrating the very heavy price that the People's Republic of China has to pay for its hostile attitude toward the Kremlin, and of thus favoring the emergence at the right moment (after the death of Mao, for example) of a faction in the leadership of the Chinese Communist party that would be prepared for an ideological and political compromise with Moscow and for stopping all public attacks on the Kremlin. This calculation includes a certain evaluation of the possibility of the re-appearance in China of autonomous military centers (the equivalent of classical "warlordism"). It could even go so far as to include the possibility of a rapid military intervention if the conflicts within the Chinese CP and the explosive development of a mass movement were to convince the bureaucracy that there was a threat of "anarchy" (that is, real workers power) emerging out of the political upheavals in China.

It goes without saying that should the improbable nevertheless materialize, and should the Soviet bureaucracy crown its

crimes against socialism and the international revolution with a military intervention against the People's Republic of China, revolutionary Marxists would condemn that intervention just as decisively as they condemned the counterrevolutionary interventions against the German, Hungarian, and Czechoslovak workers and would support with all their power the just defensive war of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese workers state.

Today, however, there is no Sino-Soviet war, and, we repeat, it is extremely unlikely that there will be one. Today a political test of strength is going on within which the show of force on the border is being used as a means of pressure and blackmail, just as it was during the Stalin-Tito conflict. The right of the Chinese government to take all necessary measures to counteract the pressure and the military threats that the Kremlin is bringing to bear cannot be denied. But the political orientation that the Chinese government has lent its intervention into this test of strength can and should be denounced as nefarious, irresponsible, and ineffective.

Having thrown elementary Marxist principles overboard, Maoist diplomacy no longer categorizes states according to their class character. It now considers that there are three groups of countries in the world: the two "superpowers," the United States and the Soviet Union, which together are "the greatest international exploiters and oppressors of our epoch"; the countries of the so-called Third World, which Peking now follows bourgeois ideologues in calling "developing countries"; and the "developed countries that are not superpowers," which fall between the first and third worlds, that is, the capitalist countries of Western Europe as well as the countries of Eastern Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada, and so on. (It would be interesting to find out which category South Africa and Israel belong in according to this theory.) All this was developed in great detail by Teng Hsiao-ping during his speech to the United Nations special session held in April 1974. (See INPRECOR, No. 2, June 20, "The Three Worlds of Teng Hsiao-ping.")

The consequence of this outlook is a policy of closer and closer collaboration with the governments of all semicolonial countries, regardless of their class or political nature. The shah of Iran, the emperor of Ethiopia, and other sinister hangmen have suddenly been elevated to the status of "courageous anti-imperialist fighters." The colonial bourgeoisie has become the "main revolutionary motive force." A second consequence is an increasingly equivocal position on the imperialist governments of Western Europe, which are encouraged to "resist the threats of social-imperialist aggression," "unite," and "overcome the state of dependence to which the superpowers want to reduce them."

From there it is but a short step to accepting the principle that these imperialist bourgeois states should be defended against the Soviet Union, a step that various Maoist groupings in countries like Sweden and West Germany have hastened to take. They come close to far-right circles in their respective countries in their denunciations of the "threat of Soviet aggression." When the Swedish Maoists organize demonstrations against the visit of a Soviet warship, when the West German Maoists put a headline on their newspaper that reads "Brezhnev is Worse than Hitler," when other Maoist groups assert that a Giscard victory was preferable to a Mitterrand victory in the French presidential elections, it is not only that they are crossing the class line. Such aberrations can only provide grist for the mill of the anti-Chinese campaign waged by the leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy. They aid the Kremlin in convincing the leaders of the Communist parties that Mao considers alliance with imperialism preferable to compromise with the USSR, even on the level of state relations.

In this regard the Maoist leaders can but follow the logic of Stalin and Stalinism in their turn. The conception of diplomacy as *Realpolitik* allowing for any amount of lies and deceptions, a conception that disregards the elementary interests of the workers and that sows intense confusion and demoralization among the very supporters of that conception, flows from the same right-wing line as was upheld by those who believed it "useful" and "necessary" to "raise our glasses to the health of the Führer, because we know how much the German people love him." This line did not hold up the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union by a single minute. But it weakened -- how it weakened! -- the ability of communists to bring about the necessary mobilization of the toiling masses against Hitler during 1940 and 1941, not only in Germany but in many other countries as well. And it thus facilitated the formidable build-up of the Nazi war machine along the Soviet border in 1941 and the launching of the aggression itself.

In the extremely unlikely event of a military conflict with the Kremlin rulers, the Peking leaders will not obtain any "aid" from the likes of the shah of Iran or Sirimavo Bandaranaike by disorganizing the revolutionary movement in many semicolonial countries and stabbing it in the back. But they will succeed in weakening, if not losing, their only sure ally should such an eventuality actually come to pass: the masses of revolutionary and communist militants throughout the world, the masses of oppressed peoples.

## Imperialism and the Sino-Soviet conflict

Like Peking, Moscow is trying in every possible way to "neutralize" Washington in case of a military conflict in central Asia. Toward this end, Moscow's emissaries are using an especially despicable language, presenting the Soviet army as the "last bastion against Chinese barbarism," affirming that Moscow would "also be defending the West" against the "terrible threat to world peace represented by nuclear arms in the hands of the crazy Peking fanatics."

Maoist spokesmen have responded in analogous style, calling on the West to oppose the USSR's aims of "world hegemony" and cynically explaining that the United States would have greater interest in a weakening of the Soviet Union than of China, which is in nothing like the same position of being able to threaten Washington's essential interests around the world.

This display of appeals and counterappeals is nauseating enough. But in fact, imperialist governments are not susceptible to these miserable "ideological" arguments that are being advanced by both sides. They decide their orientation on the basis of their general class interests and their particular interests, which are different for each imperialist power.

From the standpoint of class interest, world imperialism as a whole has a manifest interest in seeing the two main bureaucratized workers states, the two main parts of the world that have torn themselves loose from the direct exploitation of international capital, weaken each other through conflict. The gains world imperialism stands to reap through such conflict are obvious, not only on the political and social levels, but on the strategic-military level as well. For a whole period, American imperialism considered the People's Republic of China its number-one enemy, especially because of the direct confrontation that was going on in Southeast Asia between anti-imperialist forces and imperialist forces directed from Washington. The idea of extending aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to aggression (even nuclear

aggression) against the People's Republic of China was widely debated in leading Pentagon circles.

Later, Kissinger-style diplomacy made a turn that led to the lifting of the American blockade against China (which had been imposed at the time of the Korean war) and to China's entry into the United Nations. In exchange, the Maoist leaders reduced or cut off their aid to guerrilla movements in Southeast Asia and did their part in exerting "moderating" pressure on the Indochinese Communist leaders. Obviously, Peking's general alignment with the bourgeoisie and governments of the semicolonial countries can only be pleasing to Washington.

Thus, North American imperialism is today adopting an attitude of "benevolent neutrality" in the Sino-Soviet state conflict, going so far as to offer its good offices to calm possible warlike spirits. Should an armed conflict break out anyway, its attitude would most probably fall within the same logic. This might even be accompanied by some discreet economic and technical aid to Peking, whether extended directly or through third parties, sufficient to prolong Peking's resistance but insufficient to radically reverse the military relationship of forces. This might even include sending shipments to both sides. The basic line that would be adopted by American imperialism in this eventuality would thus be to exhaust the resources of the two "Communist" countries by prolonging their fratricidal conflict.

European and Japanese imperialism would have a fundamental interest in following the same strategy. Nevertheless, this would be partially modified by their own particular interests. As for the countries of capitalist Europe, there is an evident fear of a military strengthening of the Soviet forces in Eastern Europe concurrently with the show of force on the Sino-Soviet border. This reinforcement in Eastern Europe, which could be aimed basically at "taking care of the rear areas" and avoiding dissident movements and uprisings in case of a conflict in central Asia, nevertheless entails developments that would modify the military relationship of forces on the whole European continent. (For example, the rumor has been floating around recently that Moscow has demanded that Ceausescu provide a "corridor" that would allow Soviet troops to cross Rumania on their way to Bulgaria.) Hence the drive of the European capitalist powers toward military reinforcement, and even toward development of a "European nuclear striking force." Hence also a tendency to react to a possible Sino-Soviet military conflict in function of politico-military developments in Europe itself.

The same goes for Japan. As an Asiatic power, Japan would find it difficult to remain insensitive to the violent reactions that an invasion of China by what is considered a "European" power would provoke among a good part of the peoples of Asia. Moreover, penetration of the Soviet army and fleet into China and the China Sea would completely change the strategic situation of Japanese imperialism. Tokyo would thus be led to react in function of its particular interests as well.

## Bitter fruits of 'socialism in one country'

Even a superficial examination of the consequences of a prolonged military conflict between the USSR and China is enough to determine the class positions that revolutionary Marxists must adopt in this regard: The interests of the world proletariat and the international revolution demand that such an armed conflict be avoided.

This is but an extension of the attitude revolutionary Marxists adopted from the beginning of the Sino-Soviet conflict. As salutary as they considered the outbreak of ideological and political debate, which dealt heavy blows to the revisionist monolith of the Stalinist parties, they equally condemned any extension of the ideological debate and conflict to the level of conflict between states. The demand that we ceaselessly advanced, which incontestably corresponded to the concern of the great majority of rank-and-file communist militants, was the maintenance or reestablishment of indispensable unity in action to aid the Indochinese revolution and the maintenance of common solidarity against imperialism.

It must be repeated that the initial responsibility for the rupture of solidarity lies with the Soviet bureaucracy. The withdrawal of aid and technicians from China, the refusal to aid the People's Republic of China in arming itself with nuclear weapons in face of the American threat, the attempt to surround China with a "cordon sanitaire," the support extended to the Indian bourgeoisie with this aim in mind -- all these acts, which were contrary to the interests of the Chinese and international revolutions, are at the root of the deterioration of relations between the two states. The Maoist leaders then responded with equally inadmissible words and deeds, so that today the responsibility for the rupture of the united front of the workers states against international capitalism is clearly shared by Moscow and Peking.

Never before has the character of the reigning bureaucracy in the two capitals as an obstacle and impediment to consolidation of the gains of the revolution been manifested so strikingly as in the threat of a Sino-Soviet military conflict. The international communist movement is now reaping the latest bitter fruits of the theory of socialism in one country, whose fruits it had a foretaste of during the terrible months of the summer and autumn of 1941. By breaking with the

basic theory and policy of proletarian internationalism -- which involves a firm orientation toward the world socialist revolution, the subordination of any given part of the movement to the interests of the revolution as a whole, and the clear consciousness of the world unity of the struggle of the working class -- the Soviet bureaucracy created an identity between the "interests of the communist movement" and the "interests of the bulwark state" (or "guiding state"). With fatal logic, this implies the risk that the emergence of several "bulwark states" with their own apparent interests, mediated by the specificity of the interests of the bureaucracies governing them, would involve violent conflicts among those states.

The leaders of the pro-Moscow CPs accuse the Maoists of "Chinese nationalism" because they subordinate the interests of the international communist movement to the interests of the "great power," China. But by defending the concept that the contradiction between the "socialist camp" led by the Soviet Union and the "imperialist camp" should be substituted for the contradiction between the world proletariat and the world bourgeoisie (of which the former contradiction is an important expression) what are these leaders doing if not defending a "theory" that is identical to that of the Peking leaders, except that "the Soviet Union" (or "the socialist camp") is inserted in place of "the People's Republic of China"?

The petty-bourgeois nationalism that guides the attitude of the Soviet and Chinese leaders in their mutual relations is the expression of the particular interests of the bureaucracy -- a thousand miles removed from the interests of the proletariat and the world revolution. The grave implications of the Sino-Soviet conflict on the level of state relations once again demonstrate that these interests are also opposed to the real interests of the Soviet and Chinese workers states themselves. In the final analysis, the bureaucracy's interests objectively serve only to strengthen the counterrevolutionary capacities of imperialism. ■

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## SOUTH ASIA

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# PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH: FROM BAD TO WORSE

by TARIQ ALI

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A traditional tactic utilized by bourgeois leaders in South Asia has been to try to distract attention from the mess at home by attempting to win victories in foreign relations. Up till now the most successful, albeit shortlived, venture was the military intervention by the Indira Gandhi regime in Bangladesh in 1971. Since that time Pakistan's prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, has gained first position in the foreign policy stakes by obtaining the release of all the Pakistani prisoners of war (90,000 officers and soldiers) without making any substantial concessions; by holding an Islamic summit in Pakistan in February 1974 which enabled him to sell the recognition of Bangladesh to the Pakistani army; and lastly, by recently visiting the capital of Bangladesh itself. Gandhi has responded by exploding an atomic bomb, the fallout of which has been felt in both Islamabad and Dacca, not to speak of Peking. Of the three major leaders of South Asia, the most obvious and blatant failure has been Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Both internally and externally he has been unable to gain any victories and has stumbled from one crisis to another.

### Bangladesh: the weakest link

The root of the crisis in Bangladesh has been the regime's failure to develop a strong and stable bourgeois class and corresponding institutions that could provide a solid material base around which the state apparatus could be stabilized. As a result, the Bangladesh army, police, and special police, have been partially dependent on the Indian state for sustenance. Mujibur Rehman is desperately trying to decrease his reliance on India. His emissaries have visited Peking and it is likely that the latter will soon recognize the regime and begin trade in earnest.



Left. Bengali civilians killed during Pakistani genocidal war in 1971. Right. Bhutto and Rehman. Friends again?

Inviting Bhutto to visit Dacca was another step in Rehman's attempts to diversify his international support. In the days immediately preceding Bhutto's arrival Rehman realized that Bhutto might receive too enthusiastic a welcome. Two days before the latter left Islamabad, the Bengali press and television started republishing and rescreening stories and films of the atrocities committed by Pakistani troops during the occupation. But the effect seems to have been minimal. Thousands of people turned up to welcome Bhutto with chants of "Pakistan Zindabad" (Long Live Pakistan). This was the biggest indictment ever of the Awami League regime, which has held power since the establishment of Bangladesh. The favorable reaction to Bhutto, who was a leading supporter of Islamabad's genocidal war in Bangladesh, reflected the growing disillusionment with the Awami League. Without doubt, thousands of people recalled that the cost of living was lower when Pakistan was united. Unable to look forward to the future -- and given the state of the left this is hardly surprising -- sections of the masses yearn nostalgically for the past. The possibility that resumed trade with Pakistan would result in cheaper consumer goods (sugar, vegetable oil, wheat, textiles) also played a part in the welcome given to Bhutto.

But the Pakistani leader failed to realize that by making a number of concessions he could have enlarged his constituency in Bangladesh. As a result, the Pakistani team played hard and no real gains could be recorded by Bangladesh. Sheikh Rehman will thus have no option in the immediate future but to continue to rely on India. The extent of the social and economic crisis coupled with the inability of the far left to exploit the situation politically has led to a massive growth of right-wing currents, not least inside the Awami League itself.

Rehman's response to the crisis has been simple: intensified repression. Most of the 36,000 prisoners arrested for collaborating with the Pakistani army during the war of independence have been released in order to make room in the jails for the 20,000 leftists now being held without trial. In February 1974 the Awami League went beyond the powers of the previous military dictators Ayub and Yahya by promulgating the Special Powers Act under which any newspaper or journal that publishes "prejudicial" reports can be banned and its editors imprisoned and fined. To further discourage dissent the private paramilitary formation of the Awami League, the Jatiya Rakhi Bahini, was given special powers by Parliament to arrest and detain without trial any citizen of the country. "Ar-

rest and detain" is of course an extremely euphemistic phrase. The real function of the Bahini is to liquidate political opponents, a task that it is carrying out fairly efficiently at the moment. And to make sure that no bright citizen should think of appealing against the arbitrary brutalities of these Awami League thugs in uniform the parliamentary act specifies the following: "No suit, prosecution, or other legal proceedings shall lie against any member of the Rakhi Bahini for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this order or rule made thereunder."

The major victims of the repression have been the supporters and members of the JSD (Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal -- National Socialist Party) led by former members of the Awami League who participated in the guerrilla struggle and split from the League in disgust with its rightist policies and its encouragement of corruption. The JSD is undoubtedly the major oppositional force in Bangladesh today and its principal leaders have already suffered numerous attempts on their lives. Some of the Maoist groups have also lost members in the large-scale repression that has been carried out. The pro-Moscow Stalinists, who have up till now supported the Awami League uncritically (as their counterparts in India support the Congress), have participated in the repression against "left adventurism." Extremely short-sighted, they fail to realize that the repression will one day be directed against them as well, regardless of their reformist politics.

The repression, however, is a cover to hide the real weakness of the regime, which is confronted by a total crisis of perspectives. The only way out would require solutions that would sound the death knell of the Awami League and the aspiring Bengali petty bourgeoisie and would never be tolerated by the Indian and Pakistani armies. For the real solution is to unite the Bengali nation. Socially, economically, and culturally this is the only serious way out of the crisis, but it involves a complete and total break both with the bourgeoisie and with bourgeois politics. To a large extent, the Bangladesh left is still a prisoner of its past wrong strategies and conceptions. The JSD, the only leftward moving mass current to emerge after the establishment of Bangladesh, is still in process of formation. The result is that while Bangladesh is clearly the weakest link of the South Asian capitalist chain, it is unlikely that it will be broken in the coming period because of the inadequacies of the left.

## What's left in Pakistan?

Bhutto's position in what is left of Pakistan is only marginally better. Given the greater industrialization and smaller population this was only to be expected, but the crisis has continued nevertheless and has even found a reflection in the ruling People's party, where J. A. Rahim, a senior cabinet minister and close associate of Bhutto's, has recently resigned in protest against the "lack of socialism and secularism" in the government. Bhutto's way out of the crisis has also been repression, but it has been carried out on a somewhat more selective basis. If this fails, the alternative is not socialism, but a new coup d'etat, warded off for the time being by Bhutto's foreign policy successes. To understand why the left is weak it is essential to explain the circumstances and environment in which it has developed.

Historically the areas that now comprise Pakistan have never been able to boast of a strong Marxist tradition. The strong grip of tribalism and feudalism, lack of industrialization, the virtual non-existence of even a strong bourgeois-nationalist tradition (with the partial exception of the North-West Frontier Province) have all played a contributing role in this regard. Over the last thirty years, however, two other factors have helped to denude the region of the few advances that had been made: the migration of hundreds of Sikh and Hindu communists to India after 1947 and the establishment of Bangladesh in 1971.

Partition took away most of the communist cadres. There was no corresponding entry into Pakistan of large numbers of communists of Muslim origin from India. Those that came did so reluctantly, and only on the instructions of the Communist party of India (CPI). But here too the CPI bungled and instead of sending trade union and peasant organizers they sent intellectuals such as the late Sajjad Zaheer and Sibte Hassan. Both were excellent literary critics and wrote political pamphlets in a refreshingly crisp and pungent Urdu prose, but as communist leaders they were hopelessly, albeit endearingly, inadequate. Their arrival, together with that of a few others, made the infant and minuscule Communist party of Pakistan (CPP) so top heavy that it could never acquire a mass base of any significance. Desperate, the CPP leaders looked for shortcuts. An attempted putsch by an extremely dubious bunch of army officers, one of whom had links with the CPP leaders since they attended the same cocktail parties, appeared to provide an opening. Eagerly these communists went into it, only to recoil with horror when they realized that some of the "army chaps" were diehard Muslim chauvinists. Immediately they withdrew, but by that time their childish and naïve attempt at "conspiracy" had been discovered. Sajjad Zaheer, Sibte Hassan, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and several others were arrested on charges of "high treason." They served a relatively short time in prison. Sajjad Zaheer had decided that enough was enough and his family connections with the Nehru clan had led to Jawaharlal's personal intervention and he was given permission to return to India, where the cultural and political milieu was much more to his taste.

## Alliance with bourgeois nationalists

Meanwhile back in Pakistan the CPP had been banned. A party which had found it difficult to function in conditions of legality became totally paralyzed after it was banned. It disintegrated rather rapidly and the cadres were told to help in the formation of front organizations in which the communists could participate. The first of these was formed by Mian Iftikharuddin and was known as the Azad Pakistan party. It had

a brief and inglorious existence and was finally replaced by a new alliance between the communists and bourgeois nationalists which resulted in the formation of the National Awami party (NAP). At the time of the Sino-Soviet split the communists inside NAP engineered a split in the party. At various times both Maulana Bhashani (pro-Peking splinter) and the Pathan nationalist leader Wali Khan (pro-Moscow splinter) complained both publicly and privately that these "wretched communists" who couldn't form a party of their own had been the ones who had split a perfectly decent democratic party in this fashion.

The division of NAP from 1964-65 onwards during the period of the Ayub dictatorship (1958-1969) undoubtedly weakened the liberal-democratic opposition to the regime, but it did much more than that: It totally eliminated the possibility of the development of an independent Marxist opposition to Ayub raj. The decision of the Ayub regime to develop friendly relations with China provided the pro-Peking Maoists in the NAP with a golden opportunity to abandon the opposition. Ayub was suddenly transformed into an anti-imperialist, and the task of Pakistani Maoists became supporting the military dictatorship against its enemies at home and abroad. This they did with a newly-found fervor -- some Maoists going so far as to describe Ayub's "basic democracy" system as the harbinger of soviet democracy -- and as a result sabotaged the possibility of the anti-Ayub movement being led by the left. It was this vacuum which was filled by two politicians who used a similar demagoguery despite their different backgrounds: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mujibur Rehman.

While Pakistan remained a united state, the effect of a number of Bengali Marxists on the whole Pakistani left was relatively positive, despite all the aberrations of the Maoist intelligentsia. The establishment of Bangladesh removed this last contact with some vestiges of what could be characterized as a revolutionary tradition.

During the struggle in Bangladesh the Maoists in West Pakistan were faced with a severe dilemma. Peking had given open and unstinted support to Yahya Khan, expressed both in Chou En-lai's notorious letter and in the visit of Chinese delegations during the massacres in East Bengal. At the same time, many Bengali Maoists were obviously suffering from the repression as much as anyone else and many were fighting back. The overwhelming majority of West Pakistani Maoists decided to excuse the repression in East Bengal and justify the atroc-

Dacca police attack demonstrators.



ities. Indian "expansionism" and Soviet "social imperialism" were deemed responsible for the uprising in Bangladesh. The national oppression inflicted on the Bengali masses by the Pakistani bourgeoisie and its state apparatus was considered irrelevant. To have understood its importance and its repercussions would have meant a break with Muslim chauvinism and the whole reactionary concept of a confessional state. The very thought of such a heresy made West Pakistan's establishment Maoists recoil with horror.

The total capitulation to national chauvinism by the Maoists contrasted with the equally bizarre position and role of the pro-Moscow communists safely ensconced in their NAP. They thought that a socialist revolution in Pakistan was neither possible nor desirable at that particular stage. What Pakistan needed was a regime like the one that existed in India. In other words a regime which they could support and which in turn was looked upon in a friendly way by Moscow, to which most of them still had a partly sentimental and partly financial loyalty. The friendship of the Pakistani dictatorship with China was an obvious barrier and thus the pro-Moscow elements in the NAP opposed the Pakistani army's repression in Bangladesh. Its members privately welcomed the intervention of the Indian army. The only criticism some of them made against India was to bemoan the fact that the Indian army hadn't carried out a mopping-up operation in West Pakistan while it was in its "liberating mood." If India has been a socialist country such a view could have been perfectly comprehensible, but the men of Moscow deliberately chose to ignore the conditions that prevailed in India: the fact that its economy was in the grip of capital and that the Congress government, despite all its pretensions, was prepared to go to inordinate lengths to maintain the status quo, the intervention in East Bengal and the vicious repression in West Bengal representing only two of the most blatant expressions of this fact.

The advent of the People's party government under Bhutto has not substantially altered the peculiar position of the left in Pakistan. The main opposition today does not come from the Maoist Mazdoor-Kisan party led by Major Ishaq (a party which, incidentally, begins its private and public meetings with recitations from the Koran and whose manifesto is liberally spiced with quotations from the same tome!), but from the NAP of Wali Khan. Of course this opposition is situated firmly within the bourgeois nexus established by Bhutto himself, but there is little else on offer to the masses. The NAP, which was elected to office in the two provinces of the NWFP and Baluchistan, has had its ministers summarily dismissed by Bhutto. In Baluchistan, where the local population has continually suffered from military oppression, the former governor and the former chief minister, Bizenjo and Mengal, are in prison, as is Khair Bakhsh Marri, the chairman of the Baluchistan NAP and a leading member of the national assembly. Their followers have taken to the hills and a limited guerrilla war is in progress with mounting army casualties. Tikka Khan, the butcher of Dacca, has made numerous visits to Baluchistan, as has his boss, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Never was rebellion inflicted on such reluctant rebels as the NAP leaders. They pleaded with Bhutto not to dismiss them and warned him of the consequences. He disregarded their advice and preferred to listen to the words of his old friend and ally, Reza Pahlavi, the Iranian dictator, who refused to tolerate a NAP government in Baluchistan which might, even if inadvertently, have caused a nationalist upsurge in the Baluchi parts of Iran. Both the NAP leaders and Bhutto tried to compromise, since what was intended as a quick "raid and destroy" mission has manifestly failed.

While the NAP continues to fight, what are their Maoist opponents up to? While the Mazdoor-Kisan party has been re-

duced to impotence by the Bhutto regime, in the sense that it has voluntarily reduced its activities, the Maoists in the People's party, who thought that they could either convert Chairman Bhutto or take the party over, have been smashed. Their leading spokesman, Mairaj Mohammed Khan, possibly one of the top agitators with a mass appeal in the country, was for many months a member of Bhutto's government. He was nicknamed "minister for fatihah" by his opponents since his major function appeared to be to go and pray over the graves of workers who had been killed by the police on the orders of the People's party government. (The Fatihah is the opening seven verses of the Koran -- INPRECOR.) Once he had outlived his usefulness, Mairaj was unceremoniously discarded. His supporters in People's party branches in different cities were similarly treated and Bhutto's leading henchmen, Mustafa Kar and Mumtaz Bhutto (both leading landlords), witch-hunted many leftists out of the party. In June, Mairaj himself was arrested while speaking at a rally of striking teachers. The circle has turned full wheel!

Thus the left in Pakistan is in a state of disarray. There is no revolutionary organization worth the name in the country. Apart from the Mazdoor-Kisan party there is the Pakistan Socialist party led by ex-Maoists C.R. Aslam and Abid Minto, who have broken with Peking and are more sympathetic to Moscow, as well as the tiny Pakistan Workers party led by veteran trade-union leader Mirza Ibrahim and the old Stalinist, Sardar Shaukat Ali. Both parties are, however, the voice of the past.

In this situation two new factors are worth noting. Militant workers in Karachi have tended to move in semisindicalist directions with such groups as the Muttahid Mazdoor Federation, which is widely respected precisely because it is both militant and not attached to any of the discredited leftist groups. Its leaders, some of whom are Marxists, are usually either underground or in prison. Attempts to crush the Federation have failed and it undoubtedly represents the proletarian vanguard of Karachi. Second, study circles have sprung up all over the country and these are beginning to analyze the lessons of the failures of Pakistani "communism." They are of a varied nature, are uncoordinated, and differ from city to city, but one healthy sign is that they have abandoned the old phobias of Indian Stalinism and their reading lists include figures historically blacked out by both Peking and Moscow: Trotsky, Preobrazhinsky, Bukharin, Rosa Luxemburg, as well as Lukacs, Korsch, Althusser, Sweezy, and Mandel. From this nothing but good can emerge, even if the trend today is inclined towards theoreticism and academicism. These are deviations which the revolutionary movement can afford today, provided that it transcends them tomorrow, as it takes the first tentative steps toward establishing revolutionary practice.

For the past decade imperialism has been trying to unite the various bourgeois forces on the Indian subcontinent. In a curious way, the break-up of Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh has made this task much easier, for it brought home to the ruling classes that unless they united politically they would not be able to confront the mass movements from the best strategic position. And while continuing bourgeois disunity (given a fillip by the explosion of the Indian bomb) is irritating to the State Department, Washington is prepared to operate within its confines as long as the revolutionary movement in the subcontinent is weak, disorganized, and broken by repression. (There are nearly 70,000 political prisoners in South Asia today, of which 30,000 are in India.) Thus, long-term tendencies towards military and political, if not territorial, unity exist in the subcontinent. How they will develop will depend to a large extent on the rise of the mass movement and, more importantly, on the development of revolutionary parties, which are vital if the mass movement is to win success.

# the communist party and the kurdish revolution: a history of betrayal

## AN EDITORIAL NOTE

Once again civil war has broken out in northern Iraq between the armed forces of the Kurdish liberation movement -- led by the Kurdish Democratic party (KDP), which is organized around the personality of Mulla Mustafa el-Barzani -- and the Baath party regime in Baghdad. The immediate cause of the war was the government's refusal to comply with the terms of the agreements signed on March 11, 1970, "guaranteeing" autonomy and self-government to the Kurds. The latest outbreak of civil war in Iraq fits into a whole chain of events whose history runs back to imperialism's division of the Arab world just after the first world war.

There is, however, a unique aspect to the current conflagration: The first assaults on the Kurds were led by the Central Committee faction of the Iraqi Communist party (ICP). Here we have the pathetic remnants of a Communist party acting under the banner of "national unity" with the Iraqi wing of the Baath party (the same party that decimated the Communist party in 1963 and 1968) and clearing the way for the Iraqi bourgeoisie to wage a genocidal war on the Kurdish people. This twist of history raises three important issues.

First, the national question in the Arab East is extremely complicated. Its revolutionary solution requires not only a relentless battle against imperialism and Zionism, but also a concomitant and interwoven struggle against Arab nationalism. How is this reflected in the case of the Kurdish struggle in Iraq?

Kurdistan is a mountainous region of western Asia that has been the home of the Kurdish people -- one of the oldest peoples of the region -- for more than 5,000 years. After the first world war, Kurdistan (like the entire Arab East) was divided by imperialism. The Kurdish population was parcelled out among Turkey (with a Kurdish population at the time of 2 million), Iran (2 million), Iraq (1 million), and Syria (1.5 million). The question of national independence for this fragmented and subjugated people was thus posed as a democratic task of the Kurdish revolution.

For more than half a century, divided Kurdistan has been the scene of continual armed uprisings, generally led by tribal, feudal, or urban bourgeois leaderships. In Turkey and Iran the rapid and early centralization of the state structures led to brutal massacres of the Kurdish freedom fighters and to a temporary stamping out of the organized Kurdish liberation movement. The establishment in 1946 of the short-lived Mahabad Republic in Iranian Kurdistan was followed by one

of the most infamous of these state-engineered slaughters. In Iraq the situation was different. The relatively large size of the Kurdish population (which made up 25 percent of the total Iraqi population), the high degree of Kurdish organization, the extremely mountainous terrain in Iraqi Kurdistan, and the extended period of general political instability led the various Iraqi regimes to an impasse in their repeated attempts to liquidate the Kurdish revolution.

The complexity of the national question in this part of the Arab East in a result of the fact that fragmented Kurdistan is partially enmeshed within another artificial imperialist creation: the Iraqi state itself. Thus, as the class struggle of the Arab part of the Iraqi population moved in the direction of fighting for the reunification of the Arab world as against its dividers -- imperialism and Zionism -- the Kurdish national liberation movement was objectively fighting for secession from the Iraqi state.

But under no circumstances could the Iraqi bourgeoisie afford to lose the rich oil wells and agricultural resources of Kurdistan. The question for the Iraqi bourgeoisie thus became: How to derail the class struggle in Iraq and simultaneously galvanize the Iraqi Arab masses into opposing the forces of the Kurdish revolution, thus dealing blows against the Kurdish struggle and at the same time weakening the struggle of the Iraqi masses, who had a powerful potential ally in the Kurdish movement?

The answer of the Iraqi bourgeoisie was to try to mobilize the Iraqi masses behind the ideology of Arab nationalism (in its Baathist form) -- an ideology that appears to the Arab masses as having been derived from their progressive drive toward unification.

To undermine the projects of the Iraqi bourgeoisie in this regard, Arab revolutionaries are faced with the task of pointing out that it is exactly the upholders of these bourgeois forms of consciousness and action who have proven themselves incapable of uniting the Arab world and effectively fighting Zionism and imperialism. The ideological guns of the Arab bourgeoisie are being turned against the only force in Iraq that can not only achieve but also go beyond the democratic tasks confronting the Arab and Kurdish peoples: the unity of the Arab and Kurdish workers and peasants.

But the historic need for this unity can be realized only on the basis of an uncompromising battle against the oppression of the Kurdish people and the ideology that seeks to justify



that oppression, Arab nationalism. It is the duty of Arab revolutionaries to do this by supporting in both words and action the right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination, including the right of secession from the Iraqi state. For Arab revolutionaries this is a means both of opposing the designs of the Arab bourgeoisie and of helping to forge links with Kurdish revolutionaries by undermining the basis of the hegemony of the Kurdish bourgeois and feudal leaders over the Kurdish masses.

The second important issue raised by the current civil war in Iraq is precisely the failure of the traditional leaderships of the Communist movement in the Arab East to understand these interwoven processes. The ICP was founded in 1934. Unlike its counterparts in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria (including Palestine), it has played a major role in political life ever since the 1940s. It survived the severe strains of an underground existence under the Hashemite monarchy that had been installed in Iraq by British imperialism in the 1930s. After the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of an Iraqi republic in 1958, the ICP grew into a mass party with decisive influence among the workers, peasants, and students, especially in Kurdistan, where for a time it managed to replace the Kurdish Democratic party as the major pole of attraction for Kurdish militants. But later, when it supported the regime against the Kurdish uprising in 1961, it lost that position and now has even gone so far as to initiate what promises to be the most barbaric war ever waged against the Kurdish people.

In 1967 the ICP split into a reformist, pro-Moscow wing (called the Central Committee faction) and a revolutionary-minded current (the Central Command faction). But the latter group was incapable of breaking decisively with its Stalinist past, and it thus fell victim to spontanéism and Maoism. The Central Committee faction entered the Baathist government of "national unity," while the Central Command proceeded to tailend the bourgeois leadership of the Kurdish movement.

The history of these developments is dealt with in detail in the article below. Here it is sufficient to stress that the practical capitulation to the Iraqi or Kurdish bourgeoisie was of course accompanied by theoretical apologia. In the case of a historically important party like the ICP this apologia exerts great pressure on the consciousness of Kurdish and Iraqi revolutionaries. Vigorous criticism of the ICP's theory and practice on the Kurdish question is thus an important element in the fight to build a revolutionary-communist leadership in the Arab world.

Finally, the third issue raised by the new civil war derives from the first two. The Barzani land-owning clique owes its hegemony over the Kurdish movement largely to the policies followed by the ICP. This is amply demonstrated in the article below. The successive defeats of the Kurdish uprisings are related to the character of this leadership, which because of its class interests cannot afford to link up with the forces of the Arab revolution, whose participation is essential for the liberation of Kurdistan. Barzani's recent statements calling for American and Israeli military aid and promising to grant American oil companies concessions in a future independent Kurdistan are clear proofs of this. Thus, the present rebellion in Kurdistan is once again doomed to failure. At best, it will result in a new stand-off and new compromises that will set the stage for the next outbreak of fighting. The Arab and Kurdish masses will thus pay in blood for the defaults of their respective leaderships.

The article below detailing the attitude of the Iraqi Communist party to the Kurdish movement was originally serialized in the October-November and December 1973 issues of el-

Mounadil (The Militant), organ of the Revolutionary Communist Group, Arab sympathizing organization of the Fourth International based in Lebanon. The version below is slightly abridged, translated from the Arabic.

## INPRECOR



In August 1945, two years after the emergence of an armed movement in Iraqi Kurdistan (in the Barazan region) under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the Iraqi government, supported by the British air force stationed in Kirkuk and el-Habaniya, launched an all-out assault on the centers of the Kurdish revolution. Hundreds of villages and many small cities were destroyed. A blockade was clamped on much of Kurdistan. Under the impact of this barbaric assault and the retreat of large numbers of Kurdish "leaders" -- including a section of leaders who were landowners and agas, who actively went over to the central government -- the Kurdish revolutionaries were forced to withdraw to the Iranian part of Kurdistan and to concentrate themselves in areas in which Soviet armies were still stationed. In this way the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan (the Mahabad Republic) was created on January 22, 1946. But after the Soviet armies withdrew in compliance with the terms of the Potsdam agreements, Persian armies moved in and crushed the young and isolated republic on December 15, 1946.

With the defeat of the Barzani uprising, the Kurdish revolution came to the end of a long stage of its development -- a stage that had been marked by the hegemony of the property-owning classes within the Kurdish liberation movement. This leadership had failed to work out a revolutionary national program and had made use of the Kurdish mass movement to further its own class interests. Constant tribal feuds and struggles were a continual drain on the energies of the movement and frequently allowed the Baghdad regime to isolate revolutionary peasant uprisings in Kurdistan and to keep them restricted to limited and local contexts.

This was especially important in that the countryside was the main starting point of revolutionary uprisings during this period of the Kurdish revolution. Tribal and family relations played a decisive role in directing the development of the movement, and this led to the deepening of the hegemony of the existing leaderships, which were in turn supported by religious circles and the clergy. While the defeat of the Barzani uprising marked the end of one phase of the Kurdish revolution, it also opened up new opportunities during the nearly sixteen-year period of relative quiet that prevailed in Iraqi Kurdistan. It was during this transitional period that the objective conditions crystalized and the cadres were formed that were later to lead the next Kurdish uprising, which broke out in the autumn of 1961.

## Crisis of leadership

After Kurdistan was divided, the ruling classes of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, with the assistance of Anglo-French imperialism, tried to link the various parts of Kurdistan economically and politically to their respective state structures. This process of integration took various forms, from air attacks to national assimilation (Turkization, Persianization, Arabization). The principal objective of the process was to integrate the Kurdistan economy and link it to the world market in order to better organize imperialist plunder of the resources and labor of the area.

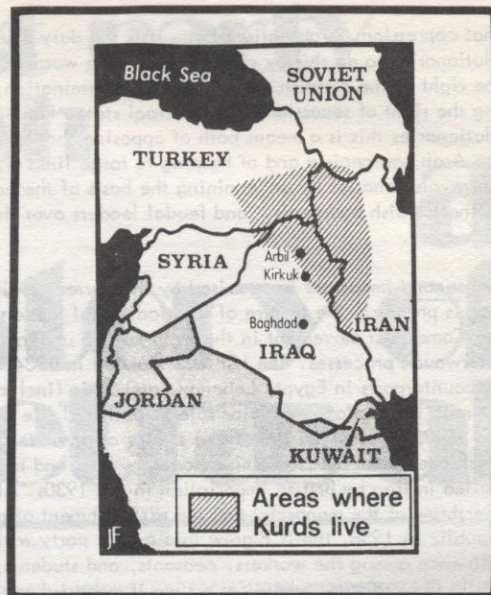
In Iraqi Kurdistan British imperialism paid special attention to the integration process, for important oil deposits are located in Kurdistan (in Kirkuk, Khanaqain, and Ain Zalah). The most important Kurdish cities were linked to the central and southern parts of Iraq by a whole network of roads and rail lines. A subsection of this network was devoted to linking the Kurdish countryside, where the fields for tobacco, wheat, and fruit and the larger portion of animal resources were located, to the commercial centers. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Kurdish peasants were deprived of their small agricultural holdings, which resulted in the strengthening of the hegemony of the Kurdish tribal sheiks and agas. This process was aimed at winning a social and political base for the Baghdad regime that would guarantee continuous organized plunder of the Kurdish countryside.

These important changes in the mode of production led to violent shakeups in Kurdish society. The traditional socio-economic formations were undermined and a new class structure began to emerge, leading to the intensification of contradictions between the hundreds of thousands of poor and impoverished peasantry and proletariat on the one hand and a handful of feudalists, property owners, and large merchants on the other, the latter side naturally being supported by the bureaucratic bourgeois state. The processes of combined and uneven development were at work in Kurdistan, for large and modern industrial concerns employing tens of thousands of workers in the oil fields of Baba Kurkur, Jambur, and el-Wand and in related services and communications sectors grew up side by side with a traditional, "natural" agricultural and craft economy. One agricultural field might be using the ancient wooden plough, while a neighboring field would be using modern tractors and other agricultural innovations.

Probably the single most important result of these structural changes was widespread rural-urban immigration. Kurdish cities doubled in size within ten years. The towns had already begun to play an important role in the national and class struggles during the 1930s. The September 6, 1930, uprising in Sulaymaniyah is an illustration. In the mid-1930s an urban leadership based on political and intellectual groupings among the students, craftsmen, and urban proletariat began to appear side by side with the tribal and religious leaderships. But these groups did not begin to have real effects on the Kurdish revolutionary movement until the early 1940s. This was clearly reflected in the formation on August 16, 1946, of the Kurdish Democratic party, which began to become an alternative pole of attraction.

Alongside the feudal-bourgeois parties, small grouplets taking the form of cultural and social organizations began to emerge among the intellectuals. The first new layer of revolutionary leaders came out of this milieu. Furthermore, the general radicalization that swept Iraq in the mid-1930s, especially after the Bakr Sidqi coup of 1936, helped deepen the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Kurdistan.

The Iraqi Communist party (ICP) was founded in 1934. A large number of Kurdish militants soon joined its ranks and subsequently played an important role in building the party. Kurdish youth in the cities were generally attracted to the ICP, and the strongest Communist organizations in the early 1940s were to be found in Arbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Rawanduz, all Kurdish cities. But the positions taken by the ICP on the Kurdish national question disillusioned large sectors of the Kurdish masses who had seen the CP as the one representative capable of fighting against the double (national and class) oppression of the Kurds.



## From the first national congress (1945) to the second party conference (1956)

The first national congress of the ICP, held in 1945, consolidated the party's position on the Kurdish question. From that point on, all the positions of the ICP remained within the framework defined by the so-called National Charter, which had been drawn up by Yusuf Salman (Fahd). The theoretical innovations that were later occasionally adopted remained generally faithful to the original charter. The central feature of this charter was its denial of the existence of the Kurdish nation on the grounds that the Kurds failed to fulfill Stalin's definition of nationhood. This conception argues that the artificial division of Kurdistan has differentiated the various parts of Kurdistan socially and economically. In this sense, the artificial division has changed "the nature of the development of the Kurdish question, creating a qualitatively new situation. . . . Before the division, and especially immediately after World War I, the Kurdish national liberation movement put forward the demand for a Kurdish state including the whole of Kurdistan." (From The Kurdish National Question in Iraq, by Majid Abdel Rudha, a member of the Central Committee of the ICP). However, with the division of Kurdistan by imperialism "it is no longer possible to put forward the slogan for a Kurdish state as a direct and practical proposition that can be achieved for all of Kurdistan or even for part of it."

But in reality, the artificial division of the Kurdish nation by Anglo-French imperialism in no way negates its existence. On the contrary, it spurs the Kurdish masses on and elevates national and class consciousness, as was reflected in the way that the Kurds -- especially the peasantry -- resisted the imperialist operation by force. Kurdistan was the scene of a continual series of revolutionary mass uprisings beginning at the start of the twentieth century that were essentially touched off by this heightened national and class consciousness. The imperialists and their agents have been able to divide up many nations and consolidate the division, but in Kurdistan the division was not completed. This is illustrated by the continued social and economic intercommunication among the various parts of Kurdistan and by the fact that the Arab, Turkish, and Persian bourgeoisies have not been able to prevent Kurdish herdsmen and agriculturalists from crossing state

borders constantly. There is no doubt that the heroic stand of the Kurdish people in face of the division is rooted in the deep common interests that they share. Moreover, the geographical terrain of Kurdistan provides an obstacle to the fragmenting dynamic initiated by imperialism. The ICP views Kurdistan as booty that has already been divided among thieves, and it therefore demands that the Kurds cease asserting the unity of Kurdistan as expressed in their demand for a unified Kurdish state. All this because of a "qualitatively new situation" that allegedly "over the years has created different ties (economic, political, and social) among the Kurdish people in each of the different parts of Kurdistan and the corresponding nations living in those parts." (Majid Abdel Rudha.)

There is no denying such economic and social ties. But they are extremely weak, and the ruling classes are not strong enough to complete their task of assimilating "their" parts of Kurdistan to the economies of their countries. Furthermore, the development of the sorts of ties that the ICP is talking about in no way explains the propositions of these "communists." Since when have revolutionary Marxists spoken of the political, economic, and social relations that develop between oppressor and oppressed nations as somehow doing away with the national rights of the oppressed as expressed in their right to self-determination?

Tsarist Russia was able to establish such relations between itself and all the nations suffering under the yoke of its imperialist domination for four long centuries. But the Bolshevik party did not put forward these "various ties" as an excuse to justify forced annexation. In fact, the Bolsheviks adopted the slogan of self-determination up to and including the right of total secession for all the nations suffering under the dead weight of tsarism.

Under capitalism and the capitalist world market, the existence of such relations has become inevitable. And exactly to the extent that they will inevitably emerge today these relations must not become an excuse to deny the right of all nations to self-determination.

All that the ruling bourgeoisie in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria have been able to do so far is rob and plunder Kurdistan. Political relations have meant militarization of Kurdistan; economic relations have meant annihilation of hundreds of villages and small cities and the burning of the fields of poor peasants; social relations have brought about total illiteracy and the mass extermination of people combined with maiming and mutilation of hundreds of children, old men, and women. The reality of the Stalinist position is that it calls for assimilation of the Kurds to the ruling classes!

## The National Charter and the Kurdish question

"We struggle for true equality in rights for the Kurdish national minority and the other minorities like the Turkumans, Arman, and Yazidiyyeen." (Point 10 of the National Charter of the Iraqi Communist party, 1945.)

Is the ICP really for the equality of rights of all national minorities? In the November 1945 issue of the ICP's central clandestine newspaper, *el-Qa'ida*, we find these rights explained in an extremely confusing and obscure way: "What is our position on the question of Kurdish national rights? We struggle for the freedom of everyone, for the freedom of organization, of democratic life, and for a democratic regime and state apparatus. We struggle to extend education

for everyone, for complete equality between all Iraqis. In short, we are struggling for the happiness (sic) of the Kurds. The working masses have the necessary organization that allows them to express their preference as to whether to remain or to separate on the basis of the interests of the Kurdish people and the working masses. . . . But the slogan of the separation of the Kurds from the Iraqi state is completely wrong. The Kurdish masses cannot benefit from it at all." (Emphasis added.)

If the right of the Kurds to secede from the Iraqi bourgeois state is considered wrong and reactionary, all the talk of true equality in rights and freedom for all and of the "necessary organizations" that supposedly would enable the Kurdish people to express themselves becomes absolutely meaningless. Revolutionary Marxists do not aspire to secession, but neither do they stand on the side of the bourgeois chauvinists who reject the right of self-determination to a people, including the concomitant right to secede.

As *el-Qa'ida* was developing the ICP's opportunist positions, the columns of smoke and fire were still rising out of the ruins of hundreds of Kurdish villages and small cities in the Barazan and Mazoori Bala areas. And only a few months later, Kurdish, Arab, and Turkuman workers were waging a revolutionary struggle against the oil companies in Kirkuk, a struggle that culminated in the strike of the workers of the Iraq Petroleum Corporation and that finally ended with the infamous massacre of workers at Kawarbaghi. It was in Kawarbaghi that the Arab, Kurdish, and Turkuman workers joined hands to oppose the bourgeois repressive apparatus. That is true unity. It takes place on the field of revolutionary struggle and not under the aegis of the "Iraqi state." The tragic irony of the ICP's positions is that they were especially consolidated during the years 1949-1951, when a majority of the ICP Central Committee members were Kurds!

## The Bassim program

In 1953 Baha el-Din Nuri, secretary of the ICP, presented a draft program that was later referred to as the Bassim program. In it Nuri adopted a correct Marxist-Leninist position on the Kurdish question, as is shown by the program's "recognition of the Kurdish people's right to self-determination, including the right to secession." This program was soon defeated within the ICP. But its brief existence did help a number of Communist organizations in Kurdistan to flourish.

During the second conference of the ICP, held in 1956, the old Stalinist attitude toward the Kurdish question was affirmed once again. A new slogan was adopted: "self-government for Iraqi Kurdistan within the Iraqi state." But even this was never seriously implemented in the party's day-to-day political practice or in its subsequent political positions. In reality, all propaganda and agitational work was confined to the previous mistaken conceptions on the national question as codified in point number 10 of the National Charter.

This total retreat from the Bassim program had serious repercussions for the organizations of Kurdish communists, which were no longer able to make tangible progress whether on the internal organizational or the mass levels. But the July 14, 1958, coup-revolution opened up a new situation.

## July 14, 1958 to July 17, 1963: confusion and treachery

The two years prior to July 1958 were years of total confusion among the ranks of Kurdish Communists. The crisis of the CP deepened as its isolation from the masses intensified. This general situation led a number of Communist formations to enter the KDP during the mid-1950s. In addition, a large number of the best Kurdish militants left revolutionary politics disillusioned. All the CP had left in Kurdistan was a grouping of militants scattered among a number of Kurdish cities.

The phenomenal mass upsurge that followed the establishment of the republic in July 1958 enabled the CP to regain some of its former popularity and to reestablish significant bases in Kurdistan. The most prominent leaders of the party, many of them of Kurdish origin, began tours of Kurdistan. This had a big effect in strengthening the party's position in these areas. These shifts and changes were accelerated by the sharpness of the class struggle, which led an important number of friends, supporters, and members of the KDP to line up with the property-owning classes. The change in the balance of forces led to losses for the KDP, most of these losses being picked up by the CP. In the winter of 1959 thousands of poor peasants and rural proletarians under the leadership of Communist militants crushed an uprising led by the feudalists Rashid Lolan and Salim Agha in the Qala'at Durzah region. This revolutionary stand weakened the influence of the KDP and opened fresh opportunities for the CP.

But this development did not last long. The CP's support to the Bonapartist regime, which was implementing anti-Kurdish policies, shifted the dynamic back toward the KDP. Under the impact of the CP's alliance with Qassim's bourgeois regime, the masses once again turned their backs on the Communist party, and so did hundreds of Communist militants who had failed in their attempts to alter the party's opportunist line. These elements began to fight to defend the gains that had been made during Iraq's "red winter" of 1958-59. It was exactly during this period that the KDP was able to regain its previous position, as it resolutely stood against all the regime's attempts to deprive the Kurdish masses of their democratic and social achievements.

The third article of the provisional constitution of Iraq, issued only two weeks after the July 14 coup, states: "The Arabs and Kurds are partners in this land." The CP welcomed this article and considered it sufficient. But the KDP considered it a first step that had to be followed by tangible policies that would go toward actually implementing self-government for the Kurdish people. During the mass upsurge of the winter of 1958-59, the bourgeois regime tried to play up to the Kurdish masses, but after the rise of the power of the reactionary forces in the summer of 1959, it began to try to restrict all the national and social gains that had been won. While the Bonapartist regime had some success in strangling the revolutionary movement in the southern and central parts of Iraq, in Kurdistan it met with fierce resistance. To counter the resistance Qassim was forced to militarize a number of dissident Kurdish tribes (Zibaris, Rikanis, Jaaf) and set them against the Kurdish national movement (Barazanis, the KDP), thereby utilizing traditional tribal enmities among the Kurds themselves. The Stalinist CP maintained silence in face of these developments, contenting itself with calling for "unity of the national front" and issuing warnings about "imperialist intrigues and designs," emphasizing for the thousandth time the need for the capitulationist concept of "self-restraint."

After the CP finally perceived the inevitability of armed conflict due to the further deterioration of the situation in the

north, it swung into the camp of the regime and demanded that the Kurds "stop causing disturbances." The motivation for this shift was the notion that the existing regime was a patriotic one that was siding with the national bourgeoisie! On the basis of this notion the CP called on the Kurdish movement to struggle to develop the national-democratic government and to put pressure on the government to extend democratic freedoms! This right-wing policy on the part of the Stalinist leadership met with vigorous resistance from the party's rank and file, which called for the adoption of a revolutionary policy on the Kurdish question and fiercely denounced the right-wing reformist policies of the leadership. But the voices of protest and denunciation were answered with an all-out campaign of liquidation and mass expulsion that hit hundreds of members and revolutionary cadre.

Still worse was the distortion of the facts of the battles going on in Kurdistan by the CP papers *Itihad el-Sha'ab* (People's Unity) and *Aazadi* (Freedom, in Kurdish). The impression given in the CP press was that the fight in Kurdistan was an intertribal battle between the Barazanis on the one side and the Zibaris and Sorgi tribes on the other that was raging in the very limited area of Qadha'i Mirka and Aqrah. In reality the struggle was part of a plan of the ruling bourgeoisie to subjugate all of Kurdistan by force. It was the prelude to the all-out bloody civil war that was launched on September 11, 1961.

By the end of 1960 the areas of struggle had broadened to include the territory from the banks of the Zab Bahwanan to the countryside of Qala'at Durzah. While the Stalinists were pursuing their capitulationist line, the bourgeois Kurdish Democratic party was standing at the head of the revolutionary masses throughout the Kurdish countryside. The KDP was leading a fierce armed struggle against the tax collectors of the bourgeois regime, who, after the growth of the reactionary forces, had once again reappeared to rob the peasants of their crops under the pretext of a land tax and the restriction of tobacco agriculture. When the government organized military expeditions to some rural centers to extract these taxes by force, thousands of peasants organized an armed resistance against the government forces. The resistance was led by members and cadres of the KDP. Once the government's operation with the Kurdish mercenary tribes had failed, the regime was faced with a stark alternative: accept the fait accompli or invade Kurdistan. It chose the latter course, and on September 11, 1961, the most vicious war in the history of Iraqi Kurdistan was launched.

## The CP and the Kurdish revolution until February 8, 1963

Toward the end of May 1961 the CP issued an apologetic statement asking the "patriotic regime" to put an end to the "extraordinary situation" in Iraq and to stop the persecution of Barazanis, patriots, and Communists. The response of the "patriotic regime" was to take further measures in the opposite direction. On August 22, 1961 (that is, two weeks before the outbreak of hostilities), the political bureau of the ICP published a political proclamation precisely defining the party's policy in the event of war. The statement said in part: "By relying on their agents working on the inside, the Anglo-American imperialists, the oil companies, and their allies, the governments of Turkey and Iran, are doing their best to exploit the new situation in Kurdistan that has been created by the government's practices; they are intending to deepen the divisions in the ranks of the patriotic forces . . . and are threatening the unity and national independence of the country."

Backhandedly, the CP tried to suggest that this movement was directed by imperialism and that in the final analysis the armed struggle served imperialist designs.

But let us see. Today it is a patently obvious and well known fact that the leadership of the Kurdish movement was not the true representative of the aspirations of hundreds of thousands of poor peasants and urban workers who made up the armed forces of the Kurdish uprising of September 11, 1961 (be this leadership the notorious feudal-tribal wing or the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois one, that is, the KDP). Moreover, the Kurdish masses extended their support to that leadership only after the betrayal by the Communist party and its stand in favor of Qassim's "patriotic" government.

Were these not the same masses that had given their support to the CP militants in the winter of 1959? Was it not the same masses that fought under the leadership of Communist militants to crush the rebellion of the feudalists precisely because the CP militants had proven in practice their capabilities as revolutionary leaders, although most of them were forced to leave the party and take to the hills of Kurdistan to defend their villages and crops from tax collectors sent by the "patriotic" government?

The CP asked the Kurdish masses to welcome Qassim's soldiers and mobile police units. It was demanding "moderation" of the urban workers without expressing the slightest anger at the numerous security and investigative officers who were "defending the unity of the patriotic ranks." Furthermore, it wanted the masses to leave the sides of the Pesh Merga and al-Ansar (the Kurdish armed forces) and to stop supporting them when they tried to fight the provocations of the police and administrative agents and when they were liberating the prisons. The masses learn from experience and not from the intentions of parties. They march behind the leadership that demonstrates in practice that it is the real defender of their national and class aspirations.

By defending the peasants and organizing armed resistance against the tax collectors and the restrictive laws on tobacco cultivation and by heroically defending Kurdistan against the barbaric attacks of the government army, by the end of 1961 the KDP had given living proof of its ability to lead the peasant masses and the urban workers. For these reasons the proclamation issued by the CP met with nothing but contempt and disgust.

The same proclamation hinted at threats against the leadership of the Kurdish revolution if it drifted into a more developed form of armed struggle: "The isolation of the Kurdish movement from the movement of the whole Iraqi people weakens the Kurdish movement in the first place and deprives it of its strong allies represented by the deeply rooted democratic and national movement." Of course, the "deeply rooted movement" means the Communist party itself. And in fact the Stalinist leadership carried through on its threats in no more than a few months. Nor was it alone in this activity. The Kremlin and the Prague bureaucracies rushed to support bourgeois rule in Iraq by sending tons of military equipment and large numbers of Soviet Migs that had the "honor" of transforming 80 percent of the Kurdish countryside into ruins.

The Stalinist leadership heaped further abuse on the KDP because it "did not see all the complexities of the situation, only the aspect of repression and oppression that the Qassim government was practicing against the Kurdish people and its patriotic forces, beginning with the idea that Qassim's role was 'the most dangerous direct threat to the Kurdish peo-

ple and its national liberation movement at the present time." (The Kurdish National Question, Majid Abdel Rudha.)

Shameful! It is not enough for the Stalinist leadership to carry out its own betrayals. It also wants a petty-bourgeois party defending the national aspirations of its people to throw down its arms and follow the path of betrayal and capitulation. In fact, Qassim confirmed the fears of the KDP by waging two years' of debilitating war that destroyed thousands of villages and wide areas of farmland, creating tens of thousands of rural refugees in the cities.

Throughout the years of the war (September 1961-February 1963) the CP maintained its traitorous positions in support of the Qassim government and contented itself every now and then with issuing a watered-down statement calling for "peace in Kurdistan" -- but a capitulationist peace. At a time when the bourgeois army was raining death, destruction, and misery throughout the Kurdish lands, many units of the army were being led by "Communist" officers. (\*)

## The February 8, 1963 reactionary coup

Within a year and a half after the outbreak of the Kurdish revolt, the forces of the Pesh Merga (al-Ansar) had managed to liberate more than one-third of Iraqi Kurdistan. The revolutionary forces inflicted severe blows on the government army, and this deepened the crisis of the bourgeois regime. Discontent and a spirit of mutiny began to permeate the military units in Kurdistan. This weakened the army's fighting capabilities to the point that whole units and sections would surrender in face of the attacks of the Kurdish revolutionary movement. Amidst the decisive advances of the Kurdish revolution came the reactionary coup of February 8, 1963.

The new regime, led by the Baath party, initiated a terrorist campaign that forced most of the Kurdish Communists and many of the other leaders of the ICP to take refuge in the liberated Kurdish territories. The Kurdish leadership, in search of the aid of the countries of the "socialist bloc," received their enemies of yesterday and offered them refuge. The refugee Communists were formed into independent al-Ansar units commanded by Communist officers, among whom were a fair number of officers who under Qassim had commanded the units that attacked Kurdistan.

From the beginning of April 1963 the propaganda produced by the "socialist" countries started to mention Kurdistan in the course of offering news on the repression against the Iraqi Communists. The position of the Communist party began to change. But the honeymoon did not last long. On October 18, 1963, there was another coup in Baghdad and in February 1964 a truce was concluded between the government and the Kurdish movement. The Kurdish leadership began to hem in

\* Taha el-Sheikh (head of military intelligence) and Jalal el-Awqati (head of the air brigades) were CPers. The Second Brigade was led by a member of the CP, Hashim Abdel Jabar, who was stationed in Kurdistan (Darbendi Khan) and was the first to begin the military assault. He was exceptional in the severity and barbarism of his actions, razing hundreds of villages around Sulaymaniyah and Halbaja. It is an irony of history that after the February 8, 1963, coup that overthrew Qassim, this same officer was compelled to take refuge in the Kurdish hills! CP air-force pilots were also at the top of the list of officers who played a shameful role in the wiping out of hundreds of villages.

the Communists in the liberated territories, turning them into soldiers in a regular army under their leadership. The Communist units were also engaged in unequal battles with the government forces, which were attempting to liquidate them, as happened in the battle around the Mawa fort.

In August 1964 the Communist party made another shift on the Kurdish question. In the interest of getting close to the nationalists and Nasserite forces with whom the CP was trying to organize the Socialist Union (and liquidate the CP), the CP leaders stopped mentioning the Kurdish question at all. This shift was codified in the liquidationist line adopted in August 1964, a line that the Central Committee faction later had to back away from because of the refusal of the ranks and cadre of the party to comply with the line. From the middle of 1964 to September 1967 the CP placed all its attention on reconstructing its organization and working out its own internal crisis, which ended in the split in the party and the emergence of the Central Command faction in September 1967.

## The Central Committee faction

The Kurdish policy of the CP (Central Committee) did not change after the July 17, 1968, coup d'etat. Even at the peak of the anti-Communist assault waged by the Baathists in the spring of 1969, the CP position was only further consolidated. The Baathist regime was forced to sign the March 11, 1970, agreements (granting limited autonomy to Kurdistan) because of the deepening of its own internal crisis and the spread of opposition in the southern and central parts of Iraq. The Central Committee unreservedly supported the March agreements despite the fact that the agreements were insufficient for solving the Kurdish national question and even conflicted with the publicly-declared positions of the CP itself. The CP's 1970 congress had formally adopted the slogan of Kurdish self-determination, but in practice the CP held to its previous position, discarding its program in word and deed and putting itself at the service of the Baath party. And the Central Committee insisted in participating in the March 11 games. It criticized the government for not allocating some of the available posts in Kurdistan to members of the CP instead of to members and supporters of the KDP. The Central Committee drew up a list of "Communist" lawyers to be appointed district heads and governors in Kurdistan on the grounds that the CP was a neutral party in the dispute between the Baath and the KDP! Furthermore, the slogan of self-determination loses all meaning when the Iraqi "people" is considered one people and when minority nationalities are considered "... to live in one state and within the framework of one people, which is the Iraqi people. It faces a united fate as one people." (El-Fikr el-Jadid.) Thus is achieved the unity of the "national front" and the united Iraqi people is born of national oppression!

When conflict between the Baathist regime and the Kurdish leadership intensified, the Central Committee turned sharply to support the government, demanding that the Kurdish leadership give way to the Baathists because the important thing was the "patriotic front." "As for the subject under dispute," wrote the December 17, 1972, el-Fikr el Jadid, "it is of little importance and can be left for another time. Life will decide the fate of many questions that abstract discussion is helpless to solve." It was not long before "life" did decide the fate of those matters that could not be solved through "abstract discussion." They were settled at gunpoint instead.

The Central Committee's lining up with the repressive and terrorist bourgeois regime reached the point of factional ac-

tivities against the Kurdish leadership not aimed at replacing the feudal-bourgeois Barzani with a revolutionary leadership but rather at defending and reinforcing the Baathist regime. Barzani responded with a vicious attack on CP militants in Kurdistan, imprisoning and kidnapping people and holding public firing-squad executions on the streets of Zakho and Sulaymaniyah. Once again, we have the final verdict of "life."

The logical culmination of the capitulation of the ICP Central Committee was its acceptance of the so-called National Progressive Front on July 16, 1973. In the final analysis, the "front" means transforming the CP into an organization tail-ending the Baath party and the bureaucratic Bonapartist regime. The Kurdish Democratic party, on the other hand, refused to capitulate.

## The Central Command faction

One of the most important mistakes made by the Central Command faction is that it did not undertake a critical review of the previous positions and policies of the Iraqi Communist party, whether on general questions of revolutionary strategy or on the Kurdish question in particular. This resulted in the Central Command wing remaining a prisoner of its Stalinist conceptions of the revolution. The failure of the Central Command wing to become a revolutionary-communist pole to the left of the reformist, right-wing Central Committee can on the whole be attributed to this. Moreover, the Central Command entered into a struggle with the Central Committee over the heritage of the Communist party. It proceeded to emphatically defend all the previous mistaken policies.

Two positions of the Central Command can be distinguished. The first concerns the period between September 1967 and March 11, 1970. During this period, the policy of the Central Command was not substantially different from that of the Central Committee. In a statement issued July 31, 1968, for example, we find the following: "2. To lay out a clear program for solution of the Kurdish question based on self-government for the Kurdish people within the Iraqi Republic, a primary right of the Kurds. It is also necessary to take first steps toward withdrawing the army from Kurdistan . . . and developing the Kurdish area and raising the level of its population." This statement, which was adopted at an expanded meeting of the Central Command held in late August 1968, called for granting the Kurds self-government, by which was meant, according to the previously mentioned statement, "to allow the Kurdish people of Iraq to administer the local affairs of the Kurdish region of Iraq in freedom, including the election of their own legal and executive councils which spring from the framework of the Iraqi Republic."

But the Central Command also registered an important advance on the Kurdish question by recognizing that the "Kurdish question is a question for the masses of workers and peasants in Kurdistan who form the overwhelming majority of the population . . . and the struggle is linked to a progressive agricultural reform and to a raising of the material, social, and cultural level of the masses and to a liquidation of economic backwardness and to a spreading of wide democracy for the Kurdish people." Unfortunately, however, this analysis ended up with the following absurd formulation: "A revolutionary democratic people's state."



# 'as revolutionary marxists we defend the right of self-determination of the kurdish nation'

In April 1969 the emigré organization of the Central Command moved to a revolutionary-Marxist position on the Kurdish question. It issued a "clarification" that declared: "It is clear that the Kurdish people cannot acquire their complete and stable national rights under the shadow of any dictatorial, reactionary, bourgeois regime. This can only come about under the auspices of a revolutionary popular regime led by the working class, not under the control of the reactionary, bourgeois Kurdish leadership." The formulation "revolutionary popular regime led by the working class" is far clearer than "revolutionary democratic people's state." But the emphasis of the comrades of the emigré organization that national rights must not be granted to a bourgeois Kurdish regime has emptied the text of its revolutionary content. Revolutionary Marxists formulate the right of self-determination of oppressed nations without conditions.

Furthermore, at an expanded meeting of the leadership of the Kurdish section of the Central Command held January 25, 1970, a formulation similar to that of the emigré comrades was agreed on: "The democratic and just solution to the Kurdish question in Iraq is conditional on the establishment of a popular democratic government led by the working class and based on the widest support, working to find solutions to the main problems facing the country." (Issue No. 1 of Rikayi Kurdistan.)

So we can see that by the beginning of 1970 the positions of the Central Command had measurably progressed, a result of the rise of young proletarian elements to positions in the leadership after the capitulation of the conservative grouping around Aziz el-Haj. The progress in position is also reflected in the fact that the Central Command denounced the March 11,

1970, agreements as a shell-game aimed at gaining time. The organization also struggled to prevent the accords from being enacted. The leadership of the armed Kurdish movement began a witch-hunt against the Central Command and constricted the organization's activities. This brought about a more flexible attitude toward the Kurdish leaders on the part of the Central Command leaders and ended up in their complete capitulation to the Barzani leadership.

When disputes again broke out between the leadership of the Kurdish revolution and the regime, the road was opened for the Central Command to resume its activities in Kurdistan. But this activity did not go beyond certain limited areas defined by the Kurdish leadership, the limits being determined by the state of relations between the regime and the Kurdish leadership.

In the end the Central Command joined the "patriotic grouping," which raises the slogan of "democracy in Iraq and self-government in Kurdistan." The "patriotic grouping" consists of a contradictory mixture of political orientations with violently conflicting class interests; it holds a chauvinist policy opposed to the aspirations of the Kurdish people. Beginning with this date the positions of the Central Command fit in with the positions of all the political formations in Iraq that adopt this confused position, from the Central Committee wing and the Barzani leadership to the mélange of the "patriotic grouping" to the Baathist authorities. The position of the Central Command leadership never broke out of its frozen Stalinist conceptions, and the Central Command was consequently unable to differentiate itself from the reformist Central Committee wing by raising a revolutionary-communist program. This remains true despite the revolutionary-sounding phrases that run through the literature of the Central Command.

## The Central Command in practice

A few months after the 1967 split, relations of the Central Command with the leadership of the Kurdish revolution improved, while those of the Central Committee deteriorated. The reason was that the Central Command adopted the slogan of armed struggle; layers of the party had already opened a dialogue with a revolutionary *foquista* group operating in the southern marsh areas of Iraq led by the since-martyred Khalid Ahmed Zaki. But the attempts of the Central Command to coordinate with the leadership of the Kurdish revolution were based on completely wrong notions: that the CP should fight in the central and southern areas while the armed Kurdish movement fought in the north, in Kurdistan. This mechanical military division led to a devastating defeat. It reflected the lack of seriousness of the Central Command in waging the armed struggle in that it did not seek to create armed Communist forces in Kurdistan independent of the forces of the Kurdish revolution that were under the hegemony of the bourgeois-feudal grouping. After the March 11, 1970, agreement, this opportunistic approach had the worst consequences for the future of revolutionary struggle in Iraq.

On June 1, 1968, the Central Command had issued a statement announcing the formation of the Popular Armed Struggle Front. The statement pointed to a revolutionary perspective. It said in part: "People of Kurdistan! The dictatorship that is fighting you is weak and sitting on a volcano. It is incapable of resisting a revolution ranging from the south to the Kurdish mountains." But, as we know, there is quite a difference between statements and actions. This correct formu-

lation becomes meaningless if the leadership in Kurdistan is handed over to a bourgeois-feudal grouping. The CP did not attempt to build communist armed units in Kurdistan; this was an attempt to "preserve the alliance between our party and the KDP." Nor did the Central Command direct any criticism at the Kurdish leadership or educate the Kurdish working masses in a proletarian socialist perspective. The response that the Central Command gave to an attack from the Central Committee over this conciliationism is revealing: "The Kurdish revolution has its limitations, and these are the subject of criticism from all Iraqi revolutionaries who are committed to the victory of the cause of the Kurdish people. But the reformist leaders of the Central Committee are the very people who were silent about these limitations in 1964. . . . So their sudden concern now cannot be explained by any concern over the program and policies of independent Communists on the Kurdish revolution." (The Party Militant, June 1968.)

In early January 1970, two months before the March 11 agreements, the Kurdish branch of the Central Command held an extended meeting in which a warning was issued to the Kurdish leadership about the stupidity of making an agreement with the Baathist regime. The warning passed unheeded.

In this same meeting, the deteriorating relations between the Central Command and the Kurdish leadership were pointed to: "The methods of pressure, constriction of work, insults, imprisonment, and disregard of repeated promises are not going to accomplish the desired goal of alliance." (Rikai Kurdistan, January 25, 1970.) The same statement goes on to say, "The correct relations between national party alliances cannot be built except on the basis of mutual respect and equality and noninterference in the internal affairs of any of the concerned parties."

Despite the direct interference of the Kurdish leadership in the organization of the internal life of the Central Command in Kurdistan (which, after the liquidation of the Central Command sections in the central and southern parts of Iraq remained the only viable section of the organization), the Central Command continued to talk about the "existing relations of alliance between our Communist party and the KDP, which constitute an important cornerstone of our national alliance." This open deception intensified the leadership crisis within the Central Command and finally led the group into the swamp of the "national alliance," as the Central Command followed the worn-out proverb, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

The only way to have avoided this pitiful end to the ICP Central Command would have been to adopt a revolutionary-communist program breaking out of the ossified Stalinist framework and delineating a strategic perspective with clearly defined practical lines of implementation. In the forefront of these practical steps should have been:

1. Formation of independent armed communist units in Kurdistan in addition to the forces of the Kurdish movement under bourgeois leadership.
2. Implementation of a revolutionary program of land reform in the areas controlled by the Communist forces.
3. Agitation among the ranks of the government forces calling for revolutionary defeatism and for joining up with the forces in the liberated areas.

This would have polarized broad masses of peasants who had carried arms on the side of the bourgeois Kurdish Democratic party in the hope of winning land and freedom. Further, any attempt by the Kurdish feudalists and bourgeoisie to crush the



red areas (as happened after the March 1970 agreements were signed) would have brought defeat to the property-owning classes.

One final word. Beginning with the revolutionary upsurge in the winter of 1958-59, the history of the Iraqi Communist party has been marked by a continuous line of division between the leaderships of the ICP and the revolutionary rank-and-file, between the right-wing reformist policies of the leadership and the positions of the party militants. After 1964, this left opposition took on increased importance, finally leading to the 1967 split and the emergence of the Central Command wing. All the revolutionary elements moved to the Central Command, and these militants played the decisive role in implementing the positive steps that were later taken by the Central Command. But the bureaucratic centralism that marked internal party life held back the transformation of a large number of revolutionary decisions into tangible material force. The sad fate of the Central Command was the final result of all this. A large number of party cadres adopted spontanéist, terrorist, and Maoist positions. Other sections were isolated from practical work and dropped out of revolutionary politics after all entries into the crisis of leadership became closed to them.

## Revolutionary communists and the Kurdish question

It is very clear that the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan has led a large number of Arab revolutionaries to think that under present conditions there is no hope in the short run of overcoming the leadership crisis in the Kurdish revolution. Today this crisis is no longer confined to the absence of a revolutionary leadership, but also extends to the existence of "communist" organizations that are weak and isolated from the masses and that either provide strong support for the regime (the Central Committee wing) or tailend the Barzani leadership of the Kurdish Democratic party (the Central Command wing). Add to this the treacherous and opportunist "heritage" that these Stalinist leaderships have left behind and the full complexity of the situation facing revolutionaries intent on building a revolutionary-communist nucleus is indicated. The situation is further complicated by the existence of an experienced feudal-bourgeois leadership with a long history of struggle that controls one-third of Kurdistan. This leadership is fully equipped with armed forces (the Pesh Merga and al-Ansar) that number more than 25,000 fighters.

But despite all these obstacles, it should be clear that this leadership has itself been racked by crisis for many years. The crisis has deepened especially during the past two years. Two main currents can be distinguished around the personality of Barzani. First there is the feudal-bourgeois current, with its tribal origins; and second there is the petty-bourgeois wing. Barzani's disappearance could trigger violent struggles between these two currents. The basic reason for the deepening of the crisis has been the failure of this leadership to solve the Kurdish question and its subsequent covering for this failure by resorting to all sorts of opportunist deals and truces that guarantee its class interests.

But this seemingly hopeless situation is but one aspect of the real state of affairs in Kurdistan. For years there has been a constantly escalating revolutionary situation that the regime has proven incapable of crushing in the organized and decisive way that it did in central and southern Iraq. This gives a tremendous impetus to revolutionary work, and it makes the task of building a revolutionary leadership an objective

need that cannot be delayed. The situation in Kurdistan has taken big steps forward since the signing of the March 1970 agreements. Hundreds of thousands of peasants and city dwellers who fought bravely for the Kurdish revolution find their conditions worsening while the agas, feudalists, and bourgeoisie profit from their misery. Any opposition is swiftly crushed in the name of security of the Kurdish revolution and unity in face of the strength of the state. Thousands of peasants and workers have begun to realize the bankruptcy of the Barzani and KDP leaderships. But in view of the lack of a revolutionary alternative, the betrayals of the Central Committee CP, and the opportunism of the Central Command CP, is it any wonder that we find the growth and flourishing of right-wing chauvinist organizations capitalizing on the demoralization of the Kurdish masses?

The failure of the Kurdish bourgeoisie to lead the democratic revolution to victory was not exceptional. It fits into the failure of the bourgeoisie of all underdeveloped countries to carry out the tasks of the democratic revolution. This is a result of their economic and social ties to imperialism and their political weakness. This means that in the final analysis these tasks fall upon the working class and the poor peasantry under the leadership of a revolutionary-communist party that can build socialism through the process of permanent revolution. The experiences of the Kurdish revolution are proof of the accuracy of this analysis.

The workers of Iraq must unequivocally reject and denounce all the maneuvers and reformist prescriptions proposed by the Stalinists and all the deformed bourgeois "solutions" to the Kurdish question, from the 1963 Baathist proposals for decentralization to the June 29, 1966, proclamations, to the March 11, 1970, agreements.

In the fourth issue of el-Moundil (published in August 1971) we said: "The right of the Kurdish nation to self-determination and for the completion of all the conditions for their national liberation and unification is a completely justified aspiration that must be supported by the revolutionary-communist party of the whole Arab world. But the March 11 agreements between the leadership of the armed Kurdish movement and the Baathist regime is no expression of this aspiration. . . . In this sense the March 11 agreements reflect a distorted solution to the national question in Iraq."

As revolutionary Marxists we defend and uphold the right of self-determination, including the right to secession, of the Kurdish nation.

This is the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist position on the national question as against the social chauvinist positions of the Stalinist Arab Communist parties.

FOR THE UNCONDITIONAL RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SECESSION, FOR THE KURDISH NATION!

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE ARAB AND KURDISH WORKING CLASS FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN IRAQ!

FOR A UNITED SOCIALIST KURDISTAN!

LONG LIVE THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION! ■

# On the pst's joint support with bourgeois parties to the "process of institutionalization"

On March 22 Argentine president Perón received, at their request, representatives of eight political parties: Unión Cívica Radical, Partido Revolucionario Cristiano, Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, Partido Socialista Popular, Partido Intransigente, UDELPA, Partido Comunista, Democracia Progresista. This meeting was not an isolated event. It was part of a series of initiatives that Perón had taken with the aim of "normalizing" his relations with the officially recognized parties (another meeting took place on April 5). But the March 22 meeting was the most important one so far, for at its conclusion the eight parties published a common declaration.

"Those who are here," said the declaration in part, "have confirmed their fundamental commitment not to spare initiatives or efforts to maintain and consolidate the process of institutionalization of the country in the framework of the democratic system and in the practice of coexistence and constructive dialogue. . . . The difficult moments that the Republic is now passing through as a consequence of its confrontation with powers that have been weighing on it for a long time will be successfully surmounted by solidarity action of the sectors that respect the majority and popular desire for freedom that was expressed in the elections and that together guarantee their right to continue to express themselves in the future, for applying it in reality to free itself from the burden of dependence, and to assure the workers the benefits of the wealth created by their efforts. As participants in this process we do not take an attitude of opposition to the realization of these projects. . . . The interview, thanks to the representativeness of its participants and to the development of its content, should be considered as a concrete step toward realizing the conjunction of the efforts that assure the course of institutionalization along the lines voted on by the people. All of us understand the risks of the undertaking demanded by the country and are agreed beyond the differences of viewpoint on the depth and rhythm of the process of change -- on the inexorable necessity of its realization. . . . Those who desire the failure of the constitutional regime or who are waiting for circumstances that would make a new reactionary adventure possible; those who are trying to utilize sectors of the regime to influence future alternatives; those who adopt totalitarian or corporatist practices in a subterranean ideological convergence with fascist-like demands and the interests of the multinational corporations that are exerting uninterrupted pressure on our borders; all those people should know that this is a country which is united on the basis of a fundamental agreement and will give them a response."

The declaration, which was published by all the daily newspapers on March 22, was reprinted in the March 28-April 5 issue of *Avanzada Socialista*, organ of the PST. But *Avanzada Socialista* did not limit itself to publishing the communiqué; it added two commentaries in the form of editorials.

The first editorial, after recalling the escalation of right-wing violence which culminated in the coup carried out in Córdoba by the police chief Navarro, explained that the "participation (of the PST) in the dialogue with the president of the republic" was "a concrete act in defense of the democratic rights heroically won by the workers and popular mobilizations that have gone on since the Cordobazo." It went on to explain that "defense of constitutional stability" should not coincide with political defense of the government and drew the following conclusion: "The fact that the eight parties came to an agreement to request the meeting in order to pose the problem of institutionalization is of extraordinary importance. But, as always, we will not cease to affirm that democratic gains will be defended above all by the mobilization of the masses as the struggles of Acindar and of the bank workers indicate to us. That is why we will not cease to affirm the necessity of the agreement to defend democratic rights being expressed in action, beginning with a big public meeting of all the parties and all the political organizations of the youth and all the workers and student organizations." The same call for a common meeting with the bourgeois parties was taken up at the end of the second editorial, which preached the need for "concrete and flexible responses at each conjuncture of the class struggle."

The leadership of the PST had to take account of the fact that its decision to participate in a meeting that gave a cover to Perón's "normalizing" actions, its signature of a document in common with bourgeois parties (among them the Unión Cívica Radical, the traditional bourgeois party and, even today, the main political force of the bourgeoisie apart from Peronism), its proclamation of a "fundamental coincidence" of all the signatories in defense of the process of "institutionalization" and the acceptance of the "projects" approved by the "people" (which are in practice projects drawn up by Cámpora and Perón), and its thesis that the struggle against fascism can and should be waged along with parties representing the enemy class all could provoke reactions among party militants.

This is why the same issue of *Avanzada Socialista* published a letter signed by "Comrade F." (a letter that was received

by the editors with startling rapidity) and an answer to the letter that took up nearly two pages.

The letter seemed to accept class collaboration with the bourgeois parties. In fact, it asserted (falsifying a quotation from Trotsky referring to the necessity for a united front with the Social Democracy in Germany at the beginning of the 1930s) that the "united front is permissible with the class enemy and even with the devil's grandmother." But the author criticized the signing of the document of the eight parties because, according to him, the PST would have thus aided Perón and given support to a bourgeois government that was on the point of falling. The response of the editors clarified the central question involved. It affirmed that it was necessary to begin with a "fundamental fact: there has been a semi-fascist coup that overthrew a provincial government. This coup was not an isolated event, but represented a leap in the escalation of the violence of the right, which is on the offensive and has not the slightest intention of stopping." The conclusion is that in the given context there must not be a struggle to overthrow the government or the existing institutions, but that, on the contrary, it is necessary to defend "democratic institutionalization and that toward this end it is correct to establish an agreement with bourgeois parties by signing common declarations and by calling for common demonstrations."

In the past the leaders of the PST have criticized the Stalinist conceptions of popular front, and they formally reiterated their criticisms in the issue of *Avanzada* in question. But just as they had previously supported the Uruguayan Frente Amplio, which was headed by the bourgeois representative Seregni, today they sign a common declaration with bourgeois parties and call for common action with them. To justify such an ultra-opportunist attitude, they utilize exactly the argument advanced by the Stalinists in the middle of the 1930s to justify their adoption of the line of Popular Front, namely that it is legitimate to line up with the bourgeoisie or with so-called democratic sectors of it to oppose a fascist danger. With this the leadership of the PST marks a stage in its evolution and openly breaks with the revolutionary-Marxist conception of the proletarian united front which is based on the Leninist conception of the Third International and was revived by Trotsky.

At the same time, it is forgetting the fundamental distinction between democratic rights demanded by the workers movement and the structure of bourgeois democracy. In signing a document that calls for the process of institutionalization of the country and in presenting itself along with bourgeois parties as a "participant in the process of institutionalization," it is contributing to Perón's main mystification, to the pseudodemocratic farce the Argentine bourgeoisie has been playing for the past three years, and is falling for the maneuver aimed at presenting Perón as a guarantor of "democracy" who embraces everyone, with the exception of the organizations of the far right and the far left (Perón has explicitly expressed himself along that line). The expression utilized on several occasions by *Avanzada Socialista* -- dialogue with the president -- says a lot about the opportunist conceptions of the PST leaders.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International, which has always rejected any form of class collaboration and has constantly counterposed the revolutionary conception of the workers (or workers and peasants) united front to the reformist and Stalinist conception of class collaboration with the "democratic" parties of the bourgeoisie, believes that the duty of revolutionaries in Argentina is to struggle uncompromisingly and without truce against the existing government and the bourgeois state, while exploiting the legal and semi-legal

maneuvering room that may exist to denounce the fraudulent operation initiated with the GAN and developed by Perón. It declares that it bears no responsibility for the opportunist and rightist attitude of the PST, that it considers the PST's attitude in contradiction with the conceptions and traditions of Trotskyism, and that it condemns this attitude in the clearest fashion.

May 29, 1974



In the June 26, 1974, issue of *Avanzada Socialista* it is affirmed that the PST did not sign the declaration of March 22, 1974, "because there were still differences" with the other parties. The editor-in-chief is said to have published the information about the PST's signature by mistake. But the same article in *Avanzada Socialista* that reports these adjustments simultaneously and explicitly reaffirms the legitimacy of reaching tactical accords with bourgeois parties in Argentina today to defend democratic rights and the institutions of bourgeois democracy.

The fundamental choice that has been made by the PST was once again confirmed by the fact that on June 29, 1974 -- just three days after the appearance of that issue of *Avanzada Socialista* -- the PST and the seven other parties, which are called "center-left" by the daily newspapers, signed a common declaration supporting "the process of institutionalization of the country" and "the functioning of the legal mechanisms of constitutional continuity." (*La Opinión*, June 30, 1974.) On July 3, the day after the death of Perón, the PST in the city of Santa Fe signed, at the invitation of the president of the Chamber of Deputies, a new declaration in favor "of the maintenance of constitutional stability as the only adequate means to achieve social justice in liberty, to break the grip of imperialist interests, and to concretize independence for all time." (*El Cronista Comercial*, July 4, 1974.)

This proves that the PST's fundamental divergence from the programmatic line of the Fourth International on the method of defending the democratic rights of the workers is fully maintained, despite the article in the June 26, 1974, *Avanzada Socialista*.

This pointing out of a programmatic deviation for which the Fourth International can take no responsibility must in no way inhibit the development of a vigorous campaign of solidarity with the PST and of defense of this party against the blows of repression and the terror of the far right.

July 12, 1974



# THE SITUATION OF THE LEFT & THE BUILDING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

With this issue we are completing publication of the political resolution adopted in December 1973 by the Revolutionary Marxist party, Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International. The first four sections of that resolution appeared in INPRECOR Nos. 0 and 1. These sections dealt with the formation of Bandaranaike's "United Front" government, the imposition of the State of Emergency in 1971, the legislative measures of the regime, and the repression directed by the government against the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front).

In this issue we are publishing sections 6, 8, and 9, which deal with the development of the parties that formed the

governmental "United Front," the state of the mass movement, and the building of our Ceylonese section. Two sections of the resolution will not be published in INPRECOR because of lack of space, section 5 on the economic policy of the "United Front" and the situation on the island and section 7, which analyzes the right-wing opposition to the regime.

The resolution has been published in full as a pamphlet in Sri Lanka in three languages: Sinhala, Tamil, and English.

**INPRECOR**

## 6. The situation within the united front

The political hegemony of the SLFP over the LSSP and the CP in the United Front of the three parties was established at the time of the formation of the Front between them in 1968. The Common Programme was expressly declared to have been drawn up "in pursuance of the Bandaranaike policies." It was also agreed that Mrs. Bandaranaike was to be the leader of the United Front, and that she was to determine the number of seats to be allocated to the LSSP and the CP, respectively, for contest by their candidates at the then impending general election, under the banner of the United Front. Express acceptance of the Common Programme by each candidate was a condition of nomination when the general election took place in May 1970.

The SLFP won three times the number of seats that the LSSP and CP won together, on the basis of the distribution of seats contested by the United Front. Though the SLFP won an absolute majority by itself, with 90 seats (out of the total of 151), it still required the support of the LSSP, at least, with its 19 seats, to have the vital two-thirds majority that ensured the abolition of the Senate and the abrogation of the Soulbury Constitution, without violence to its provisions, and the establishment of a new Constitution. This fact gave the LSSP special political leverage with the SLFP within the

United Front; and this was borne out by the appointment of Colvin R. de Silva of the LSSP as the Minister of Constitutional Affairs. This leverage continues even under the new Constitution, since any bill can be made law without challenge before the courts if it has a two-thirds majority, even if it or any provision of it is declared to be in conflict with the Constitution by the Constitutional Court appointed under it. The importance of LSSP support in Parliament for reactionary legislation, like the Criminal Justice Commission's Bill, for which a two-thirds majority was expressly declared to be essential by Felix Dias Bandaranaike of the SLFP when he presented it to Parliament in April 1972, was strikingly illustrated when a section of the CP refused to support the Bill. The apparently close and continuing political relationship between the top leaders of the SLFP with that of the LSSP has been cemented by the continuing dependence of the former on the latter for the enactment of legislation that cannot be challenged successfully, or that can be made unchallengeable, in terms, before the courts. It may be said, therefore, that the political dictatorship of the United Front in and through the Parliament rests upon the political relationship of the SLFP with the LSSP.

The split in the CP(M), resulting from the failure of its traditional leader, S.A. Wickramasinghe, and its "youth" leader, Sarath Muttetuwegama, and two other members of its parliamentary faction to vote for the Criminal Justice Commission's Act, could not be healed thereafter. This was because a ma-

majority of the CP(M), reacting to the increasing alienation of the popular bases of the United Front from it, was not willing to submit to uncritical support of the increasingly reactionary and anti-popular measures of the United Front leadership, even though the sole representative of the CP(M) in the Cabinet, Pieter Keuneman, appears to have been in general accord with that leadership. The split in the parliamentary faction became a split within the Party, when the S.A. Wickramasinghe wing gained complete control of the Central Committee of the Party. We now have a unique situation in Ceylon for a Communist Party, with a minority wing in the Government and a majority outside it, still supporting it politically, while both wings continue to maintain ties with Moscow. This reflects the equivocal relations of the United Front Government with the Soviet Government.

The LSSP leadership has generally manifested complete loyalty to Mrs. Bandaranaike, and has worked in close liaison with the coterie of SLFP ministers, like Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Maithripala Senanayake and T.B. Ilangaratne, who, together with her, appear to be the controlling group within the SLFP. Despite undoubted differences of outlook and political tradition to begin with and consequent differences that must have arisen within the ruling SLFP/LSSP clique in the United Front Government, the hopes of a break up between them, on the part of Rightist political opponents of the Government, have not been realised. The main reason for this is that they are held together by political and social self-interest, and fear of the masses, especially after the killing and torture of thousands of youth in and after April 1971, and the ruthless attacks they have perpetrated on mass living standards and rights thereafter.

Though there have been rumblings of discontent within the SLFP and the LSSP, especially amongst their youth sections, there is little reason to expect that any important Left currents will emerge from amongst them. This is because the memberships, as well as the youth sections of the two parties, are politically disoriented to a great extent and consist largely of opportunistic petit-bourgeois types, most of whom have been given or have acquired personal benefits or positions from or in the establishment. The workers amongst them are predominantly employees in the public sector, who hang behind their political leaderships, likewise mainly for personal protection or gain.

In the matter of political corruption, there is now little to choose between the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP minority that shelters under Pieter Keuneman's ministerial wing.

The relationships between the three parties of the United Front in the trade union arena reflect the state of affairs between them in the political arena, since their trade unions are completely subservient to the politics of the United Front Government. Cut-throat competition between the trade union leaderships of the three parties, however, prevails in several sectors, despite the political collaboration between them. The result has been a continuing decline in the strength and influence of the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations, controlled by the United Front. Its role is to serve as a sounding board amongst the organised workers for the leaderships of the parties in the United Front, besides being an instrument for promoting class collaboration amongst the workers, in accordance with the policies of the United Front.

## 6a. CP (Peking) wing and Peking

The open and continuing political support given by the Peking regime to the United Front Government under Mrs. Bandaranaike gave rise to a situation in which the CP(Peking) wing under Shanmugathasan has ceased to have political significance in the mass movement. Following the breakaway of the Premalal Kumarasiri group, and the expulsion of Wijeweera and others in 1966, and several drop-outs thereafter, the rump of the CP(Peking) wing was left without any effective Sinhala cadre. The imprisonment of Shanmugathasan himself and most of the leaders of the Plantation Workers' Union led by the CP(Peking) wing, for more than a year after April 1971 paralysed that Party. Thereafter, the breakaway of the leadership of the Plantation Workers' Union, together with the veteran trade union leader, Watson Fernando, left Shanmugathasan with no effective cadre at all, and no base of any importance in the trade union movement. In this connection, the discredit that the Peking regime has suffered among Maoists internationally, following the increasingly friendly links between it and the United States, and the denunciation of the JVP by that regime in the immediate aftermath of the suppression of the JVP by the United Front Government, has left Shanmugathasan little chance of any new recruitment. It now appears that Peking's influence in Ceylon politics is directly exercised through its influence with the United Front Government on the basis of political, economic and military support for it.

## 8. The mass movement

The shattering of mass illusions in the United Front Government, as a result of its attacks upon mass living standards and the continuing repression of democratic rights and civil liberties under the Emergency, has resulted in political confusion and demoralisation in the traditional left movement. It has become so disoriented and has degenerated to such an extent, under the circumstances, that it is no longer capable of any serious struggle against the capitalist class or the state, and can hardly be regarded as a Left movement anymore. However, there are considerable sections of the working class, particularly amongst its younger layers, as well as amongst the student and unemployed youth, who have not been imbued with the reformist outlook of the traditional Left parties, or have ceased to have such an outlook.

The trade union movement has been largely confined to the urban and plantation proletariat. The rural proletariat and substantial sections of the urban proletariat employed in small establishments or even in large establishments on a casual basis have largely remained unorganised, with no legally regulated or legally enforceable terms and conditions of employment.

Since unorganised workers, like the organised workers, have largely been imbued with a reformist outlook, they have looked to the parliamentary parties for improvements in their social conditions by legislative means. The organised workers have sought, in addition, to improve their terms and conditions of employment through trade union representations and struggles. Today, advancement by such means is no longer possible for the vast majority of the proletariat; nor, for that matter, is effective defence of existing living standards and rights possible by such means.

The Essential Services Order, made and maintained under the Emergency regulations since March 1971, serves as an impor-



**“it is with the younger generation that the regeneration of the left movement . . . now lies”**

tant deterrent against strikes, since it illegalises any failure or refusal to work, whether individual or collective. This vicious Order has been invoked in some cases to justify mass dismissals in strikes, and also to dismiss individual workers. Nevertheless, industrial peace has been maintained under the United Front Government more by reason of the class-collaborationist and divisive policies of the traditional Left parties in the United Front than because of the Essential Services Order.

In the government service and in state corporations, political apathy and inactivity is prevalent amongst all categories of workers. This is due, on the one hand, to disillusionment in the Government amongst the substantial majority of them, who supported the United Front at the elections. It is also due, on the other hand, to fear of victimisation for any form of active opposition to the Government, including indefinite suspension from work, without pay, on suspicion of "subversive" activity. In the state sector, furthermore, since trade unions of the United Front parties predominate amongst the workers, the latter are subject to control by the state managements with the collaboration of their trade union leaderships. In some instances, office-bearers of such unions are actually in the managements themselves, as directors of state corporations.

The adamant refusal of the United Front Government to settle the sustained strikes of the well organised trade unions of technical officers in the Irrigation Department and of state and commercial bank employees throughout the country at the end of last year, and their ultimate defeats, served to bring home to the trade union movement the realisation that collective bargaining and democratic methods of settlement of strikes, even in important sectors of the economy or of the administration, could no longer be expected under the present conditions of crisis of the capitalist system in Ceylon.

The chronic discontent that has prevailed amongst the low-paid masses of workers on the tea and rubber plantations has

become more and more acute, due to the reduction of work-days per week and the rising cost of living. The monthly-wage demands of their unions have become more and more insistent, in consequence. The recent cut in the rice ration to only half a measure per week has aggravated the economic distress on the plantations more than in any other major sector, in these circumstances. Though the Ceylon Workers' Congress has been agitating both on economic as well as democratic demands affecting the preponderant majority of the plantation workers, who are of Indian-Tamil origin, and though the C.W.C. leadership is politically antagonistic to the United Front Government, at present, it is unlikely that it will be prepared to lead the plantation workers to a showdown with the Government and the plantation owners on their demands. Nevertheless, the deep-seated unrest that prevails amongst the plantation workers may well result in a major outbreak of the class struggle on the plantations, sooner than in any other sector of the economy, unless the United Front Government makes some kind of deal with the CWC leadership to prevent it.

In the impasse in which the trade union movement now finds itself, and as a result of the substantial loss of confidence in the parliamentary process as a means of social amelioration for the masses, sections of the working class have already begun to recognise the necessity for the regeneration of the Left movement and the unification of the working class under a political leadership that will lead it in struggle for the defence and advancement of its interests as against those of the capitalist class and the state.

The liquidation of the JVP, including the killing or imprisonment of large numbers of the student youth and the general conditions of repression that have prevailed since April 1971, have strongly inhibited the manifestation of revolutionary tendencies amongst the youth in the high schools and universities, where the JVP had exercised a powerful political influence. In the circumstances, the parties of the United Front now hold sway in the student movement on the university campuses; and, as in the trade union movement, strong rivalries

exist between them. The LSSP and the SLFP wings have tended to combine against the CP(M) wing in elections to the student councils; but the latter holds a strong position in some campuses because of its critical attitude in relation to some aspects of the policy of the United Front Government.

The widespread disillusionment with the United Front Government amongst the masses has resulted, to some extent, particularly amongst middle class layers, in a turn towards the UNP as the "lesser evil" of the former supporters of the United Front parties. Despite the victories of the UNP in several by-elections, in consequence, it still cannot be said that the United Front Government no longer commands political support from amongst the masses. Such support as it does have, however, is no longer enthusiastic. It is limited to certain sections of small property owners and sections of the state bureaucracy, as well as some sections of the working class, that have directly benefited from measures of the United Front Government in relation to them or from its political patronage.

The disintegration of the Left movement that the LSSP and CP have led for a generation has left the masses not only politically confused, but virtually defenceless against the attacks made upon their rights and living standards in this situation. It is with the younger generation that the regeneration of the Left movement, as well as the revival of the class struggle, now lies. With approximately half the present population consisting of young people born after the Hartal of August 1953, even though the major set-backs that the mass movement has suffered under the United Front Government have still to be surmounted, there is every likelihood of revolutionary developments in Ceylon in the period ahead.

## 9. The party and our tasks

The breakaway minority from the LSSP that formed the Party in June 1964, immediately after the break, had no proper political cohesion at the time. The only unifying factor that led to the break was the rejection of the decision of the majority of the LSSP to support the entry of the LSSP into a coalition government under the leadership of the SLFP. Subsequent breakaways from the Party and individual drop-outs, during the period of almost a decade that has elapsed since the Party was formed, reduced its strength and its capacity to oppose itself effectively to the LSSP and the two CP's on the Left.

The breakaway of the Karalasingham group in 1966, and their return to the LSSP following in the footsteps of Osmund Jayaratne, was partly due to their lack of confidence in the Party's capacity to wield any influence in the mass movement as against the then very much more substantial influence of the LSSP. It also indicated the incapacity of such people to break with the political habits and opportunist outlook that had become prevalent in the LSSP during the period of its degeneration into a parliamentary reformist party. The subsequent breakaway of the Edmund Samarakoddy group, shortly after the last Party conference in April 1968, and its lapse into virtual political oblivion thereafter, also indicates that many of those who broke from the LSSP were incapable of re-orienting themselves to the mass movement in such a way as to remain politically viable and capable of building a revolutionary Marxist vanguard to lead it.

The Party's prospects of development were damaged by the breakaways and drop-outs from its all too small ranks. The political slanders made against the Party publicly by the Edmund Samarakoddy group added to this damage, especially

amongst young people in the Left who knew little of Trotskyism and even less of the LSSP(R). The "Healyite" group (Revolutionary Communist League) that was organised by other breakaway elements from the Party also contributed to political confusion about Trotskyism, the LSSP(R) and the Fourth International. Their newspaper propaganda has had some effect in Left circles in universities. They have no significance amongst the working class because of their utter sectarianism and virtual tailism behind the traditional Left parties in the United Front, whose leaderships they call upon to break with the Government and lead the masses to the formation of a Workers' and Peasants' Government. Their revolutionism consists in little more than repeating this refrain and calling, parrot-like, for the "building of a revolutionary party" as an answer to any and every issue arising from the class struggle anywhere, without any actual involvement on their part.

What seriously inhibited the growth of the Party, however, were the profound illusions that were created in the traditional Left movement by the political combination of the LSSP and the CP(M) in the SLFP-led United Front, established by those three parties when they were in the parliamentary Opposition to the UNP Government of 1965-1970. An important factor that militated against the growth of the Party amongst the youth, unknown to us during that period, was the development of the new revolutionary youth movement that came to public notice as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in 1970. Mass disillusionment with the United Front, and the tragic debacle suffered by the JVP in 1971, have materially changed the situation in the mass movement as regards the prospects of the Party's growth in the period ahead.

The leading role that several Party members have played in the CMU and the development of that Union into a powerful mass organisation of all categories of urban workers in the private sector and in state corporations, in consequence, has been the main factor that has enabled the Party, small as it is, to become the only politically significant revolutionary group still functioning in the mass movement today.

Interest in the Party has been heightened in the recent period, amongst those who recognise the role it has played in bringing the CMU to the forefront of the entire mass movement, in the defence of human and democratic rights under the dangerous and difficult conditions of repression maintained by the Government under the Emergency, following the bloody suppression of the JVP in April 1971. The defence of the JVP leaders charged before the Criminal Justice Commission, and the widespread publicity that the inquiry has received for well over a year, have also contributed in no small way to the growth of interest in our politics, particularly amongst the political prisoners and former adherents and sympathisers of the JVP. In the circumstances, whilst the prevailing political situation remains dangerous for the mass movement and difficult as yet for the rebuilding of the Left, the Party now stands in a position to organise a revolutionary Marxist vanguard capable of performing that task and of leading the mass movement forward, in due course, on the revolutionary Socialist road.

The main propagandist task of the Party in the present period is to bring home to the Ceylonese masses the incapacity of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie, whether through a parliamentary regime in association with the traditional Left parties or otherwise, to maintain its rule on a democratic basis, or to resolve any of their basic problems, and especially the problems of unemployment and the high and ever rising cost of living. To perform this task effectively and to lead the masses towards the eventual overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of a Workers' and Peasants' Government under the lead-

ership of the proletariat, it is essential for the Party to point out the necessity for and actively engage in the building of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat capable of uniting the forces of the urban, rural and plantation proletariat at the head of a mass movement for Socialism in Ceylon.

In the situation now prevailing, the Party should seek to build or to assist in the development and bringing together of political groups capable of being oriented in a revolutionary direction amongst the rural and plantation proletariat, developing and using the position it has gained amongst the urban proletariat in so doing. It is also important for the Party to endeavour to establish political groups, or at least to establish contact with such groups as may now exist or may come into being amongst the Tamil-speaking minority and amongst the student youth, that may be capable of becoming part of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard of the proletariat. In the performance of these tasks, the Party should specifically conduct propaganda and agitation on the following democratic demands:

(1) The ending of the Emergency and restoration of all democratic and civil liberties, including the unconditional release of all political prisoners held in custody or convicted under the Criminal Justice Commission's Act or the Emergency regulations, and repeal of that Act as well as the Public Security Act and other repressive legislation.

(2) Full citizenship rights for all stateless persons of Indian origin in Ceylon, and no compulsory repatriation of any workers of Indian origin in the plantations and elsewhere.

(3) Recognition of the Tamil language as an official language, as in the case of the Sinhala language, and abolition of all forms of discrimination against racial, religious or caste minorities.

In relation to the United Front Government, the Party should continue to expose its true character and the treacherous roles being played by the LSSP and both wings of the CP(M) in relation to it. At the same time, it is essential that the Party should also expose the demagogic character of the propaganda of the UNP in relation to matters affecting democratic rights and the living standards of the masses of the people. Since the UNP seeks to mislead the masses into believing that the attacks made upon them by the United Front Government in these respects are in pursuance of policies that are determined by Marxist ideas of Socialism, in order to discredit

it such ideas, and that it can give the masses a better deal, the Party should also explain the true nature of the role being played by the UNP in relation to the United Front Government. It should be pointed out that this role is essentially complementary, as both the UNP and the United Front Government are seeking to preserve bourgeois property relations and capitalist rule in Ceylon, though in different ways, at the expense of the masses. To the extent that they realise this only will they understand that their living standards and rights have been attacked both under the previous UNP Government and under the United Front Government due to the continuing deterioration of the capitalist system in Ceylon under both governments.

In relation to the Federal Party and the Ceylon Workers' Congress, the Party should explain the impossibility of their securing the democratic rights of the Tamil-speaking people in the Northern and Eastern provinces and the workers of Indian origin on the plantations under a bourgeois government dominated by Sinhala bourgeois and petit-bourgeois political parties, whether it be led by the SLFP or by the UNP, or by a combination between them. The Party should also explain the nature of the Tamil United Front and the essentially complementary role that it is playing amongst the national minorities in relation to the policies of the UNP in the present situation.

In relation to the defence of mass living standards and rights, the Party should continue to explain the necessity for and seek to mobilise and lead mass actions independently of the United Front parties and the Rightist Opposition parties. In this connection, the Party should continue to promote the formation of independent organs of defence of the rights and living standards of the people, such as People's Defence Committees, as well as united front activity between trade unions and other mass organisations, on demands that will serve to advance the class consciousness of the workers and to bring them to the understanding of the social necessity for the working class to take power, under the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard.

Apart from its political activity in relation to the task of rebuilding the Left movement under a revolutionary Marxist leadership, it is essential that the Party should carry out systematic education on Marxism and the need for the adherence of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard in Ceylon to the Fourth International, as the struggle for Socialism in Ceylon cannot be carried forward effectively in separation from the revolutionary struggle for Socialism on a world scale. ■