

**TO WIN** 獲得的將是整個世界 **МИР ВЫИГРАТЬ**  
1985/4

**A WORLD**

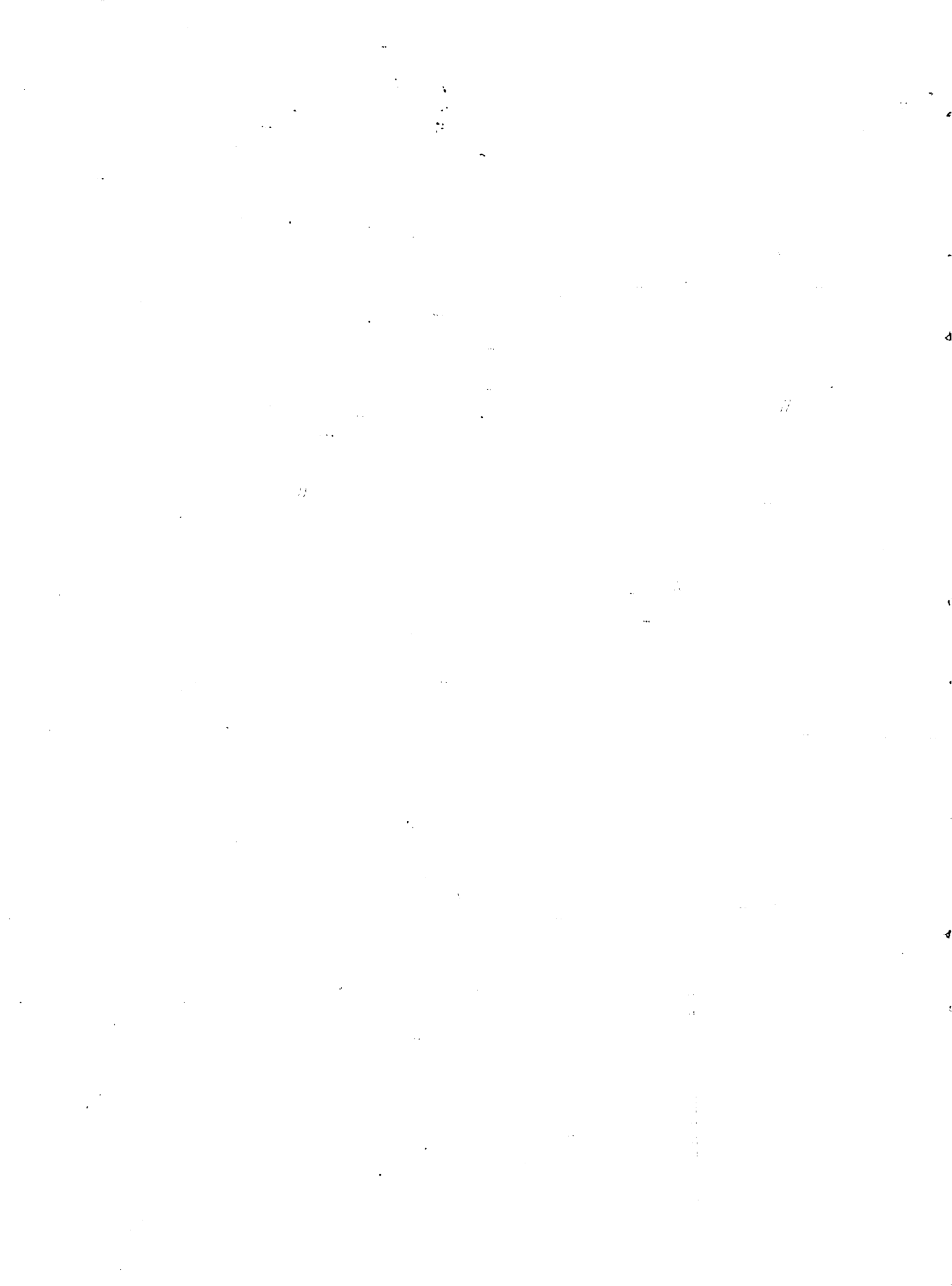
**MONDE A GAGNER** जीतने के लिए सारा विश्व है

**INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO  
SUPPORT THE PEOPLE'S WAR  
IN PERU**

**UN MUNDO QUE GANAR KAZANILASAK DÜNYA विश्व विजय**



**UN MONDO DA GUADAGNARE** جهانی برای فتح



## South Africa



Neither vicious terror nor phantoms of reform have stopped the rebellions shaking South Africa. This article looks at the dire straits of the white settler state and its Western imperialist partners and their fears that the crisis will blowup into a full-scale collision with the Azanian masses.

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## "Urban Guerrilla"

An article by P. Becker subjects the theses central to the terrorist strategy of the West European "urban guerrilla" to unsparing criticism. He convincingly argues why terrorism must ultimately make its peace with reformist politics and bourgeois ideology.

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LOSE BUT THEIR CHAINS.  
THEY HAVE  
A WORLD TO WIN



1985/4

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## Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement

The *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* was adopted in March 1984 by the delegates and observers at the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations which formed the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. The following are the participating parties and organisations of the RIM:

Central Reorganisation Committee  
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)  
Ceylon Communist Party  
Communist Collective of Agit/Prop [Italy]  
Communist Committee of Trento [Italy]  
Communist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist-Leninist) [BSD (M-L)]  
Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist)  
Mao Tsetung Regional Committee  
Communist Party of Peru  
Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist  
Haitian International Revolutionary Group  
Leading Committee  
Revolutionary Communist Party, India  
Nepal Communist Party [Mashal]  
New Zealand Red Flag Group  
Nottingham and Stockport Communist Groups [Britain]  
Proletarian Communist Organisation, Marxist-Leninist [Italy]  
Proletarian Party of Purba Bangla (PBSP) [Bangladesh]  
Revolutionary Communist Group of Colombia  
Revolutionary Communist Party, India  
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA  
Revolutionary Communist Union [Dominican Republic]  
Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)

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BCM RIM  
London, WC1N 3XX  
U.K.

TO WIN 獲得的將是整個世界 МИР ВБИГРАТЬ

A WORLD A GAGNER जीतनेके लिए सारा विश्व है MONDE A GAGNER

UN MUNDO QUE GANAR KAZANILACAK DÜNYA विश्व विजय

*The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*

**WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!**

—The Communist Manifesto 1848

You have in your hands the fourth issue of *A World to Win*, a new quarterly dedicated to an "old" idea: the proletariat of all countries faces the task of wrenching the world away from those who currently dominate, distort, and even threaten to destroy large parts of it; that those who up until now have been the victims of history must become its masters; that exploitation, oppression, and class-divided society, far from being the natural order of things, stand as the barrier to the further advance of humanity.

An "old" idea certainly, and one for which millions of martyrs have given their lives on battle fronts all over the world since Marx and Engels issued their famous call. But an idea which has lost none of its vitality or urgent necessity and continues to correspond to the reality of the contemporary world.

*A World to Win* contributes to the revolutionary process by providing analysis and commentary on vital developments in the world and in the revolutionary movement. It gives no quarter to imperialism and reaction, and its exposure will aim at East and West alike. *A World to Win* will not remain aloof from the key struggle to rebuild the unity of the exploited and oppressed the world over, to overcome the crisis in the international communist movement which came to a head following the reactionary coup d'état in China after Mao's death, and to create the political expression of this unity, a Communist International of a new type based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. In this sense *A World to Win* has been inspired by the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, announced on March 12, 1984, which has regrouped many Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations from around the world. *A World to Win* reports on the development of this movement and on its participating parties and organisations and will strive to assist this movement in becoming a more powerful force throughout the world.

But *A World to Win* is not an official organ of the RIM and its pages are open to all those on the same side of the barricades in the fight against imperialism and reaction. It is a journal which reflects the growing unity of the Marxist-Leninist forces, but which recognises that for such unity to grow stronger, vigorous debate and struggle will be necessary. It is a journal of combat against those condescending saviours who, masquerading in the name of "socialism" or "communism," betray the aspirations of the oppressed and try to suppress their struggle (or turn it into a battering ram to replace one clique of exploiters by another), but which knows that opportunism cannot merely be denounced; it must be dissected, analysed and exposed.

*A World to Win* boldly proclaims its heritage and its ideology: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao are the great leaders of the world proletarian revolution. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought remains our tool for analysing *and changing* the world. But *A World to Win* will never rest content to simply reclaim the glorious moments of our movement or to simply analyse mistakes of the past—however important both these tasks are. Developments in the world constantly pose new problems demanding new analyses, new debates, and, above all, new solutions. *A World to Win* strives to be the indispensable tool for all those engaged in proletarian revolution.

*A World to Win* is currently published in several languages and plans call for it to be published in many more in the near future. Its network of contributors stretch over all six continents, and what *A World to Win* lacks in financial means, official distribution channels, and technique are more than compensated by its greatest asset—the active and enthusiastic collaboration of men and women engaged in revolutionary combat in all its forms, be it in the guerrilla zones in Peru, the struggle to develop the mass movements against imperialist war preparations in the West and direct them against the system itself, or the efforts to take advantage of the developing revolutionary situation in India and prepare to launch a People's War that could reverberate throughout the world.

*A World to Win* has nothing to rely upon except the masses: and so we call upon class conscious workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals—all those throughout the world who refuse to accept the old order and are contributing to building the new—to step forward and help sharpen and wield this new weapon.

جهانی برای فتح UN MONDO DA GUADAGNARE

## People's War Continues

# New Regime—

# Same Reaction

A WORLD TO WIN 1985/4

Peru's new president, Alan García, took office promising to inaugurate "a nationalist, democratic and popular state for all Peruvians," even as the old state and the new revolutionary political power arising in the countryside confronted each other in battle. García's assumption of office 28 July 1985 took place after a year-long electoral campaign of unprecedented vigor and expense, guided by García's experience with the French Socialist party and by an American advertising agency. Rarely had so much been promised to so many in such an election.

Most importantly, the elections were portrayed as an alternative to violence. Even exposures of massacres committed by the military and the discredit to the outgoing Belaúnde government they brought about were twisted so as to present a general picture of senseless violence on all sides which could be rejected by participating in the elections to peacefully resolve Peru's problems.

García himself entered office with promises blazing, denouncing "the poverty arising from an unjust social system" and Peru's "dependency on foreign powers," and even firing generals and indicting ministers from the former government in a fiery campaign to "remoralise" Peru.

Without such actions, without some improvement in the political climate for reaction which under the Belaúnde government had become a serious problem, not much success in the military efforts against the revolutionary armed struggle based in the countryside could be expected.

With the election of an opposition candidate, the reaction hoped to enlist behind the banners of democratic elections even many of those who had become profoundly disgusted with the government.

But immediately this demagoguery ran up against the wall of reality, or "economic crisis and subversion," as García defined the twin challenges faced by his new government. Regarding the first, he

could offer only weak and limited measures, even for those intermediate strata his government hoped to consolidate as a social base for reaction. Regarding "subversion," García's government immediately launched blatantly bloodthirsty attacks against the revolution, including massacres even more politically damaging to the government than those committed under Belaúnde. These massacres confirmed the García government as a faithful successor to Belaúnde in the service of imperialism, the big bourgeoisie and the feudal landlords.

During this whole electoral conjuncture, the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) had been conducting a series of military and political actions aimed at countering the reaction's election offensive. These campaigns were a component part of the Party's more overall plan in this period to carry through a "Great Leap" in the construction of revolutionary base areas in the countryside, by linking up village-level People's Committees (organs of the

new, emerging revolutionary state power primarily based on poor peasants, as well as other classes in the countryside, under the Party's leadership). The PCP's first campaign in relation to the elections was to "win political space" by force of arms, bringing to the fore the contradiction between the old state power and the new, revolutionary state power arising in the countryside on the basis of the people's war there, putting forward a clear alternative to the ruling classes' electoral circus. The armed struggle became the central issue in the country's political life and all parties had to define themselves in relationship to it. In January 1985 the Party called for a boycott of the elections and began striking military blows against the electoral apparatus. García's new government, in turn, also became the target of revolutionary attacks.

In this way, both the reaction and the revolution, each in their own way, have posed to the masses of people two opposite roads for Peru's future.

### **Electoral Campaigns and Armed Struggle**

During the first part of this year leading up to García's inauguration, the People's Guerrilla Army led by the PCP carried out several thousand actions, including direct confrontations between superior guerrilla forces and smaller armed forces units, guerrilla ambushes of larger armed forces units, other guerrilla actions, executions of local tyrants and heads of the armed forces-led *mesnada* reactionary bands, the shooting of the head of the National Elections Board, etc.

During this period, the reaction increased its armed forces fighting the guerrillas from 29,000 to 45,000 and began carrying out operations even crueler than before in order to escalate the policy of forcibly grouping peasants in the areas convulsed by the revolution into "strategic hamlets" under military control. The aim of these operations has been to smash the People's Committees established under Party leadership and re-establish reactionary political power.

In the central emergency zone (the

departments of Ayacucho, Apurimac, and Huancavelica), this has resulted in a situation where the new revolutionary political power exists in the form of People's Committees sprinkled across the area which have been able to resist the reactionary armed forces' incursions and are preparing for even greater battles. At the same time the revolutionary forces are stepping up efforts to open new zones of guerrilla operations and establish new People's Committees in an area stretching down the mountain backbone of the country from Cajamarca in the north to Puno in the south. Such an extension of the people's war would make it increasingly difficult for the reaction to concentrate its forces as it has so far been able to do to some extent. This concentration of the reactionary armed forces in the departments of Ayacucho, Huancavelica and Apurimac where the revolution had been able to make rapid gains since the beginning of the armed struggle now leaves the reaction all the more vulnerable to such an expansion.

At the same time, the PCP has also striven to raise the quality of its actions in the cities, which it considers an important complement to its strategy of surrounding the cities from the countryside.

Several especially spectacular blackouts and bombings were carried out in June and at the time of García's inauguration at the end of July. Lima was blacked out for four days, by far the longest yet. The Presidential Palace, the Armed Forces Joint Command and the Prefecture of Police were all hit by car bomb explosions. García's inauguration was so tense that the entire downtown Lima area was closed off to unauthorised civilians that day, while 20,000 armed men stood guard. It was, literally, an inaugural ceremony which completely excluded the masses of people.

The reaction had tried to raise the banner of the elections against the banner of the Party in a deceitful way, in order to make the dividing line a question of violent or non-violent change, rather than a question of revolution or counterrevolution, so as to rally even sections of the masses who had become deeply

disgusted with the government. The PCP took up the challenge presented by the elections and worked to throw it back in the enemy's face. In conjunction with its military actions, it widely circulated illegal leaflets and pamphlets to expose the elections so as to win broader sections of the masses to repudiate the old order. The figures which have come out on the voting show that the reaction's efforts were not successful by any objective standard. Further, because of the PCP's strength in many areas of the countryside, especially in the central emergency zone, the government was not able to carry out elections in some districts (the local level), but instead found it possible to put up their armed forces-protected voting stations only in towns the size of provincial capitals.

On April 14th, election day, 150,000 troops and police were mobilised, close to every man and woman under arms available to the government. Still in many places the elections had to be postponed until the following day. There are reports of vote fraud on a massive scale. For instance, the tall tales of guerrillas cutting off people's index fingers so that they could not be fingerprinted to vote turned out to be an excuse to not require voters to place a fingerprint on the voters' records to show that they voted. This meant one person could cast innumerable ballots or that innumerable ballots could be cast without anyone voting.

Even with all these relatively petty tricks, the government was not able to pull off its electoral process without even more naked violations of its own constitution, leaving even more exposed the real state of affairs the elections were meant to cover up, the state's character as a class dictatorship in which elections may serve this or that political necessity but never decide anything important.

### **Analysis of Elections**

An examination of the elections themselves shows quite a bit about Peru's "constitutional order" as well as the advances of the people's war that is increasingly shaking it to its foundations. This analysis shows that about half of those eligible to

vote either didn't vote or cast a blank or spoiled ballot (for instance, writing revolutionary slogans on the ballot instead of marking a candidate).

It must be kept in mind that voting is mandatory in Peru. All adults receive a voter's book when they register, which is in turn validated when they actually vote. Without this book, which serves as standard identification, it is impossible to cash checks, receive government benefits, and so on; worse, not having voted can be considered an indication of "terrorist" sympathies, with possible consequences.

Even so only 8,292,846 people were reported to have registered to vote. Since there were almost ten million eligible voters in 1981 according to that year's census, and since that electoral population probably surpassed 11.2 million by 1985 (this was the estimate of the reactionary Lima weekly *Caretas*) therefore only about three-quarters of those legally required to register to vote actually did so. This was despite the fact that the period for registration was prolonged an extra month when the low turnout became apparent.

According to *Caretas*, in five departments of the country, namely Cajamarca, Apurimac, Ayacucho, Piura and Amazonas, only a third of those required to register did so; in Huancavelica and another four departments less than a quarter registered; and in three departments less than a fifth registered.

Of those registered, according to *Caretas*, 15% didn't vote, and another 20% cast a blank or spoiled ballot. In other words, the total number of valid votes recorded, 5,637,775, represents only about half of the more than 11 million eligible voters.

In the three departments of the central emergency zone, where the revolution has been strongest, the results are even more striking. In Ayacucho, according to the departmental election board's official results published in the newspaper *Expreso*, of the 187,000 people who actually registered, 30.1% didn't vote; of the ballots cast, 37.6% were blank or spoiled, and García's APRA party got 31.8%. Never-

theless, when the National Elections Board later published its results, it claimed that in Ayacucho 61.8% had voted for APRA, 29% had cast blank or spoiled ballots, and only 1.4% had failed to vote. In Apurimac, according to *Expreso*, departmental records show 25.1% having not voted and 36.6% casting blank or spoiled ballots, with less than 27% of the eligible voters casting ballots for APRA. Nevertheless, the National Elections Board later claimed that APRA had got over 50% in Apurimac. In Huancavelica, according to the official departmental records published in *Comercio*, 39.8% of the voters cast blank or spoiled ballots, 29.5% didn't vote, with 22% voting for the United Left and slightly less for APRA. Nevertheless, the National Elections Board listed the United Left as having received 43% in Huancavelica, with APRA just somewhat under that.

#### Constitutional Gyration

Since the Peruvian constitution requires that the president be elected by 50% of the electors plus one, this popular rejection of the elections caused a little problem. Even with all the juggling and support from the armed forces, García only got 45.74%. The constitution requires another run-off election within 30 days of the first if no candidate wins a majority, but such a prolongation of the already crumbling process didn't suit the ruling classes. By illegally discounting its own figures for blank and spoiled ballots, the National Elections Board was able to declare that García at least had got a majority of the valid votes. The United Left parliamentary opposition, an essential part of this circus, had benefited from the fraud and in general shared the goals of the ruling classes regarding the necessity of using this election to draw a dividing line between "democracy" and the armed struggle. It ensured that the boat wouldn't rock. Its candidate, Lima Mayor Alfonso Barrantes, the runner-up, withdrew from the race, so there simply was nobody for García to run against in a run-off. The show was over.

#### APRA's Programme

García's APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) is Peru's

most developed bourgeois party, in terms of its links with various parts of the country and sections of the population, a party whose fifty years in opposition has left its reputation unsullied by ever having had to fulfill its populist promises. When García took office July 28th, he announced he would "take the country in hand in all spheres, while preserving human life and easing the people's misery." In contrast to what he described as a climate of "fear and death" brought about by so-called "dogmatic totalitarians" (i.e. the PCP, which insists on the necessity for violent revolution), García promised a peaceful revolution: the "remoralisation" of a government where bribery and personal interest-seeking had run rampant; "economic development" in the countryside through government loans and credit; and the defense of Peru's "economic sovereignty." Above all, he promised "a return to the principle of authority."

The content of his inaugural declaration that his government would bring about a "nationalist, democratic and popular state, a state for all Peruvians" is worth analysing. He explained that the state would no longer represent "the 30% of the population which is privileged against the 70% which has been marginalised." Here it should be noted that he is not just making a general claim that his government, unlike the previous one — and every other government in history — will represent oppressed and oppressor alike. García is also, when he refers to the "privileged" 30%, lumping the working class and the urban petit bourgeoisie in with the ruling class themselves.

This deliberate distortion has two purposes. The first is to set up the urban working class and some sections of the petit bourgeoisie for more attacks through government "austerity measures" in the face of Peru's foreign debt and make them bear more of the burden. Already, initial measures implemented by the García government have hit hard at small savers who had sought some protection from Peru's horrendous inflation by putting their money into U.S. dollars. (Their dollar-denominated savings accounts were

¡PROLETARIOS DE TODOS LOS PAÍSES, UNÍOS!



*'Proletarians of all countries, unite! Five years of People's War! 1980 - 1985 Communist Party of Peru.' Depicted in the foreground of this recent Party poster is PCP Chairman Comrade Gonzalo.*

**PARTIDO COMUNISTA DEL PERU** 1980  
MAYO 1985

frozen and later made payable only when converted to Peruvian currency at a low rate of exchange, amounting to a confiscation of part of their savings, while the big financial concerns were left free of restrictions.) A widely heralded increase in the minimum wage (from \$25 to \$39 a week at the current rate of exchange) has been carried out at the expense of cutbacks in retirement and severance pay, while the dramatic price freezes which were supposed to give this minimum wage boost some meaning have been ignored in most cases and in others have led to the disappearance of many items from the market.

García's second purpose with this "30%-70%" formulation is to politically isolate those urban sections of the people who do not live quite as badly as most of the peasants and shanty-town dwellers from the agrarian revolution being carried out under the leadership of the proletarian party which is striv-

ing to win the active participation of these sectors in the revolution alongside the poorest masses who have flocked to the revolution since the beginning.

The García government's new agrarian policy is a similar combination of demagoguery and stopgap measures designed to deal in an immediate, if not long-term way with the twin and related dangers of "economic crisis and subversion." Like the urban policies, the aims of this programme are not to solve the underlying contradictions which grip Peru, which García cannot and does not intend to deal with, but rather to gain the government some more political room, especially by winning over and/or consolidating some relatively better-off strata.

In the mountain countryside, García's APRA party proposes to carry out "a revolution in the revolution," as one of his advisers, the well-known Trotskyite Hector Bejar has called it, to reactive the

agrarian economy which has fallen into increasing crisis despite the Velasco "land reform" (or "revolution") carried out after the 1968 armed forces coup. The Velasco junta turned some large feudal estates in the mountains into state-linked cooperatives which are often run by feudal elements; in the PCP's analysis, they have mainly benefited some better-off peasants, leaving vast numbers of peasant families with little or no land and failing to uproot feudal relations and oppression.

This proposed "revolution in the revolution" would mean increased government loans and credits to those who benefited from the Velasco measures while guaranteeing that there would be no further changes in land ownership. The political purpose is to strengthen the better-off rural strata who along with the landlords themselves have been a key part of the government's efforts to use *mesnada* vigilante bands under military leadership as an important complement to the armed forces operations in the war against the guerrillas. The government's plan is to use the polarization of the different classes and strata in the countryside, including among the peasants themselves, to its own political and military advantage.

The PCP, responding to this effort as well as to the overall situation, has issued a very significant call for peasant movements to seize land from the cooperatives and landlords by force of arms. Until now, the Party has had a policy of encouraging collective sowing and harvesting by the peasants on land the peasants invade, but has not judged conditions ripe for the implementation of its slogan "Land to the Tiller," which it considers basic to the New Democratic revolution. Armed mass movements to seize land would make it all the more clear that the Peruvian state exists to defend certain property relations and the social relations based on them, and certainly spur on the people's war to overthrow that state.

A certain thrust to García's proposals has become clear, despite the deliberately ambiguous stance on many major issues that was a hallmark of García's campaign and

## "Shining Trench of Combat"

Former Peruvian President Belaúnde moved many hundreds of captured revolutionary fighters to three main prisons in Lima in 1982 after a successful PCP military operation freed hundreds who had been held in the local Ayacucho prison. With this he tried to put an end to the PCP's "jailbreak line" which had seen many fighters break out and return to the front lines. However, the PCP's policy is that revolutionaries should turn wherever they find themselves into a front line of combat. The prisoners refer to these dungeons as "Shining Trench of Combat at Lurigancho" (or Callao or Fronton). These are places where the red flag is quite literally flying. The following typical daily schedule of the prisoners at Fronton shows what they mean:

Two hours of physical fitness exercises, starting at 6 a.m.

Breakfast (cooked by a team of prisoners of a rotating basis)

Morning production work (by team, with jobs rotating — clothes washing, ironing, cooking, cleaning, and the biggest team, which does production of revolutionary pain-

tings, weaving, etc.)

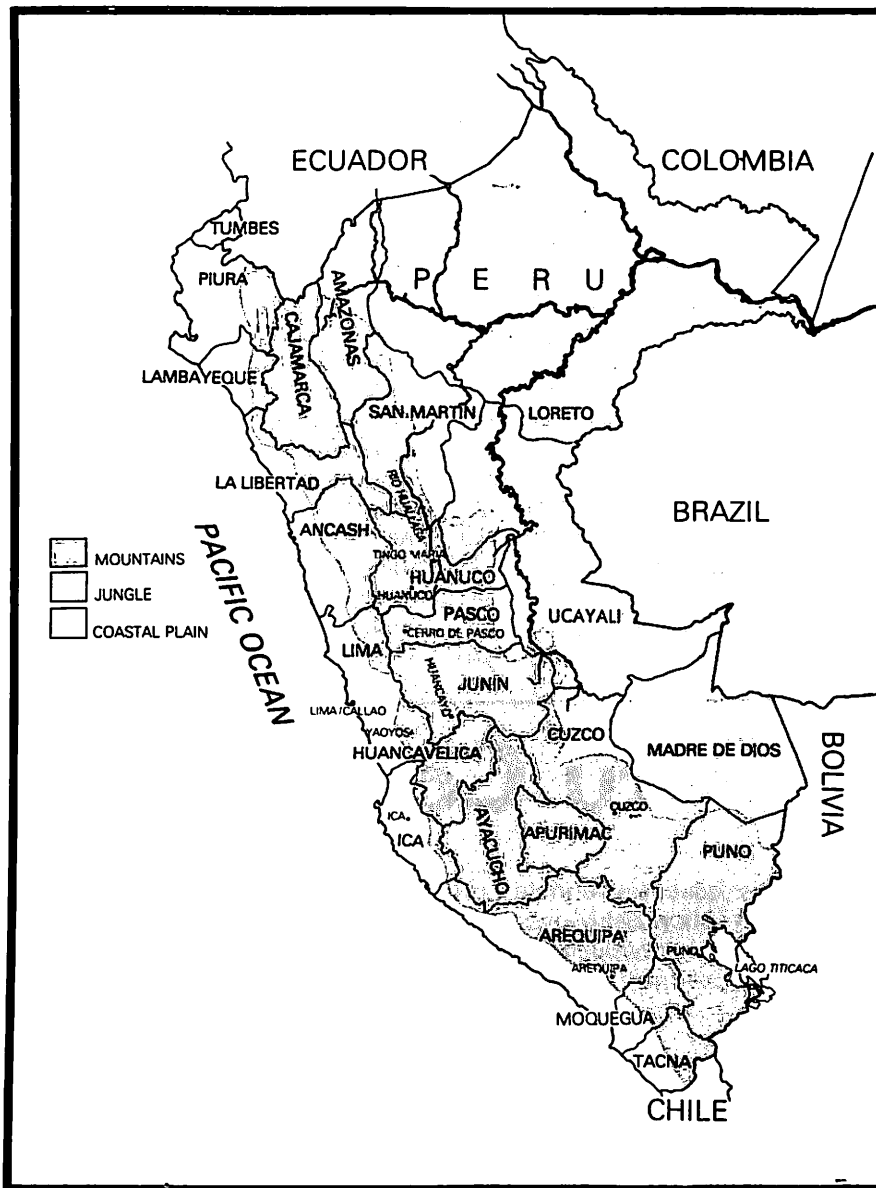
Lunch

Afternoon study — basic political education for all, including military line (for instance, Mao's *Six Military Essays*), as well as advanced study for those interested in raising their level.

Free time (including reading newspaper clippings sent in and watching the news on a TV contributed by relatives)

Bed Time

These comrades are clearly making very fruitful use of their time in captivity. Lest the other aspect of their situation be forgotten, although at least so far they have been able to organise daily life in their sections of the prisons, these prisoners face poisonings, beatings, tear gas and shooting fairly frequently, as well as constant harassment such as having their water cut off for weeks at a time, and extremely dismal living conditions. Between 1982 and García's inauguration, 18 were murdered by the authorities in prison — not including García's inaugural Lurigancho massacre. □



his failure to present any official programme. A number of the measures proposed would carry forward efforts initiated by the Velasco junta.

The García government has enlisted a number of well-known figures from the Velasco government who have called for the creation of Velasco-style mass organisations which would be under government and ruling class hegemony — for instance, provincial assemblies of all the local population which would effectively be run by the landlords, priests and local officials. These are measures that the PCP has analysed as corporatist (fascist) and linked to the further development of bureaucrat

capitalism.

Velasco's projects stalled and were abruptly called off by another junta in the mid-1970s, in the face of the worldwide economic crisis making itself particularly sharply felt in Peru as well as mounting opposition from among the lower classes and contention within the upper classes themselves.

In formulating their proposals, García's advisors have had to bow deeply to the changed conditions since the 1960s. For instance, where Velasco proclaimed that Peru's "economic sovereignty" would be won through emphasising state investment in heavy industry, today, now that large-scale loans to gather the capital for such projects are no

longer available in the current world economic situation, García proposes to end Peru's "dependency on foreign powers" through the development of light industry, especially the food industry.

However, Peru's dependency on what García does not want to call imperialism does not primarily result from "unequal exchange" between Peru's products and those it imports, as he claims, but from the country's submission to the domination of what is profitable for imperialist capital as well as the political rule of Peruvian capital tied to imperialism and the landlords. The development of food-related industries in itself, which might play an important role in the country's emancipation in a revolutionary context, in this context could only serve to develop reaction. (For instance, Argentina, which has a highly developed food industry, is no less dependent on imperialism than Peru.)

The extent to which these proposals will be implemented is not yet clear, both because of García's own penchant for promising everything to everybody and also because some of these proposals have been strongly opposed from within different sections of the ruling classes. A significant change that would come about if García's proposals are fully implemented, however, is a strengthening of the section of the bourgeoisie linked to state enterprises, a section which developed especially rapidly under Velasco.

Increasingly bitter disputes have erupted among the ruling classes, which have fueled and been fueled by the constantly reemerging political exposures of the government arising from its prosecution of the counterrevolutionary war. What García has called the "remoralisation of Peru," for example the firing or indictment of a whole series of generals and figures from the previous government for being involved in the cocaine industry, serves this intra-bourgeois contention. (García has popularised the term "narcopopulism," referring to ex-president Belaúnde's Popular Action Party. It is funny to see the same Belaúnde bigshots who once talked about "narcoterrorism" to

discredit the PCP now being implicated as kingpins of drug trafficking. Most prominent among them is Luis Percovitch, who was at various times Prime Minister, Interior Minister and Foreign Minister under the previous Belaúnde government.)

#### Rendering Unto the IMF

Much has been made, especially abroad, of García's denunciations of the International Monetary Fund and his proposal that the country limit its payments of its foreign debt to 10% of its export earnings. The importance of this proposal is in inverse proportion to the amount of newspaper space devoted to it. The essential point is that during a period in which Fidel Castro has won a hearing in certain Latin American circles with his proposal that the Latin American countries declare a

moratorium on all debt payments, García has come to serve as Castro's foil, insisting, for all his fiery rhetoric, that the question of debt payments be treated as an economic and not political question. This position has won García the open admiration even of U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz. García paints it as the last word in nationalism when he proposes to reinvest a portion of Peru's export earnings in the reactivation of its domestic economy instead of just paying it all to foreign finance capital, but this has come to be accepted by the U.S. government itself as the most prudent course in the service of U.S. political and economic interests in the nations it oppresses.

The best example of the reactionary content of all sides in this debate between García and Castro

came when the U.S. government temporarily cut off a loan programme to Peru because of the Peruvian government's failure to pay the interest on that particular loan for over a year. Castro melodramatically denounced it before an international conference on Latin America's debt being held at that moment in Havana as U.S. interference in Peruvian affairs. The United Left leaders present readily seconded this proclamation. García leapt to the occasion as well, declaring "we will not live on our knees for a handful of dollars." It turns out that the content of the loan programme in question was U.S. aid to the Peruvian military. At any rate, after a hurried meeting with the U.S. ambassador, García paid the interest on the specific loan involved, though whether he kneeled or not is not

# Worldwide Peru Campaign

"The advance of the struggle in Peru today is of great importance in the context of today's situation in the international communist movement and the revolutionary movement in general....

"The Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations calls on all the participants in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, on all genuine communist forces, to actively take up support for the New Democratic Revolution in Peru under the leadership of the Communist Party of Peru and its Chairman Comrade Gonzalo. The Marxist-Leninist forces of every country must mobilise the class conscious workers and revolutionary masses to support this struggle through propaganda, sympathy and material aid."

**Message of the Second International Conference to the Communist Party of Peru.**

In our last issue we reprinted a call by the Committee of the Revolutionary-Internationalist Movement for an international campaign to support the Peruvian revolution. This call has been taken up by participating parties and organisations of the RIM as well as other progressive and revolutionary forces, who are involved in organising programmes, meetings, demonstrations and many other activities in cities and rural areas around the world. An important part of this campaign is an international speaking tour on the theme "Summing Up Five Years of People's War in Peru." Following is the text of a leaflet prepared by the Worldwide Campaign to Support the People's War in Peru in connection with these programmes.

#### **SUPPORT THE PEOPLE'S WAR IN PERU!**

In Peru today, poor peasants and others who have been the wretched of the earth for centuries are waging a war that is a beacon for the working class and revolutionary masses the world over. While many countries of the globe are embroiled in conflicts which pit the masses of people against their oppressors, it is only in Peru where a real People's War is raging, with the clear goal of defeating reaction and imperialism in all its forms, East and West, and doing so as part of the world-wide struggle to create a world free of class distinctions and oppression.

This war, which began five years ago, is being led by the Communist Party of Peru, often referred to by the press as "Sendero Luminoso." Today, ten years after Mao's legacy was overthrown in China and his teachings declared dead by China's new reactionary rulers and all kinds of revisionists and opportunists hand in hand with the authorities of the old order everywhere, the Communist Party of Peru has become especially troublesome to all these dogs because of its firm defense and application of what it calls Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Guiding Thought (Guiding Thought means the application of this ideology of the international proletariat to Peru's specific conditions). Having analysed that the Peruvian people's sufferings are rooted in semi-feudalism (because the peasants are

known publicly. The payment was only \$123,000, a handful of dollars with far-reaching political significance. The U.S. has since announced that it has no intention of cutting off its loans and aid programmes with which it props up the government and helps keep Peru subjugated.

### García's Actions

Through the elections, the authorities have tried to focus the masses' attention on majorities and minorities in order to hide the class nature of the state — and even at that, a majority had to be invented. García has claimed his authority has arisen from the ballot box and universal suffrage, but subsequent events have clearly exposed the direct and brutal armed force upon which this state rests.

Two weeks before the García government took office, when the PCP was launching a campaign of attacks to greet the installation of the new government, revolutionaries held in three Lima prisons had staged simultaneous uprisings to force the authorities to recognise their status as political prisoners and allow them to administer their own affairs while in prison. At Lurigancho, the prisoners seized a guard whom they held hostage. The women at Callao grabbed six prison employees and temporarily took over the whole prison. On the island of Fronton across the bay, the men managed to seize an automatic rifle. The prisoners in all three institutions then dug themselves in behind barricades. After four days, the prison authorities were forced to agree to the prisoners' joint list of demands.

García's response, which came in September, was to fire the head of the prison system who had signed the agreement. García's new appointee pronounced the document invalid because the prisoners had used force to obtain the authorities' signatures. (Apparently the irony of the head gaoler complaining about force escaped him.) Three days before a planned celebration by the prisoners of the October 7th anniversary of the PCP's founding, guards were sent in to the section of Lurigancho where about 300 accused revolutionaries have been confined.

According to the version of events issued by the authorities, the guards were kept out of the area by prisoners using homemade weapons and had no choice but to blow their way into the pavilion with high explosives and automatic weapons fire; they entered only to find that 30 of the prisoners had been burned alive by other prisoners. Lawyers for the prisoners later stated the obvious truth: the authorities had deliberately set fire to the prison and then used automatic fire to keep the prisoners trapped within. Four of the 34 bodies reportedly found had been killed outright by gunshots. Other reports put the total number of murdered revolutionaries much higher. In the wake of this cowardly massacre, about 6000 common prisoners being held elsewhere in Lurigancho rose up and fought prison authorities. The sound of gunfire and thick clouds of smoke emanated from the building for several days after the massacre. There were also reports—as yet unconfirmed—of further revolts at Fronton.

The massacre at Lurigancho was meant as an unmistakable manifesto of how the government intended to deal with the people's war, the most important question facing the new government and the one regarding which García and his party had been most reluctant to present a clear programme. García had promised to set up a "Peace Commission", which among other things would deal with the cases of prisoners awaiting trial who are supporters of the parliamentary opposition and not of the PCP. The massacre at Lurigan-

tied to the landlords and the land), semi-colonialism (because of the country's economic domination by imperialism, especially the U.S.) and a bureaucrat capitalism tied to both these other bastions of the old order, the party has launched and led what is above all an agrarian war, based fundamentally in the poor peasants, whose aim is to surround the cities from the countryside, seize state power and carry through a New Democratic revolution to demolish these bastions and open the way for socialist revolution and communism.

The government has responded with tremendous cruelty. Its military forces, armed and advised by the U.S. and Western Europe as well as the USSR, have tried to wipe out the guerrilla war and the party that leads it and the growing number of people from different classes who have swollen the ranks of the revolution. This repression started with persecution, arrests and torture, and since has grown to include mass murders of whole villages, more than 4000 people "disappeared" in the hands of the armed forces and its followers, and recently the forced concentration of the rural population in "strategic hamlets" under military supervision.

Nevertheless, confounding the authorities of Peru and the world over, the armed struggle has advanced and opened up a whole new page in Peru's history. Its achievements include the building of a People's Guerrilla Army, and People's Committees through which a new regime and a new society are coming into being based on the armed power of the masses of people and their participation in the transformation of society.

An International Campaign to Support the People's War in Peru has been launched to break the wall of silence and lies with which reactionaries the world over have tried to hide the real content and aims of this armed struggle. This campaign was initiated by the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, in which the Communist Party of Peru is a participating party. Throughout the rest of 1985 and the beginning of 1986 there will be major public meetings and other activities to Support the People's War in Peru in dozens of cities on several continents. Come, find out about and stand with the People's War in Peru! □

cho made it clear what kind of treatment could be expected for the rest of the prisoners, and what the government intended to do to those who resisted the Peace Commission's offers of "building bridges"—i.e., surrender.

### A Programme of Massacres

A week after García took office, seven peasants, including a young boy and a pregnant woman, were seen being taken away in an army truck from the village of Pucayacu, in the Huanta region. Shortly afterwards, a hidden grave found by their relatives disclosed their mutilated bodies. Such events are so common in the 29 provinces under direct military rule that even the regular Lima press has come to refer to "genocide" in the countryside. The García government, which the same week renewed the state of emergency under which these provinces are subject to military rule, sought to avoid the discredit that the last year's series of discoveries of mass graves had brought its predecessor. In a dramatic move on the eve of an appearance by García before the United Nations General Assembly, he fired the head of the Armed Forces Joint Command, General Enrico Praeli. García complained that General Praeli had "kept the reality of the anti-subversive struggle secret" from him. But this move served more than just finding a scapegoat. Praeli had criticised García's election as unconstitutional (as indeed it was). All in all, this Belaúnde-appointed general was unpopular with the rest of the armed forces command, which generally supported García. Perhaps Praeli had sealed his fate when shortly before his firing he criticised the UNITAS "training" operations being carried out in Peru jointly with the U.S. armed forces.

García acted a little too hastily, however, since the need for scapegoats was just beginning. Peasants from the village of Llocllapampa, in the area of Accosmarca which had repeatedly suffered armed forces incursions, told reporters about an army patrol which had come into the area in helicopters August 14th. Walls in the village had been painted with the

PCP's hammer and sickle emblem and the slogans "For a Workers' and Peasants' Government—Long Live the Armed Struggle." (Later, after the facts came out, the reactionary Lima newspaper *Comercio* implicitly defended the army's action by reporting that out of the area's 895 registered voters, only 40 had voted, and less than half of those for García's APRA party.) Most of the peasants fled, but the 30 soldiers with attack dogs managed to trap the older men and many women who were pregnant or had young children. First the soldiers raped women and girls, then they herded their prisoners into several buildings. Shouting "terrorcos" (terrorists), the soldiers threw in grenades and set the buildings ablaze.

Some of the peasants who had escaped and hid in the woods made their way to Lima. When reports began circulating about the massacre, García, instead of dealing directly with the matter, arranged instead for Parliament to call on two generals to respond to the reports: General Wilfredo Mori, the Sandhurst (British officers' school)-trained political-military head of the Ayacucho region, and his superior, General Sinieso Jarama. These men produced documents purporting to prove that the armed forces had not been anywhere near the area August 14; they even denied that there had been any massacre. APRA parliamentary representatives pronounced themselves fully satisfied with their testimony. Several hours later, the television evening news showed mass graves in Accosmarca with 69 bodies, including 22 young children. García's newly-appointed head of the Armed Forces Joint Command then issued a communiqué admitting that indeed an army patrol had killed 40 peasants. The communiqué blamed army Second Lieutenant Telmo Hurtado for first ordering the massacre and then hiding it from his superiors. (Second Lieutenant Hurtado, who volunteered to take all the blame, is a product of U.S. counterinsurgency training at Fort Gulick, Panama. No doubt he was familiar with a certain Lieutenant Calley, who performed a similar role in the cover-up

of a U.S. Green Berets massacre at My Lai in Vietnam.) To put an end to the matter, Mori asked to be retired and Jarama was transferred out of his job.

García, as the bitter Praeli pointed out in an interview, is not only constitutionally supreme chief of Peru's armed forces, but also had already met several times with its Joint Command to discuss how it should smash the revolutionary armed struggle. At any rate García certainly could not complain that his personally appointed head of the Joint Command didn't keep him informed. It was also pointed out that second lieutenants don't carry out helicopter incursions into the countryside on their own without anybody knowing about it.

Later reports began to appear indicating that the Accosmarca massacre had been just one of a series of similar Vietnam-style search and destroy operations carried out in the Ayacucho emergency zone during August. Around the same time, six people from a village near Llocllapampa were killed, probably because they'd witnessed the Llocllapampa massacre. In another village in the area an elderly couple were found shot and chopped up, with army-style tyre tracks in the ground outside their home (the guerrillas do not use trucks). These indiscriminate killings took place in conjunction with military efforts to force the rural population in the most revolutionary areas to live in armed forces-supervised strategic hamlets, where there is a dusk-to-dawn curfew and all movements are strictly controlled. Accosmarca, which had 6000 inhabitants when the armed forces came in to Ayacucho at the end of 1983, is now virtually deserted. Vilcashuaman, a town where the old authorities had been driven out in 1982 and replaced by a revolutionary People's Committee, is now an army headquarters. Similar operations were reported in the adjoining department of Huancavelica, including the arrest and murder of a school teacher who had testified about previous armed forces abuses to a European human rights commission. In the department of San Martín, seven boys who were engaging in

karate club practice were murdered.

García's War Minister José Flores announced September 25 that 400 villages have been turned into strategic hamlets run by armed forces "civil defense committees." He also announced that after making an inspection tour of Ayacucho, "I return reassured and satisfied that the Army continues to enjoy a high level of morale and discipline, despite the events of Accosmarca. I have seen for myself, on the spot, the great love of the local communities for the armed forces."

In the wake of the Accosmarca incident, García, as was to be expected, warned against any possible attempt to use it to discredit the armed forces in general. In this he was joined by the leader of the United Left parliamentary opposition, Lima Mayor Alfonso Barrantes, who declared "there's no point in exaggerating things or trying to injure the guiding institutions of the country." The pro-Soviet Peruvian Communist Party's spokesman in parliament expressed "complete agreement with (García's) position." The parliament unanimously passed a resolution praising both García's "affirmation of constitutional order" and the armed forces' "disciplined conduct."

Coming after these events, the massacre at Lurigancho prison could not have been more explicit. The government's policy is to burn people alive while the parliamentary opposition applauds its "defense of the constitutional order."

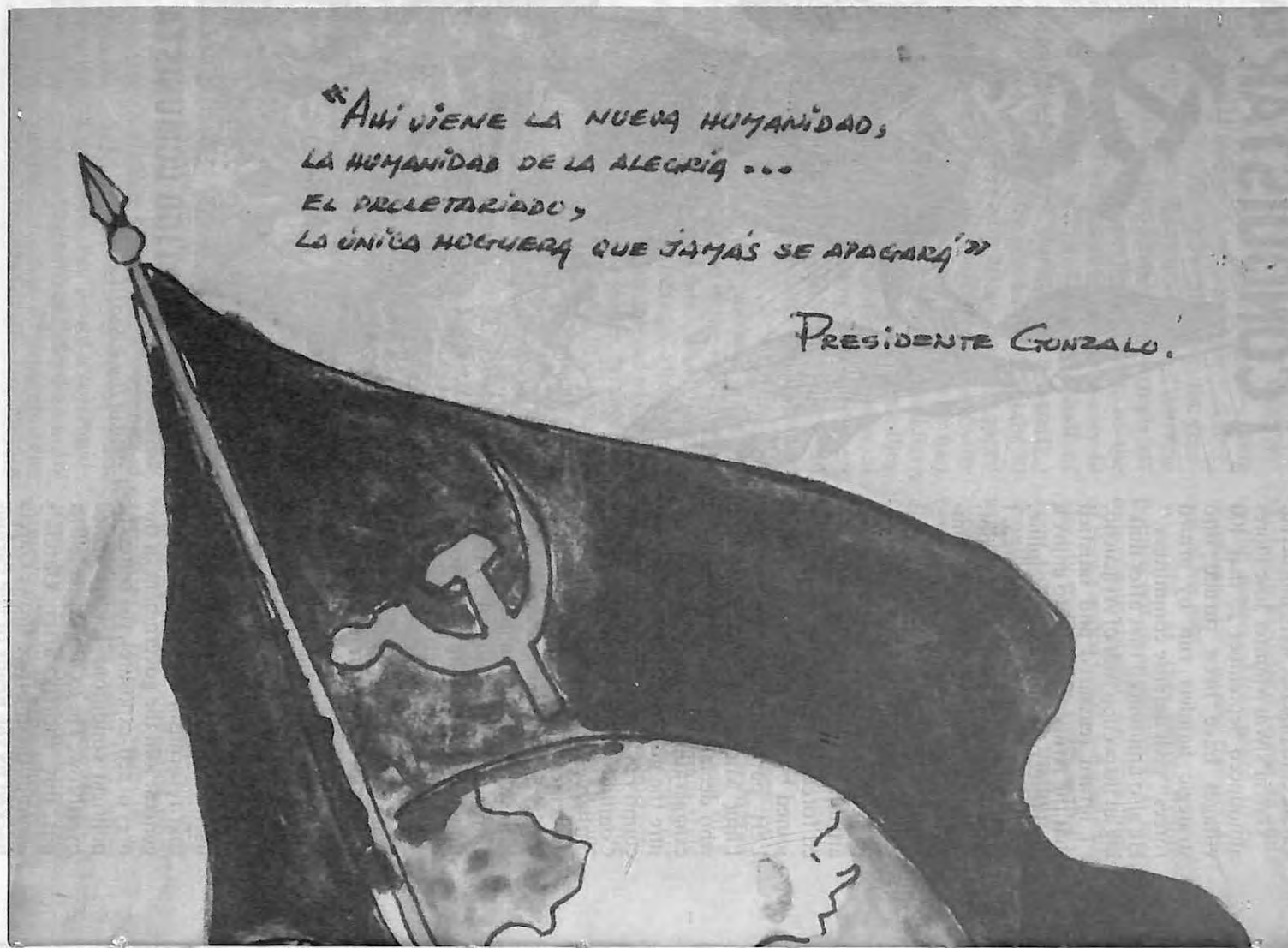
However, the more it exposes itself in this matter (and the more that reformism and revisionism in general join the government in this orgy of self-exposure), the better the political conditions for its armed overthrow. The PCP's poster leaflet put out shortly after García's assumption of office shows García backed by the heads of the various armed forces. The caption reads: "July 1985 - ?" □



"Seize the Land!"

# Revolutionary Art from Peru's Prisons

A selection from an exhibition of several dozen paintings done in Peru's prisons displayed in many countries as part of the Worldwide Campaign to Support the People's War in Peru.



“Here comes  
the new  
humanity, the  
humanity of  
joy...the pro-  
letariat, the on-  
ly blaze which  
will never be  
extinguished -  
Chairman  
Gonzalo.”  
(Small water-  
colour.)



In August 1982 guerrillas attacked the local police barracks in the small town of Vilcashuaman in Ayacucho. They seized weapons, burned down



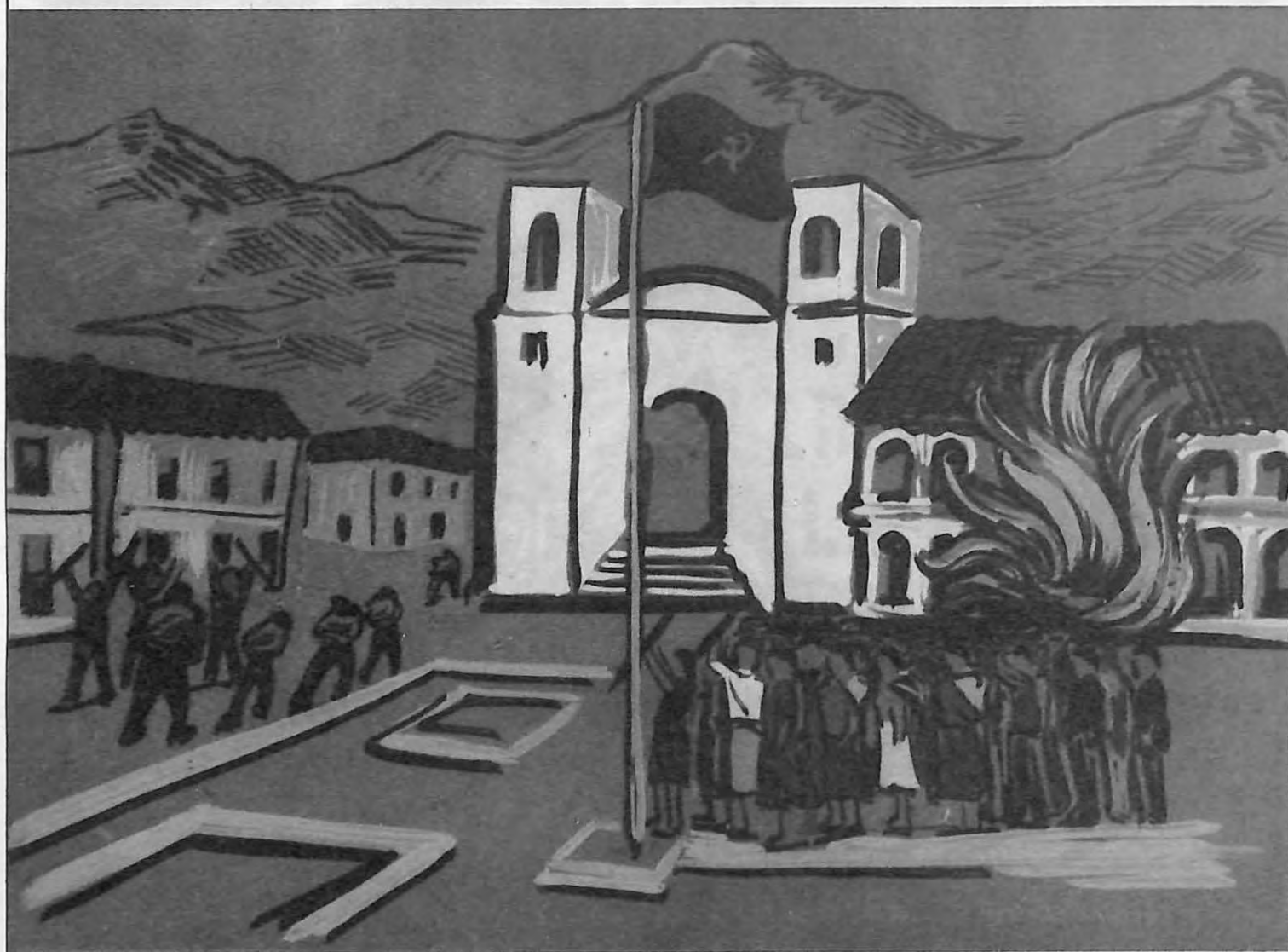
the building,  
and held a  
mass meeting  
to establish the  
new revolu-  
tionary political  
power. A key  
battle in the  
period when  
local feudal  
tyrants were



first driven out of the countryside and the first People's Committees were being established. (Boxed set of four small paintings, done with house-paint on card-



board, signed  
"Prisoners of  
War in the  
Shining Trench  
of Battle at  
Lurigancho,  
Lima, 7 Oc-  
tober, 1984."  
(7 October is  
the founding  
anniversary of  
the PCP)



**¡VIVA EL MOVIMIENTO REVOLUCIONARIO INTERNACIONALISTA!**



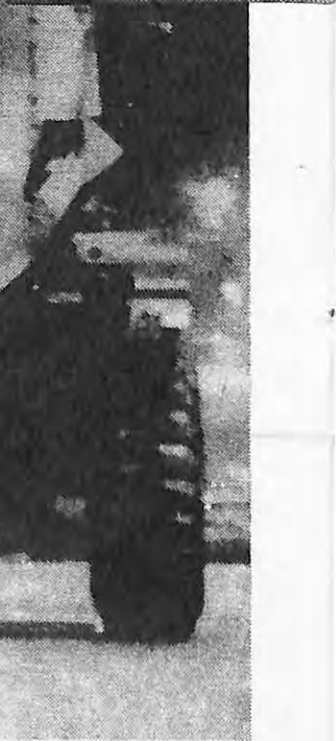
"Long Live the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement" - signed "Shining Trench of Battle at el Fronton, Callao, Peru, June 1985."

“Break the  
Chains -  
Unleash the  
Fury of Women  
as a Mighty  
Force for  
Revolution!” -  
woodcut print  
on tissue  
paper.



South Africa

# Revolutionary Crisis Deepens





There is no going back. Prospects of times of normalcy have been turned to ashes by the rebellions sweeping South Africa, whose flames are snaking ever closer to a situation resembling some form of open struggle for political power. Over the past months the explosive atmosphere has recharged again and again, the indefatigable struggle of the Azanian masses mounting in the face of all efforts by the white settler state to crush it, pushing out into every corner of the country and igniting still broader sections of the people.

From Cape Town to Johannesburg, from Port Elizabeth up to Durban, battles have continued to rage in the streets of the townships

and homelands with almost daily frequency. The black ghettos sealed off to protect the white settlers by the barbed wire of apartheid have increasingly become danger zones for the enemy, political bases for the oppressed to regroup and launch their counter-attack. Whether set off by taunting black youth throwing up fiery barricades against white soldiers and police atop armoured lorries that have penetrated into their territory, or by the most recent murder at point-blank range by the same scared thugs sparking immense funeral marches, the crescendoing struggle has delivered its response.

The determination of the Azanian masses has redoubled, and is transforming into a higher level of

struggle—both more defiant and more organised—which has been required to sustain resistance and up the ante in the face of the enemy's intensified repression. From successful, widespread boycotts of white businesses and public transport to organised actions against police stations, to planned forays into formerly unapproached white suburbs and the downtown areas in the whites cities, the rebellions have spread roots deep and wide, crisscrossing through workers in the mines, to schools, to farm and factory, drawing to the front the bold, unbounded impatience and anger of youth from all over.

The government shut down nearly 500 "coloured" schools in the Cape Town area, for example, which students had transformed into bases to organise their political struggle, while in other explosive areas like Soweto, police arrested hundreds in one day to try to force students back to school and end the boycott there. In the mines some union skirmishes (historically largely confined to economic demands) are spilling over into the political arena as debate grows about the future of Azania and the role of the working class. The general strike action called *against the government* for the first time—as an advance reply to President Botha's threats to retaliate against foreign-imposed economic sanctions by expelling migrant workers—was widely followed despite the regime's efforts to stop it. Other scenes becoming more common range from youth commandeering buses and lorries to organise demonstrations or build barricades, to their use of molotov cocktails, to pulling over and torching whites' vehicles. In short, within the jaws of greater repression both the masses' targets and their means to fight reveal a certain casting off of hesitations to employ revolutionary violence, in turn pushing the upsurge forward and into new areas.

Another such example is the virtual collapse of the black administrative structure set up by the white central government to help maintain political order. Local black

councils have been convincingly dismantled in key black townships, as black mayors and councillors have resigned in droves, or have "disappeared," discovering the same fate as black cops and police informers. Of course when the masses take a decisive stand against such elements in the heat of class struggle, reducing them to charred memories of their service to the white ruling class, this sets the bourgeois press wolfhounds howling about the "bloodthirsty" blacks "provoking" the current violence.

But few apologies could be heard from among the unarmed masses for this taste of counterattacking the militarised oppressor by amputating a few of his fingers and toes. The important practical value of this type of action in strengthening the revolutionary movement is also evident. As one youth said, "You have to do it, you have to teach people a lesson. And it works—they don't become informers so easily afterwards." Indeed, in an interview, Chief of the South African police Johann Coetzee lamented the isolation of his black snitches, who he has relied on heavily for "unraveling systems of support" among the black movement in the past.

#### Breakdown of "Normal" Order

With these official Uncle Toms temporarily out of service (although others such as the Zulu Chief Buthalezi have stepped into the breach, attacking mass demonstrations alongside the police) the white settler state stood nakedly poised before the Azanian people, reduced to administering sheer blood and terror in an effort to reestablish order. To little avail.

The state of emergency declared several months ago by the white regime has accurately advertised its unprecedented crisis. The fact that, for the first time in 25 years, the South African government had to resort to "special" repressive measures illustrated vividly its political impotence in the face of the rebellions and just how out of control the situation had become. President Botha's July 21st announcement—"rubber pellets are ineffective, we find we need recourse to real gunpowder"—gave

rein to a renewed license to kill, fueling in turn a further burst of fury from the masses. Both the army and "private" vigilante groups were brought in to assist the apparently overtaxed South African police, arresting thousands and murdering hundreds more. These "emergency measures" only served to narrow the corner the regime is backing itself into, facing off against an increasingly politically aroused oppressed majority, many of whom are ready to die to overthrow them, while revealing more savagely the need and intent to preserve white rule.

A widening crack in the ruling minority's overall staunchly loyal white front has been the participation by some white youth and students in anti-apartheid protests, particularly on the campuses. And a significant anti-draft movement, especially among Anglican youth, has sprung up, puzzling and infuriating central South African Defense Force authorities. According to some Western military sources, 8,000 out of 30,000 youth did not report for their call-up in 1985, a figure four to five times greater than recent years.

Yet, while loading and reloading its live ammunition, the government has been forced once again to begin shuffling reform legislation. If the regime's desperation was revealed through its declaration of emergency, its fundamental weakness has been further emphasised by the fact that it is not strong enough to just crack heads, but must also dish up some carrots to the masses, however limp and tasteless. Its feeble attempts to remove the official "whites only" signs from the doors segregating off some facets of daily life, or to build soccer fields and volleyball courts for the black youth, have not had the desired effect, as Lenin once described the purposes of such reforms, of allaying the unrest of the people or forcing the revolutionary masses to cease, or at least slacken, their struggle. On the contrary, each new round of self-exposure by the Botha regime and the imperialists behind it has aided the masses' political understanding of the enemy's basically weak position, despite its militarised exterior, as well as their

determination and struggle.

#### Ripening Revolutionary Situation

It has been well over a year since the outbreak of these rebellions in South Africa, and well over a year that the imperialists and white settlers have been unable to extinguish them. As we pointed out in "South Africa Summoned by Revolution," in *World to Win* number three, the revolutionary situation has been long developing in South Africa—stemming from the imperialist-designed and financed colonial set-up and all its economic and historical particularities—producing several important rounds of mass eruptions during the past decades. South Africa is gripped by a profound political crisis. The past year of sustained confrontation between oppressed and oppressor has sharpened up the terms of this crisis, and, together with this breakdown of routine order and ability to rule, has jolted the situation towards a more direct confrontation over political power, heightening the revolutionary climate.

This political collision has pitted the white settler ruling class, whose solutions are literally shriveling up as each step they take to regain control exposes them more, against the dynamic and rapidly growing but unarmed and still mainly spontaneous, unorganised struggle of the masses, which although it is lacking proletarian revolutionary leadership, is learning and pushing ahead as the enemy lashes out to stop it. The political initiative of the masses has ripped up the stability of the bourgeoisie, objectively boosting the level of the struggle beyond the bourgeoisie's means to quell it without paying a much higher political price, as youth, stones in hand, mock its armed forces, and its feathery reforms are met with derision.

With the rule of apartheid no longer tolerated by the masses, and the apartheid rulers no longer able to preside as before, the smell of a struggle for political power is in the air. The leading edge of the rebellions no longer represents simply a venting of anger or a convening of mass pressure to ease the chokehold of apartheid—whether

for higher wages, the elimination of passbooks, or a better seat on the bus to hell that the system reserves for blacks. Even if still spontaneous, a political awareness gained in the furnace of accelerating struggle with the enemy along with sensing his wounded condition have enabled the revolutionary-minded masses to perceive their strength and begin to search for the tools and means to destroy the way they have been forced to live. It is these ripening elements of the revolutionary situation that are posing—though still indirectly for the moment—the possibility that some form of open contest for state power or even civil war between the white minority ruling capitalist class and the Azanian masses may emerge.

This is not to say, of course, that the masses' struggle is soaring forward in a straight line, uninfluenced by obstacles and with no divisions for the bourgeoisie to foment, nor is it in the least to minimise the problems which will hold it back without a revolutionary line and organisation in command. A crucial starting point to move in this direction is thoroughly understanding the deep and irreversible crisis facing the South African state and its imperialist mentors.

### **Imperialist Bourgeoisies' Options and Constraints**

The state's political crisis has in turn caused new financial wrinkles in South Africa's already severe economic crisis. The political instability has had repercussions in Western financial and economic circles, causing minor tremours such as some capital flight and loan withdrawals, including the much-publicised departure of a few companies, supposedly triggering a banking crisis. These circles have mainly applied their leverage to accelerate changes aimed at releasing the pressure cooker which may wreak much worse havoc if ways are not found to cool it down.

Barclays Bank declared that even if it is a "convenient target" (referring to anti-apartheid graffiti appearing on its branch walls in Britain), it is a "force for the good" in South Africa. Or, the West German Dresdner Bank, which found a trail

of blood painted between its doors in Frankfurt and those of the South African Consulate representing its complicity with the apartheid regime, sees no reason to level severe criticisms, because nearly half of their \$2 billion in outstanding short-term loans fall due in the next year. Regardless of whether it's entirely accurate, a government report claimed that if South African chromium exports were reduced by 30% for a year, West Germany's gross national product would fall by 25%. All this has only highlighted further the political role apartheid plays to preserve the extremely profitable trade and investment conditions pumping high returns into the Western imperialist world. And it has also underscored in fluorescent colours how totally this crisis is the crisis of Western imperialism, and how determined its corporations and its rulers are to stay.

Despite the stream of rhetoric about sanctions, and counter-rhetoric about cutting the supply of vital minerals, a statement to President Botha from the South African business community, as they like to call themselves, put it plainly: "Our survival depends on making the necessary structural changes to uphold the political, social and economic values pursued by our major trading partners."

That the imperialist captains holding the decisive pursestrings and the keys to NATO installations rather than the *sjamboks* (whips) right on site are extremely worried can be seen in the reams of editorials in every language on both sides of the Atlantic, asking from a thousand different angles, "What should we do?" as they eye the options dwindling before them and the flames of rebellion grow higher. This didn't turn out as a passing "spasm of social unrest," as some of their wishful columnists doggedly persist in describing this most serious and sustained crisis yet, for which no "Way Out" is clearly indicated.

The imperialists must stabilise South Africa and put a stop to the rebellions shaking this critical region. The struggle impels them to try to make some rapid adjustments in apartheid and to implement some

reforms while building up their ties among the bourgeois opposition in order to better accomplish this. At the same time, their overriding compulsion is to support the regime in power and its oppressive apparatus which their own architects created in the first place, for if other factors allow, this is ultimately the best guarantee that South Africa continues to serve the needs of their Western imperialist alliance.

This dilemma is not easily resolved practically, nor does it make for a comfortable seat of command. Tactically, the imperialists must still basically rely upon various combinations of the carrot and the stick. Their "emergency" stick hasn't worked, in fact backfiring dangerously. And any analysis of their reforms would be a brief exercise, so few have there been. Shallow offers such as granting citizenship to blacks formerly living in the homelands, followed by the hint of establishing a black consultative body to "advise" the President's Council, for example, speak for themselves. However, despite these negligible steps, the Western imperialist powers have performed excruciating gymnastics to portray reform rather than terror (or letting the situation drift on its own) as their road to stability in South Africa, forced by the new constraints of outraged public opinion in the bourgeois democracies they preside over.

But also figuring in this terrain is the fact that the rabid dogs under their command... have rabies, and are not easily fenced into the democracy charade required in moments of extreme crisis and exposure which risk damaging everyone's interests. The seeming lack of cooperation and enthusiasm for reforms by the ruling mercenaries who are trying to literally shoot the struggle dead partly reflects the continued division of labour between imperialists and colonialist dictators, but also stems from contradictions within their own reactionary social base. More importantly though, the basic problem is not civilising some backward, stubborn boers into better democrats (emulating perhaps the colossal statesmen-murderers in

## Call to Azanian Revolutionaries:

# “Link Up With The RIM!”

Azania has erupted. The reactionary white settler regime ruling South Africa today is increasingly on politically rocky ground, with few options ahead aside from still greater repression. How much longer until a revolution really is in the making, until conscious forces fully emerge and analyse the revolutionary situation and class relations there as part of firmly seizing hold of the opportunity at hand... this is a question that revolutionaries and communists worldwide are asking as they watch with anticipation and joy another pillar of imperialism under serious assault. The revolutionary stirrings in South Africa represent a very welcome development for the proletariat and one to support wholeheartedly. However, they are also cause for soberly assessing the strengths and weaknesses of our class, the international proletariat, in the class struggle raging there.

The conditions are ripe for fanning the flames of rebellion in this struggle for national liberation. Although tearing down South Africa is long overdue, now both the regime's political crisis and the struggle by the masses contributing to it are assuming broader and deeper dimensions than past upsurges. But more, much more is required. In particular, conscious forces must step forward to form a vanguard party, based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, which can fully grasp and act upon the social contradictions unraveling, train the advanced political elements surging forward, and lead the armed struggle against the enemy towards the seizure of political power—on behalf of the international proletariat.

The revolutionary masses are capable of making giant forward strides in the quickened tempo and politically charged climate of battle. But to lead this in a revolutionary

direction and not to a murderous setback, which the wolves of reaction already show signs of preparing, the guiding political forces must seek to replace the partial truths gained so far with the revolutionary science, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. And in particular, the development of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement can be of immeasurable assistance in this. Many of the elements needed to forge a correct line to victory already exist in the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*. The key lines of demarcation and critical summation of experience it delineates are crucial to being able to formulate a specific analysis and programme to guide the Azanian revolution through twists and turns to victory.

Mao's statement that the correctness of ideological and political line determines everything was not a moral injunction. And neither is the urgency to embrace the revolutionary line forged by the RIM and apply it to conditions in South Africa crying out for revolution.

As the *Declaration* warns, “history demonstrates the bankruptcy of an ‘anti-imperialist front’ (or similar ‘revolutionary front’) which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a ‘Marxist’ (actually pseudo-Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led heroic struggles and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist influences. Even where such forces have seized power they have been incapable of carrying through a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reac-

tionary ruling power in league with imperialists.”

Who is going to lead the armed struggle for political power in South Africa, and on what basis? Does anyone expect those forces seeking to reform apartheid to launch a serious armed struggle? The revisionists of the African National Congress are also unlikely to launch an armed struggle to the death against the apartheid regime, because they lack strategic confidence in the ability of the Azanian masses to thoroughly defeat the white settler regime which is backed to the hilt by Western imperialism. These revisionists are guided by interests and goals which can only be hindered by unleashing the revolutionary war of the masses required.

Only a party guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought can lead the uncompromising, protracted struggle necessary to smash white rule and carry out a national and democratic revolution to free Azania of imperialism and its local props as part of the international proletariat's advance on a world scale.

This is not cause for alarm or demoralisation, but on the contrary, for picking up the tools and linking up with the organised revolutionary forces which can aid this decisive process of forging revolutionary leadership. A correct political line merging with the ripe revolutionary conditions that exist today in South Africa could unleash extremely rapid developments. Whether a new stage in the struggle will be born in the tempest challenging the outmoded order in South Africa or whether this upsurge becomes a bloody and tragic loss for the world's people, another bitter lesson for the international proletariat, is a very pressing question. □

(Reprinted from AWTW 1985/3.)

London, Paris or Washington?); the system of white settler rule in South Africa means that any real bourgeois democracy is impossible there.

At the same time, slight divergences, reflecting primarily a further division of labour within the ruling class, have emerged over strategies for maintaining their supremacy. While the most diehard of the reactionary Afrikaaner political elements threaten worse retaliatory violence if "reforms" proceed any further, some South African businessmen have been reincarnated into a "liberal opposition," a voice of moderation, "concerned" over the slow pace at cleaning up apartheid's image. This section of financiers, including Anglo-American Corporation magnate G.W. Rely and mining industrialist Harry Oppenheimer, who also belongs to the bourgeois opposition alliance, the United Democratic Front, made a big spectacle of meeting with the reformist, pro-Soviet leaders of the African National Congress in exile and of proposing numerous harmless goodwill reforms. The most dramatic-sounding ones included various power-sharing schemes, alongside their call for Botha's departure, who has supposedly "proved his ineffectiveness" in times of crisis. These are of course the same business figures who helped catapult him to power, and backed him through earlier phases of this same crisis. This newborn "opposition" above all gives the regime more room to manoeuvre, and can itself conduct negotiations that have so far been impossible with various badly exposed capitulators and pro-U.S. black elements.

An additional factor is that while overall the Western imperialist bourgeoisies are fundamentally united on their goal of "normalising" the situation in South Africa, some differences about how to do it certainly exist, which have been used to carry out a similar division of labour in the South Africa debate between those calling for staunch support of the regime and those "vigorous opponents" of apartheid seeking faster reform.

In the final analysis, the rulers of

the major investor countries are unmistakably intent on crushing the revolt, and a strong current among them favours letting the dogs loose without the currently popular critical rhetoric attached... This position is most eloquently represented by Ronald Reagan and his right-wing religious fanatic associate, Jerry Falwell—the first foreign visitor Botha allowed inside his jails. While Pretoria's latest round of emergency repression undoubtedly had the highest backing, the negotiators among the imperialists have nonetheless also been actively trying to pave the road for some cosmetic changes.

Those within Western ruling circles playing the "great reformers," such as Senator Ted Kennedy and his ilk at the *New York Times*, promote changes such as establishing a voting system to include blacks, legalising "non-white dissent," improving the gross disparities between schools of different races, and eliminating other blatant segregation laws, while black leaders are reasoned with to help carry this out, and to convince the people. The French pro-government press echoes much of this, polished with their special human rights adjectives, believable only from the lips of "socialists" who sink ecology boats to defend their sovereign claim to test nuclear bombs, or suppress the independence movements in their colonies like Guadeloupe and Martinique, but find apartheid just disgraceful.

More honestly speaking for the French position was Socialist Party spokesman Jacques Huntzinger, who in his appeal to avoid "murderous disorder in the whole region," clarified that they did not wish to see the collapse of this "giant with clay feet...we are not for the most extreme strategy: it is through dialogue that deep and necessary reforms must be brought about in South Africa." No revolution, please.

Although occasionally liberal posturing can also be found in the British press, along with pleas to lift the state of emergency, the bourgeoisie there has tended to agree with the more conservative (and probably overall dominant U.S. posi-

tion) that openly backing the regime is the safest route. The liberal British daily *The Guardian* wrote unabashedly: "For if change without tragedy is your hope, then Botha and his (to our eyes extremely unattractive) political skills are about the only possible agents of it within the present framework of South African politics... Outsiders should be content to warn and to encourage the economic prosperity of South Africa, which is actually the best chance of peaceful change."

The British, whose economic crisis is causing major problems of its own, have tried to take advantage of the lack of a large, tenacious anti-apartheid movement, such as exists in the U.S., to argue at every opportunity that jeopardising national interests—Britain's trade and investments in South Africa—is neither necessary nor "effective."

But unfortunately for these demagogues, whether in Britain or North America, each hypocritical remark about the ghastly conditions for blacks in South Africa quickens the fuse burning among the volatile sections of the masses in their own imperialist cities, who themselves have something to say about national oppression. Black, Asian and West Indian youth in Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham recently introduced a new element into the discussion in the streets of mother England. And the events of the world, including their rulers' crisis, are hardly lost on them. One youth, speaking about the Birmingham riots said, "It's just like South Africa here. For us, we don't see any difference."

The Azanian masses' unrepentant, unceasing rage has stirred many new forces across the world into political activity as well over the past year, particularly youth and students in the U.S. and Europe. The widespread movements opposing the U.S. as the main imperialist muscle behind apartheid have responded to the major developments in South Africa and spawned campus sit-ins, debates, and demonstrations along with massive arrests aimed particularly at forcing corporate and university divestment. The struggle to break free from imperialism in South

Africa, together with this activity to support it, have unveiled the enemy's face and nature more clearly to rebels everywhere, in the course of which raising big and important questions about what it takes to overthrow this system worldwide.

### When An Imperialist Sanctions Himself

It was this storm of public outcry inspired by the Azanian upsurge which provoked the debate over levying government-sponsored economic sanctions which the major investor countries have been wallowing in for months. The liberal imperialist position has sought to "allay the unrest" of public opinion and reinforce the notion that the situation in South Africa is certainly "democratisable." Like the tale well-known to children growing up in the West, in which the emperor paraded himself stark naked before his subjects, believing he had donned a suit of new clothes, the imperialists' frantic efforts to dissociate themselves from apartheid's ugliest crimes have only revealed their tight collaboration. Applying any serious economic pressure through their transparent sanctions was never the issue; rather, it was to mould the terms for publicly hammering out these *political* sanctions, intended to confound who are the dogs and who are the masters as well as to retrieve some lost confidence in imperialism, newly distanced from the most odious features of apartheid.

Editors of bourgeois papers everywhere asked craftily, "Should the sanctions really bite Pretoria hard or just be symbolic threats? Who would really be most adversely affected by such measures? How much time will it take to get South Africa to comply," etc. Most commonly these writers tried to champion the cause of the "downtrodden," arguing that blacks would be hurt most by sanctions since...Botha threatened to lay them off or expel them if sanctions were imposed, or to retaliate against the West, jeopardising the ability of blacks to advance economically.

As international pressure mounted for the big powers to make some kind of warning gesture to the

South African government, just how illusory—and vacuous—these sanctions were became clear. This was not altogether surprising, considering that any meaningful economic measures would amount to these heavy trading partners and investors sanctioning themselves.

France broke out to lead the imperialist pack in daredevil anti-apartheid sanctions. The Elysée recalled its ambassador and temporarily shut down the nuclear centre at Koeberg, promising no new investments for 18 whole months. And they took it to the United Nations! Ronald Reagan was mad. He dragged his feet and protested and refused to budge. It wasn't until the U.S. Congress, in reaction to widespread pressure and sizeable opposition (considering the politically charged climate in the U.S. today, which has polarised even further around South Africa) that Reagan did an "about-face." Again, for Reagan, this was a purely political question, of not condemning the regime he supports. And iron-lipped Maggie Thatcher held out even longer against sanctions, "as a matter of principle," balking first at Common Market proposals, and then going against the whole tide of the Commonwealth.

The inoffensive U.S. sanctions that were finally passed called for a curb in computer and nuclear technology sales to South Africa, no new loans, or at least not directly through U.S. companies. This certainly did not exclude loans through the U.S.' British affiliates, who never made any pretence of levying sanctions, until a watered-down version of the U.S. ones were adopted by the Commonwealth countries, under pressure by lackey African neo-colonial leaders who are after all supposed to be on the Africans' side.

Both the resulting toothlessness of their measures, and their painstaking efforts to spray the increasingly foul stench of bloody, direct links to apartheid with perfume provided rich new self-exposure. And secondly there was the great defence of bourgeois democracy, as opposed to the supposedly unrelated barbaric and racist ways of the South Africans. Listen to the agonised contortions of *The Guardian* hailing

President Botha's citizenship offer to township blacks as an "historic intellectual volte-face": "...it would be quite wrong to dismiss yesterday's changes as unimportant simply because they will have little immediate practical impact. Mr. Botha has dismantled the ideological basis of apartheid, the repugnant concept of extra-territorial citizenship under which all blacks were deemed to have been citizens of the homelands even if they did not live there. It is this travesty which enabled the whites to delude themselves that they were living in a democracy." On the other hand, they have a point: one of the wonderful advantages of bourgeois democracy is its ideological value in promulgating almost unlimited bullshit.

### Apartheid Not Democratisable

The imperialists' dilemma in trying to resolve the conflict in South Africa is as fundamental as it is monumental. For essentially they *cannot* end apartheid, or at least the basic system of rule it has become the nomenclature for. The crisis of imperialism, which has been steadily accelerating on a world scale and sharpening in the context of global tensions between East and West, has been severely reflected in South Africa, as well. This framework dictates that now more than ever, the Western imperialists cannot and will not give up this lifeline of a highly profitable and rich supply of key resources that pulses into their empire; nor will they abandon to the Azanian masses or the Soviets waiting offstage the strategically indispensable southern outpost which they have crafted South Africa into over recent years as part of preparing for world war.

Why are they unable to "democratise" apartheid, or transform the ruthless armed white rule into a "just, civilised, multi-racial [and bourgeois] democracy"? True, apartheid is a brutally oppressive system but not without its logic, however twisted. It was designed to provide the necessary political structure for the extraction of the maximum amount of wealth from the labour of the Azanian masses by international capital. On this basis a white settler capitalist

class of European origin has arisen, which relies on these superprofits, in part, to pay off and secure the support of the white population as a whole. With its hideous features inherited from the period of settler colonialism apartheid has evolved to become an integrally functioning part of the modern world imperialist system.

The political and economic subjugation of the black majority by the white minority is a structural necessity for the historically specific dynamics of the capitalism that has evolved in South Africa. The emergence of a South African capitalist class and the development of a modern capitalist economy under the auspices of imperialist capital is based on the coerced and cheap labour of the indigenous black population. This is what made South Africa such a lucrative site of accumulation for this same capital.

Apartheid happens to be a particularly ugly mutation of the logic of imperialist capital and its domination of the oppressed nations throughout the world. It is actually a vivid self portrait of the imperialists and their system—in which the political contradictions it superimposes in South Africa reveal these relations in raw, brutal form: a relatively large white settler state is licensed to exploit and terrorise the company slaves—the black majority—without even a democratic pretence of racial equality (or even admitting black compradors into this process of imperialist exploitation, necessary in other neo-colonies).

Furthermore, the much trumpeted 'democracy' and prosperity in the imperialist countries rests on the misery, impoverishment and the blood and guns dictatorships in the oppressed nations which South Africa typifies so starkly. No amount of sandpaper, paint, or even major body work will or *can* change this basic animal.

#### Blueprints Blurry

Concealing this reality has thus become a key part of the imperialists' charting their way through the present stormy waters. Various bourgeois studies examining the leaks in their ship, including

the strength of the opposition, have assessed that they can quiet the rebellions before they spread to any kind of generalised armed confrontation.

In the short-term, in order to make apartheid appear more "equal," on the path to further "progress," and to try to defuse the situation, this means that while they primarily continue to restore law and order using whatever level of repression is required, they will probably gradually dispense with some of the most exposing and blatant aspects of apartheid. This technique of balancing carrot against stick, refined throughout scores of bloody chapters of imperialist history, partly aims to exacerbate divisions that inevitably exist among the oppressed, separating the more advanced and revolutionary elements from those unable to see the real enemy and tantalised by the dangling of wisps of equality and democratic rights. These manoeuvres buy the imperialists precious time and occasionally even succeed in temporarily derailing the mass struggle.

A major factor in this is courting and propping up the most bourgeois among the black opposition elements, who are needed to somehow breathe life into illusions about these reforms (white credibility is a poor investment...) and who, if useful or necessary, may be ejected into honorary positions within the white governing structure, under the banner of "power-sharing" or some new rubric.

Overall the bourgeoisie has not been able to find the right man or capitulating group for the times, though it is madly negotiating and trying to prepare for as many scenarios as possible during the unknown events ahead. Head of the Anglican Church Bishop Desmond Tutu has continued to be widely promoted as a lingering voice of reason in the face of the "violent youth." Actively joining the imperialists' sanctions debate, his standard litany of "Too little, too late" was followed by his push for "real" sanctions, and approval of French initiatives and subsequent Common Market measures. Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, quoting the reverend during his talks with him in France, unwittingly provided a near-perfect

description of just how useful Tutu is to anyone in Azania seeking liberation: "A white prime minister who walks with a black bishop without police protection, now *that's* freedom." Now this would be a man for the job, if his teary pleas for non-violence, his collaboration with and protection of informers and cops, his campaign for a rightful voting ballot, along with countless other cases of obstructing the masses' struggle had not so thoroughly exposed his counter-revolutionary aims.

The African National Congress (ANC) has also been wooed extensively by the West, despite its ties to the Soviets and long antagonisms with the apartheid regime. While Reagan and the British Tories want to stomp this Soviet-inspired "communist" threat, the liberal imperialist representatives meet with ANC President Tambo in exile in Zambia. These do not represent different strategies, and how the Western imperialists will actually relate to the ANC is not totally clear, but their present inclusion of the ANC in negotiations is largely to widen rifts within it and at the same time utilise its position of relative strength among less revolutionary sections of the masses. The ANC's popularity among these more intermediate sections stems mainly from past upsurges, from the days of the banning of the ANC and the pro-China split-off, the Pan Africanist Congress, back in 1960 after the Sharpeville Massacre, when a number of its political leaders, including reformists like Nelson Mandela, were jailed.

In the masses' search for forces who can lead in the present upsurge, the ANC, with its militant posturing and talk of stepping up the armed struggle, has managed to gain some new support. However, alongside the vast press play of the ANC is frequent mention of the "militant, young blacks" who don't go for the reasonable strategy and middle class, old men running the ANC who (in the ANC's own words) have "grown fat with conscience money" and the open admission that it is not deeply rooted enough among the

(Continued to page 88)



by Juan Sui\*

For the past several years, U.S. officialdom has seemed to relish the role of blatant imperialist bully in Central America. The current campaign of U.S. provocations and threats of direct intervention, coming right on the heels of the U.S. embargo of Nicaragua, announced formally by Ronald Reagan with a declaration of "national emergency" that conjured up inescapable war imagery, is perhaps the most recent example. The embargo announcement came shortly after Reagan's well-publicised demand, delivered at a news conference nationally televised in the U.S., that Nicaragua's ruling Sandinistas publicly give in and "say uncle," and his accompanying near-admission that the U.S. does indeed seek the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government. Thor-

oughly documented reports of widespread murder, rape, torture and other atrocities committed by the U.S. puppet anti-Sandinista army known as the Contras are invariably followed by loving pats on the back for these state-sponsored terrorists, such as Reagan referring to them as "our brothers"; actually, it is more of a father-son relationship, but the message remains the same.

This message has also been delivered through constant threats of invasion, continuous military manoeuvres that run through invasion scenarios, deliberate sonic boom-inducing overflights of Nicaraguan territory and countless other real and threatened acts of naked imperialist aggression. In addition to terrorising the Nicaraguan masses and keeping the pressure on the Sandinistas in hopes of creating more favourable conditions for their demise, it is all calculated to maximise the image of "Resurgent America"—an arrogant mega-

power ready, willing and, most of all, *able* to roll over everything in its path.

But behind this swaggering facade lies the unprecedented weakness of the U.S. position in Central America. Despite relatively large transfusions from the U.S. and the financial institutions it leads, the dependent, debt-ridden economies of the U.S.'s Central American neocolonies are deathly ill—so much so that per capita income in the region is down nearly 25% overall since the late '70s (and much more for the poverty-stricken masses in the countryside and in the shanty-towns known as *tugurios*). Fractious infighting within the ruling classes dependent on the U.S. has intensified, often to the point of assassination. Guerrilla war continues in El Salvador and has recently started up again in Guatemala, despite the mass murder of over 100,000 and the forced relocation of a million-and-a-half people in the past six years in these two countries.

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# Trouble in the Yankee Backyard

And the U.S.'s Soviet bloc rivals continue to manoeuvre throughout the region they call the U.S.'s "strategic rear," seeking to exploit the U.S.'s difficulties for their own purpose. In short, the situation in Central America is still very much out of the U.S.'s control.

## **Tremors in the "Backyard"**

This is a far cry from the U.S.'s traditional position in the region. In earlier times, the U.S. was generally able to exercise absolute domination of its self-proclaimed "own backyard" with a relatively minimal effort. The small-scale dependent economies, with abject poverty and constant hunger and disease a way of life for the masses, were relatively manageable for the imperialists, and the requisite butchery could be carried out with a high guarantee of blood-drenching success, either through direct invasion and occupation by U.S. troops or by comprador and feudal forces installed and/or

replaced by CIA-managed coups, and trained and supplied by the U.S.

However, in the late 1970s, the U.S.'s Central American domain experienced unprecedented upheaval, including mass revolutionary upsurge throughout the region. In Nicaragua, the U.S.'s faithful butcher Anastasio Somoza Debayle, whose family and the tiny clique linked to it had ruled with an iron hand ever since their installation in power by the U.S. Marines in the mid-1930s, was overthrown and forced to flee the country, and his infamous National Guard was destroyed. Following this, rebellion in El Salvador reached such a peak that the U.S., desperately trying to forestall a similar situation, carried out a "reformist" coup, removing their exposed generalissimo and replacing him with a junta government that included not only U.S.-described "moderate" army officers but also various liberals, Christian Democrats, social democrats and

even pro-Soviet revisionist Communist Party members. Nevertheless, the upsurge continued despite massively increased repression, and the junta fell apart within three months, to be followed by the formation of a new, even more discredited and isolated junta government and the outbreak of civil war. In Guatemala, by the beginning of the new decade, the scene was rapidly developing in the same direction.

The seeds of this situation had been planted in the 1960s with the transformations associated with the U.S.'s "Alliance For Progress." The further development of export agriculture and extension (or introduction) of capitalist farming techniques along with the expansion of highly dependent industrial production greatly increased the integration of Latin America into the global imperialist system. To be sure, the level of capitalist "modernisation" in Central America was

nowhere near as high as in other, larger countries in Latin America which were, at the time, considered more strategic. Nevertheless, because the U.S. neocolonies of Central America had previously been kept in an extremely backward state, the social and political effects of the Alliance For Progress changes in the region were monumental.

For the peasantry, the situation was particularly sharp. Hundreds of thousands in the rural areas were thrown completely off the land and many more were reduced to much less land than could provide even a bare subsistence for their families. In El Salvador, for example, between 1961 and 1975, the percentage of rural families that were completely landless jumped from 12% to 41%.<sup>1</sup> While the governments of the region promised that the new industry would provide jobs, the very nature of that industry prevented many from finding work in the factories. Again in El Salvador (which is, along with Guatemala, the most industrialised of the countries in Central America) manufacturing grew by 24% during the 1960s, but *employment* in manufacturing grew by only 6% during the same period.<sup>2</sup> One result of all this was the rapid expansion of abject poverty in the countryside and of cardboard and tin shack shantytowns in every major city throughout the region.

At the same time, there was a rapid increase in the number of secondary and university students and a significant growth of the professional strata and other sections of the urban middle classes—with rising expectations of economic and political advancement. It was during this period that the Catholic Church hierarchy, in an effort to expand its influence in Latin America and keep the disenchanting from turning to more radical solutions, dispatched clerical and lay organisers throughout the region in large numbers (many of whom ended up becoming radicalised themselves by the situation they found).

By the latter half of the '70s, with the worldwide economic crisis having a major contributing effect, the U.S.'s Central American chickens were coming home to roost. The

countryside had exploded in peasant struggle and guerrilla war; the shantytowns were headed in the same direction; the universities throughout the region had become bastions of support for the armed opposition groups. The corrupt neocolonial state apparatus, especially in Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador, lashed out with full fury, intensifying the murderous repression for which U.S. lackies the world over are notorious. But rather than stifling the upsurge, the state terror only deepened and broadened it. Large sections of the population—including among the better-off strata in the cities—began calling for the overthrow of the U.S.'s most-favoured Central American dictators, and there was a huge jump in the membership of mass organisations affiliated with the various guerrilla factions and groups (which were principally led by bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalist forces).

Along with the growing isolation of the U.S.'s ruling cliques came stepped-up efforts by various pro-Western "reformers" (social democrats and Christian Democrats in particular) and pro-Soviet revisionists to influence and gain control of the armed uprisings. In Nicaragua, they attempted to broker a "peaceful" transfer of power from Somoza to a compromise government that would include significant power-holding by forces dependent on the U.S.—something very much desired not only by the social democrats and their ilk, but also by the revisionists, who see such a compromise as offering the best chance for their own manoeuvring in an area firmly within the U.S.'s "sphere of influence." Their efforts failed and an insurrectionary explosion, particularly from the shantytowns, swept Somoza from power. This set the stage for the new Sandinista government to find itself in a more acutely antagonistic contradiction with the U.S. than some had bargained for. In both El Salvador and Guatemala, various pro-imperialist forces have worked overtime to prevent a repeat of the Nicaraguan experience and to turn mass struggles into bargaining chips in their efforts at negotiating with

the U.S.

El Salvador is presently the clearest example in Central America of a guerrilla struggle not led by a proletarian revolutionary line. Instead of seeking to build up the political, ideological and military strength of the masses, involving them, relying on them and transforming them in the course of protracted people's war, the aim of this war is to force the present government, or at least some of the forces within it, to allow the opposition to share power in a conventional government. The leadership of the Democratic Revolutionary Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN) spans a variety of forces, including Christian Democrats. While the pro-Soviet Salvadoran Communist Party does not have complete hegemony, even some of the forces who are not out to sell their country to a new imperialism in order to displace part or all of the old ruling classes do look to the USSR as a lever to open the situation for them.

While the mass upsurge that characterised the region in the '78-'81 years has ebbed for the time being, the deep-seated economic and political crisis facing the U.S. in its self-styled "backyard" is just as severe. Today, in the accelerating turmoil of the current world situation, the U.S. needs more than ever to demonstrate an unchallenged ability to rule the Central American roost. But as the U.S.'s rulers know quite well, this is easier said than done. Indeed, the Central American situation holds great risks for U.S. imperialism.

### **Imperialist Insecurity**

As a complement to their tough talk, U.S. officials have not been shy about warning of the threat to their national security that Central America poses. A representative example of the rhetoric involved is the following from Reagan's April 1983 speech before a rare joint session of Congress (involving both the Senate and the House of Representatives, an action that apart from annual State of the Union speeches is usually reserved for something very dramatic, such as a declaration of war). The U.S. President screeched:

"If we cannot defend ourselves there (in Central America—J.S.), we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere. Our credibility would collapse, our alliances would crumble and the safety of our homeland would be put at jeopardy."<sup>3</sup>

Of course, one must translate such statements from imperial-ese into common language: to "defend ourselves" means to squash any who refuse to bow down before U.S. dictates; the "safety of our homeland" refers to the safety of the U.S. bourgeoisie in maintaining its rule (certainly those who firebomb row houses in Philadelphia and discuss the possibilities of "prevailing" in World War 3 through suffering "only 65 million dead" are not terribly worried about the safety of the land's inhabitants). However, Reagan's statement most definitely provides a glimpse of U.S. imperialism's strategic worry over Central America.

The basic problem for the U.S. is that there is a serious erosion of its power and a great deal of turmoil *so close to home*, at the very moment that, as the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* says, "All the major contradictions of the world imperialist system are rapidly accentuating.... The very logic of the imperialist system and the revolutionary struggles is preparing a new situation. The contradiction between the rival bands of imperialists, between the imperialists and the oppressed nations, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, are all likely in the coming period to express themselves by force of arms on an unprecedented scale."<sup>4</sup> For the U.S. ruling class, the approach of such cataclysmic times has necessitated an all-out commitment to building up its forces politically, militarily and ideologically so as to be in the strongest possible position in the period ahead. But in a number of ways, the situation in Central America presents a serious threat to that position.

First, there is the matter that Reagan referred to as "credibility." The point was developed a little more by the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America—

known as the Kissinger Commission because its chairman was Henry Kissinger, one of the U.S.'s foremost war criminals, with credentials earned in Indochina, Chile and elsewhere. In its report, the Commission fretted that "in the Central American-Caribbean region, our credibility worldwide is engaged. The triumph of hostile forces in what the Soviets call the 'strategic rear' of the United States would be read as a sign of U.S. impotence." And it added that the U.S. must prevent "the erosion of our power to influence events worldwide that would flow from the perception that we were unable to influence vital events close to home."<sup>5</sup> What is this "credibility" that is of such concern to these gentlemen? It is nothing less than the ability to inspire confidence, globally and among its domestic social base, that the U.S. is capable of leading them all to victory over every adversary—something of a sore point for the U.S. following its bitter defeat in Vietnam and the overthrow of its puppets in Nicaragua and Iran. This is one reason why Reagan and Co. have gone to great pains to paint the necessary picture of "Resurgent America," and why any incident that threatens to raise doubts about the validity of this image is met with some new provocation or new act of naked imperialist aggression somewhere in the world (and often in Central America or the Caribbean) to try and stifle the questioning.

A further strategic difficulty for the U.S. in Central America has to do with the potential military consequences of continued instability in the region. America's expert geostrategists emphasize that one critical factor that traditionally (at least since World War II) has enabled the U.S. to maintain massive military operations around the globe has been the relative "security"—that is, its absolute dominance—of the region at its southern border. However, as a study done for the infamous U.S. "think tank" Rand Corporation warns, "instability and insecurity in the (Caribbean) Basin may divert the United States to an extent that constrains its ability to play its global role from a position

of strength, especially if the restoration of Basin security should require large U.S. military measures...."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, U.S. geostrategists worry over the Caribbean sea lanes, through which about 50% of U.S. resupply to troops fighting in Europe and 40% to those in East Asia would have to travel; those the U.S. considers "hostile forces" could take advantage of favourable positions in Central America to screw up some of the U.S.'s precious warfighting plans.

And then there is the potential "spillover" effect of upheaval and turmoil in certain Central American countries touching off similar activity throughout Latin America and beyond. U.S. officials have openly fretted over the consequences of anything approaching success in opposing U.S. domination throughout Latin America, where it is admitted that there is already a great deal of anti-American feeling across a broad spectrum of the population. There is particular concern over such upheaval spreading northward into Mexico, which is correctly seen as a ticking time bomb by U.S. bourgeois experts, and perhaps even up into the U.S. itself. This latter possibility is one concern that is often left unstated by U.S. officials, but there is no doubt that it is a major worry, as evidenced by the following passage from the previously noted Rand Corporation study: "Caribbean Basin politics intrude on domestic U.S. politics more than ever before and more so than for any other third-world area. Law, order, and security concerns within the United States and along its borders cannot be isolated from major events and trends in the Basin. The primary linkage is through massive immigration, refugee, and exile flows: The United States receives more immigrants and refugees than all the rest of the world combined, and most of these come from within the Basin. The extension of Central American conflicts into Mexico or Puerto Rico would thus have dangerous, uncontrollable, and unpredictable domestic consequences."<sup>7</sup>

**The Bludgeon and the Build-Up**  
Facing a multitude of threats to its

empire from the situation in Central America and in desperate need to clamp down, the guardians of U.S. national security have developed a multi-pronged approach to the region. As U.S. State Department types like to say, economic, political, diplomatic and, of course, military measures are all being used. But they are all designed to bludgeon into submission, and/or "neutralize" (as the CIA's infamous assassination manual put it), all who refuse to prostrate themselves before U.S. domination, and to build up even greater U.S. capability for this in the coming period.

In El Salvador, following the mass murder of over 50,000 Salvadorans in the past six years by the U.S.'s hired military—by both the official uniformed and unofficial death-squad varieties—the U.S. is now pursuing a "new" military strategy to wipe out any real and potential supporters of the opposition. It involves counterinsurgency techniques and programs initially "perfected" in the U.S.'s losing war of aggression against Vietnam.

One aspect of the scheme is a major step-up in government air assaults against the population in areas where the opposition FDR/FMLN either controls the territory or has a great deal of support. The aerial bombardment has been facilitated by: the addition of several U.S. C-47 gunships, each capable of firing 1,500 rounds per minute for four to five hours at a time; 50 Huey 1-H helicopters, also firing at will, and transporting batallions of Salvadoran troops to their next peasant massacre; six A-37 "Dragonfly" jet fighter planes dropping 300-, 500- and 750- pound bombs, fragmentation bombs and incendiary materials such as napalm and white phosphorous; and air strikes called in by U.S. Air Force pilots flying C-130 reconnaissance flights from Palmerola Air Base in Honduras.

The other aspect of the "new" U.S. military strategy for El Salvador is akin to the U.S.'s scheme for supposedly "winning hearts and minds" in Vietnam. It involves "search-and-destroy" sweeps through contested territory, follow-

ed by the formation of "civil defense" groups (often using notorious death-squad aficionados) and "civic action" programs, including building roads (to facilitate army vehicle access), building schools (to keep tabs on the volatile youth) and building hospitals (to keep soldiers on the battlefield). This is all modeled on the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) "pacification" program developed in Vietnam, where its chief claim to fame was its use as an umbrella under which the infamous Phoenix Program operated; it resulted in the assassination and murder of somewhere between 20,000 and 40,000 civilians.

At the same time, the U.S. has resurrected the ghoulish figure of José Napoleon Duarte to give it all his "democratic" (U.S.-style, that is) blessings. Duarte, a Christian Democrat who graduated from Notre Dame University in the U.S., mouths demagogic platitudes about "democracy" and "peace" and pledges to stop the "abuses of authority" while the murder of suspected "subversives" continues unabated. This has been more than enough to "legitimise" the U.S.'s comprador regime in the eyes of U.S. liberal bourgeois forces and many of Western Europe's social democrats.

But in the past couple of years, the focus of the U.S. effort to regain its absolute mastery of the Central American scene has shifted from El Salvador to Sandinista-led Nicaragua. As an opposition in power, the Sandinistas have become a symbol of the U.S.'s difficulties in the "backyard." Again, without doing a deeper analysis of the Sandinistas which would be beyond the scope of the present article, it can certainly be said that even the small crack in U.S. hegemony that the new Nicaraguan government has opened, even if not revolutionary, is considered an intolerable danger by the U.S. under current world conditions. The U.S. has responded by bludgeoning the Nicaraguan masses, and punishing the Sandinistas with the aim of eventually either forcing them to surrender power or overthrowing them. To that end, a

number of U.S. forces and weapons have been wielded against Nicaragua.

Of course, there are America's "freedom fighters," the Contras. Virtually the entire senior officer corps of the main Contra group, the Honduras- and Miami-based FDN (Democratic National Front), consists of former Somoza National Guard officers, most of whom were running common gangster operations until pulled together by the CIA in 1981. Their civilian political directorate is made up of pro-U.S. oligarchs, businessmen and political hacks who, according to a former member of their ranks, came together at the behest of the CIA in 1982 in order to provide a non-somocista facade for the group; they are often informed of major Contra actions after the fact and instructed to take credit for them publicly. Like all the U.S.'s death squad operations, the Contras specialise in torture, assassination, rape and murder of unarmed civilians and don't fare too well when forced to fight against armed troops—something that they try to avoid as much as possible. Contra actions have done a great deal of damage to Nicaragua's fragile and dependent economy—over \$1 billion, according to the Sandinista government—but the most damaging acts of economic sabotage have been carried out by CIA contract employees. This is because, as an unnamed "intelligence source" told the *Los Angeles Times*: "There were questions about the competence of the Contras...whether they could conduct effective (sabotage) operations."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Contras are quite useful for terrorising the Nicaraguan masses, a necessary component of the U.S. approach to Central America.

While many of the U.S.'s loyalists have fled to Miami and/or joined up in some way with the Contras, there are still quite a few U.S. minions operating within Nicaragua. There are pro-U.S. capitalists grouped in the CIA-connected Superior Council on Private Enterprise (COSEP), who have worked to intensify Nicaragua's severe economic problems through withholding investment,

withdrawing capital and other measures; and they can do a lot of damage considering that 60% of Nicaragua's economy is still in private hands. There is the newspaper *La Prensa*, which is basically an extension of the U.S. media (and the sleazier section of it, at that) and publishes whatever will assist the U.S. and its Contras in their attacks on Nicaragua; government censorship of its diatribes has been turned into a cause célèbre in the U.S. There is the Catholic Church hierarchy, including the Contra Cardinal, Miguel Obando y Bravo, recently promoted by the Pope for his efforts on behalf of U.S. imperialism—efforts which include turning his religious ceremonies into virtual pro-Contra demonstrations. All these forces are especially working at taking advantage of the contradictions between the Sandinistas and sections of the urban and rural middle classes that the failing economy and military draft have heightened, hoping to further destabilise Sandinista rule on behalf of U.S., and their own, interests.

Diplomatic pressure is also applied by the U.S., including through the much-vaunted Contadora Group—the foreign ministers of Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia—named for the Panamanian island on which they first came together to seek a “solution” to the Central American crisis. The “Contadora process,” as the series of negotiations involving the four Contadora and five Central American countries has come to be called, has received praise and pledges of fealty from all its direct participants, the U.S., the Soviet Union and Cuba, all the Western European countries and just about every imperialist and pro-imperialist force in the world; obviously, everyone who hopes to manoeuvre for position in Central America sees some opportunities in these negotiations. But since the U.S. is the overwhelming power in the region, and all the participants save Nicaragua are quite dependent on the U.S., it has mainly served to enhance the U.S.'s pressure on the Sandinistas.

For example, last September, when Nicaragua agreed to a draft Contadora peace proposal that the

U.S. had assumed it would reject, and the other Central American countries initially implied that they too would agree, it was generally thought that the Sandinistas had scored a diplomatic coup vis-a-vis the U.S. However, as the U.S. made it clear that the proposal was unacceptable (indeed, any pact that doesn't include at least the initial steps toward a complete Sandinista surrender will be unacceptable to the U.S.), the U.S.'s Central American dependencies quickly fell in line. The Contadora countries then went back to Nicaragua to pressure the Sandinistas to agree to changes that would be approved by the U.S., and threatening the Sandinistas with isolation in the region if they don't agree. So, despite whatever tactical differences there may be between the government of Mexico, for example, and the U.S. as to the best way to “stabilise” the region under overall U.S. domination (and these have been much exaggerated by Mexico, by revisionists who hope to manoeuvre, and by others) the result of the “Contadora process” is to add the diplomatic bludgeon to the other forms the U.S. is wielding.

All these forms play their role—but perhaps the most significant act of U.S. aggression in Central America so far consists of this one-two combination: on the one hand, constant threats of a U.S. invasion, and on the other, the transformation of Honduras into a combined U.S. battle station and practice field for just such a purpose.

For the past few years, the threats have been delivered in a variety of ways, but none so direct as the continuous parade of U.S. military exercises that take place near the Nicaraguan border in Honduras and which simulate war between the U.S. and Nicaragua. The most recent of these featured 11,000 U.S. troops in two joint manoeuvres: one involved a mock Nicaraguan tank and infantry invasion into Honduras (which the Sandinistas are not about to attempt, but which is one of a number of possible manufactured pretexts for U.S. intervention); the other involved 39 U.S. warships, including amphibious assault vehicles, staging what *Time*

magazine described as looking “like a rehearsal for an American invasion of Nicaragua.”<sup>9</sup>

Of course, these actions are not only threats—they are also practice for the real thing. And such an eventuality has been further prepared for through the construction in Honduras of nine invasion-ready U.S. airfields capable of handling C-130 troop transport planes, two U.S. radar stations and two munitions storage depots. In other words, the U.S. has eliminated much of the troop transport and resupply problems that an invasion and U.S. military occupation of Central America would present by turning Honduras into a U.S. fort!

### The Risks of a Major U.S. Intervention

Nevertheless, there are some limitations on the U.S. in pursuing such a scenario, at least in the short run. For the risks to U.S. imperialism of such a move are indeed great.

U.S. strategists from the Rand Corporation and other imperialist think tanks have warned officials that a major U.S. escalation in Central America could bring about great turmoil in both Latin America and Western Europe (and in the U.S., they warn, with the immigrants once again being singled out as conduits for disaster). The problems for the imperialists in undertaking such an intervention, in times like the present, are magnified when it is embarked upon short of an all-out world war. And, it is certainly possible that a U.S. intervention in Central America could ultimately and perhaps quickly lead to this global confrontation.

It is precisely because U.S. imperialism's stakes—and its risks—in Central America are so great that there has been some debate within the ruling class over aspects of U.S. policy in the region. Questions of how openly to embrace the Contras, how much to emphasize the Contadora process and so forth have been *publicly* argued out principally from the standpoint of their effectiveness in achieving their united objective in the region—the relatively rapid elimination of all opposition to U.S. imperialist domination. While the precise terms of this

debate often remain hidden beneath a chorus of demagoguery, it seems that the danger of a major U.S. setback that would leave these imperialists with no choice (from their perspective) but to invade is one factor that lurks behind their infighting over Central America.

In the meantime, the social role of the liberal alternatives to the Administration's policy in Central America has been to promote a "legitimate" channel for the outrage and opposition to the U.S.'s crimes in the region, and thus keep it within manageable bounds. Reformists, revisionists and social democrats of all stripes have pushed lobbying of and reliance on U.S. Congressmen as the way to stop U.S. aggression in Central America, and they have been aided by the official representatives of the Sandinistas and the FDR/FMLN who, after all, are usually pro-Soviet revisionists (or, less often, social democrats) and whose own strategies are served by this approach. A fine example of where all this leads was provided by the recent Congressional debate over direct U.S. funding of the Contras. When the Reagan Administration proposal was narrowly defeated in the House of Representatives, all the "send a telegram to your Congressman" barkers declared it a great victory, despite the fact that many in the opposition had called for an embargo instead (for now) and that the Contras were guaranteed their funding through other, less open but nonetheless official, means. Some honest and progressive forces were apparently taken in by all this and one religious group went so far as to call off

planned demonstrations in the wake of the vote. In little more than a week, Reagan instituted an embargo of Nicaragua, declaring it "a threat to U.S. national security," and five weeks later, official funding for the Contras was reinstated by the Congress anyway. All this occurred in the midst of an overall leap in preparations for direct U.S. military intervention against Nicaragua. So much for great victories—and for the line of following the liberals to a Central American "peace."

### The Prospects for Revolution

The cause of the masses in Central America has been hurt severely by the fact that there has not been, up to now, a Marxist-Leninist party to lead the revolution in any of the countries of the region. As the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* states: "The key to carrying out a new-democratic revolution is the independent role of the proletariat and its ability, through its Marxist-Leninist party, to establish its hegemony in the revolutionary struggle. Experience has shown again and again that even when a section of the national bourgeoisie joins the revolutionary movement, it will not and cannot lead a new democratic revolution, to say nothing of carrying this revolution through to completion. Similarly, history demonstrates the bankruptcy of an 'anti-imperialist front' (or similar 'revolutionary front') which is not led by a Marxist-Leninist party, even when such a front or forces within it adopt a 'Marxist' (actually pseudo-Marxist) colouration. While such revolutionary formations have led to heroic struggles

and even delivered powerful blows to the imperialists they have been proven to be ideologically and organisationally incapable of resisting imperialist and bourgeois influences. Even where such forces have seized power they have been incapable of carrying through a thorough-going revolutionary transformation of society and end up, sooner or later, being overthrown by the imperialists or themselves becoming a new reactionary ruling power in league with imperialists."<sup>10</sup>

There remains a crying need for genuine revolutionary elements to emerge and form such parties in Central America. The deep-seated difficulties for U.S. imperialism, as noted, remain. And especially in an international scene characterised by cataclysmic changes and developments, it is altogether conceivable—indeed, one might say, *likely*—that mass eruptions on an unprecedented scale can occur there in the near future. Recent experience in Peru, where revisionist domination of the mass movements seemed just as permanent a feature as U.S. domination, is an example of such an impasse giving way to revolutionary people's war. The influence of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement in the Americas may have a crucial role to play in aiding in the solution of the most fundamental problem to be solved for this to happen in Central America—the development of revolutionary strategy and organisation.

The fires in the Yankee backyard have not been and cannot be put out, no matter what the U.S. or any imperialist power does there. □

### Footnotes

1. Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, *El Salvador: The Face of Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1982) p. 76, citing Melvin Burke, "El Sistema de Plantacion y la Proletarianization del Trabajo Agrícola en El Salvador," *Estudios Centroamericanos* (San Salvador: UCA Editores) no. 335/336 (September-October 1976) p. 476.
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3. *New York Times*, April 28, 1983.
4. *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*, p. 6,7.
5. *The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p. 111.
6. David Ronfeldt, *Geopolitics, Security, and*

- U.S. Strategy in the Caribbean Basin* (The Rand Corporation, R-2997-AF/RC, November 1983) p. 8 (The Caribbean Basin is a U.S. geopolitical concept that generally refers to not only the Caribbean Sea and its islands but also all the land mass that borders it, including Central America, Mexico, Panama and the northern part of South America.)
7. *ibid.*, p. 30.
8. *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1985.
9. *Time*, April 22, 1985.
10. *Declaration*, p. 32.

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# The Greenpeace Affair



On July 10, 1985 two bombs exploded under the hull of the *Rainbow Warrior* anchored in the harbour of Auckland, New Zealand, killing a photographer of Portuguese origin, Fernando Pereira.

The *Rainbow Warrior* was the flagship of a "fleet" belonging to the international organisation Greenpeace—a group of pacifists and ecologists based mainly in the imperialist countries who for fifteen years have been protesting, often at considerable danger, the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons as well as taking up other causes of a more specifically environmental nature, such as the fight to save the whale population from extinction.

Because of these activities, Greenpeace had earned the animosity of the nuclear powers. In

the wake of the murderous assault in the Auckland harbour, therefore, it was not immediately evident which hand was behind the explosions. The U.S., certainly, was a likely culprit as was Great Britain, which is Greenpeace's official homebase, and where it is considered an embarrassment by the Thatcher government. Even the Soviet Union, despite its efforts to use some of Greenpeace's campaigns for propaganda purposes, has had some serious conflicts with the organisation in the past: in 1982 a flotilla had sailed into a Soviet testing zone in the Kamchatka area—near the same area where the Soviets shot down the Korean 007 airplane.

But it was particularly France which was suspect. Ever since 1965, France has been using the island of

Mururoa in the French Pacific region of Polynesia to test and perfect its nuclear weapons. Until 1975 France continued to conduct atmospheric testing. Since that time scores of underground tests have taken place, each one weakening further the volcanic bedrock of the island and threatening to send the whole island and the accumulated pollution drifting off into the Pacific.

For these reasons Greenpeace has continually struggled against the French nuclear testing at Mururoa, provoking brutal reaction by French authorities. In one incident in the early 1970s, French sailors boarded a Greenpeace vessel and viciously beat its unarmed crew, including the current head of Greenpeace, David McTaggart, who



(D.G.S.E.). Quickly, the government of New Zealand itself, headed by the social-democratic blowhard David Lange, was to accuse France. Yet, in spite of all this, and even as evidence mounted daily, the French government continued to issue denial after denial of any official role in the attack on the *Rainbow Warrior* and to piously promise to cooperate in the investigation of the crime along with the eventual "punishment" of any unknown Frenchmen who might just happen to be involved (as individuals, of course!).

It was the beginning of a *scandale* on a scale not before seen during the Mitterrand regime in France. In many ways it was comparable to the "Watergate" affair in the United States and had many of the same features: criminal acts committed by the government itself; clumsy lying by officials on all levels trying to cover-up the affair; "leaks" to the press by various functionaries each out to save their own careers at the expense of their colleagues; efforts by rival factions of the ruling class to utilise *l'affaire Greenpeace* to carry out their political interests; an accelerating cycle of charges and counter-charges and lies and counter lies that flew out of control; the increasing exposure of the hallowed government officials as narrow, self-seeking liars and criminals.

What made Greenpeace different from Watergate was above all its *origin* (which, as we will see, is the one thing that all "responsible" parties in France, right and left, try to obliterate). Whereas the Watergate scandal in the U.S. began as simply a case of inner bourgeois foul play (sending agents to break into the offices of the rival Democratic Party headquarters) the Greenpeace affair was set off by the murder of a man during a terrorist attack against a pacifist organisation—conducted in the interests of still greater crimes: the strengthening of the grip of French imperialism on a major portion of the Pacific and the preparation for nuclear warfare.

#### France in the Pacific

Although the "traditional sphere of influence" of French imperialism is located in Africa and the Mid-East,

at the height of its power French imperialism was able to extend its influence and contend with its rivals throughout the globe. Even today remnants of the French colonial empire still exist where old-fashioned, open colonialism is still the order of the day. This is particularly true in a number of "island colonies" which France maintains scattered about the oceans of the world: La Reunion in the Indian Ocean, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean, and, above all, New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the Pacific.

French possessions in the South Pacific total 22,700 square kilometres distributed over 130 islands. The largest of these possessions, New Caledonia, has a population of 140,000 while 170,000 others are inhabitants of French Polynesia. One factor which makes these possessions particularly valuable is the current international agreement which grants each state exclusive economic rights over the ocean floor within 200 kilometres of its shores. 200 kilometres around every French island in the Pacific amounts to an economic zone *fourteen times the surface of France*.

It is not only immediate economic interest that encourages France to fight so bitterly to maintain its foothold in the Pacific. The French imperialists are also very aware, and concerned, about long-term, strategic interests in the region as well. One leading political figure in France stated that the Pacific will play the same role in the 21st century that the Mediterranean played in antiquity and the Atlantic has played in the past three hundred years. And the spokesmen for all political tendencies in France have made very, very clear that France intends to be at the table, if not at the head of it, when the Pacific spoils are to be divided up.

All this is quite linked to France's nuclear policy. After all, protecting and expanding an imperialist empire in today's world is above all a question of nuclear weapons. And the French bourgeoisie, as well as its various political parties, open and disguised, understands this only too well.

So what other single gesture could so

well typify the reality of French imperialism and its ambitions as the explosion of nuclear weapons in their far off Pacific atoll. Far beyond the immediate military benefits of these tests (and it has been asked, not without reason, that if they are as harmless as the French say, why couldn't they be conducted in the metropole) is the clear political statement involved. As government officials openly proclaim, French "dissuasion" requires the adversary to be convinced that France will *use* its nuclear weapons if necessary and thus a cornerstone of French policy in all its aspects is to constantly perfect, test and prepare to use its nuclear weapons. The brutal destruction of a pacifist ship is itself a clear message of French imperialism's intention to go to whatever lengths necessary to protect and expand its empire as well as a reflection of the intensification of the contradictions pushing France and the other imperialist powers to prepare ever more energetically for world war.

All of this is reflected in the internal politics of France as well, and especially the role of the President of France who is, above all, the guardian and ultimate trigger of France's nuclear force, the third largest in the world. This role was carved out by DeGaulle, for whom the *force de frappe* was the vital element in restoring France's "rightful" participation in the world. This policy has continued under every successive French president including François Mitterrand, the great defender of human rights and socialist! In fact the basic requirement the bourgeoisie had made of the Socialist Party was that it abandon its anti-nuclear rhetoric that, as empty as it was, had marked an earlier period, and rally around the *force de frappe*. The reversal of the Socialist Party's official position on nuclear weapons was thus a key element in the election of Mitterrand as president.

Since assuming office Mitterrand has in no way betrayed this pledge. In fact, while his policies have, across the board, been marked by one right wing turn after another, there is no arena where his reactionary, imperialist nature is so clear

as in relation to nuclear affairs. He has ardently fought for the deployment of the U.S. missiles in Europe, vigorously stepped up France's research on the neutron bomb, and updated the nuclear submarine fleet. Mitterrand has gone so far as to state, in arrogance or unwitting buffoonery, "la dissuasion, c'est moi" (a reference to the famous statement of Louis XIV who said *l'état, c'est moi* or "I am the state.")

As stated before, imperialism is not a partisan affair. That is to say that in France the basic strategic orientation of the country is not subjected to the bickering of bourgeois political parties; on the contrary, the general outlines of French imperialist policy enjoy a very broad "consensus." Even the revisionist French Communist Party (PCF) has dropped its opposition to the *force de frappe*.

Thus it is against this backdrop that the Greenpeace scandal erupted. Bit by bit the extremely ironic situation developed in which a genuine crisis of the Mitterrand regime took shape alongside bitter infighting within the ranks of the ruling circles, while all the principals concerned were 100 percent united on the really essential: that France maintain its nuclear forces; that tests be carried out at Mururoa; that France remain a "Pacific power;" and that anyone be viciously suppressed who dared lay a finger on France's sovereignty (read, its ability to maintain its nukes and use them as it sees fit).

### The Scandal Unfolds

Immediately after the arrest of the D.G.S.E. couple — the "Turenges"—Mr. Turenge (actually Alain Mafart) telephoned (from jail!) a special number belonging to the D.G.S.E. to alert Paris that the couple's getaway had been fouled up. Thus from the earliest hours, top officials were aware that French agents had been arrested in New Zealand and were under investigation for the attack against the *Rainbow Warrior*. The cover-up began right there.

At first, the French secret services tried to find another foreign power to take the fall for the *Rainbow Warrior*. Apparently they ap-

proached British intelligence, who seem to have been more or less aware of the movements of the "Turenges" and may have informed the New Zealand authorities in advance of the attack. The British refused. The Swiss let it be known they would not go along with any efforts to provide a Swiss "cover" for the arrested agents.

Meanwhile, French espionage circles were busy floating all sorts of "disinformation"—false leads to journalists aimed at spreading confusion about the origin of the affair. It was for example, reported to be a diabolical plot by "anglo-saxons" to commit an attack and then blame it on the French. This self-serving hypothesis was faithfully repeated by more than one "respectable" journal (of both the right and the left) and continued to surface in one form or another in the months to come. Efforts were made to imply that even if, perhaps, some French citizens were involved in the attack it must be the work of right wing fanatics and certainly not of the faithful followers of government orders. And on and on.

Meanwhile, the rumour mill was started up to discredit Greenpeace. Since the organisation enjoyed a high prestige in France as in many other countries it was necessary to spread all sorts of unsubstantiated lies about it. The *Rainbow Warrior* was equipped, it was claimed, with espionage equipment and its real aim was to monitor the French tests for the benefit of the Soviets. Efforts were made to portray the murdered photographer as some sort of a super spy.

These efforts continued even as new evidence pointed ever more clearly to the involvement of the French secret services. The true identity of the "Turenges" came out quickly, as did the mysterious existence of a yacht called the *Ouvéa*, home port Nouméa in New Caledonia, which just happened to be in New Zealand right before the attack. It turns out that the crew of the *Ouvéa* was made up mostly of naval combat frogmen based in Corsica who work directly under the authority of the French secret services....

It was also revealed that a certain

French agent, Captain Christine Cabon, had infiltrated the Greenpeace organisation in Auckland in April and May of 1985 as well as showing an inordinate interest in finding out where certain types of scuba diving equipment was available in New Zealand. The agent, under the alias of Frederique Bonlieu, was able to manufacture her entry into Greenpeace circles as the result of several "chance encounters" among ocean lovers and then acted out a "conversion" from luke-warm supporter of French nuclear policy to ardent pacifist which made her seem all the more convincing.

To top it all off the *Ouvéa*, a very expensive yacht, disappeared from the face of the earth. What happened to the *Ouvéa* is still not clear but press reports indicate that it was scuttled at sea and its crew picked up by a French submarine.

All of the above would be evidence enough to make any government blush, and by early August the Paris daily *Le Monde* was saying, more or less openly, that it was time to cut losses by firing and putting the blame on Defence Minister Charles Hernu. Laurent Fabius, Mitterrand's Prime Minister, was apparently of the same opinion.

Nevertheless, Mitterrand chose to try to ride out the storm. He had one piece of evidence still working for him: it seems that neither the "Turenges" nor the crew of the *Ouvéa* could have personally placed the bombs that sunk the *Rainbow Warrior*. Thus Mitterrand adopted a dual policy of increasing arrogance while hiring a long time Gaullist, Bernard Tricot, to write a report whitewashing the government.

### The Tricot Report

The Tricot report was truly a world-class example of hypocrisy, lies and cynicism. His investigation apparently consisted of interviewing various key government officials and asking them "did you sink the *Rainbow Warrior*?" and then taking their denials as evidence of French innocence. The *Ouvéa's* mission for example, was simply to "practice navigation in the South Pacific (!)" and, secondarily of

course, to consider the possibility of joining a Greenpeace flotilla at a later date. The "Turenges" were there only on an innocent reconnaissance mission against forces who threatened French interests. Tricot even waxes eloquent in his report about the sailing ability of the crew of the *Ouvéa* and how this won them the respect of New Zealanders. He never asked how the yacht disappeared, nor did he interview the crew. Most interesting of all, he never explained why it was necessary to have *combat frogmen* on hand for a purely reconnaissance mission. He concludes his report on August 25, "All that I have heard and seen gives me the certitude that no decision was made on the government level to harm the *Rainbow Warrior*."

Tricot's report was greeted with astonishment and laughter by all quarters. It is difficult to imagine that it was ever meant to be believed. It seems that the Tricot report was aimed at going through the motions of an inquiry, and essentially let it be known that the whole affair was to be whitewashed under the cover of *raison d'état*.

Laurent Fabius' comments on 29 August regarding the Tricot report in the midst of the uproar that accompanied its publication are particularly interesting. While Fabius had to admit that "I have my doubts," his main point was to throw down a gauntlet: "As a nuclear power and Pacific power we have to defend what we consider to be the interests of France in the region. Yet there are activities that are contrary to our interests: no one, least of all those who encourage these activities (i.e. New Zealand), should be surprised that we are vigilant in the safeguarding of our interests."

In this same speech Fabius attacks Greenpeace as an organisation "trying to dictate defence policy to France" and finishes by challenging New Zealand to demonstrate the proof that the French agents blew up the boat. In other words, "catch us if you can." It is especially ironic that after all of his previous hot air, New Zealand Prime Minister Lange found Fabius' speech "much more honourable and much more con-

structive" than earlier French statements.

A careful reading of the Tricot report does, however, help to make clear why Mitterrand himself chose to adopt a position of "stonewalling," as Richard Nixon had put it during the Watergate crisis. It seems that the entire operation against the *Rainbow Warrior* was of such a magnitude (3 million French francs) that it required special budget allotments. Thus even if one would care to argue that the operation had never been cleared in advance with the highest state authorities it could not be executed without the direct approval of Mitterrand's personal staff, in the person of one General Saulnier, head of Mitterrand's military staff at the time, and now Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces. It would be difficult for anyone to believe that the good general put his signature down without talking to his boss. From this flows Mitterrand's very personal interest to try to maintain, at whatever cost, the myth that the French operation against the *Rainbow Warrior*, combat frogmen, yachts and all, was a simple information-gathering mission. It turned out later that a key member of Fabius' personal staff was also required to initial the request for extra funds. Alas, the French love for paperwork comes back to haunt them...

Despite the universal disbelief in the Tricot Report the French government persevered with boldness. On 18 August Mitterrand had taken the highly unusual step of publicly ordering the armies to "forbid, by force if necessary, all unauthorized entry into French territorial waters and French airspace of the Polynesian islands of Mururoa and Fangataufa...I restate that the nuclear tests will continue in the Pacific as long as deemed necessary by the French authorities and these alone." In early September Mitterrand went one better by paying a surprise royal visit to...Mururoa for a personal inspection of the nuke-testing site (after first witnessing a rocket launching—alas, a failure—in the French South American colony of Guyana). Mitterrand convened all of France's

ambassadors, military commanders, and territorial administrators to join him in Mururoa for a meeting of what he dubbed the "Committee of the Pacific." When Prime Minister Lange felt compelled by the strong anti-nuclear sentiment in New Zealand to issue more of his empty protests, Mitterrand responded with a polite but firm kick in the teeth, "it would seem correct that the injuries and accusations of which France is the object be avoided." One can only wonder how Mitterrand would have reacted to a foreign power sinking a boat in the Seine!

### The Dam Breaks

On 17 September the Greenpeace crisis reached new intensities. *Le Monde*, a "semi-official" newspaper if ever one existed, announced as fact what everyone had already known: French agents blew up the *Rainbow Warrior*. Furthermore *Le Monde* provided the key to understanding *how* the attack was committed: a *third* team of French agents (that is, neither the "Turenges" nor the crew of the *Ouvéa*) set the bomb and left town right away. Two days later *l'Express*, a newsweekly, confirmed the story and revealed the identities of the agents involved (both from the same training centre in Corsica for combat frogmen).

Mitterrand, who seems impervious to shame, reacted to the latest turn of events by issuing a public letter to Fabius asking him to cut off some heads and indicating that he only knows what he reads in the paper, just like anyone else in France. This public letter irritated Fabius who in turn leaked to the press that he already asked for permission to fire Hernu *four times* in the month of August and that it was Mitterrand who was reluctant to let his old pal and darling of the military establishment take the fall.

In any event, Hernu submitted a resignation which was accepted by a tearful Mitterrand ("I must express my pain, my regrets and my gratitude...You continue to command my esteem and the esteem of Frenchmen who recognise the fine servants of the country"). Admiral Lacoste was fired with less

ceremony. Paul Quillès was appointed the new Defence Minister only to discover upon taking office that the documents of the Greenpeace Affair were (surprise!) missing. Shortly thereafter, Fabius announced that his investigation had "revealed" that the decision to sink the *Rainbow Warrior* came from Charles Hernu and Admiral Lacoste. Several arrests of military officers were carried out, not for blowing up the *Rainbow Warrior* of course; the only persons jailed by the French government were imprisoned for leaking information to the press! Within days the Elysée officially declared the case closed and *Le Monde* obediently followed suit. *L'affaire Greenpeace* was relegated to tiny articles on the back pages of newspapers and public opinion polls announced that the "public" was "tired" of reading about the scandal.

One of the reasons for the very dramatic "loss of interest" was the almost universal desire to save Mitterrand; between Hernu and the President lay only one more potential sacrificial lamb (Laurent Fabius) and the latter had made it clear that if he went he would pull Mitterrand down with him. What was at stake was not Mitterrand the politician, but Mitterrand the President, holder of the key to France's missiles. As a notorious right-wing minister of the former Giscard regime put it, "the president, symbol of national unity, must be kept clear of the vicissitudes of government, except in the case of high treason." Saving Mitterrand also is part of preparing what has come to be known as "cohabitation," which refers to the likely situation which will exist after spring 1986 when new parliamentary elections will probably bring about a majority controlled by the Right, while Mitterrand will remain president for two more years. Most of the principal opposition leaders have spoken out in favour of "cohabitating" with Mitterrand.

As *Le Monde* was to put it in an editorial explaining the "differences" between Watergate and the Greenpeace affair: "there is no doubt that the method chosen to stop Greenpeace was both stupid and criminal. But it is not possible to

claim that the squad in Auckland served the personal interests of Monsieur Mitterrand." In other words, if Richard Nixon could be chased from office for using espionage tactics in the pursuit of his own reelection, Mitterrand must be protected since he acted on behalf of the most noble of interests, the *force de frappe*.

### The Paralysis of the Masses

Throughout the entire affair one force was not heard from—the proletariat and revolutionary-minded and progressive people in France. In fact, there was not, to our knowledge, a *single demonstration* in France against the crime of blowing up the *Rainbow Warrior*.

There are, of course, various explanations for this deafening silence. A large part of the population continues to support the *force de frappe*: the relative independence of France's nuclear forces from the U.S. has to a large degree spared the French bourgeoisie from the mass refusal of nuclear weapons that has swept over other Western European countries in the last few years. In addition, some of the social forces who could be expected to react to such an outrage are among those who have been first deceived, then disarmed and finally demoralised by the Mitterrand phenomenon. There is certainly no question that Mitterrand has succeeded in riding through the storm in a way that an openly "right wing" president could not. The comments by the Minister of the Environment, Huguette Bourchardeau who, until recently, represented in the Mitterrand government a small petit bourgeois party characterised as "extreme left," the P.S.U. are one interesting weathervane. She declared that Hernu was "very courageous to accept the responsibility for actions which were linked to Defence" and that she was "quite proud to participate in a government that was so committed to shedding light on a scandal." It is interesting to note that her Ministry had given a subsidy of 30,000 francs to Greenpeace only a few months before the attack! The French bourgeoisie is certainly still carrying out tactics, and they have plenty of ex-"leftists" around to faithfully do

their bidding and excuse even the most barbaric of crimes.

The silence of the masses on the Greenpeace affair is probably best explained by the lack of a conscious revolutionary political force, a vanguard proletarian party, capable of really penetrating beneath the surface and challenging the terms on which the bourgeoisie had placed the debate. On the one hand everything was clear: the government had blown up the boat and every official involved, from the combat frogmen to Mitterrand himself, was implicated in the murder up to their elbows. Yet the bourgeoisie had succeeded in engineering the unfolding of the scandal in such a way that it remained on the ruling classes' terms: who ordered the attack? did the secret service agents fail on purpose to discredit the regime? what is the best way to thwart Greenpeace? etc., etc.

The Greenpeace scandal created an excellent opportunity for genuine revolutionary forces to expose the imperialist nature of France and its bloody crimes. But in the absence of such forces capable and willing to undertake such a responsibility the bourgeoisie was successful in ruling the most important political points "out of order:" that France was an imperialist power in the world, including the South Pacific; that the nuclear force existed to protect and ultimately expand that imperialism; that the self-appointed defenders of the rights of man would go to any lengths to crush their opponents, even relatively harmless ones, if they felt their fundamental interests at stake. On all these questions, unfortunately, the bourgeois consensus emerged *strengthened* in the course of the scandal. Not that more people have been won to these reactionary positions, but that these positions have gone unchallenged and have, through the working out of the Greenpeace scandal, become more than ever openly declared as the united will of the nation.

As if to announce the end of *l'affaire Greenpeace* Laurent Fabius led a delegation from various political parties to the island of Mururoa in late October to attend the underground testing of a nuclear bomb. □





# "Defeated Armies Learn Well"

—Summation from the  
**Union of Iranian Communists**  
**(Sarbedaran)**

This is a reprint from *Haghighat*, the central organ of the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran) which reappeared after a long lapse due to the severe repression of the reactionary Khomeini regime. The article is intended as a step towards a synthesis based on the advanced experiences of the proletariat and the summation of the serious weaknesses of the communist movement in Iran.—AWTW.

“Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm swiftly from success to suc-

cess; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants; ecstasy is the everyday spirit; but they are short-lived; soon they have attained their zenith, and a long crapulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the nineteenth century, criticise themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful

thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta! Here is the rose, here dance!*"

*The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, by Karl Marx

### Preface

The development of events in the past few months in Iran shows an upsurge in the mood and struggle of the masses of workers and other strata. This new round of developments toward revolution in Iran occurs in the context of an overall crisis of the imperialist system, which in its spiral development and leaps is pulled from ebb to stagnation and from stagnation to complete depression.

The world today is on the threshold of a third imperialist war for redivision of the globe.

In the epoch of imperialism, war is the result of crisis, the pinnacle of crisis, and from the imperialist point of view, the only solution to crisis. But the same crisis that leads the imperialists toward war also, through further intensifying the exploitation and misery of the masses, lays the groundwork for waves of resistance and struggle of the proletariat and oppressed peoples throughout the world. Moreover, the crisis intensifies, concentrates, and intertwines all of the contradictions of the present epoch on a qualitatively higher level, and the different links of the imperialist chain are stretched to the maximum, making it more fragile than ever. Thus a new world-historic conjuncture is shaping up.

The Iranian revolution and especially the bright prospects coming off the new round of developments cannot be understood except in the context of the world situation.

There are two main factors which shape the moves and internal contradictions of the comprador-

bourgeois Islamic Republic. One is the galloping war preparations of the two imperialist blocs, their moves and counter-moves to pull together as much as possible their respective military blocs and destabilise their rival, particularly in the strategic region of the Middle East and the Gulf. The second factor is the weight of the existing crisis and the development of the resistance and struggle of the masses of people within Iran. On the one hand the Islamic Republic regime has certain freedoms and limitations, though increasingly its freedoms have been restricted and its limitations have grown. On the other hand there is the upsurge of the people's struggle.

So Iranian society is rushing towards a new conjuncture on a national scale, although not in the same form as the revolution of 1979 or the upsurge of 1981 but in fundamentally different dimensions. Lenin, in describing how the revolutionary situation takes shape, pointed out that it is not only that the lower classes refuse to continue in the old way but also that the upper class is not able to rule in the old way. A crisis in the policy of the upper class and fissures in their ranks must develop. He also added that no single one of these factors in itself gives rise to revolution, but only causes decay and corruption in a country unless there is a revolutionary class able to transform this situation of demoralization into a situation of active rebellion and uprising.

The example of the Iranian revolution of 1979 proves Lenin's point. Communists and the revolutionary proletariat were not able to unite the working class and oppressed around a revolutionary line and seize leadership. The results of the 1979 revolution caused further reaction and decay, ideological and cultural deterioration and more fierce and outrageous exploitation and oppression.

For the communists as well as for the working class and other oppressed masses of Iran, the upcoming conjuncture will pose serious confrontations and the greatest dangers and opportunities. This is coming at a time when our communist move-

ment is at the peak of an ideological, political and, of course, organisational crisis—this is the greatest danger facing our movement. Will the army of communists enter another battle in a state of uncertainty and confusion and risk the loss of a whole generation of revolutionary communists? Or will the unity of the communists and the proletariat around a correct line lay the groundwork for communist leadership to make great advances? "...whether the slave chains will merely be rattled, or really shattered; whether the fortress of the old order will only be shaken, or new ground seized for the cause of emancipation; whether people will fight blindly...or with head up and eyes fixed on the furthest horizon, prepared to win." Will the proletariat and the oppressed be the cannonfodder of the enemy classes and fight under their leadership, resulting in disastrous consequences, or will the flag of leadership be in the powerful hands of the proletariat and broad masses of the oppressed with the soldiers of the proletarian army fighting for their own interests?

The answer to these questions depends on the ability of the communists to forge a correct political and ideological line, and developing the unity of the communists around this line in a party, and on viewing what is to be done in a clear, long-range and all-sided way and rising to the occasion to fulfill those goals.

Developing such a line, however, involves applying and developing the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the particular situation of Iran. This requires relying on the most concentrated and advanced experiences and achievements of the international proletariat and in this light synthesizing the great and precious experiences of the Iranian revolution from the beginning until now. It also involves smashing revisionism, opportunism, ideological and organizational liquidationism and all the revisionist distortions of the historical experiences of the proletariat in the world and in Iran, which aim at misleading the communists and the proletariat and thus laying the ground for the un-

disputed leadership of bourgeois forces in the movement.

Past experiences, especially those accumulated in the past conjuncture, are very important in our orientation toward the coming conjuncture. Hence it is worthwhile to draw some of the most important lessons from them.

Presenting a complete summation is not the goal of this article. Moreover, in this article we will concentrate mainly on the communist movement and the forces related to it. We are not dealing with the "others" (the national bourgeoisie, revisionists, etc.—*AWTW*), not because the communists were the most responsible for the defeat and must be more thoroughly criticised than the others, not at all. In the proper place and time, we'll deal with these forces too.

### Introduction

In a situation of great social turmoil and at the height of the national-historic conjuncture of the winter of 1981 to the winter of 1982, a very important meeting of the standing committee of the Central Committee of the Union of Iranian Communists was held. Decisions were made concerning the immediate tasks of the proletariat, the communist movement and the U.I.C. A majority of the standing committee voted for an immediate uprising. This was seen as the central task and main way of responding to the other tasks and problems of the class struggle (including preparational tasks). The minority held that the main task was one of preparation for the uprising. The majority view won.

On the basis of the decision taken by the majority of the standing committee, preparatory work began. The decision of the standing committee was approved at the end of June 1981 by the Central Committee, giving it an organisational stamp of approval. So in the face of the savage offensive by the Islamic bourgeois compradors, a majority of the leaders and members of our organisation put forward a clear and sharp answer, despite the strong capitulationist and defeatist trend which had

swallowed up almost all of the leaders of the self-proclaimed "communist" organisations as well as a minority of our own leaders. We declared that we would never repeat the historical experience of the Tudeh party in 1953 during the CIA coup!\*

Implementation of the resolution calling for an immediate uprising put our organisation on a new footing. We were stepping out on a new course, unknown not only to us but to the entire communist movement of Iran. In fact the proletariat and the communist movement of Iran, through the Union of Iranian Communists, was shouldering the responsibility for leading the revolution, and at a time of very difficult conditions.

Implementing this resolution however raised many other key questions, such as: Is it possible for a small force to shoulder a great responsibility? Can one go into a great battle without necessary previous preparations? How can an organisation solve the most urgent problems at hand while overcoming weaknesses? And a more basic question was, what did the necessary preparations consist of, and why hadn't they already been made? Our subjective and objective abilities to answer these questions was finally expressed in the uprising of January 26, 1982 in Amol [a city in the northern part of Iran—*AWTW*].

On the nights of the 26th-28th of January 1982 the city of Amol witnessed widespread bloody battle of the armed forces of Sarbedaran and their urban mass supporters against the military and police forces of the Islamic Republic regime. Organised and led by the U.I.C., this historic armed offensive was the last serious resistance by revolutionary forces against the counter-revolutionary coup of the regime. Thus a period of development of the Iranian revolution came to an end and a new period began.

The period which ended with the Amol battle had begun with the rise of the mass movement in the winter of 1981 and with a new upsurge of revolutionary struggle which was passing to the stage of settling final accounts with the regime. Serious

moves made by Khomeini and his party to suppress and extinguish the revolution, which had seriously jeopardised the government's position, reached a peak in June and July of 1981. With the coup by the Islamic Republic Party under Khomeini's leadership and the implementation of open and widespread armed terrorist policies against the revolution, this period entered a new phase. Khomeini aimed to overcome the divisions and internal political crises of the government, smash the revolutionary political groups, push back the revolutionary masses, liquidate mass organisations and enforce an atmosphere of terror, suppression and strangulation. These were seen as the political pre-conditions for the bourgeois compradors of Iran to pull out of the crisis. Finally with the defeat of Amol, the last serious revolutionary offensive, the revolution was temporarily defeated. (The place of Kurdistan in this process requires separate discussion.)

After Amol, despite some resistance and partial offensives here and there, the revolution entered an ebb, a period which consisted mainly of summing up the experiences accumulated during the five years of intense class struggle and revolution. Ideological, political, organisational and military preparation had to begin anew.

The revolution and the mass movement suffered a temporary defeat at the hands of the Islamic regime, and the defeat suffered by our communist movement was great and terrible not only because thousands of militant communists were killed by the Islamic bourgeois comprador executioners and tens of thousands captured by them, but also because this was the third of a series of heavy defeats in the short period of 5-6 years for the Iranian communists. The loss of China and the qualitative unfolding of the crisis and the agnostic and liquida-

\*The Tudeh Party is the representative of Soviet revisionism. In spite of having very strong mass and military forces at that time, in the face of the CIA coup the leadership decided to surrender and fled the country.—*AWTW*

tionist trends in the international communist movement, and in Iran the fact that communists did not play a qualitative rôle in the leadership of the '79 revolution and did not use historical opportunities afterward for overcoming our weaknesses and our lagging behind—these were two defeats that the roaring years of revolution and the quantitative growth of the communist movement pushed to the rear as something which belonged to the past, bitter remembrances best forgotten. History did not forgive us for this carelessness. Not seriously summing up the shortcomings and deviations of the past two defeats prevented us from gaining the most possible in the two golden years after 1979. These two years provided rich experience and opportunities equal to dozens of "normal" years. Then, when the time for the next test came, we were dizzy and half-asleep. What we were not ready for happened: the class struggle presented us with a decisive challenge. And in the turns and twists of these times, many numbed comrades took the easy road of defeatism, capitulationism and treachery, and the liquidationist and revisionist deviations and ideological crisis of many others was further deepened. Those of us who were awakened attempted to take up our historical mission, but were encumbered by past deviations, lagging behind the objective situation, not accumulating the requisite forces and experiences nor making sufficient preparations. To claim that this was a fundamental reason for our defeat is not idle talk.

The communist movement suffered a defeat. The catastrophe was not, however, the defeat itself, but the *nature* of it. A large part of the communist movement, which was organised into petit bourgeois organisations with leadership which claimed to be Marxist, was defeated without even fighting. This was true for both the organisations which were liquidated under direct police attacks and those which supposedly "preserved" their forces despite the attacks. The communist movement of Iran was defeated, not because of the unfavourable

balance of forces but basically because of its deviations and internal weaknesses. This defeat must be considered a political-ideological one. This is also the main reason for the capitulationism, passivity, demoralisation, liquidationism, agnosticism, revisionism, and confusion existing in our movement. The dimension of the damage caused by the political-ideological defeat was much greater than that caused by direct police attacks, by the arrest of tens of thousands of communists and the murder of thousands of them in prison. What broke the back of the communists was not the ferocity of the regime nor the dismantling of the organisations and the loss of the best comrades, but rather facing three consecutive defeats while remaining unable to find out the roots of and reasons for them.

The questions which are eating at the minds of the communists who haven't found a refuge in revisionism, liquidationism or just plain don't-give-a-damn and who don't want to do so are as follows: Why was the army of communists of Iran not able to wage and lead a serious offensive for seizing political power? Why was the army of communists of Iran so disarmed? Why did the Union of Iranian Communists, which began to rise in responding to the tasks of that period, suffer such a defeat and come so close to being destroyed?

## **The catastrophe was not, however, the defeat itself, but the nature of it.**

*The experiences accumulated in the process of struggling through the questions facing us during June and July 1981 are rich materials for the communist movement of Iran and to some degree for the communist movement of the world. They are important material in answering the above-mentioned questions and forging a correct revolutionary line. These experiences and achievements are not the private property of any one organisation. They are not trophies won which one can then show off.*

These are vital experiences paid for in blood, and the forward advance of our communist and workers movement depends on summing up and drawing lessons from them.

Today the main point in dealing with the past is not to ask who did what; but to ask who did what, why they did it and what are the lessons of this for today and tomorrow. The question today is who is concentrating the synthesis of the advanced experiences of the communist and proletarian movement and the revolutionary masses during the years of revolutionary turmoil, especially the last conjuncture, in their line and practice, and how is this being done. This should be the criterion for the communist vanguard of the working class and the revolution in Iran. It couldn't be anything but this. We won't let it be anything but this.

Once again the class struggle in our society today is rapidly going to pose to the communists in Iran the same questions we were facing in the last period. The self-proclaimed communist organisations (from Peykar to the Union of Militant Communists or Komelah and from Workers Path to the Feydayeen Minority, etc.\* ) have once again given their clear answer to those questions—their political-ideological lines have the same content but in different forms, this time in a more systematic and obviously deca-

\* Worker's Path is a Soviet-inspired revisionist organisation which was formed after 1979. It was liquidated after 1982, but soon was revived by revisionists to play a "good-faced" revisionist party since the Tudeh Party and the Feydayeen Majority had been extensively exposed. The Union of Militant Communists, now billing itself as the Communist Party of Iran, was a group formed after the 1979 revolution; despite its proclaimed adherence to Marxism-Leninism, this group is decidedly influenced by new-left and Trotskyite tendencies blended with a strong streak of economism and opposes the scientific teachings of Mao Tsetung, particularly on socialism, that is, it considers the Soviet Union imperialist, not social-imperialist. Peykar was formed by those who split from the Mojahedeen in 1976 and took a stand against Soviet social-imperialism; it had a strong economist deviation as well as failed to recognize the cardinal importance of Mao Tsetung's contributions.—AWTW

dent way. In the situation of confusion and crisis in the ranks of the communist movement and in the face of the coming conjuncture, the inability to draw Marxist lessons from the past and the adherence to old deviations in all their depth and breadth are undoubtedly the greatest danger threatening our communist movement and the advance of the revolution. Struggle for synthesis of the advanced experiences of the proletariat and other revolutionary masses, along with criticising and negating the summations of and tamperings with the revolutionary experience by bourgeois revisionists and liquidationists, are some of the most important aspects of the struggle to come out of the current crisis and to forge a correct line, thus securing communist proletarian leadership for the revolution in Iran. This article is a first step in this direction.

### **The Collapse of Mechanical Materialism in Charting the Course of Class Struggle**

Perhaps the only thing in common between us and other organisations claiming to be communist was that no one was prepared for the situation in 1981. But when one asks why this is, qualitatively different reasons emerge.

Answering such questions requires very broad discussion and involves writing several books and theses (a job that has to be done anyway). Yet, even today one can and must go into the main points; here we will touch on some of these, beginning with the question, "why wasn't the preparatory work done?"

### **Economic Crisis, Conjuncture, and Revolutionary Situation**

Most of the organisations having to do with the communist movement in Iran understood correctly—though with different reasoning—that, despite the class composition of the Islamic republic, the regime was basically relying on the class relations still intact from the regime of the Shah and was unable to change those relations, and further that the Khomeini regime set about repairing any damage done to those class relations during the struggle

against the Shah in order to preserve them.

"The Islamic republic neither wants to nor can." This famous and too much repeated refrain was churned out in huge volumes of literature from revolutionary political organisations at that time. But what was not summed up correctly was exactly what the Islamic republic regime did want to change, what they didn't want to change, what they could and couldn't change, and how. The communist movement did not have a correct analysis of the social, cultural and especially political changes in the time of the revolution of 1979, especially after the January uprising. In other words, there was never a profound grasp of the freedom and necessity of the Islamic republic

## **The communist movement of Iran was defeated...because of its deviations and internal weaknesses.**

in comparison with that of the Shah's regime, or of the changes in the class composition of the regime and thus of changes in the alignment of class forces generally. Even those who paid more serious attention to these developments didn't grasp their practical implications, or like ourselves, drew erroneous conclusions (in right or "left" guise).

Many in our movement held that since the same crisis which prepared the ground for overthrowing the monarchy continued to function after the revolution, and since the Islamic republic had not been able to rein it in, consequently under the weight of this crisis the illusions of the masses would crumble and waves of struggle arise. But this general and seemingly correct analysis regarding the continuation of the economic crisis was in fact a cover for superficial and bourgeois economist views dominating the organisations.

First of all, many in our movement lacked even a basic understanding of the roots of the economic crisis which laid the groundwork for the 1979 revolution, let alone a cor-

rect grasp of its continuation in the changed situation after the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, the fashionable economic analysis of the crisis made by the movement was more a vulgar economist interpretation than a Marxist one. Many today continue to view the essence of the crisis as summarised by unemployment, inflation, a high cost of living, lack of food and a budget deficit. Naturally, with such an understanding it was then and is now impossible to see development in the situation.

Thirdly, the tremendous impact of the revolution on the course of the economic crisis was not treated seriously. It seemed enough to say this is "basically" the continuation of the "same" crisis.

Finally, after 1979, tremendous changes took place politically and socially, yet not a single serious effort was made to grasp the manifestations of the same economic crisis in the context of these social and economic changes.

However, even beyond the interpretation of the economic crisis, a related deviation of greater significance was the extremely superficial and bourgeois economist point of view of a broad range of communists regarding the relationship between economic crisis and political and social crisis in a revolutionary situation.

The economic base is in the *final analysis* decisive in social development. And economic crisis is in the final analysis decisive (and is in a sense the base) for the existence and continuation of political crisis and a revolutionary situation. But this doesn't mean that the political crisis and revolutionary situation expand and develop *parallel* to the economic crisis in society. In the shaping up of the political crisis and/or revolutionary situation, economic factors, including the impoverishment and immiseration of the masses, unemployment, etc., play a role—like many other factors—but they are not necessarily the most decisive or important ones at all. The economic crisis dries the gunpowder in the political and social arenas and, without this, waiting for an explosion is stupid.

(By explosion we do not only mean armed urban insurrection.) But the economic crisis in itself is not the most important factor in the act of explosion. Trying to understand the political situation directly from economic factors indicates a development of economism in a line and is the height of stupidity regarding the class struggle. This is mechanical materialism. Unfortunately many have held and continue to hold this view.

This viewpoint shows itself when explaining how a revolutionary situation will take shape. Contrary to the mechanical, gradualist viewpoints, the course of development of phenomena is neither a straight line nor the gradual accumulation of factors and contradictions. Rather, the course of development is twisted and full of leaps. It takes place through the struggle of contradictions and spiral motion marked by pauses. The way conjunctures and revolutionary situations develop is not an exception to this general rule of dialectics. As the fundamental contradiction of society in its economic base qualitatively intensifies and a vast economic crisis develops, all the social contradictions arising from the fundamental contradiction or involved in its process of development also intensify and become qualitatively more active in influencing each other. Thus all the contradictions of society become increasingly intertwined. This intensification and interconnectedness of the contradictions makes it easier for social pressure to break them. Under certain conditions, the conjuncture will be shaped and the ground will be provided for a serious rupture to take place in the form of chain-like actions and reactions, convulsing the entire social organism and social life. A single spark can start a prairie fire. For this reason the starting point of a revolutionary period could be a struggle, collision or friction in a secondary arena.

*Society does not enter a revolutionary situation in a straight line or gradually, but leaps into it. Under certain circumstances, even the most peaceful opposition of the most reactionary strata of liberals against the ruling regime can be a*

spark for mass uprising where the struggle leaps to a higher level.

All the above-mentioned weaknesses and deviations, and also other deviations which we'll discuss later, hampered a great-part of the communist movement in Iran in grasping the importance of the contradictions and developments before 1981. Nor was it understood that the events of March 5, 1981\* ushered in a qualitatively new phase.

In other words, many communists were unable to grasp the qualitatively higher level of revolutionary struggle during the period of the events of March 5th and failed to comprehend the depth and expanse of the mass movement in the winter and spring of 1981.

How could the commemoration of one liberal by another (Mossadegh by Bani-Sadr) be the starting point for a leap in the class struggle? How could it raise the level of the mass movement? Grasping this was out of reach of many communists' mental ability. In fact, their outlook limited their mental ability. "This is not 'real' class struggle anymore. The masses are deluded!" Such was the initial reaction of these comrades to the new rise in struggle. What strengthened this illusion about class struggle was the fact that the mass struggles were initially waged to support Bani Sadr and were against the Islamic Republic Party and—exactly because of the deviations and weaknesses of the communists—continued like that until the period shortly after June 20th.

As said before, the mechanical and economist views of many communists, particularly in analyzing the process of the development of the economic crisis in the changed political and social situation, the development of the class struggle and the way in which the political crisis and revolutionary situation took shape, left them unable to grasp how the intensity of the situation provided the conditions for society to enter a revolutionary situation, sparked by Bani-Sadr's commemoration of Mossadegh. What lit the spark was not bloodshed in a worker demonstration around economic demands.

The same is true even today. The

Islamic republic, in a constant state of suppression, repression, terror and strangulation, has brought about numerous horrors and continues to do so today. There is not a day that a struggle is not waged in some community or factory around economic demands. There is not a month that these kinds of struggles are not suppressed violently. In a period of a few months, under the same conditions, soccer games gave rise to two violent mass demonstrations with anti-Khomeini slogans. It may seem kind of contradictory that the workers or youth who engage in struggle in their community or factory for economic demands directly related to their daily life were and are suppressed, and still they did not raise the level of struggle to anti-government street demonstrations and political slogans, while these same people at the football stadium, for a question much less important, start to demonstrate, pour into the streets, make "Down with Khomeini" their main slogan and clash with the Pasdaran.\*\* Well this "contradiction" results from the material world. This is the reality of class struggle. Yes, if the spark of the previous mass movement was lit by the contradiction of Bani-Sadr and friends against Khomeini and the IRP, the next spark could be lit by the contradiction between Mr. John Fada and the supporters of Perse police!! [Perse police is a soccer team, Mr. John Fada is the head of the Tehran soccer committee—AWTW].

The development of the conjuncture provided favourable terrain for the rise of a revolutionary situation. On many occasions the intensification of differences among the ruling class (including bourgeois forces

\*March 5, 1981: a meeting was called by Bani Sadr to commemorate Mossadegh. Tens of thousands of masses gathered at the University of Tehran to hear liberal criticism of then President Bani Sadr of the Islamic Republic Party. The peaceful meeting was turned into a heroic street demonstration to fight against Islamic Republic defendants and burning of IRP's offices by the masses.—AWTW

\*\*These were armed forces organised throughout the country by the regime from the most backward sections of its social base, to guard its power against the people.



Behruz Fathi (Nasir) —played a leading role in reorganising the UIC (Sarbedaran). He was arrested shortly after the 4th Congress and executed, in no small part due to his unflinching and active defence of the cause of communism.

within the government) of society lit the spark of social fire. This is in part because the sharpening of the contradictions among the ruling class is a reflection of splits in the ranks of the ruling class and between the ruling class and the upper strata. Such cracks are among the main factors in shaping the revolutionary situation.

On the other hand, when the intensification of the contradictions among the ruling class acts as the spark for the prairie fire, the mass movement might for a short time support one or another bourgeois force and move under their leadership. This reflects the social, political and ideological influence the ruling class has among the masses. Many times, through some of their actions, they pull the masses into political life and struggle (naturally under their own policies and banners).

But, if their influence and initial leadership is not pushed aside, a serious and sometimes decisive obstacle for the development of the movement exists, which can result in the suffocation of the mass movement (as for example in the spring of 1981).

This influence will not, however, disappear by itself. The demands and expectations of the masses in these movements are essentially different than those of the bourgeois leadership. So the mass movement itself provides the *material basis* to push aside the non-proletarian leadership and bring forward communist leadership. But this "change" of leadership can not take place spontaneously and involves the specific efforts of communists. Except for eruptions here and there, the political radicalism of the masses of workers and oppressed are either reined in or unleashed—depending on the policies and forms of struggle put forward by its leadership. Only communist leadership can unleash the radicalism and decisiveness of the movement of the oppressed to its fullest. And those "communists" who accuse the masses of inactivity, who ignore the actual upsurges going on and call them illusions, are unable to push aside the *real illusions* of the masses and pro-

vide them with proletarian leadership.

Moreover, whether the spark is lit by the struggles of the oppressed or by the "struggles" of the ruling class has a lot to do with the experience, level of political consciousness, and degree of organisation of the proletariat and oppressed. This can be achieved mainly through the strength and influence of the communist vanguard among the masses as well as their sharpness and ability to act rapidly. In other words, if communists don't look at the class struggle from a narrow and economist point of view, nor view it as a struggle of the workers and oppressed against the bourgeoisie around their livelihood, and if they are not passive observers of class struggle in society, then they should be able to some degree to direct and guide sparks of struggle from their spontaneous course onto a conscious course. (However, regarding the nature of social contradictions and the role of a communist party in class struggle, it is impossible to keep class struggle neatly organised.)

On the other hand, contrary to the narrow and economist view, spontaneous struggles or struggles of a secondary nature should by no means be ignored. Rationales such as "these are not planned or conscious" or "these are the business of other classes" and conclusions such as "this is not our business, we'll do our own 'class' work independently," etc., are nothing but economist bullshit.

The bottom line is that such reasoning undermines the role of communists, reducing communist leadership to the economic and trade union struggles of the workers, and it negates the political and ideological leadership of the proletariat and its party in the class struggle. Political leadership of the working class itself requires that all the advanced workers and also broader masses of the working class obtain an overall understanding of all aspects of political struggle going on among all strata in society. But like all other understanding and knowledge, this knowledge is not gained through simply observing and explaining processes and

phenomenon from afar but is acquired through active struggle to change them.

So for the proletariat and its communist party, even politically training and leading the class itself won't be possible without dealing with all aspects of the current political struggle in society *from the point of view of proletarian interests*; and striving to transform these struggles. In this way the proletarian vanguard not only raises its knowledge and subsequently the knowledge of the class as a whole of the relations between it and other classes in society, but even more importantly, it develops the ability to raise itself to a level of leadership of *the whole revolutionary movement of the masses*. The party can then gather the various streams of political and class struggle and unite them under its revolutionary leadership. It is from this perspective that communists *have to* pay attention to class struggle in society as a whole, even the most partial struggles, even among the upper classes and in the least important arenas, not only so as to politically train the proletariat but also to take maximum advantage of such struggles in order to deepen all struggle going on in the society, and in the interests of the proletariat, in implementing its leadership of the on-going struggles of the masses.<sup>2</sup>

**The Spiral Development of History and the Extreme Poverty of a Straight Line View of Development**  
Another factor which contributed to many so-called communist organisations being surprised by the events of 1981 was the tendency, first, to view revolution and its development as a confrontation between two distinct, separate armies facing off against each other, and worse, to view the ranks of revolution as consisting of the vast majority of people. Related to this, the revolution of 1979 was seen in the "classic" sense, that is, the development of history and revolution were seen as circular, as more or less a repetition of earlier historical events. This is one of the main reasons why these organisations were unable to grasp the importance of the mass movement of the winter

and spring of 1981.

First, the possibility of the repetition of the previous course of events would be exceptional. For example, since 1979 the international stage upon which events in Iran will be performed has changed considerably. Iran itself has gone through developments. The players have gained new experience and know each other better, and some have even changed sides.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the class nature of the leadership of the revolution is one of the factors which played a role in the manner in which the monarchical regime was overthrown and which in the absence of a serious proletarian leadership decisively influenced the alignment of the class forces and the way the revolution developed afterwards. In other words, under communist leadership or even with the presence of a powerful proletarian pole, the alignment of class forces undergoes considerable change, thus influencing the course of further revolutionary development.

In fact, those self-proclaimed communist organisations who in 1981 were waiting (and are still waiting today) for the days of 1979 to be repeated, not only disarmed themselves, the proletariat and the oppressed, but also revealed the non-proletarian content of their political and ideological line and their understanding of how to seize political power.

And when some of these organisations (like Peykar, the Union of Militant Communists, etc.) tried to formulate a more precise perspective for themselves, they went as far as thinking that a repetition of the October Revolution would take place, and, at most there will be some switch in the order of the events of 1978-79. For example, if at the time Khomeini was leader, first the petit bourgeoisie took to the streets, then the proletariat went on strike and finally the uprising occurred, then this time, in the vision of some so-called communist organisations, first the workers will go on strike, then they will have street demonstrations and finally the uprising! Since the working class doesn't initially go on a political strike, then some broad

economic struggle is the required first step. And because the economic crisis still exists, they dare to claim a material basis for such a required first step to take place and then expand into a country-wide general economic struggle finally going over to a political strike.<sup>4</sup>

But as the class struggle sharpened, the difference between reality and subjective idealism for these forces deepened and this intensified confusion in their ranks. Finally the events of June and July 1981, especially the 20th of June, dealt the decisive blow to their subjectivism. The class struggle had not gone along their predetermined circle—June 20th and the events following it "should" not have happened that way! The "cycle" was interrupted. It became necessary for them to explain why reality didn't correspond to their previous assumptions. The first explanation of the leadership of the various organisations, from Peykar to the Feydayeen Minority and the Union of Militant Communists, was interesting, but painful, causing further disarming of their forces. Their summation: the events following 20 June 1981 were the mere repetition of those of 18 August 1979,\* only more violent. Supposedly this wave too would pass like the past one and society would return to the predicted cycle. But this is more like somebody walking in the dark and whistling in order to overcome his fear.

The two weeks after 20 June 1981 were enough to show the bankruptcy of their analysis. Before these events, they were unable to assess the great revolutionary potential of the mass movement, nor had they tried to unleash it. Now after the coup, when the previous forms of struggle were old and wouldn't function anymore, and unleashing the fighting abilities of the revolutionary masses depended on putting forward new policies, tactics and forms of struggle, they still could

\*The Islamic Republic gave the order for military attack on Kurdistan, which at the time was under the control of revolutionary forces, Kurdish militants and mass organisations. Also violent attacks were launched against the free press and against the revolutionary press and the headquarters of various progressive and revolutionary organisations.—AWTW

not see the potential of the revolutionary masses—the only thing their eyes saw was the active violent forces of reaction and the base it had whipped up.

Thus, the leaders of these organisations which proclaimed to be communist and revolutionary one after another began to formulate various kinds of reactionary, liquidationist, passive, defeatist and revisionist trifles. Peykar put forward a plan for preparing armed mass uprising while at the same time saying watch out for “adventurism.” The Feydayeen Minority tried to cover their passivity, first with much touted “fighting squads” and then with the formation of “committees of workers uprising.” Workers Path called for “a retreat and hiding among the masses.” The Union of Militant Communists found it safer to play around with the “pure workers movement” and forming “real workers councils,” ignoring what was really going on in society. Many of the “smaller groups” also said “this and that must be done, but unfortunately we don’t have the forces to do it.”

Of course, considering the depth of the deviations governing the communist movement in that period, such a destiny was not surprising. In fact, with the leap in the class struggle in June 1981, many communists, especially the leaders, instead of correcting their line, consolidated their wrong lines and took a *qualitative* leap backward into revisionism and liquidationism.

In a tragic way, “neither wants to nor can” was the situation of these groups with regard to communist leadership of the revolution. With an overview, one can see that a large part of the forces related to the communist movement had a mechanical, straight line, gradualist view on the development of the revolution and the class struggle and a narrow and economist view of the task of communists and the proletariat in the revolution. They were not able to see the twists and turns and the coming of the decisive battle, nor could they prepare themselves, the working class and other masses of people for decisively facing the counter-revolution.



Pirut Mohammadi (Kak Ismail) — was the Commander-in-Chief of the Sarbedaran fighters and a member of the standing committee of the Central Committee. He led all of the major military engagements with the regime, including the Amol Uprising, during which he fell as a martyr.

The masses were left under the leadership of the liberals and the Mojahedeen. Because of these same deviations, they were unable to shoulder or fulfill their tasks in a situation that, *despite* unpreparedness, *despite* lagging behind in this very difficult situation, *required* genuine communists to march at the head of the masses and show the road forward to revolution.

The result was that on the one hand the masses of people, lacking communist leadership, lost the ability to prepare for battle. Under the leadership of liberals and the Mojahedeen, their energy was wasted. They were driven off the political stage and their movement suffered a temporary defeat. On the other hand, many of the communists organised in these organisations, confused, disarmed and unable to lead the revolution, became demoralised. Group after group was arrested and murdered by the butchers of the Islamic comprador bourgeois regime. The communist movement suffered a heavy defeat.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Ideological Disorientation and Our Deviations**

In our case, however, the question is qualitatively different. At bottom our views were not gradualist. We did not tend to view the course of development of the class struggle as straight-line or circular. We were aware of how a conjuncture is shaped (we saw the revolution of 1979 approaching). We also foresaw the conjuncture which began to take shape in the winter of 1981.

What took away from the sharpness of our line was our eclecticism on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, especially our centrist tendency regarding Mao. In other words though the reasons and roots of our unpreparedness too must be sought in the ideological crisis of our organisation, our fundamental difference with the others, such as Mobarezin, Mobarezan, and Peykar, was that they had consolidated ideological liquidationism long before the conjuncture of 1981. We had not. In the twists and turns of 1981, it was only a minority of our organisation that con-

solidated their past deviations, raising them to a qualitatively different level, to a revisionism that basically had the particularities of a Peykar-type line.

Let us point to some roots of the crisis in the context of the second congress of the UIC held in March 1979. This congress put forward the basic framework of our organisation until the spring of 1981.<sup>6</sup>

The death of Mao Tsetung, the coup of the bourgeoisie in China and the formulation by the Chinese revisionists of their Three Worlds Theory as the strategy for the international communist movement and world proletariat gave rise to a sharp struggle between the supporters and opponents of this theory in our organisation. After a year, and as a majority of our organisation decidedly held a position against this theory, the result of this struggle was that the majority of representatives present at the first congress of the Union of Iranian Communists (spring '78) confirmed a position against this theory. This became public in a series of articles in *Haghighat* with the title of "On the Three Worlds Theory," which even today is the most systematic critique of this theory in the Iranian communist movement.

Although this document was an achievement for us and the Iranian communist movement, it has a basic shortcoming. Even though it *correctly* relies on the line of the international communist movement up to that point, closing the door to the open liquidationism which even in those days had become a strong trend in the international communist movement, we had not been able to deepen our criticism and generalize it to comprehend the historical roots of the emergence of the Three Worlds Theory in the international communist movement. In fact our criticism of this theory was one of *absolute* reliance on the line of the international communist movement, without making an analytical criticism of deviations in the international communist movement. In other words, we criticised the Three Worlds Theory by *relying* on the formulations of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and the

views of the Soviet socialist government in the period of the anti-fascist struggle.

Our criticism of the Three Worlds Theory had a tendency towards dogmatism regarding the history of the international communist movement. The context for our criticism should have been more dialectical, understanding the roots of this theory in the international communist movement and developing Marxism through this. And, as is true of all periods of defeat and/or emergence of a deviation, either Marxism will be developed or liquidationism (both as revisionism or as the liquidationism of the "United Council of the Left" type\*) and dogmatism strengthened. As is also common, dogmatism is itself a prelude to the emergence of liquidationism and revisionism.

### **They provided everything within their reach; some took up arms and joined the ongoing combat.**

The point is that the nature of our approach to the Three Worlds Theory, our unconditional defense of all the positions of the Comintern and the Soviet Union and our uncritical approach to the history of the international communist movement *weakened our firm defense of Mao Tsetung Thought*. Mao himself led decisive ruptures with many basic deviations in the line of the Comintern. And Mao Tsetung Thought is nothing but the creative development of Marxism-Leninism—including in the fierce anti-revisionist struggle and the struggle to sum up the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union, the struggle against economist deviations of the Comintern, and the reclaiming of a series of Leninist principles and verdicts (especially on the role of the party and class consciousness and the refusal to worship spontaneity) which the Comintern had deviated from.<sup>7</sup>

The renegade and revisionist at-

tacks of Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Labour Party on Mao and Mao Tsetung Thought reinforced our weaknesses in relation to Mao Tsetung Thought. Our centrism between Mao Tsetung and Enver Hoxha was in fact an expression of centrism between Marxism and revisionism.

From this point on, a centrist and agnostic tendency and following it a liquidationist tendency (its ideological aspect) began to form in our organisation. Moreover, in the case of communists in oppressed countries especially, this centrism either emerges directly out of nationalist and bourgeois democratic tendencies or lays the groundwork for falling into them. We were not an exception to the rule. Centrism means standing between Marxism (the *only* ideology of the *world* proletariat) and revisionism (bourgeois ideology in the guise of Marxism), standing between the world proletariat and the bourgeoisie (both "ours" or others) and between internationalism and nationalism and bourgeois democracy.

Our centrist tendency gave way to the growth of nationalist tendencies (mainly as seeing everything only in the narrow framework of the class struggle in one's "own" society and between one's "own" proletariat and its enemies, which is itself a nationalist tendency) in our ranks and for moving away from the ideological standpoint of the proletariat, that is, proletarian internationalism. The world historic mission of the proletariat as a *single world class* which is fighting for a single goal increasingly lost clarity in our views.

Furthermore, the immense difficulty in answering the problems and questions of the international communist movement, the communists lagging behind and having little mass base in the ongoing class struggle in Iran, the necessity to immediately overcome both this lagging behind and quantitative weaknesses and the pull to concentrate all forces in this direction, and

\*A bourgeois liberal "Marxist" tendency which was formed before the Khomeini coup, and denies the Leninist teachings on the party and class partisanship.

finally the force exerted by the objective situation (a situation of revolution) created the conditions where we avoided paying attention to the ideological questions in the international communist movement.

In sum, our organisation held this important congress in the initial period after the 1979 uprising *in a situation of ideological crisis and strategic loss of orientation*.

Another important factor that fueled the crisis in our ranks was that we didn't play a *qualitatively* important role during the revolution of 1979. Most of the other forces related to the communist movement didn't see the revolution coming and could not play a qualitatively important role in it (of course this was not the *only* or even *basic* reason why they didn't). This failure should have awakened them to do some serious self-criticism and to give a second thought to their line and outlook. But in our case the question was posed in a sharper way:

We foresaw the coming of the revolution. In this sense we were the most advanced of the communist forces, in fact of the whole revolutionary movement. But despite this, we were unable to play a qualitative role in the revolution. This was a heavy blow to our spirits and strengthened agnosticism among our ranks in relation to our past positions. In going back to sort out our past positions and deeds, we were unable, due to an internal ideological crisis, to find out what were the roots of these deviations. In this case the summation of the first council of the UIC not only was unconvincing but also added to the confusion. So all positions, views and practices of the past, both correct and incorrect, were called into question, if not officially, then unofficially. Finally, the third important factor contributing to our deviations in the period after February 1979 was the old persistent deviation of the international communist movement (in right and "left" forms) in relation to the attitude towards governments of vacillating classes. This deviation, especially its rightist form, which followed the prevalent view of the

majority of representatives of the 7th Congress of the Comintern, tended to make the strategic tasks of the international working class subordinate to defending the government of the vacillating classes against imperialism and reaction in order to "preserve" their progressive nature. In the past, aspects of this deviation were expressed in our attitude towards such governments as those of Algeria, Libya and Egypt. Now the direct effect of this line was in relation to our "own" government of vacillating classes—that is, if we could consider Khomeini as a representative of "vacillating forces".

As we have said, our ideological disorientation and our centrist inclinations paved the way for nationalist and bourgeois democratic tendencies. An important result arising from this deviation was the tendency to make an absolute of our perspective of the democratic phase of the revolution, which led to overemphasising the role and potential of non-proletarian class forces, and which tended to make this democratic phase of the revolution a stage in itself. The consequence of this mechanical and absolutist demarcation of the democratic and socialist revolution led to reducing the role and qualitative place of the working class in the democratic phase of revolution.

These deviations led to having illusions about the potential role of the non-proletarian classes and to reducing the role of the working class in the revolution and thus that of communist consciousness too. This last deviation paved the way to political economism or tailing behind the spontaneous political movement of the masses and, since every mass spontaneous movement is necessarily under non-proletarian political leadership, it meant tailing non-proletarian classes and strata. In brief, all the above-mentioned ideological deviations in our policies and political line were the breeding ground for economist and bourgeois democratic tendencies in our ranks. A more general practical result of this was losing our strategic perspective and tailing behind the spontaneous events. Even more im-



Ghollam Abbas Derakhshan (Morad) —was a member of the standing committee of the Central Committee and the Military High Command of Sarbedaran. He was captured during the Amol Uprising and executed two days later to silence his indomitable and exemplary defence of revolutionary Marxism, defying all torture.

portant, we neglected the possibility of our preparing the proletariat for seizing political power in that period.<sup>8</sup>

Without question, none of the so-called communist organisations played a more advanced role in organising and leading the working class than the UIC in the winter and spring of 1981. In this period, we organised tens and hundreds of strikes, demonstrations, and mass attacks against the Islamic Republic in many parts of the country. Some of these demonstrations gathered thousands of people. But despite our resolute role in radicalizing the workers and mass movement until the end of spring 1981, the political deviations referred to earlier prevented us from moving these political movements away from the general politics and forms of struggle imposed by the Mojahdeen-Liberal leadership.

#### Historical Tardiness

In late June, *Haghighat* advised the workers and revolutionary youth to form groups of 20-30 people in factories and communities, as organisations necessary to lead the final uprising. Also, before this directive, the organisation was given directives to intensify its agitational activity in factories and communities, strive to lead and organise strikes and demonstrations, guide and radicalise spontaneous demonstrations and strikes more systematically and elevate them to forms of mass organs in accordance with the necessities of heightening the class struggle. In fact, this advice signaled a repudiation of the economist line and began a new revolutionary initiative in independent communist organising (both in political and organisational dimensions) in the movements and protests of the masses. One result of these revolutionary initiatives, for example, was the turning of a mass demonstration in the Fallah district of Tehran into an attack on and seizing of arms of some Pasdaran military forces of the regime and the local committee headquarters. During this period, however, examples such as this were the exception, because every rapid transformation in political and organisational

policies *always* brings with it a *relative* degree of organisational anarchy, which naturally leads to *relative* inabilities in the overall implementation of the policies in the transitional period. Shortening the transitional period and reducing the relative inability to implement political and organisational line depends, more than anything, on the degree of political unity and subjective readiness of the leaders and masses of the organisation in the face of the new situation, and so depends too on the accumulated experience of the organisation in carrying out various tasks and different forms of struggle. At that time, and facing new policies, our cadres couldn't readily implement the line; and what was causing this relative inability this time, rather than being a deviation, was the fact that our organisation was not mentally prepared beforehand—we had not clearly enough seen the political developments and especially our own role and responsibilities. Moreover, our organisation—for various reasons including (but not only) our past deviations<sup>9</sup>—hadn't been able to accumulate enough experience regarding different forms of struggle and of mass mobilisation. Secondly, past deviations—the beginning of economist and revisionist tendencies—were revealing their effect on different sections of the leadership and the ranks of our organisation.

These deviations had become a strong trend and put obstacles in the path of overcoming our lagging behind the tasks at hand. The rapid twists and turns and the qualitative intensification of the class struggle especially in June and July of 1981 pushed many leaders of so-called communist organisations and a minority of our organisation to revisionism and defeatism. In that tense period of crisis, two leaps occurred in our organisation. A majority of the leadership and rank and file members of our organisation began to rupture with past deviations and took a stride forward. At the same time a minority of our leadership and rank and file members systematised past deviations and shortcomings, resulting in bourgeois economism and revisionism

similar to that of Peykar's leadership. Naturally these developments had a serious effect on our ability to implement our policies.

Finally, the other important problem contributing to our inability to implement the new directives was the simple fact that these directives were late. The coup was in progress and took a leap with the repression of the June 20th demonstration and the beginning of the executions.... With this, different *tactical* requirements were hoisted on the shoulders of our organisation. Therefore the old directives should have been put aside and new ones developed, which finally did happen. (We will speak further about these tactical requirements.) The point is that the new directives should have been implemented in the winter of 1981. In fact, those directives were a very important aspect of preparation for seizing political power in that period.

**...contributing to our deviations in the period after February 1979 was the old persistent deviation of the international communist movement (in right and "left" forms) in relation to the attitude towards governments of vacillating classes.**

Now it is necessary to examine what preparatory work should have been done in that period.

#### Accumulating Forces for Decisive Battles

The key link in grasping the tasks of preparation for seizing political power lay in accelerating developments while awaiting the right time to (both partly or finally) advance. What should be accelerated and how, what organisational forms of struggle are necessary, and when is the proper opportunity to advance and how to advance? All these are

decided by having a correct knowledge of the development of the class struggle at each period and, in the final analysis, correct ideological and political line is decisive.

Knowledge of the different spheres of class and social struggle and active involvement in the more principal ones enhances the party's experiences and develops its capabilities in guiding different struggles. The party must also politically educate the masses in general and the advanced in particular, identifying the advanced in different spheres of combat and striving to recruit, educate, elevate and organise them into the party or the proper organisations under the leadership of the party. Finally all the different struggles in society must be joined into a single process and their level raised under the leadership of the party. In that way the party accumulates the necessary forces for the decisive battles to seize political power. These are among the principal duties of communists.<sup>10</sup>

Contrary to the imaginings of petit-bourgeois and bourgeois organisations pretending to be communist, preparation does not just mean doing slow political (as in pedagogical work among the masses) organisational or technical work. Further it is not just "internal" preparation of existing organisational forces either. Also "acceleration" does not mean the combat of a number of vanguards separated from the masses, whether in the form of terror or more centralised armed activities (in or outside the cities). The first is a gradualist and economist (also pedagogical) understanding of preparation which can take a more complicated form of armed economism, while the second one has a foco-ist, Castro-ite understanding of the role of communists in accelerating the course of development of class struggle. In different periods, preparatory work could also include gradual organisational and even cultural and educational activities. But preparation is neither confined to nor in most situations primarily means this kind of gradualist approach, especially in

countries dominated by imperialism, among them Iran, where armed struggle and revolutionary war is an important component of and sometimes the primary part of preparation for seizing nation-wide political power.

The necessary preparatory work in the whole period of February 1979 to 1981 should have been done in the above mentioned form. Kurdistan and the on-going revolutionary war there also must be seen in this way. This does not mean that if the possibility of revolutionary war or even liberation developed in some other areas in the period of 1979-81, we should have ignored it. The meaning is that if there is some possibility somewhere else it is wrong to let it go and throw away this opportunity—it is also wrong if you don't advance militarily in Kurdistan and develop strength in the base areas. In other words, the period of preparation does not mean a period of "not advancing." The point is that overall from February 1979 to winter of 1981, conditions for seizing nation-wide political power were non-existent, and therefore our central task in that period was to make the kind of advances as mentioned above, but during the winter of 1981, the conditions for a final advance and an offensive were ripe. This means that the preparatory work which was necessary up until the development of the class struggle in the winter of 1981 had to make the required leap.

#### **The Leap in the Developing Course of Events; A Leap in Preparatory Work**

The conjuncture and the acceleration of struggle in different levels and aspects and the prospects for seizing political power continuously push forward the new vanguard. Further, great battles demand a vanguard and bring it forward too. And with the leap in conditions to a revolutionary situation, the course of events would extraordinarily accelerate.

All these factors required a leap in preparatory work. In light of what has been said, this leap does not just mean the acceleration of current organisational work, but a leap to qualitatively higher work,

qualitatively elevating all military, political and organisational forms and levels. This is the only way to respond to the immediate needs of guiding and organising the masses' struggle and to overcome the tailing of the mass movement (naturally if we're not the leadership, others are!) and limping behind it and losing the capability of effecting the course of revolution.

But it should not be concluded from what has been said that our preparatory work is divided into different phases, as if we prepare for a conjuncture in one phase and only during that conjuncture prepare for the final battle. Rather, preparatory work for seizing power is a single process which passes through different phases which are correlative and interdependent. During the winter of 1980-81, the leap in preparatory work meant (this could also apply to any other area on the same level politically as Kurdistan) accelerating the process of the establishment of people's government, the forming of a people's army and moving to a general strategic military offensive. (Given the general military weakness of the Islamic Republic in that period, not only was this possible, but from the perspective of advancing the revolution, it was necessary.) Therefore, on the one hand an armed movement in one area dealing blows to the regime's bases would increasingly weaken it and, on the other hand, by advancing and strengthening its positions, it would strengthen the camp of revolution overall (as well as adding to the power and capability of the revolution in the areas).<sup>11</sup>

In the areas where people's war was being prepared but had not reached the military phase this should have been started as soon as possible. While organising strikes and demonstrations and trying to elevate the political level of the movement in the cities, our principal policy should have been to subjectively prepare the vast masses of workers and toilers for insurrection. In its organisational dimension this meant organising the vanguard of workers and various districts into special units of insurrection and beginning an armed offensive against the committees and military

centres, and disarming the armed forces of the regime—such could have been the main method of preparation for insurrection in the cities.

The overall offensive required the completion of five tasks. First, the advanced would be trained in the military sphere. They would develop their ability to engage in warfare. Second, this would enable us to recruit more rapidly (other advanced forces would be more readily recognised and the possibility of recruiting and organising them would have been met). Third, the masses' aspirations would be recognised more precisely, and this would enable us to formulate more definite political plans and tactics. Fourth, these offensives would in-

fluenced a larger number of the masses and prepare them for insurrection. Fifth, through these activities, the pulse of the mass movement would be taken, meaning that, in analysing the mood of the masses (and the shift of broader masses towards such offensives), we would be able to gauge the proper time for insurrection. By accelerating our activities, we would be able to ascertain the mood of the masses more precisely. With political agitation from "within," we would be able to elevate the level of mass struggle to military offensives "out" of the spontaneous movement. We would avoid

economism and tailism of the spontaneous mass movement as well as adventurism. Further, this would help to consistently grasp the subjective conditions of the advanced, the working class movement and the mass movement in general, and to conclusively and correctly grasp the potential and the capacity of the revolution in choosing tactics and avoiding "left" and right subjectivism.<sup>12</sup>

However, this does not mean that having done all this we would have seized power then. But at least we would have pushed ahead and deepened the class struggle and revolution to the maximum of our ability. Thus the soil would be ploughed and the ground would be more fertile for future battles in a

happened. Our plan was to start the uprising in a section of Tehran by relying on the military force of our organisation to seize a district, immediately arm the advanced and revolutionary masses, develop branches of revolution in other areas, direct the masses to take over the principal centres of power and reaction in Tehran, overthrow the Islamic Republic and establish a revolutionary provisional government. For this reason, we chose the Fallah section of Tehran, positioned our military force and made the necessary technical and political requirements. Considering there might be obstacles in implementing the plan in Tehran, we chose the city of Amol as an alternative for starting the uprising. Proper directions were given the Amol organisation. As the preparation period was prolonged, conditions in Tehran became unsuitable to begin the uprising, and, especially given the quantity of our forces, it became impossible there. In Amol too a broad offensive by the military and

**During these historic battles, these conjunctures, the proletariat learns a hundred times more about the science of revolution than it can learn during normal times.**



*Heroic fighters of Sarbedaran in the jungles of northern Iran.*

fluenced a larger number of the masses and prepare them for insurrection. Fifth, through these activities, the pulse of the mass movement would be taken, meaning that, in analysing the mood of the masses (and the shift of broader masses towards such offensives), we would be able to gauge the proper time for insurrection. By accelerating our activities, we would be able to ascertain the mood of the masses more precisely. With political agitation from "within," we would be able to elevate the level of mass struggle to military offensives "out" of the spontaneous movement. We would avoid

way that had not happened before.

#### **Lessons of Amol Uprising**

In the preceding sections we have explained the dynamics of preparation and some of the causes of our unpreparedness for the past conjuncture. As regards the political and practical duties of the proletariat, we entered into battle unprepared. It is essential to draw lessons from these experiences for the future of the Iranian communist movement. Why? Because it is possible that our communists could be confronted with similar conditions.

First, let's briefly explain what

security forces of the regime was unleashed, severely limiting our abilities. Therefore, the surrounding jungles of Amol were chosen for concentrating our forces and preparing for moving our forces to the city to start the uprising.

On November 2nd, 1981 Sarbedaran made their first move towards the city of Amol. Our aim was to take over the citadels of power from the regime. Due to a premature confrontation with the enemy midway, we decided not to proceed to the city that day—however, the part of the plan for blocking the Haraz highway and agitating among the people was suc-

cessfully executed. This received wide approval throughout the country. Four days later, the Pasdaran and the army undertook a broad offensive in the jungle against the forces of Sarbedaran. They were totally defeated by Sarbedaran, forcing them to retreat, leaving many dead and large amounts of ammunition and arms. From this period until January 25, 1982, the forces of Sarbedaran engaged the enemy in many offensives and brought heavy blows to the forces of the regime around the city of Amol. On the historic night of January 25 our forces arrived in the city of Amol. The main battle began.

The masses of people eagerly welcomed the Sarbedaran forces. They barricaded the streets, gathered information about the location and position of enemy forces, identified enemy elements and turned them over to the revolutionary firing squads, and so forth. They provided everything within their reach; some took up arms and joined the on-going combat. The spirit of the masses was high despite being under attack by the regime for 8 months and without being organised for resistance. This showed that their great potential for overthrowing the regime had clearly been hitherto ignored by the Iranian communist movement. However, the revolution could not withstand confrontation with thousands of armed to the teeth mercenaries, mobilised by the Iranian bourgeois compradors against this uprising. The revolutionary masses under the leadership of a hundred Sarbedaran communists gave what was left of their abilities. They fought, but with an ability whose limits were already determined. The masses and Sarbedaran fought side-by-side, street to street, house to house, barricade to barricade, they fell, rose up and retreated. Our communist movement experienced another defeat. This time with heads held high, they entered battle with their lives, a battle and a defeat which provides the victories of tomorrow.

Under what circumstances, with what aims and perspectives was our plan put forward? Revolutionary transformation like any other

phenomena does not develop in the same old form or in a straight line. The dynamics of 1980-1981 raised the masses to revolutionary positions that took a different form from that of 1979. As a result, new forms of struggle were required. Before the June 12th coup of Khomeini, liberal politics dominated the protests of the masses against the government. Many had illusions about Khomeini and his role in the contest between revolution and counter-revolution. But with his assumption to power and his call for an all-around attack on the revolution and the masses of people, Khomeini killed these illusions of the masses. Even so, many blows were received by the mass movements at the hands of the reaction. The mass movement was strongly influenced by the liberal bourgeoisie. There was the absence of a known and prepared proletarian pole which could rapidly show the correct policies and path.

All these things reduced the intensity of the spontaneous motion of the masses. In other words, the clearing away of the illusions of the masses about the Islamic Republic coincided with the sharpening of wide repression by the regime against the cause of the revolutionary masses and put the revolution in a defensive position. The regime was aware of the forms of mass struggle used against the Shah and was essentially able to disarm the masses. The masses were unclear as to what was the best method with which to fight, a confusion which would not go away by itself.

Further, barbaric repression and an offensive by the regime had limited the time for overcoming confusion and blocked the channels of spontaneous protests by the masses. (A factor which in 1979 was non-existent because the broad-scale mass offensive had pushed the regime to a position of strategic retreat.) In fact, after June 20th 1981, the Islamic Republic had a certain initiative, while the revolution had lost its initiative and the masses were in retreat in the face of the regime's repression. This was not due to "an ebb in the movement" or to their "ignorance" and "backwardness." The roots were in

the above-mentioned confusion. While the masses had come to grasp the necessity of overthrowing the regime, they also understood that new forms of struggle were required. The enemy was not the same as the one in the past. The battlefield has its own dynamism. The advanced masses with their class instinct had come to the conclusion that the task of overthrowing the regime was not possible by using the past forms of struggle and required new policies and new forms of struggle. Arms were at the hub of it.

Liberalism had revealed its impotence to the masses. Mojahedeen, with their dispersed and merely annoying activity, showed their alienation from the situation, their alienation from pushing forward the revolution and organising the advanced masses with the aim of immediate overthrow of the regime. In fact their role was to turn the masses into simple spectators.

The communists, in this critical moment, were looked to by the masses. In response to the existing political conditions, it was incumbent upon communists to have a plan which, for a period after June 20th, could not be anything but armed uprising against the bourgeois comprador Islamic Republic. The aim of this could only be the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and the establishment of the rule of the worker-peasant and other toiling masses under the leadership of the proletariat—a new democratic republic. In other words, armed uprising was the immediate duty of the proletariat and the goal of this uprising was the establishment of a democratic republic under the leadership of the proletariat. Our plan encompassed these conditions and goals.

What were the prospects of victory? The qualitative and quantitative limitations of the proletariat and its communist vanguard in that period were serious. Overall in society the material and ideological influence of petit bourgeois "Marxist" and non-Marxist forces was strong. The political, economic, social and military abilities of the Islamic Republic were formidable. Hence the possibility of seizing power was dim. Two other pro-

spects had a higher degree of possibility. First, as a result of the proletariat's offensive, the uprising would rapidly spread and result in a situation of relative anarchy or even the overthrow of the Islamic Republic regime and the installation of a non-proletarian government (intermediate class forces), which in this case would provide for a period of catching breath in the next round of battle. The other prospect was that our military offensive would destabilise the regime and prepare an opening for us and other progressive forces to catch our breath. This applies also for the Kurdish front. Battles in other areas, whether under our leadership or that of other class forces, could have been waged to prevent the regime from concentrating its forces in one area, thus the situation would become more favourable for us to consolidate the area under our influence and activity. This in turn would allow us to use our area of influence to advance and expand. But our ability to carry this out, to take advantage of these possibilities, was conditioned by our fighting for our own independent alternative and by deepening the struggle to the utmost and thus laying the basis for taking advantage of these other possibilities. This was our policy.

Was it correct to enter battle with a small force? Did we take on a task "greater than our ability"? Or, given the dynamics of the seizure of political power by the proletariat, would the proletariat be able to lead the revolution with its small force? How can the proletariat quantitatively and qualitatively accumulate and preserve its forces? It is clear that for the proletariat to win victory it must have a certain capacity, both quantitatively and qualitatively. But the proletariat cannot gain this experience through a "bit by bit" accumulation of the necessary strength to overthrow the bourgeois government and establish its own rule. By relying on the science of revolutionary communism and its latest achievements and through the twists and turns of the class struggle and the struggle to transform society, the proletariat learns the technique of making revolution, practices leadership and

with its leadership accumulates qualitative and quantitative strength and strives to enter the future class struggles in the most thoroughgoing way (the deepest possible way) and with the greatest achievements. In all of these great battles, whether in defeat or victory, the proletariat will enhance its knowledge of the battlefield, its enemies, its allies and the middle forces. It will be more conscious of how to make revolution and destroy the enemy. During these historic battles, these conjunctures, the proletariat learns a hundred times more about the science of revolution than it can learn during normal times. In these battles the proletariat examines its leaders, overcomes lagging behind, and makes great leaps forward, and it is in these opportunities that it can strive to make the greatest advances possible toward actually seizing political power. This must be the attitude of the proletariat and its communist vanguard toward seizing political power, regardless of their numbers. This is not a subjective view. It has its roots in the mechanism of revolution and the nature of the development of every phenomena which does not move forward in a straight line but rather develops in a spiral with in-

**Failure to act on the practical and political duties at such historical moments...can only turn a force, however great, into a backward one.**

numerable great and small leaps.

Let's analyse the question of small forces more carefully. First, we were not a small force. Our war policy had a vast base in society. In fact, in normal times or times of ebb in the people's movement a communist line does not have broad support among the masses. Only during periods of revolutionary upsurge are the material conditions present for communists to become an alternative to seize power. Our

weakness lay in our ability to mobilise our base in society around our communist line. Objective conditions were greatly in our favour. One day in this period of turmoil concentrated for the proletariat what would otherwise take several "normal" years to learn. The international situation was in our favour. The internal situation was explosive. The 1979 revolution was a tremendous experience for the masses of people. It had developed a generation of the best communists and conscious workers. Contrary to the prevalent mechanical views of many in our movement, a small determined force with a correct political and tactical line could ring the bell of an uprising, or as Comrade Mao put it, "A single spark can start a prairie fire." The history of class struggle in Iran has shining examples of this kind. For example the armed uprising of Satar Khan in the constitutional revolution proved that under favourable conditions sparks by a small but determined and capable force in one section of the country later developed into a great fire. There is also, however, another example: the Tudeh Party, which was a large force (this refers to the Tudeh Party before the 1953 CIA coup—*AWTW*), was turned to dust with one blow because of its opportunist and capitulationist line.

Second, the policy of communists is not decided by their size. When history presents the necessary objective and subjective conditions for uprising, it does not wait for communists to "accumulate" the necessary forces. It is their duty to seize the situation. Whether the forces are large or small should only effect the tactics used by the communists in the course of implementing their line. In the course of developments, situations arise that compel communists to enter an important battle with whatever forces they have at hand—with or without previous preparation. Failing to seize the situation will result in politically being routed, while a *defeat in battle* provides the material for future victories. If we were lagging behind the developing situation (which resulted from our not preparing for seizing state power during the two and a half

years after the 1979 revolution), and if we were blind to the new dimensions, and if the result of these two shortcomings in fulfilling our responsibilities to lead the mass movement in that period rendered the prospect of immediate victory very distant, the solution in 1981 was not to ignore our responsibilities when they became clear. In fact the solution was to come to grips with the shortcomings and subjective limitations and to strive to make up for the lagging behind by responding to the urgent political and practical tasks of the day. First, without this dialectical method one cannot overcome lagging. Second, in responding to the tasks at hand, as one overcomes lagging behind, the ability to correctly perform the tasks necessary becomes enhanced. Third, especially during stormy social upheaval, although great dangers threaten a force which has qualitatively and quantitatively lagged behind, unprecedented opportunities are created for the revolutionaries. These opportunities can be used for rapidly making leaps and overcoming previous lagging. And as Lenin says, a year of transformations in such conditions will surpass that of many "normal" years. By the same token, shunning revolutionary tasks during times of upsurge has a deadening political effect on a revolutionary organisation, regardless of size or military ability.

Fourth, while at the peak of a decisive battle the quantitative aspect might be the cutting edge between defeat and victory, communists do not enter battle assured of victory. In this respect, an important historical lesson in the bloody struggle of the proletariat exists in the example of Marx and Engels. Despite the prospect of defeat, they actively participated in the Paris Commune.

Is it correct to pit most of one's forces in decisive battles? To answer this, an understanding of the dialectics of "self-preservation" is necessary. For communists *preservation of forces* mainly has a qualitative meaning, not a "physical" one. In other words, what is being preserved must have an accumulated experience and a

certain quality which can only be attained in the process of effecting the course of class struggle and *not in any other way*. This returns again to the question of how to gain the required qualitative and quantitative ability for the proletariat to seize political power. If a force is unable to qualitatively elevate and accumulate lessons in each battle, especially important ones, it will be a fragile force in future battles (if it has not already been destroyed or degenerated from within), regardless of its quantitative size, unless it is conscious of its lagging behind and correctly strives to overcome it. Only by relying on this dialectical understanding can one grasp the relationship between the "preservation of forces" and the placing of principal forces in the forefront of decisive battles and understand how this method makes possible real preservation and advance. Relying on this principle, one can in the course of meeting the immediate practical and political duties and historical challenges overcome lagging, sort out the real political deviations and prepare for more decisive future battles. Historic moments command communists to take the offensive—this is commanded by history, not by the will of the leaders of an organisation.<sup>13</sup> Failure to act on the practical and political duties at such historical moments, failure to take up certain forms of struggle under various pretexts such as not having any prospect of victory, unfavourable balance of forces, or preservation of forces for the next period and instead retreating in a time when one must take the offensive can only turn a force, however great, into a backward one, incapable of responding to the necessities of the movement and consequently rife with pessimism, confusion, liquidationism, opportunism and revisionism.

#### Was our plan adventurist?

If we look at our plan as a phenomenon "in itself," isolated from the historical conditions in which it was proposed, then it was an adventurist plan. But if we look at it in the framework of the historical conditions and with a cor-

## Each lesson learned has always passed through a hard battle between the proletariat and its different enemies.

rect understanding of the role of the conscious element and its historical limitations, this plan and program was not adventurist. If we look at the role and place of the conscious element from an economist point of view, as if the masses by themselves would take up arms and then call on the communists to lead them, then this concrete, organisational plan for initiating the armed struggle is adventurist.

What is the role of communists? What is all the screaming and shouting about the leadership of the masses by those who pretend to be communists and Marxists? If we look at the dynamic development of a revolutionary situation (and the arriving of a proper time) from a mechanical and gradualist point of view, as though there must first be waves of general strikes and demonstrations throughout the country with the majority of people in spontaneous motion (or that the spontaneous motion of masses is "foreseeable" for uprising) then yes, our proposal for seizing political power was adventurist!

The reality is that our initial proposal for armed uprising not only was *not* adventurist but also was based precisely on the correct grasp of the conditions and duties of a vanguard accepting its responsibility to lead the movement. But as we said before, due to our lack of preparation, limitations and lagging behind the situation, the proper time was missed. Conditions for waging armed struggle were still favourable but new tactics with regard to the changed conditions were necessary. Just as tactical considerations changed before and after the coup, tactical changes within months after the coup (as opposed to immediately after the coup) were necessary due to the strengthening of the regime's forces and its increasing repression of the

people. The mood of the masses was in ebb. With the possibility of uprising in the cities growing dim, we had to change our fighting tactics.

The decision could still be waging the armed struggle from the northern jungles, not from the point of view of preserving ourselves or using the jungle as safe houses or dispersing our actions, but to prevent the enemy from securing the area, to deliver some heavy blows to the enemy, such as freeing prisoners, to attack the city and immediately retreat, taking over the surrounding villages and then falling back, keeping the spirit of the masses high, providing the possibilities for the advanced to join our ranks in the jungles and increase quantitatively. In this way we could put the enemy on the defensive, at least on this local level, and reduce the speed of its re-establishment. This by itself would have let us make our scene of action more definite and clarify the relationship between this struggle and the overall struggle. Then with more accurate planning, we would have gathered the necessary social forces for resolving the contradictions facing us and enhanced our qualitative and quantitative capabilities. We would have had more ability to clarify the prospect of advancing armed struggle and deal with the problems in carrying it forward. But in that time period, our subjective limitations did not allow us to change our tactics on the basis of transforming the situation. Therefore the January 25th 1982 insurrection in Amol, implemented according to our original plans, took place in a changed situation (a basically different situation and too late for what we had planned).

#### Causes of Our Defeat

Our lack of initial preparation and of the required quality to face the new conditions and immediate duties, the lateness of our action, inability to rally our social base and transform this base to active participation, inability to rally other possible forces, inability to prevail over the day to day changes in the revolution and the counter-revolution, our isolation from these

changes and loss of ability to choose timely and correct tactics and maintain flexibility in our initial plan—all this led to our tactical and military defeat in the city of Amol. Despite the avoidability of some of these mistakes and weaknesses in that period, our defeat in Amol did not mean the defeat of our line in the period from June 1981 to February 1982.

Rather, it had roots in our past deviations, which had given rise to our lack of preparation and thus our failure to acquire the necessary quality and quantity of forces. Even though in the period of June 1981 we were beginning to rupture with these deviations, they severely limited our ability. Our limitations and weaknesses in the above-mentioned period also were due to our inexperience and lack of clarity concerning the general process of advancing revolution, including its military theory. This itself was a sign that knowledge of principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought was not enough in dealing with new transformations in the world generally and with the process of advancing revolution in countries like Iran in particular. Summing up the proletariat's defeat in China as well as Iran's revolution and the two and a half years of tense class confrontation following it could have provided great lessons in many spheres, including the military. But grasping this was contingent on our relying on the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and its application to our fundamental communist tasks. And our centrist tendencies and eclecticism on Mao Tsetung Thought and its principles deprived us of this opportunity (not to mention others). Given the overall conditions, what we had done was more or less the maximum our objective and subjective capabilities (limited as they were by past deviations) would allow at that period. We did what we could and had to do, and despite defeat, this is a strong point of ours. We gained experiences (and materials) which could only be acquired in response to the most important political and practical tasks of the conscious proletariat in such stormy periods.

What transformations occurred in our organisation? The surfacing of a revolutionary situation in the period of June 20th, 1981 and the dynamism of responding to the immediate political tasks of the proletariat intensified internal struggle in our organisation. A majority of our organisation started to break away from the past deviations and made a leap forward, stepping onto the road towards a more decisive rupture with these past deviations and towards grasping more firmly Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and its development. The leadership of the minority made a leap backward and chose the path of liquidationism and revisionism. Being confronted with a revolutionary situation and the dynamics involved in responding to our communist tasks led to a (dialectical) division in our organisation, a transformation which did not occur in other organisations which called themselves part of the Iranian communist movement.

Despite its communist leap forward, the majority of our organisation did not gain the historical opportunity to carry to the end the rupture with the past deviations and to resolutely carry through the two line struggle in every dimension, including organisationally. The implementation of the Sarbedaran plan, its military and tactical defeat, and confrontation with the new conditions opened a new dimension of duties (and difficulties) for the communist movement and the necessity to respond to them. This resulted in the surfacing of new weaknesses (and limitations) which had an effect on the ranks of the majority of the organisation. Some of the leadership and members of the majority line could not grasp the roots of the Amol defeat, especially the roots of the political and ideological crisis of the communist movement in general. Many fell into confusion and demoralisation. In fact the process of breaking with past deviations which had begun turned, in their case, into its opposite. With the government attacks in the summer of 1982, this trend developed to a level of liquidationism and revisionism. Although the process was different, their line

politically united with that of the minority of the organisation.

The political and ideological degeneration of the leaders of the minority and of those leaders and cadres of the majority who had fallen into demoralisation and confusion was concretely revealed at the so-called trial of some leaders and members of the UIC in the winter of 1982-83. After our military defeat in the winter of 1981 and the attack of the summer of 1982, the bourgeois comprador regime of Khomeini showcased the so-called trial of some leaders and

UIC. What many people, including many advanced know little of, and all the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois forces have kept quiet about, is the vital force of the UIC who continue on the path to communism. Part of this vital force includes a great number of our comrades, from leadership to members and sympathisers, who remained steadfast to their class stand and gave their lives in defense of communism in the dungeons of the Islamic regime. This shows that they were strongly adhering to the principle of rupturing with past deviations and

committee of leadership, carried to the end the process of rebuilding the organisation after the police attacks (reorganisation had begun in the summer of 1982) and provided the vital basis for advance in the political, ideological, organisational and military spheres.

### Conclusion

It has been more than a century that the world proletariat in its battles against the bourgeoisie for communism has accumulated rich and bloody experiences—experiences which include victories and defeats, revolutionary advances and retreats of the proletarian batallions in different countries of the world, experiences which have been paid for in blood, experiences in which the proletariat in advancing its aims has learned lessons from and has enhanced its knowledge of making revolution and building socialism. Each lesson learned has always passed through a hard battle bet-



March 8th demonstration in Teheran in 1979.

members of the UIC which was basically a concentrated attack on us. The idea was to break us ideologically and politically. But this special attack of the Islamic Republic and its howling propaganda was unleashed to wipe away from the minds of the people the effects of January 25, 1982 uprising and the influence of its vanguard, the UIC, over the masses. It was a sign of the Islamic Republic's deep fear of an independent proletarian alternative in society and a response to the blows it had received from this pole. This was something that especially the vanguard and generally the masses understood. But the trial represented only one aspect of the dialectical development of the

upholding the achievements of 15 years of battle, with its peak, the Amol uprising. And outside the prisons the other part of this vital force took the responsibility to rebuild and to prepare for returning to an offensive position—politically, militarily and ideologically.

The highest crystallisation of this struggle for rebuilding occurred at a meeting of the 4th congress of the UIC in June 1983. Despite very difficult conditions, including heavy obstacles resulting from the loss of all organisational ties and that all the cadre are known by the regime, this congress ratified several resolutions (published under the title of Resolutions of the 4th Congress of UIC), elected the organisation's

between the proletariat and its different enemies. "In the course of the different twists and turns of the movement the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought has taken shape and developed through a constant struggle against those who cut out its revolutionary heart and/or render it a stale and lifeless dogma." (*Declaration of the RIM*) "In fact, history has shown that real creative developments of Marxism (and not phoney revisionist distortions) have always been inseparably linked with a fierce struggle to defend and uphold the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. Lenin's two-fold struggle against the open revisionists and against those, like Kautsky, who op-

**Only communist leadership can unleash the radicalism and decisiveness of the movement of the oppressed to its fullest.**

posed revolution under the guise of 'Marxist orthodoxy' and Mao Tsetung's great battle to oppose the modern revisionists and their negation of the experience of building socialism in the USSR under Lenin and Stalin while carrying out a thorough and scientific criticism of the roots of revisionism are evidence of this." (*Declaration of the RIM*)

With its defeat in this period of battle, the communist movement in Iran added to the bitter experiences of the international proletariat. But which victorious army is there which has not at one time been defeated? The proletariat does not mourn over defeats but rather draws lessons from them so as to act with more open eyes and return more powerfully to the offensive position, to turn defeat into its opposite. Yes, this is a reality! "Defeated armies learn well."

Today the international communist movement and the Iranian communist movement as a subordinate part of it are going through a difficult crisis, which is a reflection of the loss of the proletarian bastion in China and new transformation and intensification of all the contradictions in the world. Further, to the same extent that the revolution in Iran was a point of inspiration for the world proletarian movement, the defeat in 1982 of the proletariat of Iran (and its revolutionary efforts to win another advanced bastion for the international proletariat) resulted in the temporary defeat of this revolution and also did not help the international communist movement in overcoming its crisis, but instead furthered degeneration and confusion.

In a positive sense, the experience of Iran's revolution revealed the serious deviations and mistakes existing in the line of the international communist movement and the Iranian communist movement and provided rich material for their correct summation and for thus advancing the international communist movement and the development of Marxism. Without a doubt it can be claimed that a correct analysis based on the principles of the Marxist theory of knowledge of the experience of Iran's revolution and its communist movement will provide

rich revolutionary lessons for the international proletariat. Today great tasks rest on the shoulders of the world's communists and especially the Iranian communist movement. This summation is not for the distant future or only to be recorded as history, but is for immediate use in the critical situation which has engulfed not only our society but the whole world. Therefore, such a duty is immediate and on today's agenda.

Iran's revolution faced a temporary defeat in the situation of the imperialist system's plunging into one of the most intense and deepest economic and political crises in its history. The world is getting closer to the exploding point. Such a crisis will not allow the old system to stabilise itself in most of the world's regions, including Iran. Day by day all the big and small regimes defending the imperialist system are sucked into the depths of the whirlpool of the international capitalist crisis—a historic conjuncture on a world level. This conjuncture concentrates and condenses great revolutionary opportunities in it. This offers a great historical chance for Iran's revolution and the communists of Iran, who within a brief period after the defeat will once again face great revolutionary upheavals and even greater opportunities for achieving victory. Therefore we must prepare quickly. We must be conscious that the arrival of such opportunities also carries dangers, as through many twists and turns, pressures and difficulties, the proletariat confronts the bourgeoisie. What will protect the proletariat from these pressures and dangers is to never obliterate the line of demarcation between itself and its enemies and temporary allies. Therefore an important part of the immediate preparation of the proletariat is the sharpening of the line of demarcation between itself and all of its obvious and covert enemies and its temporary allies as well.

"Thus the Marxist-Leninist movement is confronted with the exceptionally serious responsibility to further unify and prepare its ranks for the tremendous challenges and momentous battles shaping up

ahead. The historic mission of the proletariat calls ever more urgently for an all-out preparation for sudden changes and leaps in developments, particularly at this current conjuncture where national developments are more profoundly affected by developments on a world scale, and where unprecedented prospects for revolution are in the making. We must sharpen our revolutionary vigilance and increase our political, ideological, organisational and military readiness in order to wield these opportunities in the best possible manner for the interests of our class and to conquer the most advanced positions possible for the world proletarian revolution." (*Declaration of the RIM*)

The revolution in Iran has faced defeat at a time when great prospects for victory exist. The international communist movement is coming out of its burdensome crisis, and along this path has won great qualitative victories. This offers another historical chance for our communist movement and for revolution. The meeting and the ratification of the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* by the Second International Conference of Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations is a qualitative achievement of the world proletariat and a great leap in the direction of the realisation of communist goals. The Iranian communists must grasp all of these issues and act upon their historical responsibility. "The revolutionary struggle of the masses of people in all countries is crying out for genuine revolutionary leadership. The genuine Marxist-Leninist forces, in individual countries and on a world scale, have the responsibility to provide such leadership even as they continue to struggle to solidify and raise the level of their unity. In this way the correct political and ideological line will bring forward new soldiers and will become an ever more powerful material force in the world. The words of the *Communist Manifesto* ring out all the more clearly today: 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.'" (*Declaration of the RIM*) □

## Footnotes

1. There were organisations in the Iranian revolutionary movement that even in the winter of '78 thought the regime of the Shah was in a stable situation and far from being overthrown.

2. Here we don't mean that under any situation and with any organisational force, one must participate in every political struggle (including mass struggles). We are mainly dealing with what the orientation of communists should be and how they must view all of the struggles in society. In fact it is our political line and analysis of the current situation in society, our goal and the degree of importance of each struggle in this light, that determines our approach to these struggles (our expectations, allocation of forces, etc.) at any particular time.

3. One of the important factors in the temporary defeat of the mass movement in the face of the coup of 1981 was that the masses, revolutionaries and communists were not familiar with the forms of action of the Islamic Republic. Whereas the regime, because of its historical origins, was familiar with the forms of struggle which the masses and their vanguard had used in the revolution.

4. Later, however, the Union of Militant Communists became a little more creative and tried to make this picture more "precise" and more "proletarian." It was decided that some workers councils be formed that would not necessarily be revolutionary. These councils would unite the economic struggle on a national level, then, from below, dual-power would be formed (see for example, *Communist Worker*, No. 1, "Move Forward to the Formation of Real Workers Councils in Factories"). Perhaps the scenario would be the following: The working class would not seize power immediately. First the Iranian Kerensky, whose rule would be that of Rahjavi, would form a government during the Iranian "May" to "October," and so forth!

We don't know yet how far their party advanced this clever "revolutionary Marxist" analysis—including whether it was decided who was going to play the role of Miliukov and Voluv during February to May?!

5. Explanation of the roots of the above-mentioned deviation and the way they grew in the communist movement is out of the scope of this article. We only briefly want to point out that the spectre referred to as the "third line," which the majority of the genuine forces of the Iranian communist move-

ment mobilised under, consisted of organisations which had been affected by the crisis in the ranks of the international communist movement. They fell into eclectic, centrist and sometimes outright anti-Marxist positions, thus heightening the ideological crisis in these organisations. Under the weight of the crisis and the intensification of the class struggle, their eclectic and centrist positions broke these organisations, one after another, threw them out of the communist movement and transformed them into bourgeois and petit bourgeois organisations claiming to be communist. But this didn't "cure" the "crisis" for most of them. For example, some of the communist organisations like Mobarezin, Mobarezan, Peyvand, Mojahedeen Khalgh and others had, for previously mentioned reasons, fallen into ideological crisis. The formation of "Revolutionary Unity" by them was the expression of their transformation from a communist into a petit bourgeois organisation. (Because of the particularities of development of the Iranian communist movement up until the defeat of 1981, a large part of the communists of Iran were organised in petit bourgeois organisations, such as Peykar, Razmadegan, Revolutionary Unity, Komelah and others.)

These organisations, unable to apply Marxism to the particularities of Iran, began to liquidate the ideological principles of Marxism, that is, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. They were not able to forge a Marxist line and left the ranks of the Iranian communist movement. Usually they began with the negation of Mao Tsetung Thought and inevitably negated Leninism (openly or not, mainly in the form of Trotskyism, semi-Trotskyism, modern revisionism, three worldism, social democracy, etc.). We'll write more on this in the future.

6. As said in the preface, our purpose here is not to present an all-sided summation of the past. Such a summation should be done in the context of an analysis of the development of the international communist movement and deal with all of our deviations *as well as* our positive and strong points (which form the dominant aspect of the motion) in our 15 years of existence. But considering the goal of this article, we decided not to discuss them here.

7. In the period of the first congress of the UIC, in studying our organisational practice from its formation to the winter of '78, our main deviation was assessed as subjectivism. In fact, worshipping spontaneity in the field of practical and organisational tasks was our main deviation. The way in which we developed our position against the Three

Worlds Theory and increasingly relied on the experience of the Comintern and the economist and gradualist viewpoint which dominated its 6th and 7th Congress had a direct ideological relationship to our upside down summation of past deviations in organisational practice.

8. In light of the above-mentioned which was a summation of our political deviations in the time period from February 1979 until the end of June 1981 in relation to the embassy takeover, to the Iran-Iraq war, to Kurdistan and the Kurdish people's movement, to our organisation's attitude towards the First International Conference of Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations, and to our views and practices on building a communist party—a detailed summation and drawing of lessons from these deviations is not possible in this article. Not because it is not important, just the opposite! It is too important to be dealt with briefly. We can only promise that as soon as possible, we'll organise these summations and present them to the movement.

9. We say this because even if in the past we did not have any deviations, still that would not mean that we had enough experience to lead a rapid and definitive battle. In fact, in the process of joining and striving for leadership of the great social battles, communists will gain and develop their capabilities in guiding and leading successful revolution. We will write more on this later.

10. Naturally, performing such duties demands the maximum unity and organisational flexibility including a clear perspective in relation to the different forms expressed by each aspect of the class struggle. For example, how to accelerate the struggle for the emancipation of women from the yoke of male dominance takes different forms than the acceleration of the struggle in Kurdistan.

11. By area we don't mean every area but those areas where material conditions exist for waging a people's war. We will write more on this in the future.

12. For example, many of our "leftists" foresaw the ability of the Islamic Republic to gather half a million people for the "72" burial (this refers to the 72 members of the IRP who were blown to pieces by revolutionary forces) but were unable to see the great potential of the actual though dispersed forces of the revolution. So it was not strange when they gave the order to retreat.

13. This point does not negate the preparation required for maintaining the continuity of leadership's work, an important factor which was ignored by us to a disastrous extent. □

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### What Flame?

Not even the sun will believe it!  
 Earth, this child of hers long accustomed to her warmth,  
     is preparing flames hotter than her mother's!  
 What flame?  
 A flame growing from the crack in the seeds  
     of destruction  
     which bury life back under the earth?  
 Or the anger bursting out from the rebel masses who will  
     end this slave order?!

Now, the stores of explosive fury  
     being made in every factory  
     and grown in every field.  
 Now, another sun exploding into birth  
     here, on earth.  
 Now, A WORLD TO WIN!

—an Iranian supporter of the  
 Revolutionary Internationalist Movement  
 London, 14 June, 1985  
 translated from the Farsi

Britain's Proletarian Youth:

# Smouldering Fire Flares Up



In August in Birmingham, the industrial heartland of England, John Shorthead, a five-year-old white child, was shot dead in his bed by police who had broken into the house searching for the child's father. Within hours, enraged crowds wrecked police cars and sent a constable to the hospital. He was only the first of scores, as in the weeks that followed districts in Liverpool and London too, with heavy concentrations of immigrants from the Caribbean, exploded in free-wheeling battles between riot



# Again

police and those who Britain's cops like to refer to as "the bastards."

The spark that set off the conflagration in the Brixton district of London was the police murder of a woman. In the course of searching for a youth, they broke into his home with a sledge-hammer and then shot his 38-year-old mother pointblank. Scotland Yard called this a "carefully planned and properly executed operation." In Tottenham, during another police break-in, yet another mother died on the way to the hospital with a

heart-attack—*after* they had roughed her up, all the while scoffing at her kids' warning about her heart trouble. The ruling Conservative Party's summation of the cause of the rebellions which followed these events was delivered by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd: "The roots of these acts lie in greed and the excitement of violence." He was not, of course, talking about his murdering pigs.

In one after another of these incidents, large formations of cops were forced into protracted battles against hundreds and even thousands who met them with rocks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails. Official England was particularly incensed by occasions when the cops were evidently lured into areas where they could be—and were—ambushed. Broadwater Farms Estate housing project, heretofore considered a "showcase" by the government, had its label changed overnight to "nightmare": the upper-level walkways connecting the series of buildings were used time and again by the youth there to rain missiles down on cops and then quickly melt away. Widespread bitterness for and hatred of the cops was manifest; the London *Guardian* admitted that the "troublemakers appeared to have wide support from many hundreds of people on the streets, including blacks, whites, Asians, women, young and old. At each spot where the rioters and police appeared the cry 'murderers' went up." The cops were surprised repeatedly by the savagery of the attacks on their ranks—by early October, one had been killed and two critically injured. This display of fury was touted by respectable commentators as evidence that the events were the work of alien-types—that they had nothing to do with the real England and its traditional "keep a stiff upper lip" spirit. Enoch Powell renewed his calls to expell the immigrants and decried that England may be in the process of disintegration, ceasing to really be "a nation."

But it does indeed remain a nation—an imperialist one, as ugly and chauvinist as ever, but now with less means to heal over all the divisions of that society. Sixty years ago Liverpool was the crown jewel of a

far-flung empire. Now the docks of the old Cunard Line creak with wood-rot—the unemployment rate is nearing one out of three. Among black youth leaving school in Birmingham's Handsworth district in the last four months, only one in twenty has found work. The minor injections of funds into community programs following the rebellions of 1981 have done virtually nothing but add riot control police on the one hand, and prop up a small layer of "community leaders" on the other. Thatcher called on both to end the rebellions.

These are weapons which the government will continue to use to deal with Britain's "divided cities." New legislation has been proposed outlawing "disorderly conduct" in order to give the cops even more leash on the streets. The police have also loudly publicised—"so that all Londoners will know"—that they are now armed with rubber bullets (sometimes lethal) and tear-gas, hitherto reserved for putting down the Irish and never before used on English soil. The Labour Party bemoaned the situation and called for a commission to study the "deeper causes"—which was already done following the 1981 upheavals, at nauseating length, and a repeat of which would no longer have even the limited demagogic value of the first go-around. Anyway, the government showed just how deeply it intended to probe when Tory Party head Archer stated, "I know what unemployment is—to find work, you have to move a bit."

Dividing lines in British society have sharpened—but hardly along the lines of black vs. white as portrayed by the press, of immigrants standing alone against a united England in some sort of mythical Churchillian tradition. Rebel punks, Asians and others pummelled cops alongside the black youth in more than one city. The impact of world events also continues to sharpen these divisions—Irish-style masks were common, and Zulu chants too were heard...as England burned. □



# Pitched Battles in the FRG

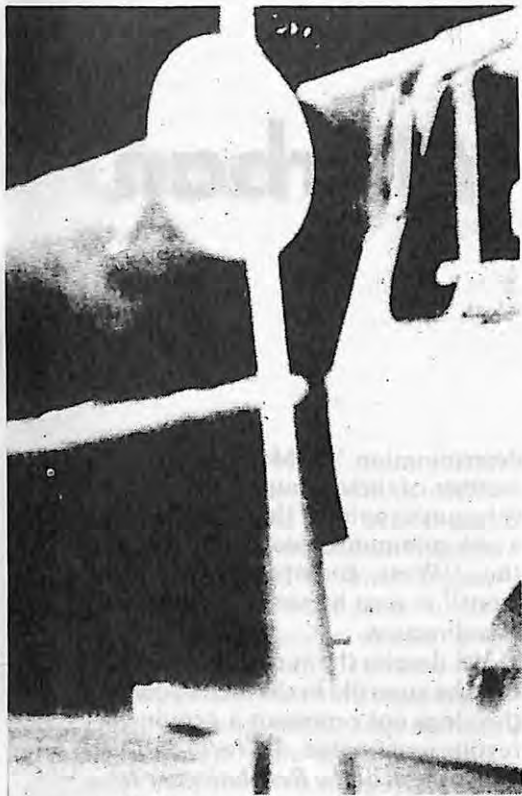
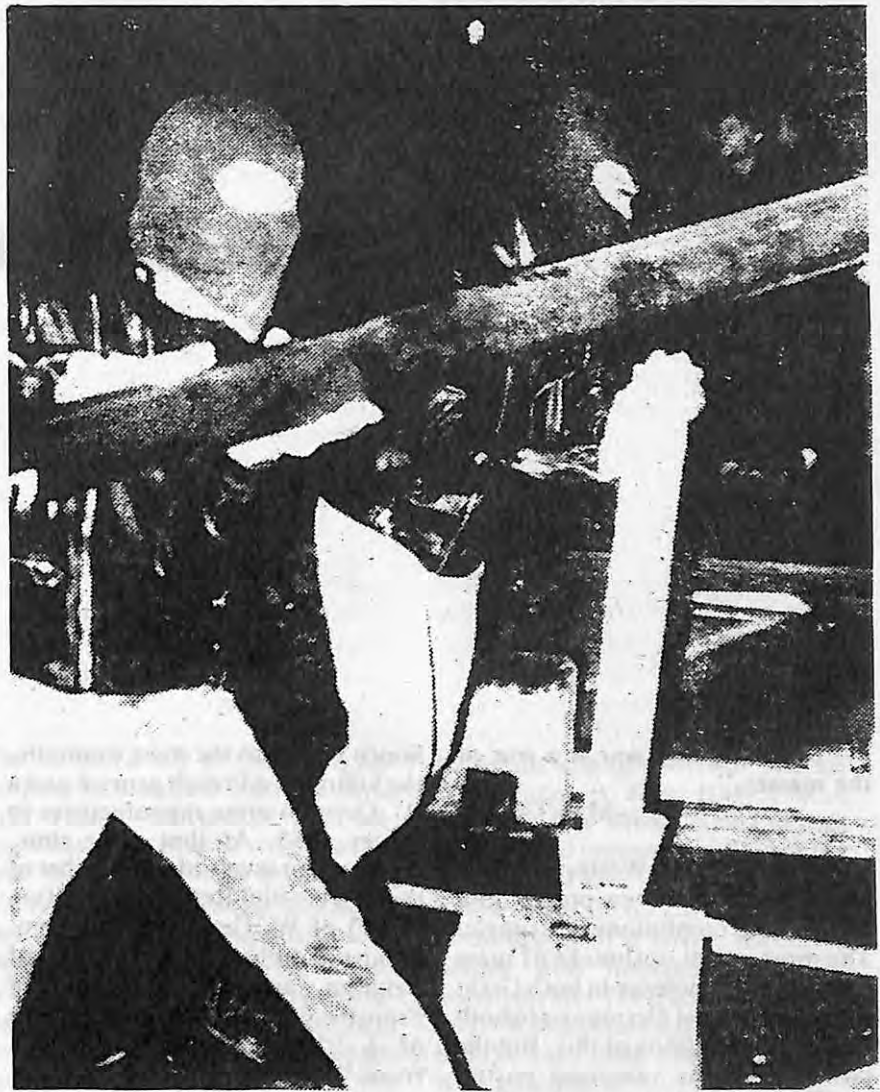
Bitter, furious protest suddenly erupted and swept through 16 cities in W. Germany in September and October of 1985. On Saturday, 28 September, Günther Sare, a long-time activist in the Frankfurt area, was knocked over and crushed to death under the wheels of a 26-ton police water cannon during a mass demonstration targeting a meeting of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party. Thus the armed forces of the state demonstrated—and it was not beyond the call of duty—that murder is no obstacle in this so very democratic Federal Republic of Germany when it comes to protecting fascist thugs and their anti-immigrant, anti-Turkish venomously reactionary message.

Hundreds from the demonstration and others too immediately pulled together and, led by a youth holding the towel on which Günther Sare bled to death, marched through the neighborhood. A few blocks away, a Daimler-Benz parts warehouse was sent up in flames. Daimler-Benz manufactures the water cannon which killed Sare—and which is also exported to Turkey and South Africa, among other places. To cover up this murder, the next afternoon the city prosecutor's office announced that besides having a crushed chest, Sare had also suffered a skull fracture—which they outrageously proposed as "probably" caused by a rock thrown by a demonstrator! Meanwhile, members of the neighborhood in which Sare was murdered, a proletarian area, renamed the street Günther Sare Strasse and put up a banner reading "Murdered in the name of the people, to protect the Nazis." That evening, several thousand angry demonstrators gathered and, attacked by the police once again, fought for hours into the night in a scene not seen since Hot Autumn '83 in W. Germany.



Even as the city government in Frankfurt clamped down further, outlawing all demonstrations except those held by "responsible" groups, further fighting blazed in other W. German cities. In Hamburg two commercial centres were trashed and a police car torched. In Berlin, barricades were set up and nine police injured. Even as far away as Copenhagen, the W. German embassy was hit with rocks and paint. The suddenness and the fury of these outbursts belied the calm which had reigned over the surface of the country during the past two years. And as in Britain, a hint of larger forces at work was felt in the streets, as in this one chant: "Frankfurt, Brixton, Transvaal, Bullen morden überall" (the police murder everywhere). □





PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM TAYLOR

# The False Path of "Urban

by P. Becker

"Revolutionary war is a war of the masses."

—Mao Tsetung

The situation in Western Europe continues to show new possibilities for genuine revolutionary struggle. The most recent outbreaks of mass revolutionary violence in both Great Britain and West Germany are both striking illustrations of this. But the lack of genuine vanguard parties based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought makes itself sharply felt there. The fight to construct genuine vanguard parties is of vital importance and requires that the revolutionary communists of these countries—and the international communist movement—develop a thorough critique of the ongoing revisionist and opportunist deviations which continue to plague the movement in these countries. In this light it is also useful and necessary to examine a peculiar variant of opportunism which cloaks itself as revolutionary and communist and even claims to be an opponent of revisionism—we are speaking here of the self-styled "urban guerrillas."

In the past year, a series of acts of sabotage and assassination were carried out in W. Europe, from the bombing of NATO pipelines and companies doing business with

South Africa to the most dramatic, the killing of a French general and a W. German arms manufacturer in winter 1985. At that same time, three groups involved in a number of these acts—the Red Army Faction (RAF) of W. Germany, the Communist Combat Cells (CCCs) of Belgium, and Direct Action of France—proclaimed the formation of a "West European guerrilla front," whose chief target they announced to be NATO.

Virtually all of these groups claim that they are "communist combatants," that their organisations are the vanguard of the class struggle, guided by Marxism-Leninism, and that their goal is revolution and communism. By carrying out armed actions as an integral part of their activity today, they have, they argue, decisively ruptured with the revisionism and reformism characterising the official W. European left. Moreover, their urban guerrilla warfare is said to be "the practical expression of genuine proletarian internationalism," as the Communist Combat Cells (CCCs) put it. "At a time when so many peoples of the world fight the monster, gun in hand, the revolutionaries in the metropolises have the duty to attack the front lines of the imperialist machine with the same

determination." (May, 1985) A number of these groups have recently begun to write of the necessity for a new communist international, and the "West European guerrilla front" is seen by some as a step in this direction.

Yet despite the very militant face of "the guerrilla in the metropole," this does not represent a genuinely revolutionary line. In fact, as the *Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement* puts it: "In some countries small numbers of people have turned to terrorism, an ideology and political line which does not rely on the revolutionary masses and has no correct perspective of a revolutionary overthrow of imperialism. While these terrorist movements like to appear very 'revolutionary,' they have also incorporated, more often than not, a whole series of revisionist and reformist deviations such as 'the liberation struggle' in imperialist countries, the defence of the imperialist Soviet Union, and so forth. These movements share with economism the fundamental failure to grasp the centrality of raising the political consciousness of the masses and leading them in political struggle, as preparation for revolution."

The question of violence is not the central issue in criticising the "guer-

# the W. European Guerrilla''

rilla in the metropole'' theory, but whether that violence will be wielded only by a handful of individuals, however heroic and self-sacrificing, or by masses led in revolutionary warfare to shatter the imperialists' supposedly invincible armies and uproot the capitalist system. The sights of those who burn with impatience for the day when they can settle accounts with the bourgeoisie must be lifted even higher, beyond the mere thirst for revenge to the horizon of waging the armed struggle in order to advance mankind to a whole new epoch of human history. The problem with the "guerrilla in the metropole" theory is that they do not arm themselves and the masses with the weapon of the science of revolution. Whether or not they have gun in hand changes nothing of the reformist, nationalist and economist essence of their outlook. Their conception of the "guerrilla in the metropole" must be rejected not because they are "extremists" who "run too fast" or are "too out in front of the masses," but because they are not "out front" at all.

The strategy of urban guerrilla warfare is nothing but a new variant of a deviation which has arisen in various forms since the birth of revolutionary Marxism—*terrorism*.

The scientific use of this term has nothing in common with the shrill hypocritical scream of the imperialists, who preside over the biggest reign of terror in history and who try to turn this fact upside down and paint all armed opposition to them as itself savage terrorism. What Marxist-Leninists are referring to instead is a specific political line which substitutes the armed attacks of a relative handful for the revolutionary struggle of the masses, politically and ultimately militarily as well. Marx fought this in the form of "propaganda of the deed" advocated by Bakunin, Most, and others; and Lenin forged the Bolshevik Party and its line in part in struggle against the populist terrorism of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) and later the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

The terrorist trend today shares much of the same roots—but it has its own features too. Born in the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly the RAF in W. Germany and the Weather Underground in the U.S. set out to launch armed attacks in solidarity with and as material aid to the national liberation struggles raging then—a sort of rearguard action which they argued would one day go over to direct revolutionary war. They started out by bombing cor-

porations engaged in war crimes; later, groups like Italy's Red Brigades and Prima Linea (Front Line) added innovations like taking hostage and kneecapping (shooting in the knee) factory directors who were targets of a strike, executing judges who imprisoned revolutionaries, etc. Their activity peaked in 1978 when the RAF kidnapped and executed Hans Martin Schleyer, W. Germany's "boss of bosses," and the Red Brigades did the same with Aldo Moro, head of Italy's largest political party, the Christian Democrats. The bourgeoisie struck back ferociously. Within a few years, by the early 1980s, the ranks of the RAF, Prima Linea and the Red Brigades were decimated, with thousands imprisoned in Italy (including many whose connection with this activity was never proven). Thus the activity which broke out in 1984-85 spurred speculation throughout W. Europe about whether this was the last gasp of a dying trend or the birth of "a new generation of terrorists."

## Urban Guerrilla Warfare in the Metropolises: The Theory

The terrorist line argues that the carrying out of armed attacks on imperialist institutions and personnel is generally the principal and at any

rate an indispensable task of the revolutionary forces from the very inception of their activity. These armed attacks are at the centre of their strategy: "protracted people's war" (sic) in the imperialist countries, with its pivotal figure, the guerrilla in the metropole. This theory is said to be the product of summing up two particular developments: first, the failure of the West European Comintern parties (the French, Italian, British, etc., Communist Parties) to lead revolution with their so-called "two phase strategy" of political preparation followed by military insurrection (and their degeneration today into revisionist parties), and secondly, the victories of people's war in China, Vietnam and other national liberation struggles. The conclusion that the RAF draws from this summation is that "the revolutionary organisation of the proletariat cannot lead the revolution to victory if it is not at the same time military, if the communist party does not build the Red Army of the revolutionary classes at the same time"; or as the Red Brigades put it, "in the epoch of imperialism, political work must be carried out gun in hand."

The various groups differ somewhat in their emphasis on what the armed struggle accomplishes and how it figures in the theory of "protracted people's war," but these are differences in emphasis—almost all portray their battleplan as a war of attrition, a long war to wear down the enemy bit by bit. They consider that the strength of the bourgeoisies has grown so considerably in the twentieth century that now only drawn-out urban guerrilla warfare can successfully combat them. As the CCCs argue, "bourgeois power has developed immensely, forming mountains which must be moved by the revolutionary movement." The RAF elaborates, "Revolutionary development no longer takes place from general strikes going over to military insurrection, but from commando actions for building centres of resistance, for forming militias, for disorganising and demoralising the forces of oppression through small protracted wars to wear them down...." These armed actions of the guerrillas "demonstrate the

vulnerability of the regime," emboldening others to take up urban guerrilla warfare. As guerrilla attacks wear down the bourgeois repressive apparatus, they argue, it will grow increasingly weaker and demoralised, spurring even more people to take up the armed struggle. In such a way, the bourgeoisie's strength is whittled down, until eventually what the Red Brigades call "the balance of force" between the warring classes shifts decisively in favour of the proletariat, which thus finally defeats the bourgeoisie and institutes its rule.

### I. The Military Strategy

As a military strategy in the imperialist countries, there are two problems with this scenario: it won't work, and it's not revolutionary in the first place.

The terrorist arguments begin from a confusion of the military strategy for revolutionary war in the oppressed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America with what is required in the imperialist countries. The terrorists argue that protracted people's war is applicable everywhere, and that this is a reflection of the fact that guerrilla warfare is necessary wherever the revolutionary forces begin from a militarily weak position and the reactionary forces from a strong position.

What happens when this is actually attempted in the imperialist countries is that the relative handfuls of the "urban guerrilla forces" place themselves on a military footing with a highly superior armed force which can be relatively rapidly brought down on their heads, in a situation where they have no way—and in fact do not really expect—to militarily mobilise the masses. They are thus isolated and smashed—as the terrorists have been repeatedly, even in situations where they have enjoyed some sympathy, as in Italy in the late 1970s.

That this is the case is a reflection of the differing conditions which make protracted people's war a generally applicable path in the oppressed countries, whilst efforts to transplant it to the imperialist countries distort it into a static and useless, even harmful, "model." In this sense, what the terrorists are try-

ing to implement is not really a military strategy of protracted people's war. For in the process of trying to carry out their transplant they are forced willy-nilly to divorce the military strategy of protracted people's war from the social conditions that make it appropriate to the oppressed nations, and in doing this, they are also forced to go up against the Marxist-Leninist method Mao Tsetung used to analyse these conditions and develop the military strategy in the first place, as well as the role of the revolutionary party in making that analysis and in politically and militarily guiding that struggle. What they wind up with is not people's war, but a perversion of it.

Take the RAF's characterisation of people's war quoted above: "small protracted wars to wear them (the bourgeoisie) down." To the RAF, guerrilla warfare is attractive because of the military effectiveness of small guerrilla bands. But what actually makes it appropriate in the oppressed countries is that it is a form of warfare which corresponds to the specific political, social and economic conditions there and on that basis can unleash masses in revolutionary war. Mao pointed to a number of factors, including that China's ruling classes were divided into warring fractions supported by different imperialists who were opposed to each other internationally, and that its central government was weak. Most importantly, however, he showed how China was a large semi-feudal and semi-colonial country where the imperialists reinforced feudal oppression, so that millions of peasants were in a revolutionary mood and burning to carry out agrarian revolution. These are among the principal factors why, in the oppressed countries, a revolutionary situation generally exists, though unevenly and with ebbs and flows. Given these conditions, the armed struggle in a country like China could, in connection with the agrarian revolution, establish areas where red political power reigned—red base areas where the land could be redistributed and social transformations begun even before nationwide seizure of power, giving a taste of the future to China's masses and unleashing millions to serve militari-

ly, economically and politically to advance the revolutionary war overall. Mao showed how these objective conditions enabled the Communist Party to lead the armed struggle, starting on the strategic defensive, building a Red Army step by step, which in coordination with the guerrillas would advance from the base areas in the countryside, and go over to the strategic offensive, to surround the cities and establish a revolutionary government. That his military strategy of protracted people's war led to victory was based on a correct political and economic analysis of the conditions in China and internationally—a reflection of the fact that military line is a concentrated expression of political line, and that the Party—which is above all the political vanguard—commands the gun, and not vice versa.

In the imperialist countries, on the other hand, it is a fact proved by both analysis and experience that revolutionary situations do not generally exist, but come only rarely. Here the bourgeoisies are able to use their global position of plunder to pacify large sections of the populace; the countries are, relative to the oppressed nations, highly integrated economic units, with strong central governments, where massive military strength can be quickly brought to bear. How can a strategy of a war of attrition possibly mobilise masses in revolutionary war here? How does "urban guerrilla war" politically unleash the proletariat in the way that rural guerrilla warfare unleashes the peasantry in the oppressed countries? The RAF in its early days wrote about areas controlled by the guerrillas where cops would be militarily prevented from entering and where social transformation could be begun; and the Red Brigades, while explicitly denying that "red base areas" could be militarily established in the imperialist countries, went on to describe "red political power" areas not much different from the RAF's. Both proved to be dangerous illusions. The urban guerrilla strategy cannot enable the masses to deal with incursions by the enemy's military forces, which in the op-

pressed countries are operating on alien turf, with stretched-out, vulnerable supply lines, and attempting to suppress masses who have gotten a taste of the future in base areas. Guerrilla warfare in "normal," non-revolutionary times, in the imperialist countries can do none of the principal things it does in oppressed countries, and attempts to launch it there in such times are generally doomed to remain isolated military attacks by relative handfuls.

Yet revolutionary situations do inevitably emerge in the imperialist countries, produced by the workings of the system itself. What is required of revolutionaries is to be in a position to seize on such situations to unleash the masses to wage genuine revolutionary warfare. Lenin analysed how these revolutionary situations thrust masses onto history's stage. The strategy of the party, he analysed and proved in practice, must be based on seizing hold of such upsurges, launching the insurrection and immediately taking the offensive, bringing significant forces rapidly to bear on the enemy so as to prevent it from gathering its initially far superior military strength, to "win victories day by day," retaining the offensive at least long enough to prepare conditions for then pushing through with civil war. Through this insurrectionary process a revolutionary regime can be established and thus serve as a genuine red base area for the civil war, however, unlike in the oppressed countries, the establishment of such a regime cannot be done bit by bit, but is concentrated into a relatively short period, which then is followed by all-out civil war, a contest of strength between the new-born revolutionary regime and the remaining areas of bourgeois control.

All this demands that the revolutionary forces carry out the most thorough political preparation and organisation beforehand, so that the advanced forces can be in a position to leap on such a moment. It is this basic scenario which can defeat the imperialists, because it is based on the actual dynamics of imperialist society and so can unleash *mass revolutionary warfare*—just as protracted people's war does in the oppressed countries. While no revolu-

tion will be a "carbon copy" of one which has gone before, and while, it is certainly true that many new features of the revolutionary struggle for power in the imperialist countries will undoubtedly emerge, it is still correct to stress, as the *Declaration of the RIM* does, that the October Road (as summarised above) remains the starting point for a genuine revolutionary strategy in these types of countries.

### **Perverting People's War**

The terrorists initially made some efforts to portray their perversion of people's war as the line of Mao Tsetung. The RAF, for instance, early on (before they abandoned Mao altogether) argued that "the lessons of Mao Tsetung on the armed struggle...constitute a *general line* which is sufficiently concrete to develop the path of armed struggle everywhere and in all cases where the class struggle is sharpening, in the ripening conditions of the capitalist formations." In fact, the military line of Mao Tsetung *does* have universal significance—and especially his demonstration of how a military line must grow out of a Marxist-Leninist political analysis so as to unleash war as a revolutionary war of the masses.

But the RAF has learned nothing of Mao's *line*. Instead they attempt to mechanically transplant a static *model*, in a way that Mao himself had to fight *against* in developing his military line. At one time, leading forces in the Chinese Communist Party had declared that the path of the Russian Revolution was universally valid and that the Chinese revolutionaries should "follow Lenin" and go for quick mass insurrection in the cities. The line of these self-styled "Chinese Bolsheviks" led not to a quick insurrection but to a quick smashing of the vanguard in the cities. It was also, like its terrorist counterpart today, reformist at its core: in the case of China, it led to ignoring the necessity and the means to mobilise the masses of peasants in carrying out agrarian revolution and warfare in the countryside. The Chinese Bolsheviks' line had nothing to do with Lenin's development of the path of insurrection and civil war in the imperialist countries,

just as the terrorist line has nothing to do with Mao's development of protracted people's war. Having started off by thoroughly perverting Mao's line on revolutionary war, it is not surprising that the RAF, like many of the other terrorist groupings, has long since jettisoned any reference to Mao.

### **The Bourgeoisie: "Too Powerful"...For Whom?**

The terrorists have also had to go directly up against Lenin's October Road of insurrection and civil war, which they have characterised as "outmoded." This has been done under the banner of the heightened strength and perspicacity of the bourgeoisie. The Red Brigades have devoted the most attention to this particular effort. They argue as follows: "insurrectionalism" "...does not take into account the changed conditions which make this path impossible today. This is due to a series of reasons: a) The system of bourgeois democracy has reached a mature level of consolidation...and is able to absorb the upsurges of even the most antagonistic class struggles in a complex and sophisticated circuit of political, economic and military mediations.... b) Preventive counter-revolution, as a constant policy, a now inherent structure, impedes every convergence between the proletarian interests and the revolutionary undertaking." (Or as the Spanish group GRAPO puts it, "The monopolies will not permit the proletariat to concentrate its forces nor to organise. Neither will they allow themselves to be surprised in the future by a general insurrection which erupts at a given moment....") "c) The integration into the imperialist chain...through the structural characteristics of the stage that multinational capital has reached, means that each member state incarnates these common interests or, even more, incorporates its own interests as part of reinforcing the entire chain...."

Thus the Red Brigades' three "too powerful's": the bourgeoisie is too strong, too smart and/or too united to "permit" the masses to get away with insurrection. As proof of this, the terrorists frequently point to the

experience of Germany in the 1930s: the Nazis smashed the German CP, they say, before the latter could get strong enough for insurrection—and a similar fate awaits those who try this path today.

Here the full poisonous fruit of the terrorists' philosophical outlook—subjective idealism—comes to bear and leaves the Red Brigades in awe of the bourgeoisie. This philosophical outlook considers that it is the ideas of individuals which determine reality. Thus it appears to exaggerate the role of the individual: the terrorists continually highlight the power of small bands of guerrillas, working independently of the masses and the objective conditions. But actually this outlook not only denigrates the masses' strength but that of the subjective forces too, for the latter play their full role exactly by leading and unleashing the masses, based on a grasp of the objective conditions.

Cut off and isolated by their outlook from this strength of the masses, the Red Brigades are left gaping impotently at the bourgeoisie's strength. They look at the relative stability of the W. European order, the imperialists' ability to survive the upsurges of the '60s and at the fact that they still have some reserves with which to pacify broad sections of the masses in the imperialist countries, and they conclude that these are results of "inherent structures" and "constant policies" of "preventive counter-revolution" capable of "blocking every convergence" between revolution and the masses. What they do not and cannot see with their subjectivism is that the temporary strength on which these policies has been based is even now being undermined, that the crisis the imperialists are enmeshed in now is deep and growing more acute, and that regardless of all their policies of "counter-revolutionary prevention" and so forth, the very workings of their system, including the dynamics driving them towards inter-imperialist world war, break down their ability to unite their ranks or "absorb even the most antagonistic of class struggles," as the Red Brigades put it, and will push millions onto history's stage offering perhaps un-

precedented opportunities for revolutionary advance, including in W. Europe. In short, the Red Brigades look at the bourgeoisie and see giants, but not that these giants have feet of clay, that the very augmentation of their power is based on heightened exploitation of the masses, including the drawing of millions more around the world into the ranks of their gravediggers, the international proletariat. (This point is related to their analysis of political economy which isolates the metropole from the periphery, dealt with in Section III.)

In any case, what makes "urban guerrilla warfare" a better response to dealing with the bourgeoisie's power and their "policies of counter-revolutionary prevention," etc., than "insurrectionalism"? Perhaps the Red Brigades think that "insurrectionalism" calls for the

*In the midst of the 1917 Revolution, the Bolshevik Party and the section of*



vanguard to lay itself on the tender mercies of the bourgeoisie by confining itself to parliamentary work and strictly legal organisation? If so, then they have been watching the revisionists and social-democrats too long and have forgotten (or more likely *chosen to ignore*) genuinely Leninist organisation. As the *Declaration of the RIM* states, "the backbone (of the party) must be organised on an illegal basis, (and) should be prepared to withstand the repression of the reactionaries who will never peacefully tolerate for long a genuine revolutionary party."

Furthermore, however efficient the bourgeoisie's surveillance and repression, the principal method for successfully combatting this is to mobilise the masses against it and to sink such deep roots among them that they can never be dug up—not

principally to hide and conserve the vanguard (and the RAF's description of the urban guerrilla "swimming like a fish in the sea of the masses" really means *hiding* in an ocean of anonymity). The real importance of strengthening the clandestine nature of the Party on a correct basis is to enable the vanguard to continue to organise and carry out active political preparation in order to hasten the time when the all-out assault can be launched.

#### Using Lenin to Defeat Leninism

Even though the terrorists have rejected the outlines of the path to revolution in the imperialist countries charted by Lenin, they have tried to use Lenin himself to justify this, arguing that Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action, that it must continually develop new

methods of struggle, etc. They quote frequently from Lenin's "On Guerilla Warfare" to buttress this argument—in fact, it is almost certainly the work of Lenin most used by them, especially one key section:

"Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass* struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows,

*millions were gripped by an insatiable thirst to read, to talk, to thrash out a plan for the future. And at their core was advanced proletarians who, as Stalin put it, had been "trained by Pravda."*



as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle." In this work Lenin goes on to urge the party to "organise guerrilla actions" and in general to polemicise against sections of the Bolshevik party who at that time condemned guerrilla warfare as "anarchist" and "terrorist."

"On Guerrilla Warfare" was written in mid-1906, in the wake of the mass armed uprising of December 1905 which almost overthrew the Russian government and was still reverberating throughout the country, while the masses were themselves organising armed resistance to the government's counter-attack, and the army was even bringing in artillery to shell various recalcitrant villages. How does Lenin's advocacy of guerrilla warfare in *those conditions* possibly aid the terrorists in advocating a *strategy* of guerrilla warfare in W. Europe today? Just who is "concocting" here? And talk about "dogmatic recipes"—for the terrorists, isolated acts of assassination and sabotage have been the highest form of struggle in the early '70s, the late '70s, and now the mid-'80s—and one can only imagine that when mass revolt explodes in W. Europe, they will come up with the creative innovation that the main form of struggle is...isolated acts of assassination and sabotage (just as, for example, the terrorists of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party actually did during the 1905 revolution in Russia).

What they have no understanding of at all is giving "an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress"; thus urban rebellions like the recent ones in Birmingham, Brixton, Frankfurt, etc., are greeted with silence by the terrorists whilst they content themselves with repeating by rote that since communists "positively do not reject any form of struggle," why should they reject urban guerrilla warfare?! In fact, the guerrilla warfare of the RAF, etc., has nothing in common with Lenin's instructive summation (later in that same work) that "guerrilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a

time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of insurrection and when fairly large intervals occur between the 'big engagements' in the civil war."

Moreover, this continual invocation of Lenin's "Marxists positively do not reject any form of struggle" is sheer hypocrisy on the part of the terrorists. They *objectively* reject all forms of struggle *except* armed terror isolated from the masses. They say otherwise of course—in fact, the terrorists *say* almost anything. The CCCs, for instance, mention in passing how legal agitation and propaganda are also crucial and must develop "in dialectical unity" with their armed actions, and a number of terrorist groups routinely tack on a few phrases about Lenin's discussion of how agitation and propaganda, including a political newspaper, are critical for revolutionary work. The problem is none of them ever *do* any of this. And having put themselves on a military footing with the imperialists' repressive apparatus in a context and in a manner in which they cannot draw masses into their activity, how could they really ever expect to carry out such work—how could such promises remain anything but pious wishes?

A crucial point here is that the disagreements Marxist-Leninists have with the terrorists are not over any particular tactic or act, but over their relentless insistence on carrying out their activity regardless of its connection with the masses, particularly the advanced. In this respect there is a significant difference between the strategy and line of the RAF and Co. and that of groups like the Irish Republican Army (IRA)—for the latter represent, to a large degree, an extension of ongoing mass struggle. The IRA's military strategy of protracted warfare is a reflection of their political goal—to drive the British out of Ireland—and as such reflects the national character of that struggle. For these reasons it has been able to draw on continuing mass support. On the other hand, similar (on the surface) tactics take on a whole different meaning in the context of the imperialist countries: these bourgeoisies cannot be driven into

"leaving" their home base, but must be utterly smashed.

### Enlisting Rudyard Kipling

Let us return to the CCC's statement quoted earlier that "at a time when so many peoples of the world fight the monster gun in hand, the revolutionaries of the metropole have the duty to fight with the same determination." Yes—a thousand times correct. The problem is that for the CCCs and the rest of the terrorists this duty is realised by simply launching guerrilla attacks, regardless of the politics they represent. An exaggeration? Then let them explain how the armed actions of the RAF serve to advance world revolution, when the RAF's vision of the political goal which these actions serve is, by their own declarations, congruent with the bourgeois dictatorship of the Soviet Union?! To their comrades of the CCC, who consider the Soviet Union imperialist, the answer is obviously unimportant—striking NATO *in itself* is sufficient to constitute revolutionary internationalism, *regardless of the political goal this serves*.

And if the terrorists want to point to the actual material damage their actions do to the imperialists—to go beyond "mere verbal denunciation" and "really wound the beast," etc., as the RAF puts it—and thus aid struggles around the world, well, it is time they get serious about how this is really done. A lot of the claims made by the terrorists about the effects of armed struggle sound nice because they are true...about *real revolutionary war*. But what does this have to do with *their* activity? A day of revolt by masses in Birmingham does a hundred times more material damage to the imperialists than years of their urban guerrilla warfare—not to speak of the fact that the more important damage it inflicts is the political and ideological blows dealt to the bourgeoisie and all their claims to be a just and decent society, alongside of which the terrorists' acts pale.

A sort of bottom line of the terrorist argument is: if you *really* believed all your talk about unleashing revolutionary violence, then you would be doing it *right now*. The difference between this

line and Marxism-Leninism is that Marxism-Leninism can *win*. It is not simply an exhortation to do what makes you as an individual feel good. By treating the armed struggle as a *moral* duty abstracted from advancing the revolution, the terrorists give free rein to an individualist notion of revolutionary activity, as if the point of waging the armed struggle was to expunge one's personal guilt and purify oneself—Christian colonialist Rudyard Kipling's "white man's burden" with a left twist. This bottom line argument of the terrorists, like their line more generally, has a lot in common with anarchism, and particularly the anarchist argument versus the dictatorship of the proletariat: if you really believed in communism and doing away with the state, you'd do it right now on the morning of victory—which in every revolution so far (and for the foreseeable future) would just mean the revolutionary proletariat laying down its own weapons and ceasing the armed defence of its revolutionary power. Furthermore, what Marxist-Leninists are doing right now in preparing the masses politically, including in the course of revolutionary struggle, is key for unleashing *mass* revolutionary violence (more on which later).

### **A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire**

For decades now the revisionist and social-democratic parties of Europe have raised "the objective conditions" and having "the masses with them" as justification for smothering the flames of revolt among the more advanced minority under the inertia of the mainstream. And the terrorist trend has repeatedly proclaimed their disgust with this kowtowing to the mainstream. But disgust with this reformist orientation towards the masses does not obviate the need to base oneself on masses any more than disgust with the revisionists' "Marxist-Leninist parties" obviates the need for developing genuine vanguards based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

Arguing for the need for the vanguard to make an analysis of the objective conditions and base itself

on the revolutionary masses cannot be a call to wait for better days—on the contrary, such analysis poses all the more urgently the task of revolutionaries to find the ways to act as a real vanguard today and train the minority that is already politically awake so that in the context of the rapidly intensifying crisis of the imperialist system, they will be able to, as Lenin put it, place themselves at the head of the revolutionary army and lead the armed onslaught.

It is worth relooking at Mao Tsetung's famous formulation "a single spark can start a prairie fire." With this slogan, Mao emphasised the great potential for the Chinese Communist Party to unleash the awakening energy of millions of China's peasants in revolutionary war. Terrorists have invariably failed to do this because the forms of struggle they initiate and the politics they are based on are not designed to draw in and unleash advanced masses. In fact, what they have chosen as their central activity—acts such as assassination of government officials—*substitutes* the struggle of isolated handfuls for the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

These isolated actions have nothing in common with truly advanced revolutionary actions which sometimes even when starting with a small minority have played a crucial role in the revolutionary process. Consider Ireland in 1916, for instance, when a few hundred armed Irish revolutionaries marched on the government. In defending this against the charge of "putschism," Lenin pointed out how this grew out of a whole history of developing struggle in Ireland, and how it found an echo among the masses and could not be considered a putsch. But can the same be said about the W. European urban guerrillas? If they really and truly believed that their own actions too were a continuation of a whole history of struggle, for instance, in Italy, where they do make this claim, then why didn't they ever launch this kind of open public assault on the forces of order and try to rally mass support? The point isn't that they should or could have, but that this kind of activity is never discussed by them (and probably

never occurred to them), even while they were kidnapping and executing Moro himself, because igniting *mass* struggle is not what their line is all about. Their single sparks are not to light prairie fires, but to put beneath a glass and gazé at excitedly...till they flicker out.

### **The Role of Armed Struggle**

The carrying out of armed struggle as the conspiratorial activity of relative handfuls by the terrorists reveals their basic opposition to the real purpose of the armed struggle. Armed struggle is the inevitable and only means by which the power of the exploiting classes can be broken—political power does indeed grow out of the barrel of a gun. As Mao eloquently put it, "Some people ridicule us as advocates of the 'omnipotence of war.' Yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad, that is Marxist.... Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords; in this sense, we may say that only with guns can the whole world be transformed."

The point of taking up the gun is to liberate the masses to transform the world—and it is impossible to separate the goal of this warfare from the way it is fought. As the *Declaration of the RIM* observes, "Revolutionary war... must be carried out as a key arena for training the revolutionary masses to be capable of wielding political power and transforming society." If not, if the very means of struggle used to smash down the bourgeoisie are separated from the goal of advancing the masses' capability to transform the world, how can there be any result but the substitution of a new group of exploiters for the old—a result which is only too familiar. Even if the terrorists' military strategy were somehow (perhaps with the aid of the Soviet Red Army?!) able to defeat the bourgeoisie, isn't this exactly where their line would lead?

Not basing the armed struggle on at least an advanced section of the masses means restricting it to the

practice of the vanguard alone—armed struggle is for “communist combattants,” whilst the masses are left to go about their own lesser forms of struggle. As the Spanish group GRAPO argues, “The political movement of the masses and guerrilla warfare are two complementary forms of the Movement of Popular Resistance which evolve in a parallel direction and in mutual relation,” and the Red Brigades argue that “the armed struggle is the *historical form* through which the *political content* of the party’s activity manifests itself.” (their emphasis) Now it is certainly true that the vanguard will initially form the core of any revolutionary armed forces—but aren’t these formulations a recipe for perpetuating the armed struggle as the activity of the vanguard *by itself*? And if the armed struggle is restricted like that, if the proletariat is left on the sidelines in the war, how is it suddenly going to be running society? In concluding its arguments against “insurrectionalism” the RAF shows just where they think the masses fit in to this scenario: “Only in the final stage of the struggle will mass actions (demonstrations, strikes, barricades) be decisive, first by providing support (which could be considerable) and then leading to the total disarmament of the oppressive apparatus.” “Providing support”!!—such is the role of the people in this perversion of “people’s war”...support which the RAF feels compelled to add “could be considerable”! How very generous of our condescending heroes. Presumably the masses are to continue “providing support” while the RAF runs society for them too (benevolently, of course!).

Their conception of the armed struggle and the goal for which it is fought is completely opposed to a revolutionary strategy in *any* country, oppressor or oppressed. Mao, in opposing the “purely military viewpoint” rooted in somewhat similar perversions, described the tasks of the Red Army: “The significance of the tasks of the Chinese Red Army lies in the fact that it is an armed group for carrying out political tasks of a class nature....When the Red Army fights, it fights not merely for

the sake of fighting, but to agitate among the masses, to organise them, to arm them, and to help them establish political power; apart from such objectives, fighting loses its meaning, and the Red Army loses its meaning for existence.” (On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party.) Whatever their intentions, the RAF, CCCs, etc., do not and have never organised masses, armed them, educated them, or helped them establish political power—nor can they with a way of fighting which makes that impossible. They cannot even carry out the tasks of a real unit of a Red Army...much less those of a vanguard party. Isn’t it the case that the Red Brigades, the RAF, etc., have truly lost their reason for existence?

### Terrorism and Revisionism

This separation of the goal for which the armed struggle is fought from the way in which it is conducted has coloured the evolution of the “urban guerrillas.” The contemporary European terrorist trend had its roots in the late ’60s and was influenced by the climate and events of those times: by the national liberation wars, particularly in Vietnam, the Cultural Revolution in China, the urban upheavals exploding in Paris in 1968 and throughout Europe and the U.S., and by a repulsion against the official European left, which sought to smother the revolt and channel it into harmless byways. At that time broad forces looked to anyone and everyone who called for armed struggle against U.S. imperialism, ranging from revolutionary communists like Mao Tsetung to revolutionary nationalists like Amílcar Calbral or Franz Fanon, not to mention centrists like Ho Chi Minh.

In the terrorists’ case, this initial motion away from revisionism never went much deeper. The RAF, for instance, summed up that “the importance of Mao Tsetung’s contribution to revolutionary theory was that he showed that the revolution must be conducted from the beginning with military means”—and with this they took Mao’s path-breaking analysis of protracted people’s war and New Democratic Revolution and reduced it to simply picking up the gun,

thereby obliterating the key role of political line. That they considered this THE contribution of Mao also reduces to secondary importance Mao’s analysis of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and the necessity to unleash mass revolutionary struggle to prevent this—which he did with the Cultural Revolution. Though they professed their admiration of the Cultural Revolution, their denigration of political line left them unable to grasp the heart of this unprecedented struggle of the masses to seize power in and transform all spheres of society. Nor did they understand that it was the product of a breakthrough by Mao in political understanding.

Not surprisingly then their initial criticisms of the Soviet Union were never based on an all-around understanding of the restoration of capitalism there and the lessons of this for continuing the revolution under socialism, and was limited instead to repulsion at its specific policies in the late ’60s of collusion with the U.S. imperialists and refusal to aid the national liberation struggles. When a few years later the USSR began to more aggressively challenge the U.S., organising and funding, for example, the Cuban incursion into Angola and then invading Afghanistan themselves, the RAF regarded this as progress—after all, the Soviets were “standing up” to the U.S., weren’t they? That they were standing up in order to establish their own imperialist domination was, for these forces, secondary.

Just how secondary it is can be seen by the actions of the CCCs. In a recent polemic they wrote that “the CCCs do not distinguish themselves fundamentally from the rest of the political gamut by the armed struggle, but above all by their genuine Marxist-Leninist leadership, their truly revolutionary outlook. It is our political analysis that prescribes the armed struggle....” As for what this means, consider their act of uniting with the RAF in the West European guerrilla front. The CCCs have repeatedly described the Soviet Union as imperialist in their various communiqués and other public statements,

yet the RAF, whom they consider to be comrade Marxist-Leninists, *has for years considered the Soviet Union a socialist country*. And the CCCs want to assure us that what distinguishes their trend is not at all unity on terrorism, but unity on "their genuine Marxist-Leninist leadership, their truly revolutionary outlook." What this is instead is authentic contempt for Marxism-Leninism and for the revolutionary goal for which they claim they are fighting—will it look like the Soviet Union or not?! Can anyone really treat seriously their claim to be making a revolutionary class analysis of their own country either?

The basic spirit guiding this outlook was encapsulated years ago by Uruguay's Tupamaros (one of the original inspirations for the RAF, the Red Brigades, and others) in a phrase which is still bandied about in various forms: "words divide us, actions unite us." In other words, "stop yakking and start shooting." It's a slogan that reactionary armies might be proud of—they need, in fact they require, ignorant soldiers. The proletariat doesn't.

## II. Terrorism as Political Preparation

As a military strategy, the terrorists' war of attrition in the imperialist countries is fundamentally flawed: it is not based on the actual motion and development of the imperialist countries or on the dynamics of the class struggle there—which requires an insurrectionary offensive against the imperialists—and it cannot unleash mass revolutionary war. It has no real perspective of defeating the bourgeois armed forces on the battlefield and smashing their state apparatus, nor of the masses implementing their own armed rule. But after 15 years of armed actions which have not resulted in any attrition whatsoever of the imperialists' military strength, at least some of the inadequacy of their theory as a military strategy has impinged even on the terrorists' outlook. What one finds in a survey of their literature is a shift in emphasis from urban guerrilla warfare as a military strategy to urban guerrilla warfare as the best means for politically bringing the



*The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China.*

masses over to revolutionary struggle.

Central to this claim, in the terrorist view, is the role of armed actions in destroying the aura of invincibility surrounding the imperialists in order to unleash the masses. As GRAPO puts it, "The armed actions give the masses confidence in their own strength, facilitate their organisation and demonstrate the vulnerability of the regime. They

thus eliminate the vestiges of fear and of terror which the regime tries to instill." And the Red Brigades: "The problem is not transmitting communist consciousness to the multitudes, but demonstrating the necessity and possibility of the very existence of revolutionary politics; of the viability of the alternative plan for power, which immediately and directly confronts (independently of the objective conditions for

revolution) the State.”

What a profound discovery! The masses don't lack consciousness, only courage! All that is necessary now in the world of terrorist "revolution" is that the masses gain confidence, overcome their fear, and get on with it—how easy, how spontaneous, and how disgustingly conservative!

This is a vision of a change of power-holders, not communist revolution—for anyone who looks around W. Europe today and believes that the transformation of the *congé-payé* and *scala mobile*-infected consciousness of the masses is not a profound problem is fighting for something besides the kind of radical rupture required by proletarian revolution. These statements by GRAPO and the Red Brigades testify to the petty-bourgeois character of the terrorist line: perhaps they do indeed want the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, but they have no grasp of what is required for the proletariat to actually lead masses to seize control of and transform all spheres of society and advance to a whole new communist epoch of human history, where, as Mao put it, "all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world"—a task which it is impossible to even begin without real leaps in consciousness.

### Condescending Saviours

The Red Brigades' phrase—"the problem is not transmitting communist consciousness to the multitudes"—poses as anti-elitist, as if Marxist-Leninists were some kind of modern-day Christs who thought they were dispensing god-given eternal truth to ignorant masses. Yet it actually reeks with elitist contempt for the masses' own ability to take up the science of revolution and remake the earth.

This outlook seals the wedlock of the terrorists with the outright reformists and economists. As Lenin acidly observed in the celebrated section of *What Is To Be Done?* on "What Is There in Common Between Terrorism and Economism," "The Economists and the present-day terrorists have one common root, namely, *the worship of spontaneity*.... At first sight, our asser-

tion may appear paradoxical, so great is the difference between those who stress the 'drab everyday struggle' and those who call for the most self-sacrificing struggle of individuals. But this is no paradox. The Economists and terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity: the Economists bow to the spontaneity of the 'pure' working-class movement, while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to link up the revolutionary struggle with the working class movement to form an integral whole. It is difficult indeed for those who have lost their belief, or who have never believed that this is possible, to find some outlet for their indignation and revolutionary energy other than terror." The Red Brigades' contentment with the present level of consciousness serves as justification for their own isolated activity. The terrorists start from a completely upside-down understanding of what the problem facing revolutionaries in W. Europe really is: that the vanguard forces are most definitely *lagging behind* what is demanded of them right now by the advanced masses there. Are there not millions around W. Europe today who have a burning need to grasp the nature of all the class forces shaping society, who need to be armed with an assessment of the different forces behind the major events in all spheres of society, political, cultural, scientific, economic, etc., so as to forge a class conscious force capable of leading through the complex process of armed insurrection and civil war to establish a real revolutionary government? And there are tens of thousands right now who could be trained in this way...if there were a force prepared to train them. What is demanded of revolutionaries is not that they retreat into isolated acts of sabotage and assassination, but that they raise *their own ability* to politically forge this class conscious section of proletarians, above all into a vanguard party itself.

### "Rivers of Ink"

As part of heaping abuse on the so-called "insurrectionist" strategy, the

terrorists continually deride the "little sects who issue their few hundred copies of their newspapers," "all the little M-L groups who make their dogmatism the best alibi for their own inactivity" (Red Brigades "second position"), "the rivers of ink aimed by all the little M-L parties in order to 'explain to the masses'," (Red Brigades) and they call instead not for "mere verbal denunciation" but for "real destruction of the enemies of the world proletariat" (RAF)—i.e., armed attacks.

Most sympathisers of the terrorist groups of W. Europe may actually have only seen in action this kind of dogmatic squabbling and patient evangelical activity of reformist sects, for the genuine Marxist-Leninist movement there has largely collapsed and had for years previously been rotting from within. But the terrorists are themselves manifestations of this same economist malady, only much more so—their derision reveals not mere ignorance of but opposition to genuine revolutionary activity. If they really want to go up against a worthy advocate of "directing rivers of ink towards... 'explaining to the masses,'" etc., someone who fervently advocated issuing not only hundreds but thousands of issues of a revolutionary newspaper, why don't they just come right out and launch their polemics against that person who for them is presumably the patron-saint of urging political preparation for insurrection and thus, for them, a stalwart of "mere verbal denunciation"—V.I. Lenin.

It was Lenin who fought the old terrorist rot of Narodism, who wrote *What Is To Be Done?* in order to orient the Bolshevik Party toward the task of *political preparation* of the advanced for proletarian revolution. There he argued that "the masses *cannot* be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity in any other way except by means of such exposures," referring to the necessity to carry on constant political agitation and propaganda on the burning issues of the day in all spheres of life. Lenin even said that, "In a word, the plan for an all-Russian political newspaper, far from representing the fruits of the

labour of armchair workers...is the most practical plan for immediate and all-round preparation of the uprising...."

Imagine that! A political newspaper—"rivers of ink" and "mere verbal denunciation" for our terrorists—as the "most practical plan" for the armed uprising! And yes, Lenin too certainly was attacked for leading a "sect" with their "several hundred revolutionary organisers" and their "half a dozen revolutionary papers appearing not more regularly than once a month," as he put it. (And to be utterly clear: of course the political line of such agitation and propaganda is key—the problem with the PCI, PCF, etc., is hardly that they issue rivers of ink but that their ink trains people in revisionism and reinforces the existing bourgeois outlook. That the Bolsheviks carried out altogether different training was proved quite well in 1917 by "the generation of workers trained in Pravda," as Stalin called them.)

There is also something to be said here about the terrorists' claim that their actions "eliminate fear" and impart courage and so forth. If GRAPO, the Red Brigades, etc., really believe that their activities do this, they might have at least learned better from their own experience. In the face of a wave of repression in the late '70s and early '80s in Italy, leading members of the Red Brigades, Prima Linea, etc., along with dozens of their cadre who had been arrested, betrayed their ranks and named names to the cops, leading to the round-up and imprisonment of many hundreds. Besides these "pentiti," hundreds of others publicly renounced revolutionary struggle altogether in exchange for more lenient treatment in prison; many of these today are collaborating with the revisionist PCI.

Some desertions and even collaboration are of course inevitable in the face of serious repression, but not the kind of mass phenomenon seen here. This tragic scene did not come about because these people had not seen their share of "armed actions demonstrating the vulnerability of the regime" and "eliminating the vestiges of fear," etc., but because this kind of train-

ing cannot arm people with the scientific understanding which alone imparts the strategic confidence required to resist torture and repression. For an example of this, let those Italian political prisoners who still long for revolution look to the heroism of the revolutionary prisoners of Peru, who have steadfastly resisted savage repression and who continue to hold high the red flag and to regard their time in prison as a period of preparation for returning to the frontlines—this courage is the product of a genuine proletarian line and ideology.

#### Reformists with '38's

While most terrorist groups claim their actions politically bring masses over to a revolutionary position, one group in particular—a recent split off the Red Brigades sometimes referred to as "the second position"—presents this argument most sharply. They were recently expelled by the Red Brigades majority for rejecting "protracted people's war" as the military strategy for Italy and instead calling for a period of preparation for insurrection and civil war. Carrying out this preparation, they argue, requires that the vanguard "strike at the heart of the state," particularly at "key projects of the bourgeoisie," with armed actions which they view as "the decisive method for politically educating the masses." These actions are said to provoke a response from all the political forces in society, thus exposing their true class nature to the proletariat.

This development represents the break-up of the terrorist project on the shoals of reality—what Lenin referred to as Narodism (Russian terrorism) straining towards Marxism...but remaining mired in the outlook of terrorism (and the "second position's" "strike at the heart of the state" theory bears more than a superficial resemblance to the Narodnaya Volya's own "propaganda of the deed" and their slogan of "hit the centre.") Faced with their severe defeat and the outright desertion of the bulk of their cadre, and with no real advance for the terrorist project anywhere in Europe, the "second position" takes the dramatic step of rejecting

the strategy of urban guerrilla warfare as "protracted people's war" and then replaces it with...urban guerrilla warfare as pure "excitative terror."

They consider an outstanding example of this line to be their own kidnapping and execution of Italy's Christian Democratic Party chief Aldo Moro in 1978. Moro and his party were on the verge of agreeing to the "historic compromise" long sought by the PCI which would have brought it into the government and united all the bourgeois political parties against the proletariat, thereby, argue the brigatisti, handing it a historic defeat. Moro's assassination, they claim, thwarted this "national unity" project of the ruling class, exposed all the revisionist and social-democrat forces who came out to demand Moro's release, and overall advanced the proletariat's cause.

When the Red Brigades executed Moro in order to influence the composition of the Italian parliament, what they told the proletariat with their guns was that the real political content of "striking the heart of the state" was having one and not another political coalition in office. Isn't this the outlook of reformists with guns? Isn't there a reason why this kind of activity is a favoured method of bourgeois oppositions when their reformist activity is outlawed—why the bourgeois opposition in Nepal, or Aquino's followers in the Philippines or those of Bani-Sadr in Iran at times make terrorism their strategy?

And isn't it generally the case that such assassinations of bourgeois bigshots isolated from real revolutionary war only engenders a *liberal mood*, and objectively spreads the idea that their elimination might change things—thus, when capitalist society proceeds methodically onward, leaving people deflated and at best *waiting* for the next action. If the Red Brigades think that their communiqués printed by the Italian media at that time carrying indictments of Moro and Italian capitalism counter-acted this, then all that proves is that the Italian bourgeois media understands better than the brigatisti how what they did overshadowed anything they said.

Furthermore, consider the outlook on the state operative here: that the "heart of the state," which is what they claim to be striking, consists of the handful of its chiefs—and this is what is put in practice over and over by the terrorist trend when Direct Action kills their French general, the RAF their "boss of bosses", etc. And just what if somehow the terrorists could even get all the chiefs—would the state, minus its "heart," topple over dead? Or wouldn't it instead just reproduce a new generation of bourgeois chiefs, because its roots lay untouched? With their objective reduction of the "heart of the state" to its handful of leading figures the terrorists come very close to the *political line* on the state of the revisionists, with their "anti-monopoly coalitions," and so forth, which serves the revisionists' ambitions to replace "bad bourgeois leaders" with their own enlightened leadership—and maintain intact the relations of exploitation and the state that enforces them. Both of these outlooks obscure that the "heart of the state" is its repressive apparatus consisting of hundreds of thousands of armed men and the bureaucracy behind them based on and enforcing a system of class exploitation, and that to "strike at the heart of the state" requires mobilising masses in armed insurrection and civil war to smash this apparatus and root up the capitalist *system*—something the Red Brigades were not prepared to do in 1978 and will never prepare the masses to do with a line that narrows their sights to a handful of figures.

#### Inciting, or Exciting, the Masses?

As for the value of these actions in "stimulating" a revolutionary mood among the masses—"exploding bombs in people's conscience," as a leader of the RAF once described it—Lenin replied to this theory of "excitatory terror" in *What Is To Be Done?*

"Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life that special 'excitants' have to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement

even by Russian tyranny will stand by 'twiddling their thumbs,' watching a handful of terrorists engage in single combat with the government? The fact of the matter is that the masses of the workers are roused to a high pitch of excitement by the abominations in Russian life, but we are unable to collect, if one may put it that way, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular excitement, which are called forth by the conditions of Russian life to a far larger extent than we imagine, but which it is precisely necessary to combine into a *single gigantic torrent*." Are there any *fewer* outrages now than then, with famine, repression, murder, rape and war the daily lot of hundreds of millions already, and nuclear global war threatening?

What Meinhof's "exploding bombs in people's conscience" amounts to is just adding one more small "drop" to the general excitement. And by contenting themselves with this instead of finding the means to "concentrate all the drops and streamlets" into a "single gigantic torrent," the terrorists see no way to actually link up with and move forward the advanced masses who are *already acting* on the political stage in W. Europe. In fact they don't even see them at all: they are so satisfied to gaze at their own tiny droplets that they can't see the rivers and streams that so desperately need to be rechanneled—they look around W. Europe and conclude that really not much has been going on. When, for example, Hot Autumn '83 protests against NATO's deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles were pouring throughout West Germany, the terrorists stayed aloof from the mass movement.

The Revolutionary Cells of W. Germany, a terrorist organisation which shares much in common with other "urban guerrillas" even though it makes no claim to being Marxist-Leninist, eventually provided an explanation for their own absence: they concluded that the movement was probably set in motion by the bourgeoisie itself and at any rate was dominated by bourgeois politics and totally under

the control of the official peace movement: "the sections of the peace movement which pinpointed and took up practically the relationship between armaments and imperialism always remained a minority," "the hope that the protest would be radicalised...did not materialise," and so "the old point that a movement does not allow criticism from within...must undoubtedly be made again and again." Thus the Revolutionary Cells conclude that "so long as a radical mass movement is not in sight," "the decisive means against the arms build-up are as always internal unrest and subversion of the foundation of power at the points where the most effective resistance can be carried out with small forces"—i.e., terrorism, in which "we determine our own moments."

Well of course the dominant politics remained bourgeois, of course the radical section was a minority—and what else does one expect of a mass movement involving millions in a non-revolutionary situation in imperialist W. Germany? It is more often than not the bourgeoisie themselves who drag people out of their daily routine and propel them into the political arena, and for their own ends—but once there what people do is by no means a settled question. On the other hand, if all the revolutionary forces threw down their shovels, quit the sandbox and went and played with themselves ("as always") like the Revolutionary Cells, how is that minority that was straining to raise the level of the fight to target the imperialists, that minority that the RCs are so disdainful of, that certainly consisted of thousands and thousands, how are they *ever going to play their role* and be unleashed by revolutionary politics *to lead millions* in a future revolutionary situation? The mass movement doesn't *determine* the role of the vanguard, but it does offer ground on which small numbers can unleash powerful forces—*when* they have the means for politically doing this. (See *AWTW* no. 2, "Hot Autumn") When they don't, when their line in fact opposes this, they are doomed to tail the mainstream or remain on

the sidelines—a position which the RCs contentedly took.

### Rejecting the Vanguard Party

The terrorists don't rely on the masses, they denigrate political preparation of the advanced, they downplay the need for an overall analysis of the objective situation since it is their own actions which they regard as key to all political development, they're content enough with the masses' consciousness and seek merely to excite them to revolution—with this programme, what need could they possibly have for a vanguard party? Of course claiming to be Marxist-Leninists, they naturally also claim that they are out to construct such a vanguard—the “party of communist combatants”—but when you really get down to it, if your programme is one of “demonstrating the vulnerability of the regime” through isolated acts of sabotage and assassination, what is the urgent need...and so they routinely postpone the party into the indefinite future.

And even if they did proclaim a party (which at least one group, Spain's GRAPO, says it is the armed unit of) what would it look like? The “second position” split from the Red Brigades even reached the point of saying that one of the Red Brigades' most critical errors had been to fail to realise that “with the Moro action the Red Brigades had assumed the role of the revolutionary party and after the Moro action we should have consciously raised ourselves to this level.” Such is the baptism by fire of a real vanguard party in the terrorists' eyes—kidnapping a bourgeois politician!

### III. Terrorism: Chauvinist and pro-Imperialist

The terrorists' rejection of the task of politically preparing and relying on the masses for proletarian revolution and all that entails—especially the downplaying of the role of the vanguard party and theory—and their bowing to spontaneity leaves them bowing spontaneously to the dominant bourgeois ideology on a whole range of key political issues,

a couple of which will be examined here.

### Euro-centrism vs. Proletarian Internationalism

In singling out NATO as their chief target, the W. European guerrillas analyse it as “the most advanced system of domination” of imperialism. They argue that NATO plays a decisive, strategic role in the “homogenisation” (sometimes “Americanisation”) of W. Europe. The high level of strategic integration achieved through NATO is, they say, for the purpose of intensifying repression against the European masses (some groups consider this the *principal* purpose of NATO) and for carrying out the imperialists' response to their deepening crisis: “generalised war” (the Red Brigades speak of inter-imperialist world war).

Central to this line is their view of the internationalisation or multinationalisation of the European states, put forward in one form or another by virtually all the groups. In “A Revolutionary Task, The International Fight,” in which Direct Action laid out some of the theoretical basis for the formation of the “W. European guerrilla front,” they state: “At both the market and the production level, Western Europe constitutes a single territory on which Multinational Capital projects, plans, realises and imposes its profit logic. All of Western Europe's production and market structures have in fact become multinationalised....More and more, the governments of the various national States are serving as mere screens for the internal struggles of Multinational Capital, each one of them forming an arena in which the interests of Multinational Capital coexist and compete.” Thus Direct Action draws together its indictment of the European bourgeoisies: “The role of Europe has been recast within the Atlantic alliance. It is both a *victim* (territory which is nuke-able in capital's game) and *executioner* (capital's instrument throughout the world)....”

This view of Direct Action bears a striking resemblance to the Chinese revisionists' Three Worlds

Theory, which puts the European countries in the Second World, midway between the First World superpowers and the Third World nations, and thus concludes that they are also “victims” of superpower aggression. In such a way Direct Action, like the Three Worlds Theory, obscures the bloody imperialist *essence* of the W. European nations, which for decades now have gorged themselves on the plunder of the world's peoples.

What Direct Action focuses on is the internationalisation of the capitalist circuits of accumulation *within* W. Europe—what they *omit* is the internationalisation of the circuits of accumulation at a global level, and especially between the various European countries and the oppressed nations, which are fundamentally relations of exploitation. These exploitative relations are still very much rooted in the various imperialist countries as separate national entities, with national states which defend the interests of its own home-based capitals. The terrorist trend cuts all this off and out of sight. The Red Brigades have published lengthy analyses of the political economy of Italy which treat it as an isolated entity, or at best functioning within a European framework (for instance, in their most famous work, *The Bee and the Communist*, which attempts to analyse the political economy of imperialism, they never even attempt to apply Lenin's *Imperialism*). By underplaying the actual material interests of the European powers in defending and extending their own share of the plunder of the oppressed nations, the terrorist trend winds up treating NATO as if it were principally an instrument of repression internally in Europe, or as if the U.S. imperialists were forcing the European powers into it against their real interests. Thus they propagate slogans like “W. Germany (Italy, etc.) Out of NATO,” promoting the outlook that the national interests of W. Germany, etc., are really being “betrayed” by the ruling bourgeoisies (or “Multinational Capital”) and would be better served by being outside rather than inside NATO. RAF even calls for a

war of "national liberation" in W. Germany!—(a view which is reinforced by their claim to have adopted the military strategy of national liberation wars in the oppressed countries).

And just what are these "national interests" of the W. German nation which the RAF wishes to liberate? Far from being betrayed by the W. German rulers, are they not very well represented by W. Germany's position in NATO—are not the interests of the German nation bound up with the defence of its decades-old plunder of the oppressed nations, which it is NATO's task to defend and extend against the threat of their imperialist rivals in the Soviet bloc? And where will such a formulation lead in an imperialist country like W. Germany, except that in the interests of the struggle against NATO and American hegemony, the proletariat must unite with at least those sections of the bourgeoisie who do resist the U.S. and uphold Germany's "real national interests"?

So it is that the RAF, which prides itself on its history of supporting national liberation struggles against imperialism, winds up simultaneously trying to defend W. Germany's "national interests"—which lie squarely with suppressing the national liberation movements. (Nor do the other terrorists fare any better. Direct Action from France, which is not formally part of NATO, in their communiqué on the assassination of General René Audran denounces "the change in orientation of the French armed forces, which have gone over from a position of defence of territory to one of 'advanced defense' directed at the socialist countries." And so Direct Action, which also prides itself on supporting national liberation, accepts the bourgeoisie's own characterisation of the French armed forces as having been mere "defenders of territory"!)

Missing the actual material interests driving the European powers, including into NATO, even those terrorists who speak of inter-imperialist world war miss the urgency of the moment, as well as the necessity of a relentless political struggle against the violent na-

tionalist passions which this dynamic gives rise to in those countries. They have no grasp that in the coming period when the contradictions of imperialism will explode into the clash of arms, the point will be not to save but to destroy the German (Italian, etc.) imperialist entity, not that the proletariat can better represent the fatherland but that it has no country.

The terrorist trend's reasoning behind its attacks on NATO converges neatly with that of the Soviet imperialists. The Soviets have repeatedly urged the Western European governments to consider whether their real national interests might not lie outside NATO and the Western bloc generally, pointing not too subtly at their latest nuclear war-fighting equipment, particularly the now more than 400 SS-20's which lie within minutes' striking distance of W. Europe (a threat which is doubtlessly a bit more thought-provoking to certain W. European bourgeoisies than the terrorists' own .38's.) So not only do the terrorists wind up objectively capitulating to their own fatherlands; they also outright defend or apologise for Soviet imperialism. The RAF and GRAPO hail the Soviet bloc as socialist, and Direct Action increasingly talks of the "socialist camp."

The Red Brigades have continued to denounce the Soviet Union as imperialist—but they target the U.S. as the "principal enemy," while the "second position" split hits the U.S. as "the most powerful and aggressive" imperialist. The latter goes on to argue that analysing the Soviet Union as imperialist "does not prevent us from taking into account the concrete world situation, from assessing both the *degree of aggressivity* of the imperialists and the *particularities* of their policies, and from realising that if the revolution wants to advance in a world divided into 'blocs,' it *can and must* exploit the contradictions produced by the functioning of the capitalist mode of production itself...." They conclude: "Anyone who in denouncing all the imperialists avoids undertaking one of the primary tasks of a true communist—that of exploiting all the contradictions which flow from the general dynamic of imperialism

in order to accelerate, advance and lead the world revolution—is an opportunist in deed."

So targetting all imperialism, instead of being a sworn duty of revolutionary internationalists, is now a hallmark of opportunists! These brigatisti have also now discovered a new "primary task of true communists"—exploiting *all* the contradictions of imperialism—which for them amounts to hitting one imperialist as "more aggressive," "more powerful," etc., activity which can have no other effect than lining up the masses in one imperialist camp as it goes down for battle against the other. Far from a "new primary task for true communists," this is very old and familiar treachery from the days of the Second International on down.

And if anyone who refuses to take up this "primary task of true communists" is an "opportunist in deed," one waits expectantly for the "Marxist-Leninists" of the Red Brigades to announce their posthumous granting of this title to Lenin—for he categorically refused to play this game. Lenin instead unceasingly trained the Bolshevik Party and the class-conscious proletarians in Russia in the outlook that, as he put it, the proletarian movement "will remain true to itself only if it joins neither one nor the other imperialist bourgeoisie, only if it says that the two sides are equally bad, and if it wishes the defeat of the imperialist bourgeoisie in every country" (Under a False Flag). He went on to argue that it did not matter which imperialist fired the first shot, nor in whose countries the enemy's troops were stationed, for the point was that inter-imperialist war was like a war between two slavemasters, one with 100 slaves, the other with 200, "for a more just distribution of the slaves." The only *practical* question which the Red Brigades can envision is: which slavemaster will they organise their followers to fight and die for.

Bowing to spontaneity, isolated by their failure to fundamentally rely on the revolutionary masses, the turning to some stronger power as "aid" in their fight is perhaps inevitable for the terrorist trend. And with their view of socialism gutted of

any vision of the masses consciously transforming all society, they have no problem seeking out the Soviet Union for such "aid."

So it is that the entire spectrum of W. European guerrillas, this vanguard of "communist combatants" who if it ever utters any self-criticism at all usually states half-boastfully that perhaps indeed they are running too far out front of the masses, winds up defending or apologising for the hideous betrayal of the world's first proletarian revolution, now a dictatorship of the new revisionist bourgeoisie. It is a sad state of affairs for those who years ago claimed to oppose the stale swamp of revisionism infesting W. Europe, who proclaimed their support for Mao Tsetung and the red flag flying over revolutionary China—and who have now degenerated more often than not into shock troops for Gorbachev and apologists for one or another faction of their own imperialist ruling class.

The lesson of the terrorists' experience is not that the armed struggle cannot be waged in the imperialist countries, but that there are no substitutes for proletarian revolution. The goal of communism—"all mankind voluntarily and consciously changing itself and the world"—makes imperative a conscious political revolution, with the masses themselves in their millions taking up not only the guns that will finally batter and break the military power of the imperialist states, but the understanding that will guide them to do this in a way that will not lead to the replacing of one imperialist exploiter with another. The crisis of the imperialist system is even today preparing the conditions for one of those rare opportunities in the imperialist countries when this may be possible—for days which will mark the future of the world. Whether revolutionaries will be in a position to seize the time, to actually launch revolutionary warfare, defeat the imperialists on the battlefield, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in sections of Europe as part of the world revolution depends to no small degree on putting aside the old baggage which has for too long burdened those in the imperialist countries



*In the Chinese Communist Party's Yen-an command centre, Mao Tsetung placed great stress on the political education of cadres and soldiers.*

who seek revolution and making great leaps in preparation right now, above all in constructing vanguard Marxist-Leninist parties. Only in

such a way will the exceptional moments looming so near be seized, and not lost forever. □

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masses to truly play the difficult capitulatory role required.

The animosity between the ANC (and the United Democratic Front it works within) and radical black nationalist forces has also been a source of open antagonism. This seems to be based, among other things, on the ANC's inactivity over past years, its reactionary position on the national question (promising to unite white and black under one South Africa), its completely unrevolutionary Freedom Charter programme—which holds out a rosy future to western investors under an ANC-shared power—and its opposition to genuine national liberation. Much of this, along with the decisions at the ANC's recent congress where multi-raciality was officially adopted, was published by the bourgeois press, which is searching here for possible openings for the West. It's not that the ANC has abandoned its Soviet sponsors, who continue to provide its arms and support it with rhetoric internationally.

While mainly parading the ANC's militant new stance of "stepping up the armed struggle to do away with apartheid," the Soviets reveal their own revisionist conception of "liberation" which amounts to using the armed struggle merely as a pressure tactic to win some democratic gains. According to an editorial in *Moscow News*, the 20 million Africans "are demanding the granting of universal suffrage, abolishing the ban on democratic organisations' activities, as well as limiting the dislocation of indigenous people in the country, and freeing political prisoners. Not reforms, but the elimination of apartheid!"

This jargon from the Soviet press is thin disguise for armed "freedom fighters" who meet with the chief South African capitalists, working to "establish dialogue" where Botha refuses. Of course the West wants also to avoid their rivals gaining any further foothold in this crisis for the West, during which the Soviets have remained conspicuously silent. But their main purpose in negotiating with the likes of the ANC (who along with Tutu and Oppenheimer,

are influential in the UDF) is to siphon off what credibility they do have towards more moderate figures like Tutu and Buthalezi—putting out the message that it's okay to be seen in public with the imperialist bloodhounds from Washington D.C., because the "guerrillas" of the ANC are also there.

For his part, Chief Gatha Buthalezi, as the head of the Zulu homeland, is also a favoured imperialist choice, but again, alas, has few secrets to hide. His open past and current collaboration with the South African government and its security forces to attack the masses—using the despicable cover of "tribal divisions" that spawn violence in the ranks of the people—has won him ridicule and hatred. He has echoed various lines of the bourgeoisie which promote black prosperity (especially his own) and black "heads of state" (his name is frequently mentioned, not just by Botha's Nationalist Party, but also by the extreme right-wing Conservative Party) and has threatened non-cooperation if black power-sharing with the white government is not part of the solution to the current crisis.

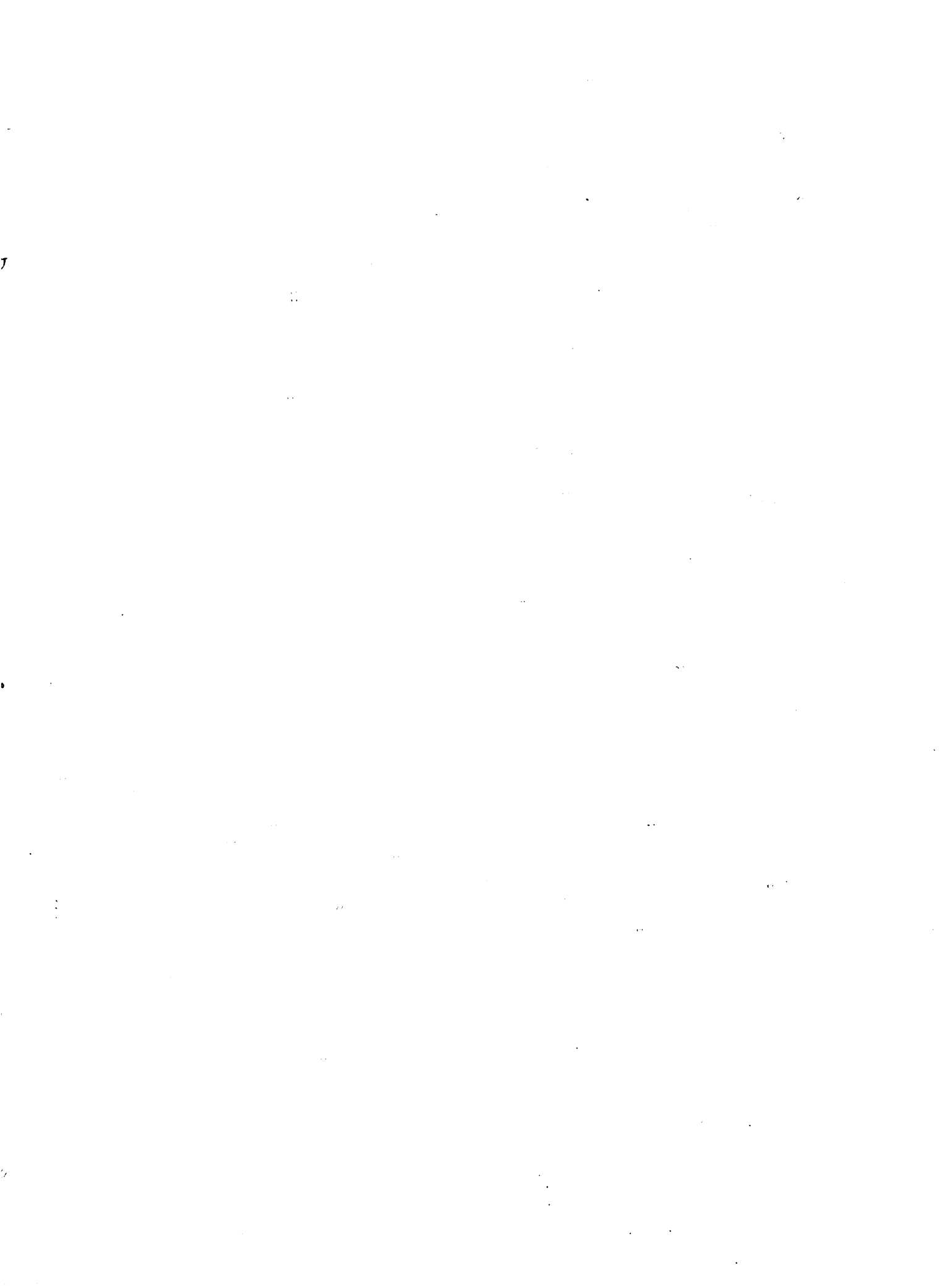
The fact is that the Azanian masses' struggle has outstripped by a long distance the national bourgeois and petit bourgeois nationalist forces generally relied upon by the imperialists to rein in the rumblings from below in their colonies or neo-colonies. The various fence-sitters and hand-wringers seeking compromise, if not direct service to the current white power structure, have not altered the political situation significantly. As much as the imperialists try to discount any possibility of revolution, frequently pointing to the lack of a force capable of challenging them for state power, they are also keenly aware that the sentiments of the masses are quite revolutionary, and not at all hemmed in by reformist leaders with hegemony over the struggle, which the bourgeoisie habitually yanks into their trenches of capitulation. Yet they have no choice but to negotiate and manoeuvre frantically in this direction, to try to avoid the masses putting their armed overthrow on the

immediate agenda, counterposed to more apartheid, which is all they have to offer.

These apologists for imperialism who want to jump in bed with the white settler state in order to lord over the black masses themselves have also fueled another attack emanating from the bourgeoisie which like to describe the situation as a bloody "race war." This is then contrasted with honeyed talk of improving blacks' horrendous conditions side by side with new forms of integration between white and black, in which the dagger of "equality" is poised to distort and defeat the concept some have already considered—a revolution by the Azanian masses.

For just as white minority rule is there to stay, at least short of revolution, the crisis cannot be solved in its present framework. Perhaps the imperialists will resort to massive murder to physically maim the struggle into temporary submission, or perhaps other short-term delays will be gained by bringing black faces in government places into view, replacing Botha, or by even eliminating some formal elements of apartheid. But regardless of the particular combination of more terror and more illusion they implement, greater mass outbreaks are in store, and the prognosis for a stabilising imperialist solution is not at all good.

History calls for destroying the whole apartheid machinery and routing its white foremen, for ripping Azania out of the jaws of imperialist logic altogether. Nothing short of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, unleashing the political initiative of the masses and leading the armed struggle that will bring about a New Democratic revolution, can do this. The call we made for Azanian revolutionaries to link up with the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement remains all the more valid and urgent. The revolutionary crisis in South Africa sending shocks throughout the imperialist empire today provides an excellent situation for this proletarian internationalist line to take root among the Azanian masses. □



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