

# PROLETARIAN UNITY



Theoretical and political journal  
of the Marxist-Leninist Organization  
of Canada **IN STRUGGLE!**

No. 21 (vol. 4, no 3), July-August-September 1980

Communists  
and the family (p. 19)

Plant shutdowns,  
unemployment,  
inflation

## The economy slides into a recession

# From the economic crisis... to Jean-Paul Sartre

Dear readers,

This issue begins with an article which we hope will contribute to a better understanding of the current economic crisis. The instability that has wracked the economy in recent months is a central characteristic of the present situation. It heralds an economic recession and an over-production crisis for the masses of working people. This analysis of the economy is accompanied by an article written by comrades in Ontario which describes the concrete effects of this crisis in one province and explains the bourgeoisie's strategy to make the people bear the burden.

This issue also includes a major article on the family, a topic that has been neglected all too often so far. On the same question, there is a letter from the Women's Action Collective on Health in Regina. This article tries to provide an historical explanation of the current development of the family under capitalism and looks at what the future of the family will be under socialism. We hope that this article will be a starting-point for debate on a very contemporary and urgent issue that has for too long been ignored by communists. We urge all those concerned with the struggle for women's liberation, and in particular women active in the various women's organizations, to send us their comments and points of view on this question.

The discussion of communists and the family reminds us of the need to take a critical look at the history of the communist movement in the last forty years. This is what Charles Gagnon sets out to do in his article, which deals more specifically with the period in the history of the international communist movement surrounding the 1960 Moscow Meeting and Statement. His article is also a plea for a materialist and historical point of view in the study of these questions.

We are also publishing a short background article on Central America and an interview on the situation in Cyprus. These should improve our understanding of the major contradictions that affect these two parts of the world.

The round table on the work of Jean-Paul Sartre and the review of Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie-la-Charette* should also be of special interest to our readers. We look forward

## IN STRUGGLE! needs translators

Dear readers,

IN STRUGGLE! is issuing a call at this time for help in translation work towards various languages, including Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, Punjabi and Chinese, to name only some. We are also looking for people who can translate towards French or English from these languages.

The list of languages we need to work in is long indeed if we consider the many languages spoken by Canadian people and into which we need to be able to translate our publications.

As well, the struggle to build the unity of the international communist movement requires that our publications be

to receiving your comments on these two articles, which are the journal's first ventures in the fields of philosophy and literature.

Readers who have already seen previous issues of the journal will realize that we are continuing to try to deal with a growing variety of subjects in the journal. We intend to go even further in this direction, because we are firmly convinced that Marxism is not a frozen dogma; it is a tool and a weapon for understanding what is happening in the world in all the many different fields that concern and affect progressive and working people. This is our goal, but we need your help to make it a reality.

### You can help review books

Summertime is vacation time for most people, and vacations are an opportunity to catch up on reading that we never seem to have time for the rest of the year. We invite you to send us your comments and criticisms of the books you read, be they literature or studies in politics, history and so on.

This does not have to take much time, but it is an important contribution to the work of the journal's editorial board. And you don't need a university degree to do it! Simply send us the titles of books that you think other readers should know about, or write a brief summary of them and include your comments. Rest assured that we will use any material that you send, either in the preparation of Books in Review or in other articles under way.

### What happened to those three months?

Attentive readers will certainly notice that the last issue was the February-March issue, while this issue is the July-August-September issue. The three missing months do not mean that you or we missed an issue. It is simply that with this issue the journal becomes a quarterly, a decision announced some time ago. As well, we have decided to conform to the accepted practice of identifying each issue with the months during which it is distributed, rather than the months leading up to its publication.

made accessible to readers in other countries. It also requires that we overcome language barriers by making known the positions and publications of the different communist forces around the world.

So the need for translation is great indeed. That is why we are asking you to help us.

*If you can contribute to this work, please write to us at:*  
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Hardly a day has gone by in the past several months without some kind of frenzied announcement about a major drop or jump in the exchange value of the U.S. dollar, the price of gold, interest rates or the quotations on the stock market. What on earth has gotten into the capitalist system to make it go through such spectacular ups and downs? What has become of the people who promised us twenty years ago that the days of economic crises and unemployment were over? **page 8**

## Editorial

Reforming the constitution is once again everyone's favourite subject. It is part of aftermath of the Quebec referendum — a referendum that did nothing to help solve the national question in Quebec. Will Canadian capitalists really manage to come up with a new constitution that they all agree on? More important, what will the working-class movement and the oppressed nationalities in Canada force the bourgeoisie to concede?



More and more women on the labour market; the youth revolt; challenges to traditional sexual morality; all this has had a profound impact on the family and family structures in the past twenty years. There is good reason to wonder what is happening to the family.

The traditional patriarchal family, notable for its oppression of women, is not the eternal institution that some present it as. What will become of it under socialism? **page 19**



In the wake of the upheavals in Iran and Zimbabwe, powderkegs are being lit in Central America. There have been two revolutions in the region in a matter of months, and the end is not in sight. Central America has long been known for its volcanoes, but it is now emerging as a source of other, more awesome eruptions — the revolt of the people. **page 15**

## Will constitutional reform be achieved at the expense of people's rights?

After twelve years in power, the Trudeau government has decided to up the ante and put its very existence on the line. It has interpreted the 'no' vote in the Quebec referendum as a 'yes' to something else. What does it say this something else is? Renewed federalism, a new Canadian constitution.

The ruling class in Canada did not have much choice left. They had to promise something new to disguise their defence of the status quo and fend off a 'yes' vote in the referendum. The something new could and indeed had to be suitably vague, but they had to promise **something**. The problem was that they had been making similar promises for the past ten years. To give them some content, and to take advantage of the "new atmosphere" resulting from the referendum and Canadian politicians' new-found great "desire for change", they had to translate the promises into concrete proposals. So the federal cabinet minister Jean Chrétien paid lightning visits to all the provincial capitals except Quebec City to feel out this "desire for something new". Yet another round of constitutional talks was scheduled for June 9, the prelude to a process that is to last eight to ten months at the most, in the opinion of Prime Minister Trudeau.

So constitutional reform is once again everyone's favourite topic. It is part of the aftermath of the Quebec referendum — a referendum which everybody admits did nothing to solve the Quebec national question. Now that the PQ's project of sovereignty-association has failed, it seems likely that the struggle against national oppression will once again be taken into the streets; for neither four years of government by the PQ nor the referendum have done anything to really solve the problems of the masses of the people.

In the coming months, this new round of constitutional talks will probably bring out more clearly than ever the serious contradictions that divide the Canadian bourgeoisie. But these talks will also be an opportunity for progressive forces to demand the recognition of the national rights of all nations and national minorities and the democratic rights of the working class and working people.

\* \* \*

There has been talk of reforming the British North America Act for more than 50 years now. Trudeau has already had a go at it several times. He failed in 1968, and again at the Victoria conference in 1971. Curiously enough,

in 1971, opposition to the Victoria Charter in Quebec was headed up by none other than Claude Ryan, then editor-in-chief of *Le Devoir*. Just one year ago, the Trudeau government lost the election after a campaign centred on the promise to patriate the constitution. In other words, for fifty years the growing contradictions in the ranks of the Canadian bourgeoisie have prevented it from agreeing on a plan to reform the constitution.

Recent events suggest that constitutional reform will not be any easier today than it was in 1971. The contradictions are perhaps sharper today than they were then, but that is about all that has changed.

Today, it is Alberta that is drawing the battle-lines, demanding an end to federal interference in the field of natural resources, and in particular oil. Its main provincial opponent is Ontario, whose previously strong economy has been under heavy attack in recent years. Ontario badly wants a strong central government to preserve its advantages. Federal Energy Minister Marc Lalonde recently endorsed Ontario's position when he said, "We defeated those who wanted political sovereignty with economic association. We did not carry out this difficult battle to get economic sovereignty with political association."

This issue seems to be the starting point for this round of constitutional talks. Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney defines renewed federalism primarily as "the division between what powers will be exercised by the central government and what powers will be exercised by the regions and the provinces".

This makes it sound as if the talks on renegotiating federalism will be a direct continuation of a referendum campaign in which the issues of national oppression and the people's democratic rights were clearly raised.

But what Canadian politicians are really interested in discussing these days are oil and electricity. This makes it easy for Davis and Lougheed to portray Quebec as one of a number of provinces that are simply trying to "regain control of the loot". After all, Revé Lévesque has said it himself often enough, in a paraphrase and a parody of former Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis. And like Duplessis before him, Lévesque is not the slightest bit uncomfortable about going to beg for his share of the loot at federal-provincial conferences.



**In May, the Canadian Brotherhood of Indians demanded the right to participate as a full partner in talks on reforming the constitution. It was bluntly told to mind its own business!**

\* \* \*

It is perhaps tempting not to take these talks very seriously. This would be a mistake, however, because they ignore and therefore deny the democratic rights of the people and nations and national minorities in Canada. You don't have to look far for examples of this. The Manitoba government has stubbornly opposed entrenching minority linguistic rights (in Manitoba and elsewhere) in the constitution. Chauvinists in British Columbia do not want to see linguistic rights recognized outside federal government services and Quebec. And there are a few things the federal government and all the provincial governments do manage to agree on: none of them recognize the right to self-determination of the Quebec, Inuit and Indian peoples; and all of them share the same opposition to extending the democratic rights of the working-class movement.

A constitution is not simply a piece of paper describing how the central government and provinces divvy up the Canadian cake. It is also the supreme law of the land which entrenches the democratic rights of the country's people and nations. Conversely, a constitution may also formally deny democratic rights such as the right to self-determination, lin-

guistic rights, freedom of expression and association, the right to strike, women's rights, etc.

So constitutional reform talks do raise some fundamental issues for the people of Canada. It is true that it does not really matter to the working-class movement which slimy politician has the constitutional right to tax away the workers' pay cheques, or which level of government is authorized to cut back welfare payments, or whether the offices of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers are searched by police acting for the provincial or federal government. But what does matter a great deal to the working-class movement is whether it can make good use of its strength and mobilization to force the bourgeoisie to concede certain rights. It is also important to know **which** rights it can force the bourgeoisie to recognize, so as to be in a better position to continue the struggle.

Already several organizations — the Association of French-speaking people outside Quebec, the Canadian Brotherhood of Indians and the Association of Inuit in northern Quebec — have demanded the right to take part in the process of constitutional reform. A number of groups have already demanded that the nations and national minorities be democratically consulted about the place reserved for them in a new constitution. They have all been simply ignored and told to mind their own business. In May, Trudeau even had the nerve to tell the Indian Brotherhood to mind its own business at the same time that he invited it to vote 'no' in the Quebec referendum so as to preserve this great and beautiful country.

No, we cannot afford to ignore the constitutional talks. At its last convention, the Canadian Labour Congress firmly recognized Quebec's right to self-determination. The labour and working-class movement must join together with Indian, Inuit and French-speaking associations and women's organizations to act to prevent the bourgeoisie from monopolizing the issue. Trudeau and Lougheed must not be left free to impose their own vision of the talks and make them a discussion of how to share up the exploitation of Canada.

There is an added reason why it is important to take up this task today. Conditions at the present time are more favourable than ever to victories for the proletariat on these issues. More people than ever before have organized and worked for the recognition of Quebec's right to self-determination. Today, this is a real and vital issue for a growing number of unions and committees. As well, more and more progressive people across Canada are working to promote and defend the democratic rights of the Indians, Inuit and Acadians. Others are fighting against racism in the major cities of Canada. An impressive sixty thousand people signed a declaration in favour of the equality of languages and nations.

There is a genuine movement of unity between workers and working people throughout the country and all the nationalities. This movement must make its voice heard and work to win greater and greater victories.

The ruling class in Canada is divided. It claims that it wants to renew the constitution. We can and must take advantage of this situation to put forward the working-class path — the path of the absolute equality of languages and nations.

## On the use of polemics and irony in the journal

I find the article on the CNTU Convention in PU 19 very good. On the basis of facts, various forms of nationalism are exposed. What I would like to speak about is the way you criticized the WCP.

I think we illustrate the WCP's nationalism well and their opportunism on this question as on many others appears very clearly. However, in some cases, I think we are off the track. Take the following statements for example: "In yet another coincidence the WCP was a few weeks later to get its main spokesman within the CNTU Robert Coté to enter the lists of the provincial by-elections as an aspiring young candidate in Maisonneuve" and "its funny how birds of a feather have bad luck together..." What proves that the WCP is nationalist is not that it runs in elections, which can be a perfectly justified communist tactic, but the facts which were presented in the previous part of the article...

Although we can use humour sometimes, I think we should use it with care because it reinforces the impression many workers have of "leftist" groups, that they are constantly quibbling over nothing. It produces this same impression when we go overboard to bring out even more strikingly the errors which we criticize. In fact, this does exactly the opposite of what we want. It tends to weaken the impact of a correct analysis based on fact...

A comrade from Regina

## A breath of fresh air

As an observer of the Marxist-Leninist movement, I am pleasantly surprised at the new tendency of the Organization. A breath of fresh air is blowing over IN STRUGGLE! and it is a very encouraging sign. IN STRUGGLE! seems to have made qualitative progress, and we can really see the maturity of the group. By maturity, I mean the capacity to think on its own. IN STRUGGLE! no longer reacts to events with slogans but rather

with analyses which are increasingly adapted to the current situation and which are evidence of a correct understanding of Marxist theory and practice...

IN STRUGGLE! is right in wanting to study the history of the Third International, and it can even criticize it if it thinks it has reason to do so. To judge the Third International, we must not look at who set it up, but rather the positions it adopted and what happened to it afterwards. That is a logical position which *Bulletin International* does not seem to understand. Shortly before the Second World War, the U.S.S.R. was extremely isolated and it is therefore understandable that Stalin then tried to protect the victory of the Russian Revolution from imperialist attacks. However, I don't think the positions of the Third International are very logical. If we look at its Seventh Congress, it is clear that class struggle was subordinated to the struggle against fascism. Before the Seventh Congress, the social democrats are social fascists, and after the congress unity was supposed to be possible with just about anyone. The Popular Front in France was used to crush workers' struggles more than to fight against fascism. In Germany, it was too late to unite with the social fascists then, for a few months earlier, they had been the **worst enemies** of the working class.

If Mao Zedong's New Democracy means collaboration with the bourgeoisie and the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, can someone explain to me what makes it any different from the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe? What is the fundamental difference between the programme of the popular fronts, that of the CPC(M-L) and those of the Eurocommunists? Is there not a similarity between the popular fronts' programme for peace and the tactic of the WCP? One protects the Russian revolution and the other the Chinese revolution by allying with the small or national bourgeoisie that acts in a consistent way. So, the rise of nationalism in the communist parties on the eve of the Second World War and the disbanding of the Comintern to please the imperialist bourgeoisies in struggle against fascism is not surprising.

The roots of revisionism will be found in the class struggle and not only

in documents. We cannot denounce Khrushchev for being revisionist without asking ourselves how he came to power and where he got his support to stay there.

A reader of  
PROLETARIAN UNITY

## What is happening in the scientific world?

...How does the progress of science and technology benefit the bourgeoisie ideologically, politically and economically?

Could scientific progress start serving the cause of the working-class struggle for socialist revolution?

Those are questions which should be posed if we want to probe deeper into this question...

## The "new Right" in the sciences

In the past few years a whole range of theories have come out, based on discoveries in the pure and applied sciences, which have reached a mass audience. A lot of those theories come out of one or another branch of biology.

Sociobiology (the study of mechanisms and factors involved in the perpetuation of animal societies and their evolution) has been one of the most potent sources of theories that serve to justify the biases of what has been called "the new Right".

The new Right, in the United States and many European countries, made up largely of scientists, teachers and intellectuals of all sorts, has appealed to the ruling classes to ground their policies in the findings of sociobiology. This discipline has already been referred to by one of its boosters as "the science of optimizing the chances of reproductive success and good relations of consanguinity to serve the cause of evolution".

1. A monthly bulletin published in France. You can find our response to some points of view of this publication in No. 19 of *Proletarian UNITY*, p. 54.

The *Le Devoir* published some material in August 1979 which reviewed some of the public discussions in France over the emergence of this new Right. A French sociologist made the link between the new Right in science and the Milton Friedman followers in the Chicago school of economics. The Friedmanites put forward a policy of austerity and reactionary measures and the rightist scientists found justifications for it "in Nature".

Sociobiology is far from the only "in" theory these days. To take one example, look at what Dr. Jean-Marc Brunet, a Montreal-based advocate of the theory of eugenics (producing a higher race by cross-breeding humans — ed. note) put forward by the ultra-reactionary Alexis Garrel is doing. Last year, two readers of *La Presse* wrote the Montreal daily to condemn Brunet for propagating fascist ideas in the guise of laws of Nature.

A man named Roch Tousignant rallied to Brunet's defence, deploring the "intellectual terrorism" being directed at the poor doctor. Tousignant reminded readers that Marxist-style terrorism had been employed against Konrad Lorenz and Hans J. Eysenck earlier. These men had had the courage to question the "a priori egalitarian assumptions that most modern-day ideologies base themselves on". Interestingly enough, both Lorenz and Eysenck are biologists too.

Eysenck specialized in genetics in Great Britain. He claims that that the hereditary genetic imprinting of an individual is what determines the eventual social station of that person or his descendants.

Lorenz founded ethology, the study of animal social behaviour, over 50 years ago. More recently he has done more detailed research into human and animal aggression. His conclusion is that man's social behaviour is necessarily subject to all the natural laws connected to instinctive behaviour patterns acquired by man at any stage in his evolution. His views are summarized in a book entitled, *On aggression*.

These studies revive the Malthusian theories. They soon came to be used to explain and justify wars between nations and countries. According to Lorenz, they are an expression of the territorial defence behaviour that can

be observed in a number of species of animals.

Debates on these questions are not limited to scientific circles. They can, for example, be found in the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, which carried an article on "The new biology and the war" in its June 1970 issue (vol. 3, no. 2)

The tendency to look at social phenomena and events in biological terms is gaining ground. Marc Laurendeau, a political columnist for the Montreal daily *La Presse*, invoked the "aggressive impulses" of American citizens to explain Carter's policies.

The ruling classes are working — quite successfully — to make this pattern of thinking, this false vision of social life, a part of popular consciousness...

## Biology

Sociobiology, neurobiology, ethology — for each branch of biology there are different sets of ideologues from different philosophical shades. All try to promote theories which justify wars of plunder, capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression or else seek to encourage an attitude of passivity and running away from instead of confronting this oppression.

These are obviously not the only branches of biology involved. Genetics is one of the biggest sources of theories justifying racism and sexual discrimination.

The newspapers reported the other day that an American millionaire was bankrolling a project to fertilize women with high IQs with the sperm of five Nobel prize winners with the hope of creating "exceptional children". The idea of creating a "biological elite" is hot stuff — for the geniocrats, the people around Jean-Marc Brunet and the millionaires who are desperate for a little publicity.

But the idea should not just be discounted. The sad fact is that a lot of serious and respected geneticists uphold this idea.

In human paleontology, there is a debate going on between the supporters of polygenism (the theory that mankind comes from several different racial stocks) and those who believe in monogenism.

A number of people have used the polygenist thesis to give a "scientific" grounding to the theory of the superiority of the white race.

The Communist Party of Dahomey referred to this debate and to the UNESCO resolutions opposing polygenism in their booklet *Introduction aux réalités économiques et sociales du Dahomey* ("Introduction to the economic and social situation in Dahomey", NBE, 1979, pp. 5-10).

One final example of a science which is having its findings extrapolated and applied to human beings is thermodynamics. This branch of physics looks at the whole question of energy transfer in inert and living matter.

The university-level school text on *Cellular Biology* by A. Loewy and P. Siekevitz first explains the basic laws of thermodynamics. The authors then speculate as to whether civilization, that "form of organization external to the organisms themselves", might not see a situation where man evolved socially to the point where civilization "would be wracked with contradictions which, being rooted in man's biology and transmitted historically, cannot be resolved on the social level".

Yet again, scientific knowledge in a very specific area is being used as a basis for questioning the general evolution of society.

Prigonine has also raised the question as to whether it wouldn't be possible in the near future to explain human social life (like wars) using thermodynamic models. Prigonine won the 1979 Nobel prize for, among other things, his brilliant work in using thermodynamic models to explain termitariums. Using a thermodynamic model would mean measuring the quantity of energy resources, how they were used, in what ways they were transformed into other forms of energy, etc...

## Favourable conditions

Further, another factor working in our favour is that there is a definite progressive trend among scientists, including the specialists in various fields of the pure sciences, who are opposed to the misuse of scientific knowledge.

Albert Jacquard organized a series of conferences last year and wrote a book (*L'éloge de la différence* — "The

worship of differences") against the use of genetics to justify racism.

Then there is the U.S. magazine *Science for the People*, which has been coming out for many years now. Its stated objectives are: to protest the ways in which the ruling classes use science and technology; to expose **all the myths perpetrated by the capitalists**; to rationalize how they manipulate and monopolize the discoveries of science and technology to reactionary ends; to publicize the experiments that technicians, scientists and intellectuals have conducted and the new information which they wish to make available to the mass of people in their day-to-day struggles against U.S. imperialism.

Thus, *Science For the People* exposed how the CIA used the findings of anthropologists on the social structures of mountain tribes in planning operations against popular insurrections. It ran an article showing how the CIA used the work of psychological specialists studying how behaviour can be modified by conditioning to set up programmes in public American hospitals to torture homosexuals. The gay persons were given negative shocks, usually electric, in order to forcibly make them into heterosexuals. Another article reported on how military technicians took experiments in the field of genetics and manufactured virulent microbes for use in bacteriological warfare...

### Against anti-scientific attitudes

Agitation and propaganda needs to be done on a number of issues mentioned above. But it should also include a campaign against the obscurantist viewpoint which is presently on the rise. The "anti-science" spirit has active proponents all over the world.

The French magazine, *La Recherche*, a popular science publication, recently reported that a serious survey showed that 60% of the people polled felt that ASTROLOGY was a real science, ranking ahead of all the physical sciences!

The occult sciences are getting more and more popular. Magazines like *The Plain Truth* get wide distribution. An article in this rag in February, 1980,

tried to prove that the theory of evolution was false. A "conscious scheme" was behind the creation of the insects... And then there are groups like the Children of God, whose members will tell you (this happened to me) that theories like the one about evolution and the science of genetics were dreamed up to prevent people from seeing the message of God. The religious fanatics have things backwards. These are but a couple of the hundreds of obscurantist groups belonging to the trend which the bourgeoisie tries to keep afloat...

Again, more recently, the Jehovah Witness magazine (French version of *Awake*, February 22, 1980), which is distributed throughout the working-class districts of Montreal, dealt with the problem of atheism, where it came from and how it was developing in the modern world. "Can evolutionism replace faith?" is the question posed by the article:

*Before Darwin popularized the theory of evolution, most people thought that there was a God. There was no other possible explanation for the existence of things. For many people, once the theory of evolution was accepted, there no longer was any need to believe in God.*

*"However, if you believe in evolution you might be interested in the commentary which appeared in Harper's magazine on the factors which influenced Darwin's thinking. Was it really an objective analysis of living beings and fossils? S. Gould, a Harvard University biologist, said: 'The idea of phylogenetic ladder was an a priori supposition from the beginning. He didn't find it in the rocks. He was simply expressing the political and cultural prejudices of 19th century liberalism.' In other words, Darwin's thinking was shaped by the society in which he lived. Moreover, the article we just cited brought forth this statement from Marx: 'It is amazing to see how Darwin finds in the animals and plants the English society of his time, with the same division of labour, competition etc.'" (our translation from French version of *Awake*)*

My now, that is an interesting polemic. The authorities cited are none

other than a biologist and Karl Marx (quoted out of context) whose words are used to make a radical criticism of Darwin's theory of evolution. Later on in the same article, the words of Einstein and other scientists are used to bring us to the grande finale conclusion:

*"There are a lot of things that scientists know exist but are unable to explain, such as the human spirit, consciousness and the religious instinct. All of those things clearly exist but science cannot explain them in terms of its 'current state of knowledge'. What about life itself? What is the 'life energy' which distinguishes living beings from inert matter made up of? The scientists cannot tell us."*

Again, the questions raised are most pertinent. They are the issues that anyone who is forming a world view has to broach.

It is thus up to us to take on these issues too, from a materialist standpoint. This is what Marx and Engels did very amply in making a complete break from all vestiges of the religious philosophy that was dominant in the era they lived in...

### Is dialectical materialism doomed to extinction?

Jacques Monod won the Nobel prize in 1965 for his work in the genetics of micro-organisms. One of his theories is the regulation of the activity of genes.

Monod believes that the old philosophies, religions and materialism all put forward an "animistic" view of history, a view that history is basically pre-determined.

Monod's main criticisms have been directed against Marxism. He believes that his explanation of natural philosophy based on modern biology goes beyond all the "worldviews existing, from primitive Western civilization to dialectical materialism". Or so he says in his book *Le hasard et la nécessité*. (Accident and necessity).

Monod's manifesto, published in 1970, got an incredible response. The international press, scientific and non-scientific alike publicized it, commented on and criticized it everywhere.

A Russian philosopher - journalist, I.T. Frolov, devoted a 400 page critique to it (*Dialectique et éthique en biologie*, Editions du Progrès, 1978). The Chinese press also criticized Monod's views. The Communist Party of France (M-L) (publishers of *Humanité Rouge*) wrote a short piece upon Monod's death... Another example: look at the *Scientific American* for November 1979. You will find an article called "The quantum theory and reality". It tries to prove that "the doctrine that the world is made up of objects whose existence is independent of human consciousness turns out to be in conflict with quantum mechanics and with facts established by experiment".

The doctrine referred to by the author of this article, Bernard D'Espagnat, is very close indeed to the doctrine of materialism (D'Espagnat calls it realism). This is the old debate between materialism and idealism all over again on a sophisticated level, the same debate Lenin joined in with his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

D'Espagnat has just recently elaborated his views at greater length in a book titled *La nature du réel* (The nature of the real).

It would obviously take a very long time to rhyme off all the different instances of articles and views of this kind. One common feature which most of them share is that the natural scientists turned ideologues like to pretend that they are basing their conclusions on new findings never before known.

However, those people who have done a minimum of reading and study in the sciences and philosophy notice right away the tell-tale marks of an old "discovery" slightly dressed up to seem like something new.

All of us in fact are aware that the effort to prove that dialectical materialism is out of date because of scientific advances did not begin yesterday. Mr. Duhring tried to push this idea in 1870. His chief claim to fame was the critique that Engels inflicted on him.

Marx and Engels undertook to take the theory of dialectics, developed in German philosophy, and to integrate it into a materialistic understanding of both human history and nature in general. They both saw very clearly how the development of natural science contributed to their understanding. Marx

said that, despite certain limitations, Darwin's work on natural selection and the theory of evolution was a historical and natural foundation for his theories.

The struggle was carried on by Plekhanov. Then it was Lenin battling the empiriocritics. Lenin and Plekhanov were both aware that philosophy was the breeding ground for many revisionist ideas. That is why the first propagandists for Marxism did not hold back from struggles against trends like the "god-builders", who were trying to reconcile Marxism and religion.

In short, the struggle going on between the main philosophic trends of today which have influence on the masses and the revolutionary movement should be seen by us as an opportunity to put forward and explain the basic tenets of Marxism.

Materialism has to change form at each major stage in the development of scientific knowledge: you can read that assertion in just about any Marxist philosophy text. Putting it into practice is a little more difficult than just saying it, however...

An IN STRUGGLE! member

### Feminist activists debate socialism

*A comrade in Regina recently sent us an interesting document written by the Women Action Collective on Health (WACH). This organization has been active for many years and has many struggles under its belt. It has waged a firm struggle for the right to abortion in Saskatchewan and on all questions related to the emancipation of women. The following excerpts were taken from a document entitled A Feminist View on Organizing for Socialism which was debated within WACH. Here is how these comrades present their contribution: "WACH is presenting these notes in a particular spirit: we see ourselves as part of the left, and we want to encourage communication and joint struggle within the left. We don't see ourselves, or the women's movement, as having a final answer about the nature of the struggle, but we do have some ideas based on our practice which we want to explore and discuss."*

...In the previous discussion, we have noted two major weaknesses of Marxist groups: their definition of what is political, which puts primacy on class to the point of creating a hierarchy of oppression and organizational problems which arise in part from the failure of many groups to address some of the real issues of people's lives. Both of these problems arise to a large extent from a fundamental weakness of traditional Marxist analysis: the failure to develop an adequate understanding of culture.

Culture is a difficult concept. WACH is using it here to indicate significant forms of behaviour which cannot be readily explained in class or even materialist terms. Sexism and racism, for example, are in many ways arbitrary and counterproductive social practices; yet they are pervasive to the point of being universal. They are associated with every form of class society and probably with non-class societies as well. In many situations, they dominate class relationships; we can see that in the position of women in our own society. It is clear, then, that an analysis which looks at class as the only significant social political factor is simply incapable of providing an adequate understanding of reality. Unfortunately, many, if not most, left groups have this kind of analysis.

Marxist explanations of the family and of personal life have a long history of wrestling desperately with facts in order to make them fit the assumption that class is always and forever the primary division of our social existence. Engels was the first major analyst to fall into the trap, explaining women's oppression as the result of the rise of class society and male domination of property. He did not explain why women didn't own property in the first place, except to hint at biological reasons. Some contemporary left groups try to claim that there is no sexual or sexist oppression within working-class marriage because there is no ownership of property involved in the marriages of the working class. The pattern shows up in action as well as theory.

Lenin scorned the concern of some communist women's groups with sexual questions and openly fought against letting such questions have any legitimacy; he told those 20th-century women who

were struggling to arrive at an understanding of their condition that August Bebel, a 19th-century man, had said all there was to say about women.

And of course, the history of struggle for the last 100 years has been one of women being told that their emancipation is dependent on the emancipation of the whole working class, and that separate struggles are divisive, unnecessary and doomed to fail in any case. It is interesting to note that more than 60 years after the October revolution one of the editors of a new Soviet feminist journal, *Women in Russia*, was picked up and questioned by the KGB within 24 hours of the first issue's appearance. She was forced to recant her non-orthodox beliefs.

For the last 100 years, the organized left of whatever ideological and intellectual current has played a similar role with respect to women. It has belittled their questions and their struggles, sometimes going so far as to call women who have expressed concern about their position counter-revolutionary. Rather than question Marxism, the left has gone on a perpetual witch-hunt against women who have asked questions that Marxism cannot answer. And women, insecure and socialized into a concern for others which makes them particularly vulnerable to the argument that they are dividing the working class, have ended up either subordinating their own struggles or disillusioned with the left.

What Marxists have to face is that Marxism does not deal with every possible social issue, and that it does not always deal adequately with social issues. Sexism is one case where both these failures hold true. Traditional Marxism's response to women's issues has been proven by time and experience to be inadequate. This does not mean we reject Marxism as a whole. The left does Marxism no favors by assuming it must be either perfect or nothing.

Instead, one task of the Marxist left has to be the development of an analysis and understanding of those major issues which can neither be understood nor resolved in class terms. Sexism is one of these issues. It is a central issue, both organizationally and politically. It cannot be resolved, and will not be resolved, by a simple reiteration of the primacy of class ...

February 1980

## The U.S. economy goes into a recession

Hardly a day has gone by in the past several months without some kind of frenzied announcement about a major jump or drop in the exchange value of the U.S. dollar, the price of gold or the quotations on the stock market.

In September 1979, it was the dollar's turn to go through a disturbing decline. At about the same time, from August to October, gold fever hit world markets, pushing the price of the Midas metal up 50% in a few short months. The losses on the Canadian stock market in a single day, March 27 1980, hit the startling figure of 7 billion dollars.

What foul pest has bitten our fair capitalism? How could the system that is to last forever go through such spectacular and sudden ups and downs? New records are set every month. Panic takes over the markets on many a day. As the jumps upward in value become more lightning quick and meteoric, the ensuing fall back down is all that more abrupt. Things that at first seem to be exceptions to the rule become the rule within weeks. The only constant is the condition of chronic instability that everyone has to learn to live with.

It has got to the point where the *Financial Post* is reduced to organizing sweepstakes to figure out which economic forecast is to be believed. The American financial expert, J.P. Granville, put it bluntly in a statement issued during a recent visit to Montreal:

*"Don't rely on what the economists, stockbrokers and financial publications are predicting... Follow your own inner rhythm."*

What has become of our noble knights of yesteryear? These financial wizards of modern neo-capitalism who are today running sweepstakes and checking their daily bio-rhythms before a big investment decision are the same people who promised us 20 years ago that the days of economic crises and unemployment were over. The future of capitalism was the leisure society. The stark realities of the past many months do not augur well for capitalism. The prospects are grim indeed for the mass of working people. But the freakout that the Canadian and American financial circles went through just a while back is merely the tip of the iceberg. That anxiety is merely a symptom of the crisis which is eating away at the whole rotting edifice of the Western financial and monetary system. It is the harbinger of a still more profound and serious crisis which lies at the very heart of capitalist production.

These headlines of major American magazines indicate that the economic crisis has got U.S. capitalists worried sick.



### The Volcker plan

With the dollar dropping significantly and investors trying to protect themselves by switching to gold, the U.S. government moved to restore confidence in the dollar by imposing a whole series of restrictions on credit. The biggest move was to push interest rates up to astronomic levels never before seen in the history of American capitalism.

On October 6, 1979, Paul Volcker, president of the Federal Reserve Board (U.S. central bank), returned abruptly to Washington right after the general

1. *La Presse*, April 20 1980, p. C-1

meeting of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in Belgrade, Czechoslovakia. On the same day, he announced a boost in the bank rate from 11% to 12% (the bank rate is the interest charged by the U.S. central bank to commercial banks).<sup>2</sup> Three days later, the commercial banks jumped their prime lending rate (the interest charged to their biggest and best customers; hence their lowest rates) to 14.5%. The Volcker measures also obliged the banks to augment their reserves (the amount of liquid currency they themselves hold to back up loans, etc.). This had the practical effect of limiting the amount of cash that the banks had left over for lending out.

On February 15, 1980, the bank rate went up another point to 13%. The prime lending rate increased to 16¼% or 16½%. The increases of one kind or another continued to pile on top of one another. By the spring, unusual for the prime rate of short-term loans (from one month to a year) was hovering around 20%. It wasn't very long ago that a figure like that was thought to be the lot of the most underdeveloped countries only. Those rates have only begun to edge downwards again very recently.

Virtually all other advanced capitalist countries were quick to follow suit in adopting similar measures. In Canada, Gerald Bouey, president of the Bank of Canada, announced that Canada would have a floating bank rate from now on — it would be readjusted every week to conform with market conditions. Canada hasn't seen that kind of thing since the fifties. The rest was predictable as the Canadian rates have followed the U.S. rates up and down.

Volcker first explained the high interest rates policy as mainly a move to shore up the U.S. dollar. The buck had plummeted down just a bit too dangerously far in the immediately preceding weeks in the eyes of the Federal Reserve Board.

The fact of the matter is that the U.S. dollar has been in constant decline since Nixon devalued it in 1971. Tricky Dick also chose that moment to announce that the U.S. dollar was no longer redeemable (at a fixed price) in gold. The dollar has gone through what the authorities like to call a controlled skid since 1971. That is a visible sign of how seriously the value of the dollar has been undermined over the past few

Table 1  
Evolution of the Bank Rate in Canada

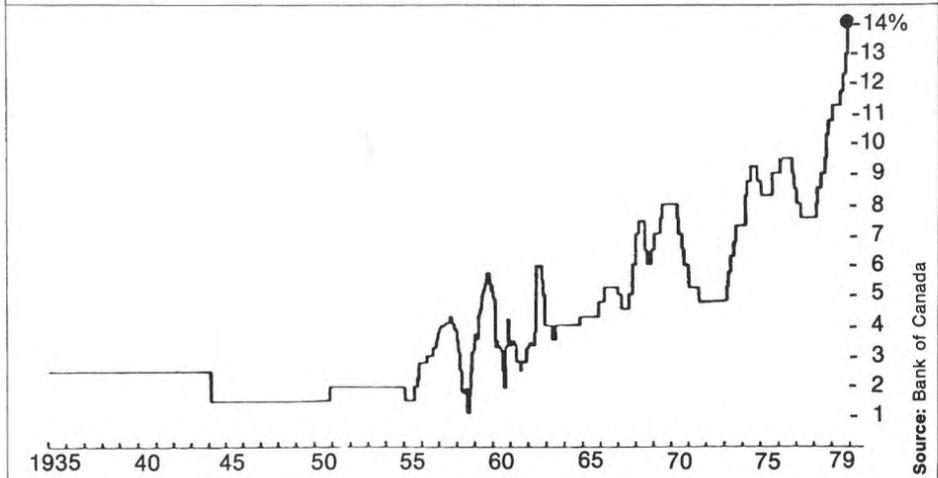


Table 2  
Changes in the Bank Rate in Canada and the United States

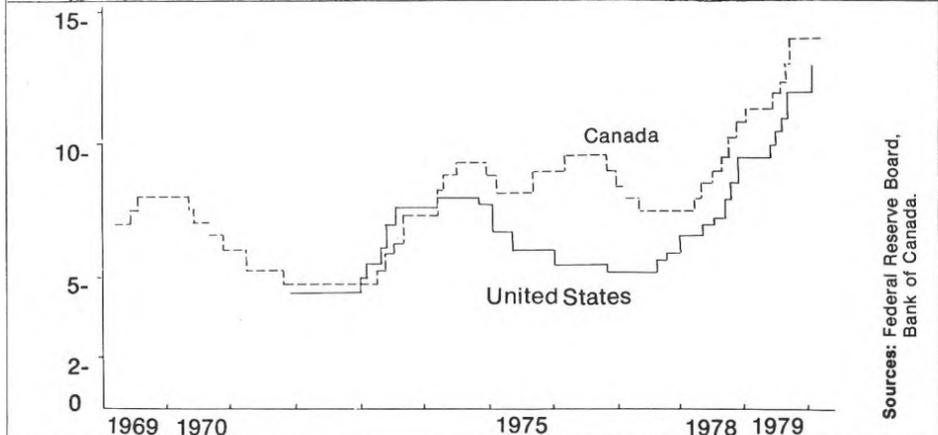


Table 3  
Important dates in the history of the international monetary system

**1944-The Bretton Woods Agreement.** The main imperialist countries of that period signed this agreement that made gold the standard for exchange of currencies on the international market. The value of gold was fixed at \$35 U.S. an ounce.

**1971 —** The Nixon government announced that **the dollar was no longer convertible into gold.** The dollar went through its first devaluation at the same time. This enabled the United States to transfer its crisis onto the backs of its competitors and to revive U.S. exports.

**1973 — Floating currencies** (not set at a fixed exchange rate in relation to the value of gold or another currency) **become the general rule** for the currencies of all major capitalist countries. This is clearly in response to the devaluation of the dollar.

**1976 — The Jamaica Accords:** The International Monetary Fund officially decides to go off the gold standard and reduces its gold reserves. The United States successfully puts forward the U.S. dollar as a substitute standard to replace gold.

2. The Federal Reserve Board, like all central banks, determines the amount of money that it will put into circulation. It does so by lending

money to the commercial banks at what is called the bank rate. The banks then in turn loan money to their clients, obviously at a higher rate.

years. The downwards slide also has its advantages. It enables the United States to transfer a substantial part of the burden of its own economic crisis onto the backs of its competitors. Thus Japan and West Germany have been obliged to intervene regularly to prop up the dollar, which despite everything remains the basis of the post-war monetary system. Indeed, if the dollar were to drop too suddenly it would likely bring the currencies of these other countries down with it.

But the controlled skid had gone altogether too far by the end of 1979. The gold fever on gold markets pointed to a certain lack of confidence in the dollar as a viable currency. After all, it was beginning to get to the point where you could measure the value of dollar bills by weighing them in pounds. The developments in Iran and the freeze on Iranian assets in the United States made an already disastrous situation even worse. The imposition of credit restrictions was thus imperative to restore confidence in the shaky U.S. dollar.

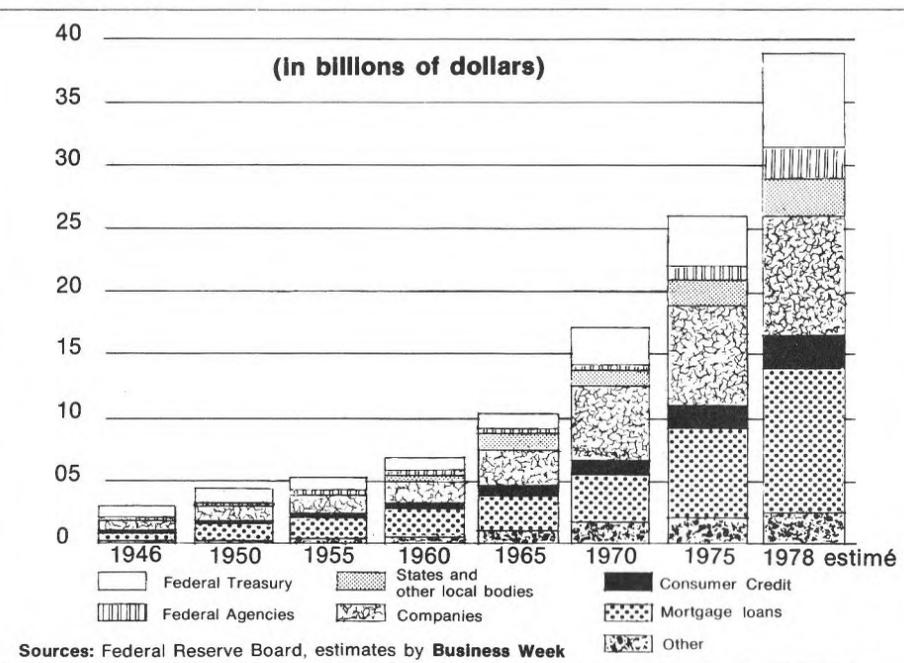
### An economy built on debts

If you look at the methods used by the U.S. economy since the Second World War to extend its hegemony and to fight off crises of overproduction, it is relatively easy to see why all the recent measures are being implemented. The bottom line is that the United States, like all capitalist countries, has practised a deliberately inflationary economic policy (i.e. has consciously tried to offset unemployment and dropping profit margins by allowing businesses to constantly raise prices).

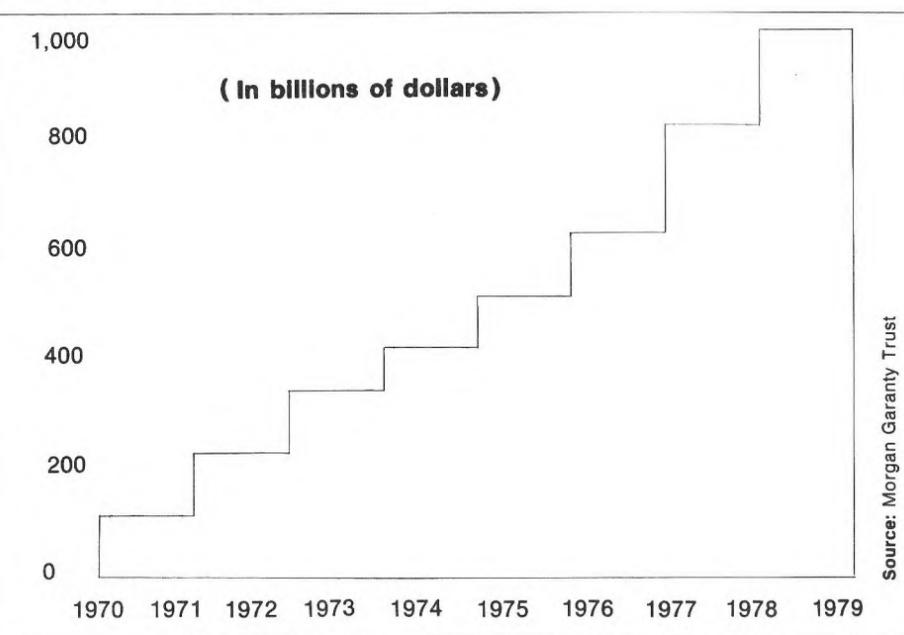
According to the economists of the Keynesian school,<sup>3</sup> economic crises which recur regularly under capitalism are not crises of overproduction. Rather they are due to the "under-consumption" of the masses. The standard answer to recession is thus to artificially stimulate demand by pumping money into the economy: altering fiscal (monetary and tax) policy, increasing government spending and relaxing credit.

The Keynesian policy produces the absolutely incredible statistic that there has been an average of \$200 million a day borrowed in the United States since 1946 to keep the wheels of the profit machine well-oiled and running smoothly. The source of that informa-

**Table 4**  
**A mountain of debts which keeps getting bigger**



**Table 5**  
**Rate of Increase in the International Market in Eurodollars**



tion is none other than the October 1, 1974, issue of Business Week.

*"The U.S. economy is built on a mountain of \$2,500 billion in debts corresponding to piles of cars, houses, factories and machines that have made our economy the richest and most powerful in history."*

*"The figures defy the imagination: \$1,000 billion in corporate debt, \$600 billion in mortgages, \$500 billion in government loans, \$200 billion in personal debt. To sustain thirty years of economic growth, the country as a whole has been borrowing at a rate of \$200 a day since the end of the Second World War."*

- J. Maynard Keynes was a British economist whose theories have been applied in all capitalist countries since the thirties.
- Business Week, October 1974, quoted in the magazine La Vérité, March 1980, p. 90; our translation from the French version.

billions in mortgages, \$500 billion in government loans, \$200 billion in personal debt. To sustain thirty years of economic growth, the country as a whole has been borrowing at a rate of \$200 a day since the end of the Second World War."

The result of all this is that the United States has the lowest rate of saving of any industrialized country. And that pitiful rate has continued to fall off as the years go on (e.g., from 3.4% of personal income in 1975 to 3% in 1979).

The spread of consumer credit has made it possible to move goods over the counter faster than ever. Without it, working people just wouldn't be able to buy those goods. The capitalists' stake in all this is that the extension of credit enables them to speed up what is called the turnover cycle of capital. Step one in that process is the production of the goods (commodities). If and when things stop there, the capital which the capitalist has invested is literally congealed in the form of (unsold) goods. If there was no credit, the capitalist would have to leave his capital tied up for as long as it took to sell the goods for money before resuming production. With easy credit, all that worry and bother goes away as capital is "reproduced" quickly. The capitalist can move with dispatch to continue exploiting the labour-power of more workers. The owners thus get maximum use out of the means of production and they extract a maximal amount of surplus unpaid labour, source of all profits, from the workers.

How do you make a system work where the companies and the State all borrow from the banks, where the banks all borrow from the Federal Reserve Board, and then where the companies have to borrow all over again to pay the interest on their previous loans? There is only one way to do it. Get the money printing machines a-rolling churning out the green stuff.

The growth in the money supply (the number of bills in circulation) has greatly surpassed the rate of real growth in material production in the United States and all other capitalist countries. The name given to this huge mass of floating paper dollars which are exported to every country in the world is Eurodollars (in Europe) or petrodollars (in OPEC countries). There was no less than \$850 billion Eurodollars cir-

culating in Europe as of March 31, 1979. That is the same amount of dollars that are circulating within the United States itself!

The number of Eurodollars has increased elevenfold in a little under ten years (i.e., since 1971). Each successive reform in the monetary system has only resulted in further increases in that number. That is the price that the capitalists are obliged to pay to maintain their profit margins and to keep increasing the level of production, albeit very minimally.

This development alone is inflationary. The constant increase in the volume of dollars being passed back and forth around the world bears no relationship whatever to the woefully small increases that may occur in actual material production of the goods that money is supposed to buy (and represent the value of). That is the reality behind the oft-heard saying that you can hear repeated a thousand times a day in any supermarket in the country — a dollar today is not worth half what it used to be worth.

This situation is a source of galloping inflation in the European countries and Japan too. These countries are regularly driven to prop up the U.S. "Monopoly money". They pay for such blood transfusions by printing off new German marks and Japanese yen. All this for the simple reason that the international monetary system must be kept afloat.

The great post-war capitalist economic theorist, John Maynard Keynes, was thus quite right to agree with Lenin when he said:

*"Lenin was right... There is no subtler and surer way to subvert and overthrow the present bases of society than to debase the currency. The (inflationary — ed. note) process takes all the hidden forms of the economic laws and puts them onto a scrap heap. It does so in a way that only one man in a million is able to diagnose what is going on any more."*

Keynes forgot just one thing: the basis of all this anarchy in the monetary system is the capitalists' search for maximum profit.

The problem today is that all these inflationary policies haven't really succeeded in staving off the recurrent crises and stagnation in the economy. For the

past 20 years, we have experienced a brand new problem: stagflation, the existence of rising unemployment and runaway inflation at the same time. Instability is all-pervasive. Because of the "credit revolution", the first bankruptcy of any significance whatever threatens to start a chain reaction, just as happened with the spillover of the problems with the U.S. dollar into all other capitalist countries.

The Volcker measures can only be properly understood when situated in this context. The object is to restrict access to credit, especially to dampen the strong demand on the U.S. market. This can only mean barrelling even faster towards a recession and a wave of bankruptcies of many companies that are in desperate need of credit to keep above water. In other words, Volcker wants to slow down the mad pace of the paper money printing machine which has been cranking George Washingtons out faster and faster every year.

Finally, in the words of the big "money comptroller" himself, John Heimann (he is the administrative boss and overseer for the U.S. banking system), the reason for requiring the banks to increase their reserves is to ward off more bankruptcies like that of the Franklin National Bank in 1974. Nonetheless, these measures came too late to avoid them entirely.

Events are proving Mr. Heimann right. The oldest American bank, the First Pennsylvania Corporation, is in serious financial straits and is begging for a \$1.5 billion rescue package.

There aren't very many economists who feel that it is possible to hold down inflation with those kind of policies. At any rate, if the measures ever succeed in temporarily quelling inflation it will be at a price: the biggest recession that the United States has seen in 20 years.

The Volcker measures basically try to reassure the capitalists by putting a stop to certain excesses of a system that was starting to provoke widespread panic. He has no intention of doing any more than curbing; the same basic system will remain intact.

All bourgeois economists find themselves in a quandary. The January 14, 1980, Bulletin of the International Monetary Fund explained the dead-end that the restrictive measures are leading to:

5. J. Maynard Keynes, *Ibid.*, p. 71; our translation.

**Table 6**  
Rate of inflation, unemployment and real GNP (Gross National Product) increase in Canada between 1960 and 1979

Year	Average rate of Inflation	Average real GNP increase	Unemployment rate
1960-70	3.3%	4.7%	
1970-72	3.8%	3.5%	6.2%
1973	9.0%	6.7%	5.6%
1974	10.9%	3.7%	5.5%
1975	10.7%	1.1%	6.9%
1976	7.5%	4.9%	7.1%
1977	7.8%	2.0%	8.1%
1978	7.7%	3.4%	8.3%
1979	9.8%	2.75%	7.6%

Source: Revue économique du Canada

"A more restrictive budgetary and monetary policy used to be enough to master inflation and control a runaway economy. Recovery measures sufficed to reduce unemployment and get the economy rolling again. At the present time, the only effect of economic recovery is to accelerate inflation without expanding employment; in parallel fashion, an austerity policy makes unemployment worse without putting a stop to inflation."<sup>6</sup>

It is easy enough to understand the reason for this impasse. It is only the financial and monetary side of the overall crisis we can see unfolding right in front of our very eyes. They are only the symptoms, not the causes, of a much deeper crisis. That crisis originated in the foundation stone of the whole capitalist structure, in the realm of capitalist production. It is thus hardly any surprise to see the bourgeois economists fail and fail again to wrestle the crisis to the ground when they are attacking the effects of the crisis and not its cause.

### The crisis of overproduction

Why do people talk today about a liquidity crisis on American financial markets? The heavy demand for credit (i.e. for liquid money, for cash) is not the result of some great new growth spurt in real production. Far from it. The present real rate of growth in production in both the U.S. and Canada is a whopping 0%. The demand

for credit comes from the fact that there are a large number of companies going through major financial difficulties. They are forced to borrow, no matter how high the interest rates are, to meet their obligations.

There has been an increase in the tempo of bankruptcies in Canada, up from 452 in January, 1979, to 578 in January, 1980. And those are not all small businesses by any means. The level of liabilities<sup>7</sup> of bankrupt enterprises has in fact practically tripled. The best known example is Chrysler Corporation. It is having increasing difficulty getting adequate guarantees from the banks to persuade the government to give it the hand-outs it needs. There are a number of other big companies tottering on the brink in the U.S.: Amtrack, Lockheed Aircraft, the City of New York.

This is the source of the meteoric rise in loans made on the short-term loans market at amazing rates like 30% over 2 years. The companies are not borrowing so they can increase production (and employment). They are merely hoping to use the bread to finance selling off their existing inventory and to survive at least a little while longer. They also borrow on the long-term loans market so they can indulge in speculation and absorb other companies having trouble. There has been a veritable tidal wave of mergers and companies bought out in the past few years. Some companies have even specialized in these kinds of operations.

You won't find the cause of the current crisis in the way credit is being expanded or restricted. You can analyse the degree of restraint in monetary

policy until you are blue in the face but you won't find the answer there either. As Marx said about the economists of his own era:

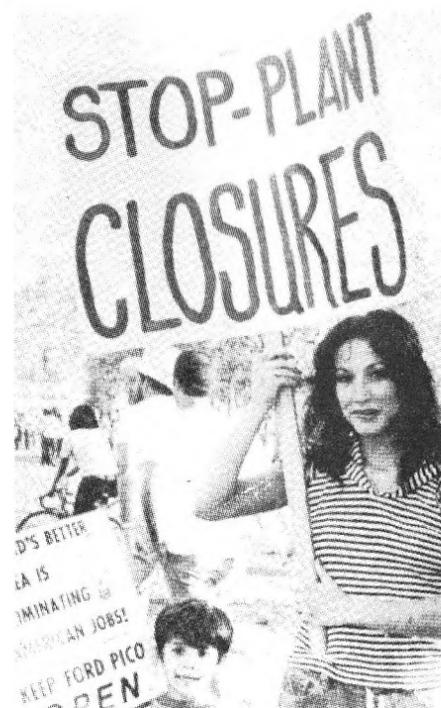
"The superficial nature of political economy is revealed by the simple fact that it considers that the expansion and contraction of credit — which is simply a symptom of alternating periods — is a decisive cause of the industrial cycle."<sup>8</sup>

The source of the crisis lies in the crisis of overproduction. The workers cannot afford to buy the goods that they themselves produce. That is what is happening with the recession we are going through today in Canada and the United States.

There have been no fewer than 10,000 layoffs in the forest industry in British Columbia in the past few months, and the prediction is that there will be 12,000 more people out of work by the end of 1980. The unemployment rate in Windsor has hit 20% and Ford has just announced the shutdown of its casting plant. Ford has also announced that its

6. Bulletin du Fonds Monétaire international, January 14, 1980, quoted in Interventions critiques en économie politique, Spring-Summer 1980, no. 5, p. 94; our translation from the French.
7. Liabilities here means all the debts of a given company.
8. Karl Marx, Capital, Editions Costes volume IV, p. 99, quoted in Jean Baby, Principes fondamentaux d'économie politique, published by Librairie Progressiste, p. 150

"Stop plant closures" has become the rallying cry of the autoworkers and their families.



In April, members of the National Farmers Union demonstrated on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to protest rising interest rates.

largest single assembly plant in the United States will be padlocked forever. Fully 28% of the United Auto Workers membership are presently without work. Newsweek went so far as to call it the "deepest crisis" of the auto industry "since the Great Depression".<sup>9</sup>

The recent hike in interest rates can only make things worse. Many commentators have said that the policy is in fact a deliberate attempt to provoke a recession. The auto and construction industries were the first to be hit. Retail sales were down 1.3% in the U.S. in March 1980. Industrial production slipped 0.8%. Robert Korthals, executive vice-president of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, described what tight money could mean for small business: "For them it could mean more than just the loss of a trip to Florida this year."<sup>10</sup>

The American press has practically been wishing for the recession to come, supposedly because it would combat inflation. This is the kind of Hobson's choice that capitalism has been pushed towards in order to patch up its own contradictions.

After they have obliged people to perform every imaginable sacrifice to feed the great profit machine, the capitalists are still left with a large amount of capital which is stuck in the form of unsold goods that the mass of working people cannot afford to buy. When the economists rant on about the crisis of liquidity, they don't mean by that that there is insufficient capital. What they mean is that the capital which does exist is tied up in the form of goods for which there are fewer and fewer buyers. Alternatively, the capital is stuck in the form of machines and factories which are idle and are not contributing in any way to completing the turnover cycle of capital. Hence, there is only one solution to the crisis and

that is to devalue a part of the stock of capital and thereby make it possible to put it back into effective operation as a functioning link in the reproductive cycle. That means getting rid of the excess production by any and all means, including selling it below its value. It means letting machines and factories rust and thereby depreciate in value. It means buying up companies that are having difficulties or just letting them go under. The capitalists realize that this is the only solution for them. That's why they are prepared to say flat out that the present recession is a necessary evil that is completely acceptable to them. A writer in Time put it in this way:

"Recessions are not only unavoidable but often beneficial — despite the pain they cause some individuals — to society as a whole. They can purge the system of excesses, failed products and mismanaged companies."<sup>11</sup>

It would be difficult to imagine how Time could put it more bluntly. Capital needs the crisis, despite the pain that massive unemployment and poverty may cause a few million individuals. Let the people of Canada and the United States be warned. The capitalists know what is coming: still worse living conditions and even greater sacrifices by working people to pay for the cost of investing in a geared-up war machine.

### War: the only industry that is expanding

In January 1980, President Carter announced an increase in the defence budget the likes of which hasn't been seen since the height of the Vietnam war. An additional \$100 billion will be

spent between now and 1985. In other words, the defence industry will eat up no less than \$1000 billion in the next five years. And the U.S. government has the unmitigated gall to claim that its number one priority is to beat inflation, and it must therefore cut back government spending. The only spending to get cut will be in the area of social services to working people. Canadian workers will experience the same cutbacks in order to finance the purchase of up-to-date equipment for NATO. But all of that will not be enough to stop the recession, as Business Week admitted in February, 1980:

"Almost nowhere — except perhaps in the defence industry — is it reasonable to look for a spontaneous recovery of the demand. On the contrary, all the other sectors of the economy are fighting to maintain previous production levels."<sup>12</sup>

The American business publication went on:

"If we finance arms spending as we did during the Vietnam war, adding it to the over-all demand, we will simply penalize non-military investments through accelerated inflation and higher interest rates."<sup>13</sup>

9. Newsweek, April 28 1980, p. 58
10. Financial Post, March 22 1980, p. 2
11. Time, April 21 1980, p. 49
12. Business Week, February 18, 1980
13. Ibid.

**Table 7**  
The Carter plan to increase the defence budget

Year	Defence spending
1980	\$146 milliiards
1981	\$158 milliiards
1982	\$180 milliiards
1983	\$201.5 milliiards
1984	\$224.2 milliiards
1985	\$248.9 milliiards

N.B. all figures are in current dollars  
Source: U.S. Defence Department

That is why Business Week wants to see a wage freeze. It is the only way they can see to get American working people to put up with inflation and a recession at the same time while allowing the defence industry to get all the money it needs.

The game they are playing is obvious enough. They are seeking to do anything that will justify to people the state that capitalist economies have been in since the sixties and especially since the Americans got fully involved in the Vietnam war: the simultaneous worsening of unemployment and inflation.

More and more, the only prospects for economic growth lie in military production of weapons that are already ticketed to go straight to the scrap heap. The production of more consumer goods for the mass of working people is simply out of the question.

This is why the capitalists see war increasingly as the only way to ensure development in economic terms, let alone for the political reasons.

**“In the long run, we are all dead”  
(J.M. Keynes)**

In those few words, John Maynard Keynes, the most respected and respectable economist of the post-Depression period, summed up the mentality of that era and of his class. That phrase communicates the reality of the irresolvable contradictions that capitalism is faced with. It expresses the parasitic, bloodsucker role played by the handful of financiers who toy every day with the lives of three billion working people on this planet.

The fact that our sweat and blood is going to feed that little band of vampires is becoming more and more evident. The financiers rule the world. As Lenin noted, the financiers are those who “live by ‘clipping coupons’, who take no part in any enterprise whatever, whose profession is idleness”.<sup>14</sup>

The capitalists also have another avocation: speculation. They speculate every time a company is sold and resold. They speculate on the price of gold, on the stock market and on mankind. The American magazine Forbes gives a pretty accurate description of how the ruling classes prey on society parasitically with all their speculative activity:



**March 1980: people demonstrate in front of the White House in Washington.**

*“Is Big Business becoming merely a collection of portfolio managers, who have abandoned the creative financing of new industrial productivity for the less risky and more expedient process of shuffling assets without creating new products and new jobs? Is economic power becoming concentrated without yielding concomitant economic advantages?”*<sup>15</sup>

Parasitism is not just characteristic of each individual bourgeoisie in each of the industrialized countries considered separately. It is a universal characteristic shared by all capitalists throughout the world. The American, Canadian, German, Japanese and whatever nationality capitalists are not satisfied with the blood and sweat of just their own working class. Oh no. They are only happy when they have their teeth into the necks of working people all around the world. The statistics speak for themselves about what has been done to the people in the underdeveloped countries: the external debt for these countries in 1977 alone was \$250 billion.

The crisis that is hitting one capitalist country after another is for real. It is a world-wide crisis that no capitalist country can avoid. It is hitting the underdeveloped countries and the revisionist ones just as strongly. The U.S.S.R. is particularly hard hit. It had an economic growth rate of 2% in 1979. That is the worst figure since 1930.

So that is where all the high-flung promises of the fifties, that crises were a thing of the past, have ended up. Gone

to pasture every one. It is certainly true that the capitalist countries, and more particularly the United States, didn't go through crises that were as serious as the Depression in the thirties after the Second World War. The tricks that were employed were enough to paper over the worst cracks for a certain period. But those days are over. In 1974, a new crisis of overproduction broke out in the capitalist countries. Since that time, the level of production has been revived slightly only to run up against yet another crisis which threatens to be even more devastating.

Capitalism today is only reaping what it has sown for the past thirty years. The reliance on investment in unproductive areas of the economy, the deliberate policy of inflation, the unprecedented expansion of credit, and the ever-increasing indebtedness of the State — all those policies have laid the groundwork for crises much more catastrophic than the ones we have already experienced.

The economists aren't just playing with words when they evoke the spectre of another Dirty Thirties Depression. They have more regular access to the economic facts than most anyone else. The capitalists are not preparing to usher in a new Leisure Society. As long as they control our future, the society we can expect to see will be replete with massive unemployment and poverty for working people everywhere.

14. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Collected Works, vol. 22, p. 277  
15. *Forbes*, August 7 1978, p. 31

Central America  
and the West Indies

**Lands  
in  
revolt**

**Interest to protect**

Last April, during the wave of declarations surrounding the Soviet military buildup in Cuba, President Carter did not pull his punches when he stated that the Soviet presence in a region of “extreme strategic importance” for the United States had to be opposed.

Jimmy Carter weighed his words well for, after the Middle East, Central America, Mexico and the West Indies are certainly one of the most important regions for maintaining U.S. hegemony in the world on both the military and economic levels.

U.S. subsidiaries abroad produce four times the dollar value of what the United States exports. Central America is no exception to this super-exploitation which is the lot of all of

**“A people's sovereignty is not up for discussion; it must be defended arms in hand.” This cry by the people of Nicaragua is being taken up by peoples throughout the Latin American continent.**



In the wake of events in Iran and Afghanistan, powder kegs that had been lying dormant for many years have been lit in a region of strategic importance for U.S. imperialism — Central America.

In less than a year there have been two revolutions, and instability seems to have hit the entire region. First one of the oldest military dictatorships in Latin America was overthrown in Nicaragua. Then the people of El Salvador declared war on imperialism. Alongside these victorious examples of popular revolt, there is the anti-communist propaganda campaign around the Cuban refugees, and the campaign around the Haitian refugees (which is, however, somewhat less to the liking of imperialism).

If in addition we consider that the U.S.S.R., through its Cuban associate, has also begun a campaign of “aid” to several newly independent republics in the West Indies, we are quite right in evaluating that this region in the world will continue to experience upheavals in the months and years to come.

A highly volcanic land, Central America and its neighbours are becoming sources of eruptions of another kind, this time even more dangerous — eruptions of popular revolt.

Latin America. Central America alone furnishes 18% of all U.S. income from abroad.

Formerly the private preserve of the United Fruit Co. for many years, this thin strip of land which stretches from the southern border of the United States to the gates of the South American continent is becoming more than a simple reserve of cheap fruit. In the past few years, there have been significant investment growth in certain sectors such as oil, processing industries, finance and trade.

In Central America, one-third of investment is now going to industry. This has led to the rapid development of the working class and its organizations. Even if fifty per cent of the population are peasants, these peasants are becoming increasingly proletarianized as they are forced to leave their villages for the

city or to work on large farm holdings for several months every year.

Mexico, for example, which does two-thirds of its trade with the United States, is becoming an important producer of oil and gas. Some people are even quick to compare its future development to that of Saudi Arabia today. Industrial investments in Mexico have risen from \$924 billion in 1966 to \$2,223 billion in 1976. And Mexico provides the U.S. with more than oil. It also sends it 800,000 immigrants a year, who swell the ranks of underpaid workers in the United States, particularly in the textile factories.

Besides these economic advantages, it should be pointed out that countries like Panama, the Bahamas and Bermuda are fiscal paradises for the big monopolies. The latter two countries alone handle 60% of all American financial activities in Latin America.

As well, the islands in the West Indies are non-negligible sources of oil, bauxite (used to produce aluminium), iron, copper, sugar, meat, cotton and bananas for the United States. This means \$13.7 billion in direct American investments for these small countries.

But beyond all that, this entire region is a strategic region on both the political and military levels. More than half of the oil imported to the U.S., including that coming from Venezuela and Mexico, arrives by way of the waterways which stretch from Venezuela to the Florida coast. These same waterways are the gate way to the Panama canal for the entire Western hemisphere, the only direct path between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

So it is not surprising that both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., as well as the

other imperialist powers, have judged it necessary to reinforce their military presence in the region.

For several years now, the island of Cuba, which is only 90 miles from the U.S. coast, has been overrun by a swarm of Soviet military advisers and 5,000 troops. More recently, the Cuban government began building harbour facilities in Cienfuegos (on the southwest coast) capable of receiving submarines carrying nuclear warheads.

Given the Soviet military efforts, the popular uprisings and the political instability of the region, the United States could not remain silent. That is why the Pentagon ordered major military manoeuvres in the area. And this year, the Solid Shield 1980 would have been held in the West Indies rather than off the eastern coast of the United States, if it had not been for the Cuban refugee affair.

Canada is also showing keen interest in the stability of this region, where it too has considerable economic interests. Jumping on the bandwagon, Canada will be participating this year in the Caribbean Contingency Joint Task Force, which patrols the region jointly with U.S. and British forces.

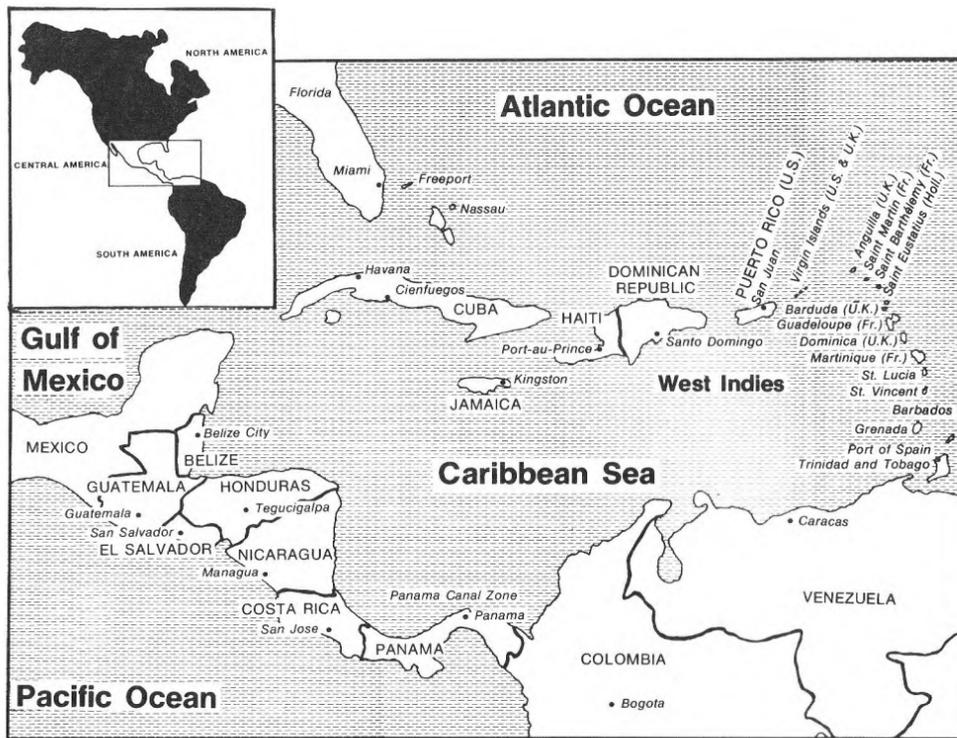
The popular revolt which may well set all of Central America on fire soon is forcing the imperialists to bring all their weapons, both military and non-military into play. The peoples of these countries, just like those of Iran and Zimbabwe before them, have decided to put an end to centuries of oppression and exploitation at the hands of imperialism.

## Revolt is stirring

The fall of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua last year marked an historic moment in the struggle of the Latin American peoples. It was the first armed revolution in America since the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship in Cuba, twenty years ago.

The fall of Somoza meant the fall of one of U.S. imperialism's main pillars in the region for the past forty years. Somoza, who personally owned two-thirds of the country's means of production, represented one of the bloodiest dictatorships imaginable.

But more than that, the Somoza family had traditionally played the role of guardian of law and order throughout Central America and even



elsewhere in the world. Put in power by U.S. marines in 1934, the Somozas more than repaid their debt to Uncle Sam. Nicaragua successively supported economic sanctions against Cuba and intervened alongside the U.S. army in the Dominican Republic in 1965. In 1954, Somoza helped overthrow the Arbenz government in Guatemala which had had the nerve to attack the United Fruit Co. As a protector of worldwide reaction, and armed by the United States, Israel and Argentina, Somoza was an enthusiastic supporter of the American war effort in South Korea in the fifties.

Somoza was also one of the mainstays of the Council for the Defence of Central America (CONDECA). The purpose of this creation of U.S. imperialism and the local reactionary regimes is to repress guerrilla movements. It brings together regimes which are worthy rivals of Nicaragua, regimes like those in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

It is in the context of these joint agreements that attacks were organized on the revolutionary forces of Nicaragua a few months ago, as well as the repression of the popular uprisings in 1978 with the help of the Honduran army.

Last December 30, Somoza convoked a secret meeting of the CONDECA to study the state of subversion in Central America. Afterwards, CONDECA forces were

involved in combats in northern Nicaragua, and Honduran troops were stationed along the border. As we write these lines, Guatemalan and Honduran troops have crossed the border into El Salvador.

This context makes it easier to understand what the fall of Somoza meant for U.S. imperialism and all the local reactionary forces. It also helps explain why U.S. imperialism has not had to intervene directly in these countries in recent years, why it has been able to rely more on local forces of repression.

But bayonets and guns are less and less capable of maintaining law and order. Each of the countries in Central America can be compared to a smoldering volcano whose eruption is likely to harm imperialism more than the explosions of Mount St. Helens in Washington State.



In El Salvador, the Revolutionary Co-ordinating Body of the Masses has declared war on the supposedly reform-minded military junta which succeeded the dictator Romero. In May, the first zones were proclaimed liberated territory.



In Guatemala, a country which is still basically an exporter of farm products, the Metis and Indians represent 32% of the population. In this country, where the price of basic necessities increased almost 100% in 1979, peasant revolts have been growing. February 2, more than 5,000 people accompanied the funeral procession of 40 Indians assassinated during the occupation of the Spanish embassy. In the past few years, the labour movement has been strengthened: following the CoCa-Cola strike in 1976, for example, a much stronger union movement has been built with the creation of the Nation Council of Union Unity. The guerrilla movements are also developing their unity with the merger of the Guatemalan Labour Party (PGT), the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) and the Army of Poor Guerrillas (AGP), which has waged successful guerrilla warfare in the regions inhabited by the Indian population.



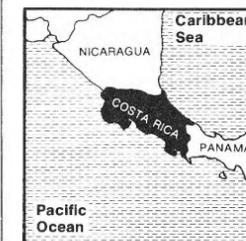
Honduras, the poorest country in the region, has also been affected by events in Nicaragua. The presence of 6,000 Somoza guards who took refuge there caused protests throughout the country. The triumvirate in power (the ruling body composed of three people) has not carried through on its promises of land reform, and this has led to numerous occupations of land by the peasants.

After eight years of military dictatorship, an assembly was recently elected to write a new constitution. But the promises to return to constitutional rule are so dubious and uncertain that a U.S. official recently declared, "If

Central American stability depends on Honduras, we're all in trouble."



In Panama, the economic boom which was expected to follow the signing of the new agreement on the canal failed to occur. U.S. statistics indicate that one third of the population lives in poverty at the present time. Unemployment is chronic and is reinforced by the exodus of the rural population, which can no longer make a living in the countryside. Discontent has broken out into the open, particularly with the lengthy (several weeks) teachers' strike in 1979. This situation creates growing instability for General Torrijos's regime which is being increasingly discredited.



Even Costa Rica, formerly considered the most stable country in Latin America, is no exception to the rule. In this "oasis of democracy", strikes are more frequent: railworkers in 1976, teachers in 1977. In August 1979, major revolts shook Puerto Lima, where the country's only refinery is located.

This brief outline of popular revolt should be enough to show that Latin America is emerging from the silence imposed on it by decades of military regimes and coups d'etat.

The significant development of the proletariat in this region has certainly influenced the struggle being waged by the masses. Workers' strikes are taking on increasing importance and have given rise to trade unions. Political organizations which claim to base themselves on proletarian ideology and Marxism-Leninism are also playing a more and more significant role, as is illustrated by the example of the Farabundo Marti Popular Armed Forces, the leading force in the Popular

Revolutionary Bloc in El Salvador. Increasingly, the working class is demonstrating that it is the only force capable of putting these countries on the road to genuine liberation and socialism. It is also the only class which can carry out the land reform demanded by the broad masses of the peasants.

Not only is Central America seething; instability is also beginning to characterize the countries on its periphery, in the little islands dotting the Caribbean Sea.

## Little States, big problems



We have seen that the imperialists attach great importance to this very strategic zone. If we add that two of the world's largest oil refineries, which process one-quarter of the Arab and African oil imported to the Americas, are to be found in the Caribbean, it is clear why the imperialists are getting worried.

In the West Indies, many mini-States formerly dominated by France or Great Britain are gaining their political independence. This has given rise to an all-out imperialist race to "aid" these new States — for their own good, of course.

In five years, five new States in the region have obtained their independence, including three last year: St. Vincent, Santa Lucia, and Grenada.

Last year, Grenada was the scene of a coup d'etat which overthrew Eric Gairy, who had received full support from the U.S., Chile, Taiwan and South Korea. The new administration established on March 13, 1979, has made no secret of its sympathies for Cuba, and has already received substantial aid from that country. Just before Hurricane David ravaged the island in August 1979, Grenada was the scene of large demonstrations against corruption and the white minority of landowners who keep the Black and East Indian majority in misery.

Similar demonstrations took place in the Dominican Republic, where they led to the resignation of the government. Following that France quickly moved in to provide economic aid to the island to ensure that the Cubans not repeat the Grenada and Jamaica experiences.

In Jamaica, the U.S. government has used all its economic might to persuade its allies and the World Bank to refuse loans to the island's government, because of the latter's sympathies for Cuba. The results of this imperialist game are that the people of this country lack the basic necessities and live in dire poverty. This is how Washington hopes to overthrow Michael Manley in the coming election and ensure the victory of Edward Seaga, who is more open to developing economic ties with the United States.

In addition, it should be noted that U.S., French and Dutch colonies are likely to demand their independence in the coming years. This is the case with Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, where a referendum is to be held next year on the island's political status. Not one indigenous political organization still defends the Commonwealth status which Puerto Rico has had since 1952. On the international level, the struggle for independence for the island has received support throughout Latin America and within the non-aligned movement. So this is another possible source of attacks on the U.S.'s hegemony in the region. The threat to the U.S. is all the greater since Puerto Rico is an extremely important U.S. military base and a major industrial centre where the United States profits from cheap labour.

These dozens of mini-States spread out over the Caribbean Sea are becoming a source of political instability and imperialist rivalries.

### A new policy?

The general situation in Central America and the West Indies has led some observers to conclude that the United States have opted for a new, less interventionist policy in the region.

Since the armed U.S. intervention in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, there has not been further direct military intervention by the U.S. in recent years, not even in Nicaragua last year. The U.S. government even tried

to replace Somoza with a more acceptable and apparently reformist figure. Later, the U.S. government agreed after much hesitation to grant a \$75 million loan for the reconstruction of Nicaragua, devastated after two years of earthquakes and a civil war which Somoza transformed into a massacre before he was defeated.

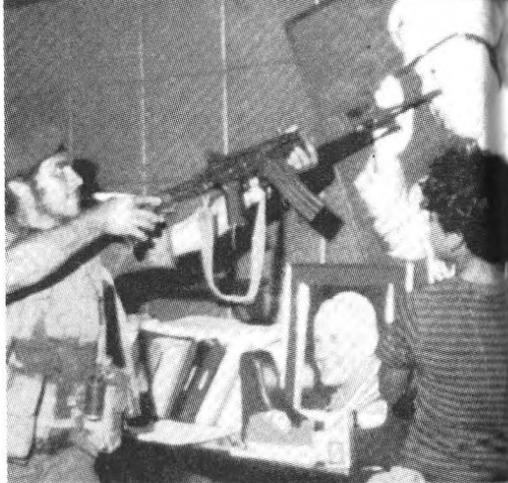
In fact, however, the U.S. is pursuing the same policy. It is just doing it in another way. Its new methods include attempts to corrupt governments in power and the establishment of governments which appear to be reformist as a way of avoiding the overthrow of regimes despised by the masses and which are no longer able to contain the revolt of all sectors of the population.

But as U.S. News and World Report pointed out last May, "Washington and its friends worry that help may be too little, too late."

This has been shown by the uprisings in Nicaragua and El Salvador. It is all very well for Washington to get rid of the dictators in its service at the last minute. It can try and do the same in the other countries in the region and intervene through apparently reformist front men, if it wants to. But this will not be enough to hold back the popular revolt. That is why those defending a harder line are back in force on the American political scene, as is shown by the U.S. election campaign.

In these countries, broader and broader sectors of the population are taking up the struggle against the regimes kept in power by U.S. imperialism. At the centre of this opposition, there is the proletariat and the peasants. The proletariat in these countries is growing, as was discussed earlier in this article. These workers suffer a system of exploitation which is almost unimaginable. To be a worker in Central America generally means being condemned to living in sheet-metal barracks and more often than not to eating only one out of every two meals. It means being condemned to growing unemployment, malnutrition and the denial of the most fundamental rights, such as the right to freedom of association and freedom of speech. So it is not surprising that, as it develops, the working class has placed itself in the vanguard of the struggle for the emancipation of the masses, and notably the peasants.

Even today, the peasants constitute



**In Nicaragua, Somoza's savage regime was unable to smash the people's revolt. Nor did the pope's visit to Latin America put a damper on it.**

the majority of the population of Central America. Their living conditions are as bad, and indeed worse, than those of the proletariat. Their main demand is land reform. Promised for decades by all the bourgeois politicians, it has hardly ever been implemented.

Growing sectors of the population are drawing closer to these two basic classes, including the petty bourgeoisie and even some parts of the local bourgeoisie.

This means that imperialist domination is increasingly isolated, and that it must work harder than ever to protect its position and power. At the same time, this creates the conditions for the penetration of new imperialist powers.

As is the case in the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Iran and Zimbabwe, the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of Central America face many problems. Lined up against them are the combined forces of imperialism. They must confront local reactionary regimes which hope to hang on to power by smashing revolution at their borders. They are also confronted with attempts to co-opt them — by one or another imperialist power which tries to present itself as democratic or progressive, as well as by the national bourgeoisie which is ready to collaborate once again with imperialism.

The international proletariat cannot remain indifferent to this situation. By helping the peoples get rid of imperialism today, the workers of the world will make it more possible for the peoples to step up the attack on their new enemies who try to hinder their progress towards socialism and total liberation from imperialism.

PROLETARIAN UNITY

# Communists and the family

## End the yoke of private ownership

**Is the family disappearing? Is it still the foundation of contemporary social structures? We have been hearing these kinds of questions more and more over the past few years.**

**They are questions for people in all walks of life. Many observers have told us that the family is in crisis, a crisis that has been getting worse, especially in the last twenty years.**

**In the most reactionary and conservative circles, there is a steady stream of calls to preserve this sacred institution, the ultimate bulwark against the winds of protest sweeping capitalist society as a whole. The time has come to restore the authority of the father and reaffirm the glories of being the perfect homemaker. The ideal home is the family in which the mother does the dishes while the father reads his newspaper and the children grow and develop under the watchful eye of the school and parental authority.**

**Fortunately, this vision of the family has been profoundly challenged in recent years. The youth movements of the 1960s, the massive arrival of women on the job market, the widespread challenges to the old sexual morality — all this helped to show that the family was not really the oasis of peace and tranquillity that it once seemed to be. With this came a growing awareness that the family was not a permanent and unchanging institution. But concretely, what is actually happening to the family? What are the factors that influence its development?**

**These are the questions we will discuss and try to answer in this article. By seeking to understand the material conditions that have made the family what it is today, and that are already signalling changes in the institution of the family that will be even more fundamental than those in the past, we will gain a better understanding of how we can influence and shape these material factors.**

**The "perfect" family, that haven of peace... Reality paints quite a different picture.**



### The family in history

It is very much in the interests of the bourgeoisie to present the structures of capitalist society today as the natural order of things, as something eternal and unchanging. This is especially true for the family, which is presented as the natural cornerstone of all human society, above and beyond the course of economic development and political upheavals — in sum, an ahistorical category.

But throughout history, individuals have been divided into many different kinds of marriage groups, and the ideal, eternal family portrayed by the bourgeoisie is in actual fact only one specific, and relatively recent, form of kinship group. It is the monogamous, patriarchal family, based on conjugal marriage and governed by the authority of the father and husband. The origins of this specific family grouping are not to be found in the natural, biological order of things, in the relationship necessary between the sexes for the reproduction of the species. No, the origins of the family lie in the specifically economic relations that have shaped the evolution of human society up until today.

*"According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labour on the one hand and of the family on the other."*<sup>1</sup>

1. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, International Publishers, New York, 1972, pp. 71-72

Examining the reciprocal, historical development of the two aspects of the material bases of human society, work and the reproduction of the species, Engels points out:

*"The lower the development of labour and the more limited the amount of its products, and consequently, the more limited also the wealth of the society, the more the social order is found to be dominated by kinship groups."*<sup>2</sup>

There is good reason to suppose that early man had to discover empirically things we take more or less for granted today, such as how children are made and the harmful biological consequences of inbreeding. He eked out a bare existence in conditions of extreme poverty. In these conditions, concepts like the ban on incest and the conjugal union of relatives developed slowly and gradually.

Before the emergence of social classes and of the State that ensured the domination of one class over another, various family structures developed that resulted in more and more restrictions on inbreeding, or marriage between blood relatives. As Engels said, *"The urge toward the prevention of inbreeding asserts itself again and again, feeling its way, however, quite instinctively, without clear consciousness of its aim."*<sup>3</sup>

The first stage in this evolution was group marriage in its various forms, involving the *"mutually common possession of husbands and wives within a definite family circle, from which, however, the brothers of the wives — first one's own and later also collateral — and conversely also the sisters of the husbands, were excluded."*<sup>4</sup>

*"In all forms of group family, it is uncertain who is the father of this child; but it is certain who its mother is.... It is therefore clear that insofar as group marriage prevails, descent can only be proved on the mother's side and that therefore only the female line is recognized."*<sup>5</sup>

This is what has been referred to as "mother right", although the term here has no legal connotations, since in these classless societies the State — and therefore the legal system — did not yet exist.

But as the rules designed to prevent marriage between blood relatives became more and more complex, group

marriage became increasingly difficult. It was gradually supplanted by the **pairing family**, based on the couple.

*"Thus the history of the family in primitive times consists in the progressive narrowing of the circle, originally embracing the whole tribe, within which the two sexes have a common conjugal relation. The continuous exclusion, first of nearer, then of more and more remote relatives, and at last even of relatives by marriage, ends by making any kind of group marriage practically impossible. Finally, there remains only the single, loosely linked pair..."*<sup>6</sup>

But the pairing family was still a far cry from the monogamous patriarchal family that emerged simultaneously with class society. The pairing family did not put an end to matrilineality (descent through the female line) or the public nature of the household economy.

These primitive forms of the family, based on the recognition of the female line of descent, satisfied the two decisive conditions defined by Engels:

— the natural result of man's experience with the reproduction of the species was the establishment of matrilineality and, gradually, growing restrictions on inbreeding until the family came to be based on the couple;

— since the economic conditions of labour were simplified to the utmost, and since neither private property nor classes and the State existed, relations within the family were relations of equality, not oppression, and domestic work was still a valued part of social production.

As these latter factors evolved, they played an increasingly important role. The result was fundamental changes in the family with the emergence of class society.

### The patriarchal family emerged with class society

The driving social forces that were to cause basic changes in the family can be traced back to the economic revolution that resulted in an unprecedented accumulation of wealth, as well as to the appropriation of this wealth as the private property of a class that controlled all of society through the State

— an institution that was previously unknown.

For instance, the peoples that discovered livestock raising and built up herds were able to develop methods of food production that superseded the old methods of food-gathering. But a family does not reproduce itself as rapidly as livestock does, and eventually family labour could no longer keep up with the work of caring for herds that were getting larger and larger and more and more productive. This gave rise to the practice of using slaves, who were originally prisoners captured in wars against other tribes.

*"One it had passed into the private possession of families and there rapidly begun to augment, this wealth dealt a severe blow to the society founded on pairing marriage and the matriarchal gens (kin group or extended family defined through women — ed. note). Pairing marriages had brought a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother it placed its natural and attested father.... According to the division of labour within the family at that time, it was the man's part to obtain food and the instruments of labour necessary for the purpose. He therefore also owned the instruments of labour, and in the event of husband and wife separating, he took them with him, just as she retained her household goods. Therefore, according to the social custom of the time, the man was also the owner of the new source of subsistence, the cattle, and later of the new instruments of labour, the slaves. But according to the custom of the same society, his children could not inherit from him."*

*"Thus on the one hand, in proportion as wealth increased it made the man's position in the family more important than the women's, and on the other hand created an impulse to exploit this strengthened position in order to overthrow, in favour of his children, the traditional order of inheritance."*<sup>8</sup>

The female line of descent (from mother to daughter) was replaced by

2. *Ibid.*, p. 72

3. *Ibid.*, p. 109

4. *Ibid.*, p. 104

5. *Ibid.*, p. 106

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112

7. *Ibid.*, p. 119

8. *Ibid.*

the male line (from father to son) and paternal inheritance rights. As Engels so rightly pointed out, *"The overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."*<sup>9</sup>

This was the origin of the patriarchal family, based on the domination of one sex over the other in order to guarantee the line of inheritance. This type of family is still the rule today.

With classes emerged a society in which the family system was completely dominated by the system of property. It was also the beginning of a double standard of morality. In theory, marriage was indissoluble and strictly monogamous. In practice, however, only women were bound to observe its monogamous nature. While an unfaithful husband might be formally held up for criticism, unfaithfulness — including prostitution, its most overt form — was commonly accepted and widespread behaviour.

Not only was the patriarchal family dominated by the system of property; as well, the household economy, which had been a public industry, became a private service provided by a slave — the woman — for her master — the man.

*"In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their children, the task entrusted to the women of managing the household was as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the producing of food by the men. With the patriarchal family and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production."*<sup>10</sup>

### Large-scale industry has attacked the economic foundation of the patriarchal family

The patriarchal family was an eminently suitable form of family for slaveowners. As a matter of fact, the very word "family" comes from Latin, the language of the Roman Empire —

one of the greatest of the societies based on slavery in history. The Latin word "familia" was originally used to designate all the slaves belonging to one man.

With the help of the Church, the patriarchal family survived feudalism intact.

With the dawn of the capitalist era, the rising bourgeoisie still needed a solid, indestructible family unit in which the father was the authority figure. The family was an important locus for the accumulation of wealth, first through trade and then through the exploitation of workers in manufacturing workshops.

The introduction of large-scale industry, however, gradually undermined this family structure by undermining the economic foundations of the patriarchal family. First of all, the domestic economy as a system of private production lost considerable ground with the growth of the mass production of basic necessities. Our grandmothers made their own soap and did the laundry with a washboard; today, we buy our soap at the supermarket and do the laundry in an automatic washer. Furthermore, the development of capitalism, and in particular large-scale industry, was accompanied by a parallel growth of women's participation in productive wage work. For the bourgeoisie, this was and still is a way of using the traditional debasement of the situation of women to hire women for less than they pay to men and to do jobs that are often seen as an extension of women's work in the home. After all, when the boss's wife serves him his morning coffee at home,

it is surely only natural for him to require his secretary to perform the same service during the afternoon coffee-break?

With the development of capitalism, the bourgeoisie needed a labour force that was increasingly well educated to do jobs that were becoming steadily more technologically complex. As a result, the education of children tended more and more to become a public service. The State gradually but thoroughly took charge of the entire school system.

Last but not least, although the family was the emerging bourgeoisie's preferred institution for the preservation of its wealth, with the growth of monopoly capitalism it was replaced by the banks and the other financial institutions as the collective steward and general manager of the financial interests of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the patriarchal family remained the bourgeoisie's preferred channel of inheritance, providing it with a direct line of transmission for its acquired wealth.

So capitalism has had contradictory effects on the patriarchal family. On the one hand, it is in the process of completely undermining its economic foundations, while on the other hand it seeks to preserve this family structure so necessary for passing on its wealth to its inheritors and more especially for enabling and guaranteeing the superexploitation of women.

These are the material factors that are the basis of the crisis of the family in today's society.

These are the material factors that are the basis of the crisis of the family in today's society.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121  
10. *Ibid.*, p. 137

### More and more women in production has had a profound impact on the old patriarchal family relationships.



## The contemporary crisis of the family

The contemporary family reflects a whole series of social contradictions. Its very survival as an institution, at a time when economic necessity works in favour of its disintegration, often seems to be due more to external constraints than anything else. There are a number of indications of these opposing tendencies.

To start with, the number of women on the labour market in Canada has grown from 2.5 million to 4.2 million in the last ten years. For the majority of families, a second income has become an absolute necessity to make ends meet. In 1976, both the mother and the father worked in 54% of Canadian families. In January 1979, 48.8% of the workers in Canada were women. At the same time, however, the gap between the average wages of women and men has widened steadily.

One of the results of women's struggles has been a sharp rise in the divorce rate, despite the legal obstacles to divorce. Today, one couple out of four eventually divorces, and one family out of ten is a single-parent family. In Ontario, more and more single mothers are keeping their children: 30% did so in 1968, and 88% in 1977. In British Columbia, there are now 33.6 abortions for every 100 births.

The old sexual morality has also been seriously challenged. It is estimated that in 1980, 55% of adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 will have sexual relations. One thousand teen-age girls become pregnant every week in Canada.

In a survey of 5,000 men and 6,000 women in the United States, the sexologist Alfred Kinsey found that already in the late 1940s and early 1950s 37% of the men surveyed had reached orgasm at least once in a homosexual experience, while another 13% admitted having had homosexual desires to varying degrees. In contrast, however, only 4% of the men were exclusively homosexual throughout their entire lives. Significant findings were also obtained for women, although the proportions were lower.

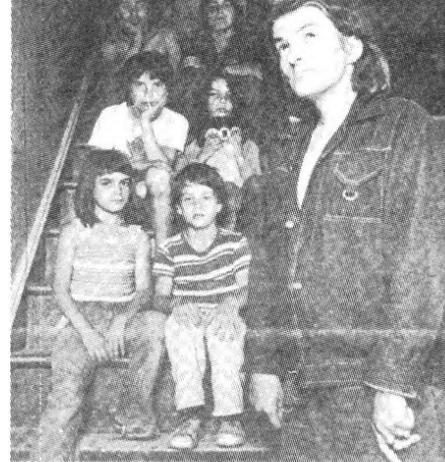
But the effects of the crisis in the family have not always been liberating. Violence is present in the family to a surprising extent. According to a study done in the United States, in 1977, more than one-sixth of the couples had

quarrelled and come to blows in the year preceding the inquiry. In Canada, one woman out of ten is beaten by her husband every year — 500,000 battered women in the country as a whole. In France, 8,000 children are killed by their parents every year, and another 18,000 are seriously injured. In Canada, the rate of juvenile delinquency almost doubled in the space of two years, and youth are rebelling in increasingly violent ways.

According to the statistics of Quebec's Régie de l'assurance-maladie (health insurance plan) for 1972, general practitioners diagnosed women's illnesses as anxiety more than anything else except the 'flu. Other sources indicate that nervous symptoms are three times more common among married women than among single women. In 1976, the number of women in Quebec who consulted psychotherapists was twice as high as the number of men.

These are only a few, very partial raw statistics, but they are nevertheless very indicative of the scope of family problems in our society. Women are the chief victims of these problems. The bourgeoisie tries to disguise the fact, but it is obvious that one of the manifestations of the crisis of imperialism is the crisis in the family as we know it. This family is the product of centuries of capitalism and thousands of years of class society.

What are the living conditions of working people, and in particular working-class women, as capitalism



**Marge Demers is a sole-support mother of eight children in Eastern Ontario who has to scrape by with \$675 a month from welfare. Her situation reflects that of thousands of other women in this country.**

wears away at the economic foundation of the patriarchal family?

On the one hand, capitalism opens up the possibility of new family relations based on love instead of the sense of ownership. This is especially true in proletarian families, where there is the least objective basis for such a proprietary attitude. Capitalism has by and large deprived the family of any role in handing on an inheritance. Workers do not have much to leave to their children except their debts. As well, capitalism puts an end to the basis for male supremacy inasmuch as it encourages women to become

economically independent by joining the labour market.

On the other hand, however, these changes occur against a background of violence and poverty for ordinary working people, and especially women. For capitalism also perpetuates a whole series of economic and cultural barriers to any genuine liberation in relations between men and women.

### To end the yoke of private ownership

The question is sometimes raised of what socialism and communism will mean for the family. It is often suggested that communists are in favour of a puritan morality in which individuals and love between human beings have no place whatsoever. This is utterly false, as we will see.

*"What will be the influence of the communist order of society on the family?"*

*"It will make the relations between the sexes a purely private matter which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society must not intervene. It can do this since it does away with private property and educates children on a communal basis, and in this way removes the two bases of marriage up to now — the dependence of the wife on the husband and of the children on their parents resulting from private property. And here is the answer to the outcry of the highly moralistic philistines against the communistic 'community of women.' Community of women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its complete expression in prostitution. But prostitution is based on private property and*

*falls with it. Thus communist society, instead of introducing community of women, in fact abolishes it."*<sup>11</sup>

This is how Engels described the future of the family in communist, classless society. In doing so, he also showed up the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie, which claims to champion the individual against the communist ogre that is reputed to eat children, share women and do away with all private relations. But who in fact tears the child from the arms of the working-class mother? Who else but capitalism, which with its hopeless shortage of day care services and the right to maternity leave denied more often than not in practice, has made motherhood in many ways a burden for women? This situation means that most women with young children are obliged to stop working. They are thus deprived of an income they need and confined to the home. And it is much worse in underdeveloped countries dominated by imperialism, where the children born are condemned to a life of poverty and misery, and often an early death.

To make relations between the sexes a "purely private matter", as Engels puts it, it is necessary to break with centuries of history since the emergence of the patriarchal family during which economic relations have had precedence over relations between individuals in the family.

More fundamentally, it implies putting an end to a situation in which marriage and love have always been two separate matters. In the early days of history, each group of individuals was automatically married with another group right from birth. Later, with the emergence of the pairing family, it was customary for the mothers to arrange their children's marriages. With the rise of capitalism, inheritance became the governing factor in the union of individuals and cemented the permanency of the marriage bond. In establishing formal equality between individuals, capitalism made possible the first, hesitant steps towards freely-consented marriage founded on love. But at the same time it blocked any real progress in this direction by perpetuating the decisive role of economic factors and the submission of women to domestic work. It is thus

**Demonstration for the right to day care in front of the national assembly in Quebec City.**

hardly surprising that true love has always been seen as something outside marriage, usually found in adulterous relations and in violation of social conventions.

Socialism will be built on the social foundations inherited from capitalism. By abolishing relations based on private ownership, it will enable humanity to pursue the goal to which men and women have always aspired — union based on true love. After thousands of years of evolution, after the trial and error of prehistorical man and the oppression of class society, humanity will learn to build new relations between the sexes, based exclusively on mutual love.

But before a communist society, free of both classes and the State, can be achieved, workers must first seize State power. Even then, an arduous and protracted struggle will be necessary to eliminate all vestiges of class society. This is the task of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is "a persistent struggle — bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative — against the forces and traditions of the old society".<sup>12</sup> Socialism must be seen as a transitional society on the path to full communism.

### Socialism, an all-out struggle against private ownership

*"In particular, the full equality of men and women will at last be recognized in more than words. With the socialization of domestic work and the participation of women in social production, the total realization of full equality will finally be under way."*<sup>13</sup>

This excerpt from article 6 of IN STRUGGLE!'s Programme outlines a number of tasks that must be carried out under socialism if women are to be freed and the relations of domination inherited from the patriarchal family abolished.

By carrying out these tasks, Soviet power did more to liberate women in one of the most backward countries of

**Meeting of the International Coalition for Abortion Rights (ICAR).**



11. Engels, *Principles of Communism*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1977  
 12. Lenin, *Left-wing communism — an infantile disorder*, in *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, vol. 31, p. 44.  
 13. Article 6 of IN STRUGGLE!'s Programme, published in PROLETARIAN UNITY, no. 17-18, p. 123

Europe than bourgeois society had ever managed to do. In the years right after the Russian revolution, the revolutionary government abolished the old discriminatory legislation on divorce and "children born out of wedlock"; guaranteed the right to legal recourse to compel a father to provide for his children's needs; got rid of laws against abortion and homosexuality; and so on. But as Lenin himself emphasized, all this was only a first and relatively simple, straightforward step — simple, that is, if State power was held by the working class.

*"The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from 'household bondage' through transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialized domestic services. This transition is a difficult one..."*<sup>14</sup>

In abolishing private ownership of the means of production, socialism did more than attack the economic basis of capitalist exploitation; it also attacked the economic foundation of the patriarchal family. But this alone did not put an end to the traditional family structures. It was also necessary to combat the private nature of the household economy, which had always been the objective foundation of women's debased status. For, although the household economy has always been a social necessity because it contributed directly to the reproduction and maintenance of labour-power, its value has always been underestimated and denigrated by society because it is not part of public production. This has been all the more true in capitalist society, where the value of all objects and services is evaluated in terms of their price or monetary value (i.e. what they can be exchanged for).

Consequently, to destroy the patriarchal family — the most specific locus of oppression of women — socialism has to do more than decree the legal equality of the sexes in law and enforce those laws in practice. It also has to **socialize household work and eliminate the last economic basis of woman's inferior status.** Socialism must make it possible for each cook, each housewife, to take part in State affairs and productive work. But it must do more.



**Women in Quebec City decided that they were fed up with sexist publicity and that it was high time to show it.**

Socialism must work to make housework itself a public matter, to make it collective and productive work.

The destruction of the economic foundations of the patriarchal family will make it possible to eliminate the distinction between men's work and women's work and put an end to the sexual division of labour, thereby undermining once and for all the objective bases for the antagonism between the sexes that has historically been associated with class society.

### **The abolition of private ownership is also an ideological struggle**

Human psychology is impregnated with the sense of ownership through and through. As Marx pointed out, *"all physical and moral sentiments were replaced, through a simple deterioration of all these sentiments, by the sense of ownership."*<sup>15</sup>

It is important to realize that, under socialism, the old ideas of ownership — a legacy of centuries of class society — are an obstacle to furthering revolution; more than that, they objectively encourage a return to the past. That is

why private ownership cannot be fully abolished without a protracted struggle against old ideas. With respect to the family, the sense of ownership is a corrosive agent that leaves the imprint of domination, selfishness and jealousy on relations between men and women, parents and children.

In the words of Enver Hoxha, head of the Party of Labour of Albania, *"The bourgeois world outlook, based on private property, carries with it also the idea of maintaining the rule of parents over their children, of depriving the latter of rights and freedom... Economic interest gives birth to the 'superiority' of the male over the female, to the patriarchal authority over children, to love-less marriages authorized by parents and impermissible without their consent. This leads towards placing sentiments in the service of private property, instead of abolishing private property..."*<sup>16</sup>

14. Lenin, "International Working Women's Day", in *Collected Works*, vol. 32, p. 162

15. Marx, *Political Economy and Philosophy* (1844 Manuscript), quoted in Enver Hoxha, "On Some Aspects of the Problem of the Albanian Woman", in *Speeches, 1967-1968*, November 8 Publishing House, Tirana, 1974, p. 152

16. Hoxha, *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160

Applying his approach to family problems more generally, Hoxha comments:

*"At times there is no harmony in the family. I will not analyse all the causes but, if I am not mistaken, the real reasons may be found only in property interests..."*<sup>17</sup>

Hoxha brings psychology back to earth, revealing the corrosive effects of hundreds and thousands of years of class society that underlie interpersonal conflicts. The struggle to build the new man, free of the traces of the old society, is a long-term task.

Marxists have always considered that relations between men and women reflect the development of human society. A nation that oppresses another nation cannot itself be free, and in the same vein one could undoubtedly say that a sex that oppresses the other sex cannot itself be free. This underlines why it is so important that socialism tackle the job of totally transforming family relations and enabling women to participate fully and completely in all aspects of social life.

### **As for free love...**

Communism will transform relations between the sexes, making them strictly private relations. Does that mean that marriage as a legal institution will disappear and be replaced by what some have, under capitalism, already termed "free love"? By the disappearance of marriage, we mean the absence of any form of State-imposed rules concerning the responsibilities of the members of the couple, and in particular the man's responsibilities towards the woman and children.

This issue was raised and discussed in the communist movement at the turn of the century. If the question is posed in relation to the eventual classless, communist society that will only exist after all traces of private ownership of the means of production have been eliminated from the face of the earth, it is doubtless quite true to say that the State will no longer play any role in governing relations and responsibilities within the couple, for the State will no longer exist.

Where the question is meaningful is in relation to the transition from class society to communist society, namely the whole period of socialism characterized by the continuation of the



**Alexandra Kollontai (1872-1952), a Bolshevik from the early days, she was a member of the first Soviet government, led by Lenin. She firmly believed that only socialist revolution would bring about the conditions necessary for women's liberation.**

class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Under capitalism, the slogan of "free love" is an expression of the legitimate desire to break down the social and economic barriers to the free union of men and women. It is also a way of rejecting the old sexual morality imposed by years and years of religious obscurantism. But where confusion and error creep in is when "free love" refers to the path of individual liberation.

Alexandra Kollontai, a Soviet revolutionary, explained why communists oppose this slogan:

*"In this individualist world, the rules and legislation governing marriage are women's only guarantee that the full burden of motherhood is not left solely in their hands. So can we do away with these rules at the present time without making women suffer?... In today's class society, concentrating on making 'free love' a reality instead of trying to free women from the old family structures amounts to adding a new burden for her: the care and concern of children..."*<sup>18</sup>

In fact, adds Kollontai,

*"Marriage will no longer be a burning issue for most women when, and only when, society frees them of the petty details and problems of the household, problems that are today inevitable, given the system of individualized and dispersed household economy. It will only be a thing of the*

*past when and if society takes responsibility for the care of the young generation, when and if it is in a position to protect motherhood and give each child a mother, at least for the first month of his or her life..."*<sup>19</sup>

*"'Free love'! 'Free marriage'! Before these slogans can become reality, there must be a radical transformation of all man's social relations. More especially, there must be profound, basic changes in all the standards of sexual morality and consequently human psychology in general..."*<sup>20</sup>

In tackling the system of ownership head-on, the proletarian revolution begins to reform radically all social relations. But it is only the beginning, although an absolutely essential beginning. The new man, the communist man, cannot be built overnight. The transformation of family relations must be an on-going process, a determined struggle against the old notions of ownership. Therefore, State regulation of family relations is still required as a means of guaranteeing women's and children's rights and combatting the traditional forms and expressions of oppression.

This is an important factor to keep in mind in evaluating some of the criticisms made of relations between men and women in socialist countries — criticisms which often ignore all historical considerations. It is all too common to hear people criticize sexual morality in Albania as being still too severe. People also frequently criticized the way China encouraged late marriages before the restoration of capitalism in that country. In both cases, the criticisms are based on current conditions in Canada or Europe. But these criticisms ignore the history of the peoples in these countries. In countries where not so very long ago women were still treated as beasts of burden, it is hardly surprising that sexual relations before marriage are banned. When a country has taken up the task of transforming all aspects of its social life, the morality in that country cannot be judged on the basis of conditions elsewhere, in North America or

17. *Ibid.*, p. 160

18. Alexandra Kollontai, *Les bases sociales de la question féminine — 1909*, excerpts published in *Marxisme et révolution sexuelle*, Maspero, Paris, 1973, p. 83; our translation.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 85

20. *Ibid.*, p. 86-87

Europe; it must be judged in the light of its historical development. In Albania, for example, women have in the space of barely 25 years won their independence and now participate fully in social life. So there is every reason to have confidence in the Albanians to make the changes that will be necessary in their sexual morality.

This is not the case, however, with other, formerly socialist countries where it is already becoming clear that women have suffered definite setbacks. One may be unable to change everything all at once, or one may not progress as quickly as might be hoped, but this is quite different from sliding backwards in all respects.

### The revisionist step backwards

After even such a summary examination of communist positions on the question of the family, one thing must be clear: none of the many political programmes put forward in our society proposes as radical a transformation of all social relations, including family relations, as does the Marxist-Leninist point of view.

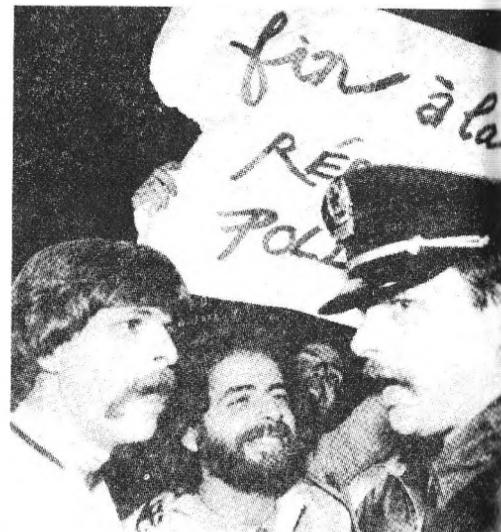
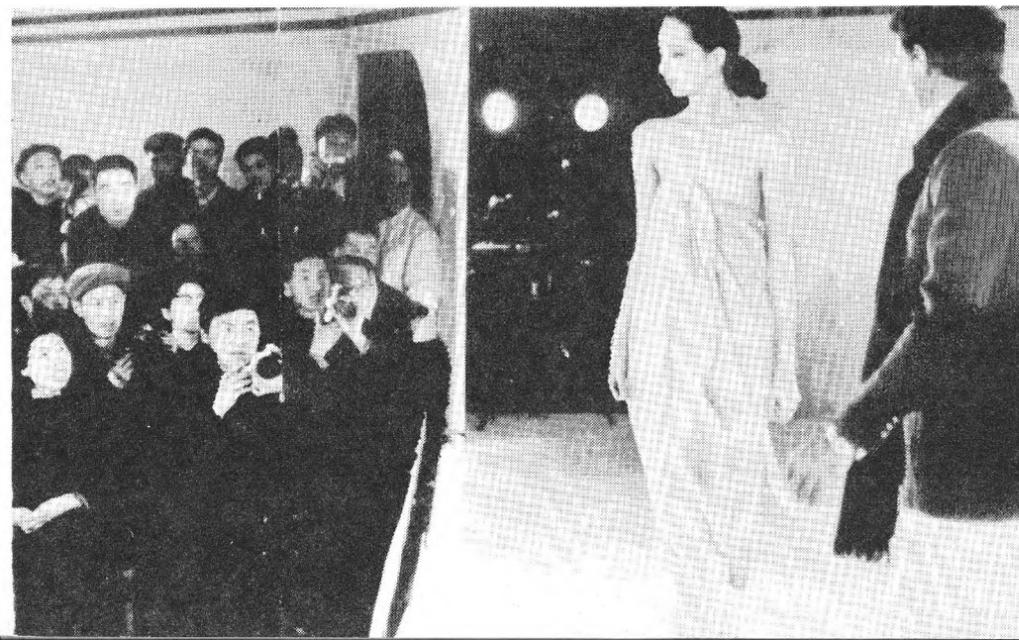
Nevertheless, for a number of decades now, this point of view on the family has not been defended as staunchly as it should have been. This weakness is a direct result of the setback suffered by the international communist movement with the revisionist betrayal. In the U.S.S.R., for instance, a recent public opinion survey indicated that a majority of men there considered

that it was the role of women to stay at home and look after the housework and the children. This is a telling example of what the return to power of the bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union has meant.

Propaganda reflecting traditional ideas about the patriarchal family and the role of women has the upper hand once again in the revisionist countries. The bourgeoisie has brought back fundamental aspects of the old family legislation. Fashion magazines portray women as play-dolls, and film stars are the favourite models of "emancipated" women. Meanwhile, the radical transformation of family relations has given way to the restoration of values tied to ownership. In these conditions, it is no wonder that social evils like alcoholism continue to spread and that the divorce rate — the confirmation of the failure of the couple — is rising. These countries have little to offer in the way of inspiration or models for the people in Western countries who are looking for solutions to the crisis in the family that is the inevitable side-effect of the general crisis of capitalism.

But the revisionist countries' out-and-out betrayal of the socialist tasks concerning the family must be put into historical perspective. When this is done, it becomes evident that the international communist movement was faced with serious problems on this issue long before Khrushchev took power in the Soviet Union. The appraisal of communist work in the past fifty years is a task that remains to be done. Nonetheless, it seems obvious that the

### A Pierre Cardin fashion show in newly-revisionist China. Another aspect of the return of capitalism!



Demonstrators defend the rights of homosexuals in Montreal last May.

revolutionary tasks and political debate on the question of the family were seriously narrowed down in scope. Parallel to this, there was the development of political stands and legislation that contradicted the positions taken previously by the international communist movement. This is illustrated clearly and convincingly in the evolution of the communist movement's attitude towards homosexuality.

"There is already a slogan in Germany, 'Eradicate the homosexuals and fascism will disappear'." <sup>21</sup> This sentence from the pen of the famous Soviet writer Maxim Gorky — a phrase that the Nazis were to implement in their own way — illustrates the tragic scope of the communist movement's error of judgement. In the Soviet Union, this error eventually led to the re-establishment of backward laws that the Bolshevik Revolution had done away with. Gorky went on to say,

*"In the fascist countries, homosexuality, which ruins youth, flourishes without punishment; in the country where the proletariat has audaciously achieved power, homosexuality has been declared a social crime and is heavily punished."* <sup>22</sup>

In March 1934, a new law came into effect in the U.S.S.R. providing for sentences of up to five years in jail to punish simple homosexual relations between consenting persons. Yet only four years earlier, the 1930 edition of

21. Maxim Gorky, *Proletarian Humanism*, quoted in Lauritsen and Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, Times Change Press, New York, 1974, p. 69  
22. *Ibid.*

the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* was still explaining:

*"It is already obvious that the Soviet evaluation of the features and characteristics of homosexuals is completely different from the West's evaluation. While understanding the wrongness of the development of homosexuality, society does not place and cannot place blame for it on those who exhibit it. This breaks down to a significant degree the wall which actually arises between the homosexual and society and forces the former to delve deeply into himself."* <sup>23</sup>

And eleven years before the new Soviet legislation, the Mental Health Institute of Moscow stated that all forms of sexual relations that did not infringe the rights of another person were to be considered as "private matters". So the 1934 legislation was a marked departure from the point of view held previously in the Soviet Union, as was the suppression of abortion in that country in 1936.

These about-faces were not justified by anthropological or other scientific studies that, as Engels pointed out, can alone situate mankind's ideas, including their sexual morality, in terms of what is fundamental — namely, the struggle against private ownership and for a classless society. In this connection, Engels warned against the pernicious effects of prejudices inherited from thousands of years of class society and laid the materialist, scientific foundations for the communist movement's attitude to sexual morality:

*"What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to*

**"Abolition of the family!". Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.**

**"On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things**

*what will disappear... When these people (born and raised in the new society — ed. note) are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual — and that will be the end of it."* <sup>24</sup>

### The family is too important to leave to the academics alone

The question of radical change in family relations, the destruction of the patriarchal family and the building of a new man and a new woman free of the old ideas of domination and ownership — this question is much too important to leave to a handful of academics. It is a **fundamental issue of communism.**

The Marxist-Leninist programme indicates a clear, materialist and thoroughly radical path for putting an end to class society and the system of ownership that has dominated the family and relations between the sexes ever since it emerged. When one sex oppresses the other, it cannot itself be free; and the emancipation of humanity is impossible without the full emancipation of women. Thus the family system that made the woman the "domestic slave" of man must be thoroughly and utterly destroyed by socialist revolution and by the ensuing lengthy, conscious and tenacious struggle to root out all traces of the old world.

The international communist movement has acquired considerable experience in this matter, and it should not hesitate to make this experience widely known. At the same time, it must confront in a frank and materialist way the problems raised by

**finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution...**

**"Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty."** (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*)

the history of the communist movement; for these problems are certainly related to the subsequent triumph of revisionism in the majority of formerly socialist countries.

The question of the family is a complex issue. It is of concern to everyone. The bourgeoisie is well aware of this, and it is no coincidence that it is a favourite topic for newspapers, television, novels and the film industry, all of which play up the same perspective: the status quo accompanied by all the shades and nuances of the bourgeois double standard.

Marxist-Leninists have acted as if they had nothing to say on the question and have given the bourgeoisie free rein in this area for long enough. We hope this article will help change this situation. If it does, we will have accomplished what we set out to do.

23. Lauritsen and Thorstad, *op. cit.*, p. 65  
24. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 145

### Bibliography

For readers who want to explore the question of the family in more depth, we have a few suggested readings. **Needless to say, we strongly encourage our readers to write to the journal PROLETARIAN UNITY and the newspaper IN STRUGGLE! to express their points of view on any of the questions dealt with in this article.**

1. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, International Publishers, New York, 1972. Chapter 2, on the family, is of particular interest.
2. Lenin, "A great beginning", in *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, vol. 29, pp. 409-434.
3. Lenin, "The tasks of the working women's movement in the Soviet Republic", in *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, vol. 30, pp. 40-46.
4. Enver Hoxha, "On Some Aspects of the Problem of the Albanian Woman", (a speech given at the Second Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, June 1967) in *Speeches, 1967-1968*, November 8 Publishing House, Tirana, 1974.
5. Lauritsen and Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, Times Change Press, New York, 1974

# They say cut back, we say fight back!

The economic strategy of the Ontario government and the anti-cutbacks movement

This article consists in a series of excerpts from a pamphlet published recently by IN STRUGGLE! in Ontario. The excerpts included here deal with the Ontario government's strategy of cutbacks at all levels in the field of social services. They illustrate some aspects of the economic crisis in this province and how it affects the masses of working people. But the situation described here is also to be found well beyond the borders of the province of Ontario. The crisis and cutbacks are hitting workers throughout Canada harder and harder.

The concluding section is a criticism of the NDP's strategy in Ontario, which is one of the major obstacles to the development of a movement of struggle against the cutbacks.

## Davis teaches First Ministers how to "conserve"

The First Ministers delivered a coordinated blow in the national offensive on social services at their February 1978 Conference. Governments all across Canada, including the NDP, lined up behind Ontario Premier Bill Davis and his comprehensive economic development plan to bail Canadian capitalists out of their crisis.

The plan was straightforward:

- curtail the growth and expenditures of the public sector in order to free up resources to the private sector;
- develop a positive enterprise strategy to stimulate industrial investment and productivity in Canada.

Representing the heartland of Canadian industry, Davis stressed Ontario's concern for a national industrial strategy and urged the ministers to agree on government support to manufacturing as the first priority. Canadian industry, he argued, must innovate technologically, pay more attention to internal marketing, industrial research and development, and rein-

force those sectors where Canada has a competitive advantage.

In a revealing statement on Canada/U.S. relations at the November 29, 1978 Premiers Conference, Davis announced Ontario was agreeable to lower U.S./Canada tariffs and closer ties concerning energy and resources, but only on the condition Canadian monopoly capitalists get access to the U.S. market and their fair share of U.S. industrial investment abroad. The Tories are no "narrow-minded nationalists"!

## Industrial heartland missing a beat

Ontario's 1979 budget papers note the fact that Ontario's income growth exceeded the national average in 1977-78 for the first time during the 1970s, "due to lower wage settlements and the depreciation of the dollar".<sup>1</sup>

The same article registers alarm, however, over the fact that U.S. investment in several high-technology industries in Canada declined during the 1970s, particularly in the electrical, machinery, and transportation products sectors. The \$11.8 billion deficit in Canada's manufactured end products in



**Ontario Premier William Davis is in the vanguard when it comes to cutting back budgets for social services.**

1978 worries our bourgeois economists, as does the fact that the proportion of Ontario government expenditures spent on debt charges rose from 4.4% in 1970 to nearly 10% in 1979.

Ontario is "The Industrial heartland missing a beat", according to a special November 1978 *Financial Post* supplement. The *Post* criticizes the fact that Ontario is now the slowest-growing province in the country.

These "ominous" trends account for the main feature of the 1979 Budget — the \$200-million Employment Development Fund (EDF) approved by all parties, including the NDP. The fund was set up to aid those industries that will strengthen Ontario's competitive position in the world. Ontario's pulp and paper industry alone had received \$100 million as of December 1979.<sup>2</sup>

The 1979 budget holds spending increases down to 7.4%, while revenue is

1. *Ontario's Economy: Prospects and Policies, Ontario 1979 Budget Papers.*
2. *Hansard, December 20 1979, p. 5793*

projected to increase by 9.6%. "Only by stimulating the private sector can we create lasting jobs and growing incomes for our citizens", says the Ontario Treasurer.<sup>3</sup>

Gifts to fine corporate citizens abound in the 1979 budget. Succession duties were repealed, the mining tax rate reduced once more, and the Small Business Development Corporate Rebate created to reward all those who invest in a small business with a 30% rebate from the government.

The people got another 5.3% increase in OHIP fees, forcing a family to pay \$480 a year for medical insurance. Gasoline, diesel fuel and alcohol prices increased as well.

A glance at the government's expenditures between 1977-79 show a marked change in priorities. Education, Health and Social Services had their budgets increased by 9%, while the rate of inflation was double that during the same two-year period. Industry and Tourism, on the other hand, had its budget increased by 48%, and Treasury & Economics by 25%.<sup>4</sup> The total police budget in Ontario increased by 198% from 1970-77!<sup>5</sup> These are the same police who gun down Blacks and immigrants in Toronto and brutalize strikers at Fleck, Boise Cascade, and Radio Shack.

Let's take a look now at the effect of the government's "neo-conservative" policies on specific social services.

## Health care... for those who can afford it

The government concedes it has cut back health care as far as it can for the time being.

The ratio of hospital beds/population is now 3.5/1000, down from 4.1. Only Newfoundland has fewer beds per capita than Ontario. Chronic care patients now have to pay \$10.50 a day for their keep. 20% of Ontario's doctors are charging 42% more than the standard OHIP (the Ontario medicare plan) fee, while the government turns a blind eye. "Make the User Pay" is the government's new philosophy. As of last June, 4500 more hospital beds were slated to be cut — the equivalent of 18 major hospitals across the province. Wage increases to hospital workers,

still denied the right to strike, averaged 4% this past year.

Conditions are even worse in northern Ontario. North of the 50th parallel, there are now only six hospitals with a total of 282 beds. In Thunder Bay, up to 11 patients wait overnight in emergency for regular beds. In Elliot Lake, there is no pediatrician, radiologist or psychiatrist. At the Blind River Hospital, the full-time nursing staff has been cut in half.

The Ontario Economic Council now concludes health care costs are no longer out of control! But, the Council hastens to add, "we need longer-run major re-structuring of health care delivery" along the lines of paramedical manpower training, increased development of community health centres, and alternatives besides hospitalization in acute care hospitals — proposals the NDP, incidentally, agrees with.

"We seem to have turned the bend in the last three or four years," remarks Robert Elgie, Chairman of the Select Committee on Health Care Financing and Costs in his October 17, 1978 Report. Elgie warns, however, that the declining birth rate and growing number of elderly in Ontario will put added demands on the health care system in the future.

The Committee argues the regressive premium system should be maintained since "it deters the user from abuse of the system". It also says the current subsidy system for low-income people should be replaced by a tax credit system. (Such a system will only penalize poor people who will use the health care system less because they lack ready cash). The government predictably agrees with this cost-saving policy and plans to implement it in the near future.

Innovative programmes like day-surgery and home patient care are also recommended, since community programmes are cheaper than institutional care.

Having pinched the nerve of the health care system, the government's main target of attack has now shifted to the education sector. Under the pretense of declining enrolment, the government intends to squeeze Ontario's schools and universities for the millions of dollars needed by crisis-ridden capitalists.

## Government's next target: education

The government insists the crisis has not yet hit the field of education. "The early 1980s will see the most serious impact," warned an education ministry official recently. And this despite the fact that the proportion of Ontario's budget spent on education fell from 31.4% in 1970 to 26.1% in 1979.

With thousands of teachers already out of work, dozens of schools closed, immigrant children on endless waiting lists for English as a Second Language Instruction (ESL), and property taxes zooming to make up for shrinking provincial grants, the "crisis to come" will surely be quite something.

Decentralization of responsibility for elementary and secondary schools is a key factor in the government's strategy. "By shifting a larger burden back to the municipalities, it allows the government to cut its expenditures," argues the On-

3. Ontario 1979 Budget Papers
4. Ontario Government Expenditures Estimates 1979
5. Ontario Justice Statistics
6. *Steelabour, November 1979, p. 4*
7. *Issues and Alternatives Update 1979, Ontario Economic Council*

## Provincial employees demonstrate in Toronto in the spring of 1979.



tario Economic Council (OEC).<sup>8</sup> Government grants to school boards now cover only 50% of the costs, down from its former 60%. This policy clearly discriminates against poorer districts in northern and eastern Ontario, where school boards are unable to raise municipal taxes much more. Indian children north of the 50th parallel face the harshest conditions of all.

Under pressure from the province, high school boards are attempting to eliminate tenure clauses in collective agreements in order to lay off teachers at will. No less than a dozen demonstrations by parents, teachers and students took place in Toronto last spring protesting this policy.

The government justifies its actions by citing lower enrolment figures. While no one can deny enrolment figures are down, the Toronto Teachers Federation points out this represents a golden opportunity to decrease class sizes. Fifty per cent of Ontario's high school classes are too large, according to the Ministry of Education itself. Not to mention the growing need for ESL and special education programmes, as well as a universal State-funded 24 hour child-care system.

**Post-secondary education, however, will face the most drastic cuts in the near future.** The Fifth Annual Report (1979) of the Ontario Council on University Affairs (OCUA) outlines the government's likely strategy.

Revenue increases have lagged behind the combined increases in inflation and enrolment since 1971, according to OCUA. To meet expenses with their 1979 budget increase of 5.8%, OCUA recommends the universities either reduce salaries and/or lay off faculty and staff. In a pointed remark, OCUA states that every 1% increase in tuition fees equals 33 faculty positions and notes that tuition fees have only risen by \$200 since 1970.

The Ontario Economic Council goes even further and recommends all universities and colleges be allowed to set their own fees. This recommendation was acted upon in January 1980, when the minister of education announced what amounts to a 17.5% tuition fee hike, 10% of which is to be applied at the discretion of the university. Ontario's tuition fees are now among the highest in the country. The new increase will probably lead to a significant drop in university enrolment, particularly of

low-income students. The principle of equal access to post-secondary education is ridiculed once again.

To further "rationalize" the university system, OCUA recommends that certain universities merge (for instance, Carleton and the University of Ottawa), satellite colleges like Glendon and Erindale College in Toronto be closed, and universities specialize more in the programmes offered. OCUA also urges an embargo on funding of all new graduate programmes.

Foreseeing such recommendations, the government paved the way for them in the spring of 1978. At that time, university funding increased by a mere 5.8% and the student aid budget by 2%. Ontario's grant plan cut 30% from the allowance for students' living costs, and all grant assistance to graduate students ended. Parents were also forced to play \$500 more towards tuition fees than in 1977, assistance to part-time students was further curtailed, and university faculty and staff received a 4% wage increase. These policies resulted in mass layoffs of graduate assistants and clerical staff, a freeze on faculty and staff hiring, and increased use of part-time workers.

The strategy is clear. The government intends to rationalize the post-secondary system through wage cuts, staff layoffs, tuition fee increases and university mergers. Post-secondary education will soon become the exclusive domain of the wealthy.

### Women hit especially hard

The government's concerted attack on day care, abortion and birth control services, welfare and housing has pushed working-class women up against the wall.

The day-care "boom" went bust in 1975 when the government froze expansion of the day-care system, increased rates for subsidized day care and imposed a stricter means test. At that time, day-care centres accounted for the care of only 7% of 3 to 5-year-old children with working mothers in Ontario. Simultaneously, the government began to promote private home care for infants and has since phased out most public infant day-care centres under the slogan, "It's time to return government responsibilities to the family." A tax-credit system for low-income mothers is

now being considered as a way to discourage such mothers from entering the job market in order to save the government money.

"If day care was free," claimed Professor Krashinsky at a government think-tank in Toronto, September 19, 1979, "everyone would want it, just as everyone would want champagne if it was free. If something is more expensive, people buy less of it." He recommended the government abolish subsidies, charge full costs to users and issue tax-credits at the end of the year to poor people.

As Ontario's health care system degenerates, so do already inadequate birth control and abortion services. Ninety-five percent of Ontario's gynecologists have opted out of OHIP. An abortion today can cost up to \$200. 1,795 Ontario women were forced to go to the U.S. for an abortion in 1975 because they simply could not get one in Ontario. Due to a maze of government regulations, only 20% of Ontario's hospitals perform abortions. No money is allocated on a provincial level for sex education in the schools and up until very recently, the Ontario government had no public material on birth control methods.

Welfare and mothers' allowance recipients now live on incomes 36% below the official poverty line in Canada. A 6% increase in benefits in 1979 did not even match the rate of inflation, let alone stem their slide into deeper and deeper poverty. To torment them still further, the Ontario government periodically whips up "workfare" campaigns and has threatened to cut off benefits to single mothers with children who don't accept any job offered them.

Tenants in Ontario public housing, many of them single mothers, are the government's latest victims. The government wants to sell its public housing to the private sector in order to cut costs. As many as 14,500 families could be evicted if the government has its way.

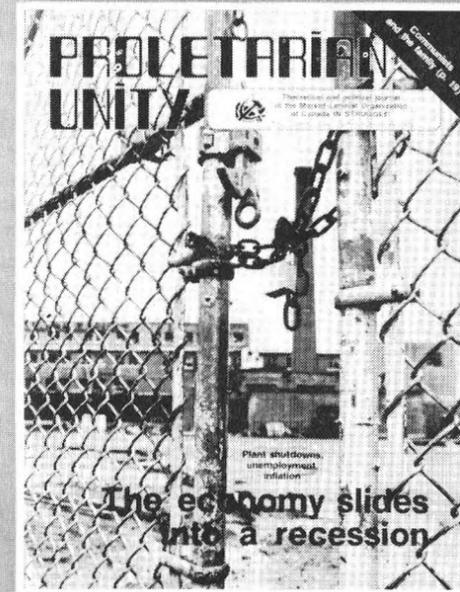
### NDP — the main stumbling block

The NDP tells us the Tories are the enemy. The Tories have "mismanaged" the economy and sold us out to foreign

8. Ibid.

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multinationals. Rely on us, the party says, and we will save medicare for you. A "new" industrial strategy will fix everything. But there's nothing "new" about the NDP's industrial strategy.

During the debate in the House on Ontario's 1979 Budget, both the Liberals and the NDP called for a strategy that would strengthen Canadian-owned industry. The Liberals put the emphasis on government aid to Canadian firms in the private sector, the NDP on a mixture of State and privately-run Canadian firms, while the Tories advocated aid to U.S. multinationals on the condition that Canadian-owned firms get a crack at U.S. markets and U.S. firms continue to invest industrial capital in Ontario. Hardly differences of principle!

**All three parties endorsed the creation of the \$200 million Employment Development Fund, whose funds come from social service cutbacks.** Yet our fine NDP spokesmen have the nerve to posture as the "champions of medicare".

NDP MPP Laughren from Sudbury spoke last April of his vision of "an Ontario that has a viable manufacturing sector and is industrially more self-reliant."<sup>9</sup> He had no principled objections to the Employment Development Fund; he merely suggested grants be allocated to "one or two key industries" whose profits will be reinvested in Ontario. A defender of Canadian monopolies, the NDP MPP went on to state: "The NDP would encourage mergers in manufacturing sectors such as mining, industry, or electrical products." Laughren concludes with a call to nationalize Ontario's natural resources.

Here we have nationalism combined with support for direct State intervention in the economy — shades of Keynes once more! Eleven years of similar policies under Trudeau only

deepened the crisis; a slightly more "radical" version of liberal economics would be no less disastrous for the people.

Flip the "Save Medicare" coin over and you read "Save Petrocan". Saving the likes of Petrocan is what the NDP is all about. But what's the difference, from a workers' point of view, between Petrocan and Imperial Oil? Between CN and CP?

The NDP may quarrel with the Tories and Liberals over **which capitalist gets the dough** — U.S. or Canadian — and **who gets to administer it** — the State or a private entrepreneur; but Broadbent spilled the beans at the Steelworkers Conference in Toronto on October 5: "I believe in the private sector and the predominance of the private sector for the rest of our foreseeable lifetime." During the 1980 federal election campaign, he again reassured businessmen:

*"We want to work with the private sector to create jobs. It's too simplistic to say we are against big business."*<sup>10</sup>

The NDP's stand on medicare also reveals fundamental interests in common with the Tories and Liberals. The OFL/NDP's brief to Parliament last December highlights the demand for "Community Support Centres" — expanded community health clinics that would streamline the many fragmented and duplicated social and health services presently available. The Tories could not agree more with this orientation. Community programmes are much cheaper than institutional care, as Robert Elgie, Chairman of the Select Committee on Health pointed out in October 1978.

The plan to decentralize health services, children's services and public housing is in reality a scheme to institute social service cutbacks through the back door. The burden will fall on municipalities to provide needed services; and as the province continues to cut back on its grants to municipalities, property taxes will rise.

Mental patients, for example, are being discharged in growing numbers from hospitals as part of this policy of "de-institutionalization". For the patient, this means a threadbare cot in a squalid boarding house, three starchy meals a day and a welfare cheque that leaves them \$25.00 a month after room

and board. But the government saves money.

At a time when hospital operations are under concerted attack, it is curious indeed to see the NDP endorse a Tory policy designed to "rationalize" the hospital system under the guise of bringing medicine to the community.

The NDP also recommends that "the goodwill of the medical profession not be squandered in a confrontation over fees"<sup>11</sup> and supports an increase in doctors fees. (Doctors in Ontario now average over \$55,000 a year after expenses!) The Tories are just as sympathetic to the doctors' "plight"!

No, the Tories are not the enemy. The entire Canadian ruling class, allied with U.S. imperialism, is responsible for the misery we face. Neither Keynes in Liberal/NDP disguise, nor Friedman in Tory disguise, can solve the crises the capitalists are forever foisting on the working class.

The anti-cutbacks movement must be oriented towards overthrowing this system of private property and destroying the State that has already cost us our wages, jobs, and democratic rights.

The main stumbling block, the NDP, must be exposed for what it is — a bourgeois party that appeals to nationalist sentiment in workers and progressive people in order to strengthen Canadian monopoly capital without protest. A party that tries to hoodwink people into believing the capitalist State can be reformed through endless briefs and lobbies. A party so desperate for hegemony that it splits and wrecks the resistance movement.

We must refuse to line up behind any pro-capitalist party, even those with a left-wing coating like the Communist Party of Canada or the Workers Communist Party.

Honest activists must take the direction of the movement into their own hands. Coalitions that unite the fight against cutbacks with defence of public service workers' rights through mass action should be actively supported. The road ahead is not easy. There will be many roadblocks, but we must persevere if the people are to achieve lasting victories.

9. *Hansard*, April 19, 1979, p. 1078-1092

10. *Toronto Star*, January 19, 1980.

11. *Report of the Select Committee on Health Care Financing and Costs*, October 17, 1978.

# Imperialist interests in Cyprus

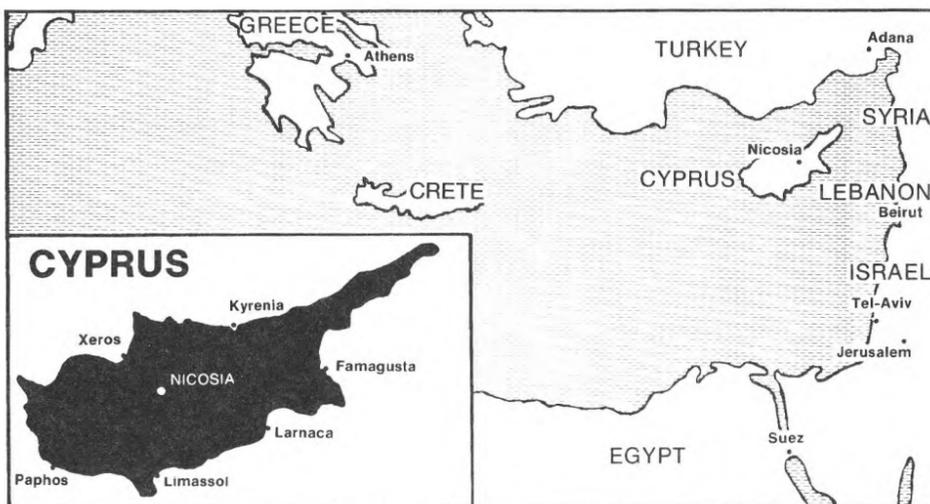
Interview with a representative of the Communist Party of Cyprus Marxist-Leninist (Organizing Committee)

During a recent voyage, a comrade from IN STRUGGLE! met with a representative of the Communist Party of Cyprus Marxist-Leninist (Organizing Committee), who agreed to give us an interview. At the present time, the CPC ML (OC) is active mainly in the northern part of the island (the area occupied by the Turkish army). So far, it has concentrated much of its work on the concrete analysis of Cypriot society and determining the path of the revolution in Cyprus. In this interview, he explains part of this analysis.

**PROLETARIAN UNITY:** Could you please begin by telling us about the nature of the present government in Cyprus, and its links to different foreign powers?

**CPC-ML (OC):** In the north of Cyprus, it is the lackeys of American imperialism that are in power. There is a puppet government in the north, but this government is really very weak and the real power is actually held by the fascist armies of the Turkish occupiers. The present government is in the hands of representatives of U.S. imperialism, the so-called "National Unity" party. Other forces present in the parliament are interested in developing relations with the West European imperialists. But this is not always completely evident, because it is the influence of American imperialism which is dominant over-all.

In the southern part of the island, the government is composed of lackeys of British imperialism. This is the party of Kyprianou. As well, in southern Cyprus, the AKEL party, which is a lackey of Soviet social-imperialism, is quite strong. The AKEL has quite a lot of influence amongst the masses, for historical reasons. Along with these two parties which I have mentioned, which have representatives in the parliament (or, as it is called in Cyprus, the National Council), there are also two other parties with representatives in the National Council. One of these parties represents the interests of American imperialism, and the other represents the interests of the national bourgeoisie.



**CPC-ML (OC):** For the imperialists, Cyprus is of strategic importance, because it can be used as a military outpost to control the oil of the Middle East and to suppress the liberation struggles of the peoples in this region.

Up until the Second World War, it was mainly British imperialism that dominated Cyprus, and this was because of the important interests of Britain in the Near and Middle East. Since the time of the Second World War, American imperialism has become more dominant in the world, and at the same time has come to have a growing strategic interest in the control of Cyprus. As well, there are important British military bases on Cyprus, which are used by the British and the Americans as electronic listening posts in order to overhear the electronic communications of the U.S.S.R. and of the other countries of the Near and Middle East.

After the Second World War, as British imperialism declined in power, the strategic importance of Cyprus for Britain declined as well, and Britain was content with maintaining a number of military bases in Cyprus, rather than trying to militarily dominate the whole

**PU:** Can you tell us about the strategic interests of the different imperialists in relation to Cyprus, and how this has affected the political life of Cyprus, especially since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974?

In terms of political power, we can say that in the north power is really held directly by the Turkish army, which is a governing body, and which is the army of one of the strongest military forces in NATO. In the south, political power is more divided, but is mainly held by the forces representing the interests of British imperialism, and secondarily by the AKEL, representing the interests of Soviet social-imperialism, through their respective local fractions of the comprador bourgeoisie.

island. However, at the same time, the interests of American imperialism in Cyprus gained in importance, as American imperialism rose in dominance amongst the imperialist powers. However, it is British imperialism which continues to dominate in Cyprus. The main economic links of Cyprus, which is an agricultural country, are with Britain. The agricultural production of Cyprus, such as citrus fruits and grapes, is exported mainly to Britain.

What happened in 1974 was that the fascist Greek junta was becoming so rapidly isolated amongst the Greek people that it had to provoke an incident in order to develop support amongst the people of Greece on a chauvinist basis. The Greek junta, which was allied with U.S. imperialism, provoked a fascist coup d'état in Cyprus on July 15th, 1974, in order to overthrow the Makarios regime. The Makarios regime at that time was allied with British imperialism. But the fascist coup in Cyprus was very rapidly isolated, both by the mass struggle of the people of Cyprus and by progressive public opinion internationally. This put the Americans in a difficult position, making it hard for them to continue to support this fascist administration.

At the same time, the regime in power in Turkey, which was allied mainly with the interests of Western European imperialism, was also very isolated politically, and risked losing parliamentary power. It was in their interests to try to develop public support in Turkey by staging an invasion of Cyprus, which took place on July 20, 1974.

It is important to understand that for both Greece and Turkey, the ruling classes have historically presented Cyprus as "their" island, and that by asserting their control militarily over Cyprus, they were trying to win the support of their populations on a chauvinistic and expansionist basis. It is also important to understand that in relation to Turkey although it was a fraction of the comprador bourgeoisie allied with West German imperialism that held parliamentary power, the basically dominant imperialism in Turkey continued to be U.S. imperialism, and U.S. imperialism clearly controlled the Turkish military forces. This meant that when the government in Turkey ordered the invasion of Cyprus in order to try to develop support amongst the

Turkish people, the U.S. imperialists — through the Turkish army — were able to accomplish their original objectives of the July 15 coup in Cyprus: that is, to indirectly assert their military control over the island.

However, although the American imperialists basically supported the Turkish invasion of the northern part of Cyprus, they remained silent about this, in order to prevent their further isolation from international progressive opinion.

The military control established by Turkey on the northern part of Cyprus at this time has continued up until this day. The Turkish military occupation of the north was presented to the Turkish Cypriots as an act to "save" them from the menace of the Greek fascists, and on this basis it was initially welcomed with a certain degree of support by the Turkish-Cypriot people.

**PU:** Could you now tell us what this has meant for the conditions of the working people in Cyprus, since the time of the invasion, and up until today?

**CPC-ML (OC):** First, of all, the invasion provoked much suffering and many deaths. Many Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and soldiers of the

## A few important dates in the recent history of Cyprus

**1960:** the British colony of Cyprus becomes a presidential republic, with a Greek president and a Turkish vice-president.

**November 1967:** the national conflict gives rise to military incidents between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

**July 1974:** President Makarios is overthrown in a coup d'état staged with the support of Greek officers and the complicity of the colonels' regime in Greece. Turkey intervenes militarily and occupied the northern part of the island (40% of the territory).

**June 9, 1975:** a "federated Turkish State" is proclaimed in the northern part of Cyprus.

Turkish army were killed. It is important to point out that these soldiers of the Turkish army were recruited mainly from the toiling masses of Turkey, from the workers and peasants, and especially from the peasants of Kurdistan. The invasion also left many casualties, in the form of people with permanent injuries, and resulted in the dispossession of many people from their homes and from their land. Over 200,000 people, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, were forced to abandon their homes, their land, even their families, in order to find work and homes in a new location.

Today the conditions of the people are extremely difficult, particularly in the northern section. The control established by the Turkish army in the north — politically, economically, culturally — means that the crisis in Turkey, which is extremely acute in terms of poverty, inflation, unemployment, etc., is also exported to the northern part of Cyprus. The rapid deterioration of the living conditions of the people since the Turkish occupation in 1974 in the north have also provoked important mass resistance by the people. Many thousands of workers, peasants, teachers and small shopkeepers have demonstrated against the rising inflation and unemployment. However, most of these people still see these problems as only being the result of the policies of the local government.

In the south, the conditions of the masses have been somewhat different. Since 1974, the ruling government has been linked to British imperialism, after the failure of the attempted fascist coup, and the government had for some years received an important amount of so-called aid from Britain. This aid from Britain helped to maintain somewhat more prosperity in the southern part of the island, up until the last few years. However, as you know, in the last few years we have seen a deep intensification of the crisis of world imperialism, including for British imperialism. This has made it impossible for Britain to continue to subsidize the economy of the southern part of Cyprus in the same way, and has meant that the conditions of the masses here are also deteriorating. However, the relative poverty and oppression of the masses in the south is still not the same as that in the north, and the differences here remain important.

**PU: We know that Canada is involved in Cyprus through the so-called peace-keeping forces of the United Nations. Can you please explain to us what is the real role of these forces?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** It is obvious that the troops of the UN are not there in order to keep the peace, but really in order to provoke clashes between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and in order to protect the bases of NATO and of British imperialism in Cyprus. The most important role of the UN forces is to maintain a constant and strict control of the British military installations. However, when there is a sharpening of the class struggle in Cyprus, the UN forces are also there to aid the local rulers, and this has been seen on many occasions.

**PU: We hear a lot in the capitalist press about the divisions of the people of Cyprus on the basis of nationality and religion, and the fighting that this has provoked. What is the reality behind this?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** The population of Cyprus is composed of two nationalities, the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot nations, as well as certain national minorities. Historically, the two main national groupings have been able to live in peace with each other. This was reflected, for example, in the fact that certain villages were composed of both Turkish and Greek Cypriots living side by side. This was also reflected in a certain intermingling of the cultures and a reciprocal effect of the languages in relation to the two main national groupings.

However, in the last decades, there have been important clashes between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. But these clashes, for example in 1963 and in 1967, were mainly the work of fascist organizations, both in the Greek-Cypriot and in the Turkish-Cypriot communities.

We must also consider the particularities of the period from 1960, when Cyprus received its formal so-called independence from Britain, up until the events of 1974. During this period, our analysis is that the Greek-Cypriot nation was an oppressor nation in relation to the Turkish-Cypriot nation, which was an oppressed nation. The Turkish-Cypriot ruling classes, acting

through their striking arm, the TMT (Turkish resistance organization), was able to use the sentiments of the oppressed nationality, the Turkish Cypriots, to rally the Turkish Cypriots behind their armed provocations against the Greek-Cypriot people.

Since 1974, of course, the imperialists and their local agents have maintained the permanent division of the island between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. However, many of the Cypriot people, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots, now are beginning to question the justness of this so-called solution to their problems, because of their conditions of life on the island.

**PU: What solution does your organization propose for these problems of the people of Cyprus?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** The first thing that we say is that genuine peace and genuine independence for Cyprus depends on the expulsion of all foreign invaders and occupiers. When we talk of all foreign invaders and occupiers, we don't only mean the Turkish army in the north, as is put forward by the Greek chauvinists. We also include the elements of the Greek army that are present in the south, and we include the British imperialists who maintain their military bases, and we also include the American imperialists, who are now stockpiling in Cyprus the military equipment that they saved from the anger of the people's revolution in Iran.

This struggle against the foreign invaders and occupiers gives an anti-imperialist aspect to the struggle of the people of Cyprus, but we analyse that the basic revolutionary struggle of the people of Cyprus is for socialism; because the relations of production in Cyprus are capitalist relations of production. We consider that it is necessary to link this anti-imperialist aspect of the struggle — the struggle against foreign control, the struggle for genuine peace and independence — with the struggle for socialist revolution. This can only be done if the struggle is developed on the basis of the leadership of the proletariat through its communist party, although the struggle must also include broader unity in a united front. The struggle against the foreign invaders and occupiers is only a first step in the necessary struggle for socialist revolution. In this struggle, we



**In 1974, the Turkish army invades the northern part of Cyprus and hoists the Turkish flag.**

can construct a united front of those opposed to the foreign invaders and occupiers, even on a temporary basis, with sectors that may be enemies of the people. But the success of the struggle depends on its proletarian leadership, and depends as well on the unity of the peoples of the two nations of Cyprus in a common revolutionary struggle.

We believe that our organization is the only force that is capable of leading this struggle in a correct manner.

**PU: How does your position differ from the positions of other political groups in Cyprus which claim to represent the interests of the workers?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** I'll begin with the situation in the north. In the north, the main opportunist political party claiming to represent the workers is the Republican Turkish Party. This party is a social-fascist party aligned with Soviet social imperialism. This party legitimizes the Turkish occupation of the north, as well as the general imperialist control of the whole island. This party also pretends to the working people that the situation can be fundamentally changed if their party is elected with a majority in the National Council. This party does not really have that deep an influence in the working masses, and as we extend our mass agitation and propaganda in the future, we think that we will be able to make rapid progress in combatting their influence.

In the north there is also an organization called Marxist-Leninist Platform, which claims to be Marxist-Leninist but which has opportunist views on the struggle in Cyprus.

They ignore the struggle against British imperialism, which is really the dominant imperialism in Cyprus, and talk only of the struggle against U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism. As well, they claim that

the revolution in Cyprus is still at the democratic stage, which is a very important error. Furthermore, they ignore in practice the necessity to develop the united struggle of the Cypriot people of the two main nationalities.

In the south, the revisionist organization AKEL has an important influence. For example, they had 40% of the popular vote in the last elections, which is the highest percentage of the popular vote of any revisionist party in Europe. There are historical reasons for this. The AKEL is historically linked to the old communist party of Cyprus, a member party of the communist international. It has a certain influence among the people because of its association with the revolutionary traditions of the past, and also because its activities were unchallenged amongst the people for a certain time, due to the lack of existence of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party. In relation to the problems of Cyprus, they put forward that these will be solved by United Nations resolutions. This position also serves the interests of Soviet social-imperialism which would like to get involved in the control of Cyprus through its role in the United Nations Security Council. The AKEL also accepts the Turkish occupation of the north of Cyprus, and accepts the proposals of the local ruling classes for the permanent division of Cyprus, hypocritically pretending that this is justified on the basis of the principle of the "self-determination of nations". The AKEL

**The Canadian army defends the interests of Canadian imperialism in Cyprus, where it makes up part of the UN's supposed "peace-keeping" forces.**



also sabotages any class struggle by the masses in Cyprus which would threaten their important position of strength in the parliament; and they work actively to destroy the activities of the workers' movement in southern Cyprus. A full exposure of the nature of these opportunists is in our pamphlet published by Revolutionary Struggle Publications, entitled **Lackeys of Russian social-imperialism in Cyprus: AKEL and CTP.**

Another party in the south is the ADEK, which claims to be a party of the working people, but which really represents the interests of the Greek-Cypriot national bourgeoisie. This party takes some positions in opposition to foreign control of Cyprus, but not in a consistent way. It does not have an important mass influence.

**PU: Can you tell us about the positions of the groups in Greece and in Turkey that are Marxist-Leninist, or claim to be, in relation to the question of Cyprus?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** In Turkey, we believe that there is a communist party, which is the CP of Turkey — Marxist-Leninist. The Marxist-Leninist nature of the positions of this party can be seen in relation to their positions on Cyprus. This party was the only political force in Turkey which took a position of revolutionary defeatism\* in relation to the Turkish invasion, in 1974, and which promised to do everything in its power to aid the struggle of the communists of Cyprus. We have close

fraternal relations, materially and morally, with the comrades of this party. We consider that other organizations in Turkey, like Halkin Kurtulusu, took opportunist positions in relation to Cyprus. Although they denounced the Turkish invasion, they talked only about American and Soviet imperialism, and not about the role of British imperialism. They have also actively opposed our efforts to create the communist party in Cyprus, and have pretended that we are simply a student organization, even though they know that this is not the case.

In Greece, the organization that we see as closest to us is the CP of Greece — Marxist-Leninist, which has many correct positions on the international situation. However, the positions of this party in relation to Cyprus have been marked by chauvinism, and in the past for a long time they supported the idea of "enosis", or the union of Cyprus with Greece.

**PU: How do you think the people in Canada can build correct international support for the struggle of the people of Cyprus?**

**CPC-ML (OC):** Our organization believes that in the present era the struggle of the proletariat for power is not only national but international. In this sense, it is very important for the people of Canada and the people of Cyprus to support each other's struggle.

One of the first things that can be done by you in Canada is to use your press to make known the revolutionary struggle in Cyprus and its objectives. It would also be important in the future if we are able to create an international organization of communists, to use this to greatly increase the material support between the communists of the world, to unite the proletarian struggle.

We should also remember that the people of Cyprus and the people of Canada face a common enemy in relation to Canadian imperialism, represented in Cyprus by the UN so-called peace-keeping forces, and that the struggle in both countries against Canadian imperialism helps to weaken one of our common enemies.

The articles of the CP of Cyprus ML (Organizing Committee) which are available in English will soon be available at our bookstores in Canada.

\* Ed. note: By this, the Cypriot comrade means that the CPT(M-L) did not support the Turkish invasion and in fact called for the defeat of the Turkish army.

# Round table conference on the work of Jean-Paul Sartre

The French writer and philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, died in Paris last April 15. The fact that his death was an important news item on all the media indicates that the influence of this eminent intellectual reached far beyond the circle of people who read one or another of his works. Sartre's reputation is due just as much, if not more, to his political positions as to his philosophical or literary works.

Among the many commentaries which followed his death, there were some who, after tossing off a few rapid words of praise, criticized the fact that he had supported revolutionary movements, opposed the anti-communist movement in the fifties, supported the Algerian people's struggle against the French army and the Vietnamese people's struggle against U.S. aggression, as well as the uprising in France in 1968. The image of Jean-Paul Sartre refusing the Nobel Prize and distributing the newspaper "La Cause du Peuple" in the streets of Paris to protest against the political censorship of the system is still probably a difficult one to swallow for the ideologues of the bourgeoisie.

But who is this university philosopher, perpetually at odds with the social role which was conferred on him: that of a famous intellectual celebrity? How do his ideas and actions relate to the rise and fall, due to the revisionist betrayal, of the French and international communist movement?

To clarify these questions, PROLETARIAN UNITY invited three Marxist professors from the Montreal area to give their points of view on the content and meaning of Sartre's political ideas.

The following comments were gathered quickly and are certainly not a global and final analysis of Sartre's work. Nevertheless, they help to situate his work in the more general historical context of the period, from the rise of fascism and the outbreak of war to the rebirth of the international Marxist-Leninist movement. For the history of ideas cannot be studied apart from history itself. And inversely, the study of the philosophical ideas of a given period are an integral part of the history of that period. So, the criticism of Jean-Paul Sartre's work must be seen as one aspect of the general criticism of the roots and of the content of revisionism which has led an important part of the communist movement away from the grounds of Marxism and revolution.

But first of all, what is existentialism, the philosophical trend to which Sartre belongs? And what is the relationship between existentialism and idealism in general?

**Robert:** Generally speaking, idealism is a school of thought which upholds that ideas and the will of men can account for historical development. According to the idealist school of thought, the motive force of history is man's mind and not the material conditions of the world. For a long time, the dominant form of idealism was religious idealism. In this case, the spirit which controlled the course of events was not even that of man; it was the spirit of God, somewhere in the sky, who determined history.

In this context, existentialism represented a break. In a certain way, the "existential cry" was a move towards the material world because it focused on Man as he is in reality, his passions and his everyday life. The early existentialists like Kierkegaard, Heidegger, etc. really developed what could be called the philosophy of everyday life. It was an expression of revolt in the face of the living conditions of the masses.



However, due to a lack of perspectives, a lack of solutions, mysticism began to appear as the solution: if there is no solution in this world, then we should try to be happy elsewhere... That is what finally emerges out of these philosophies. And then, in particular, between the two world wars, the philosophy of the absurd began developing with such writers as Kafka and Camus. When Sartre first began writing, he belonged to this tendency. Through the criticism of religious idealism, existentialism contributed to the development of what could be described as "subjective idealism".

Subjective idealism which focuses on Man's ideas, his life, his despair, is still very much with us today. Statements like "that is your opinion and I have mine", reflect the point of view of philosophical pluralism, where what counts is not reality but rather the fact that you, as a human being, think X and that I, as a human being, think Y. So, subjective idealism brings ideas down from the sky and puts them in the mind of men, but ideas remain the motive force of history, and this is still the dominant philosophical trend.

\* \* \*

After these opening clarifications, the

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debate got under way on this specific form of existentialism which is intrinsically linked to Sartre's work.

**Robert:** To have an accurate picture of Sartre, we must look at him from an historical point of view. At the age of 25, he explains his position in the following way:

*"We refuse official idealism in the name of the tragedy of life".*

He revolts against the official philosophy which states that all is well, because it is obvious between the two world wars that the proletariat lives in misery. And, quite rapidly, he demarcates from the other existentialists.

He then comes to the conclusion that philosophical pluralism is a rightist position. He clearly states that there can only be one philosophy for each given period, and that it is the one which is based on objective conditions. So, in his general philosophical approach, he had a materialist point of view. And this is what brings him to say that Marxism "is the philosophy of this era: we cannot go beyond it because the circumstances which have given rise to it are still present". (ed. note: Quoted from "Question de méthode" by Jean-Paul Sartre, our translation)

His criticism of Marxism is that at one point Marxism became hidebound. He illustrates what he means by the fol-

lowing example: beautiful designs were made for the subway of Budapest, but since the substratum of the city did not match the designs, the substratum was declared counter-revolutionary! This is a good example of Sartre's image of the Marxists of the time, that is, as dogmatic people who forget to analyse concrete situations and to draw appropriate conclusions. He claims that practice is going to become empirical and that theory is going to become dogmatic because theory has been cut from practice. That is why he believes that Marxists do not apply Marxism. This is where he introduces Freud's theories and sociology as useful tools, if situated in a Marxist perspective, to understand the role of the individual.

Here, we start touching Sartre's sore point. His concern about explaining the role of the individual in history is generally speaking a legitimate one. The criticisms he makes, not of Marxism, but of Marxists, are correct. In short, I would define Sartre as a materialist philosopher, who is in many respects dialectical, but who loses sight of the class point of view. His petty-bourgeois class position makes him grant so much attention to the question of the role of the individual in history, that he focuses on questions which are secondary in the present period.

He also states, "we believe that the

basic contradiction is only one of the factors which determine what is possible. What we should look into is rather the question of the choice that was made, for that is what brings to light its particularity and how it was experienced." This leads him to the conclusion that the choice that is made is the determining factor for it is the creative factor.

It is in this way that Sartre does not completely break away from subjective idealism. He demarcates from it to a certain extent by saying that men cannot be everywhere, but he still believes that man is the determining factor within a 100-mile range. The importance which he attributes to the individual's choice is linked to his class origin and position. He doesn't see that what is going to be decisive in regards to global changes are class actions, the actions of groups of men collectively, and not the actions of isolated individuals within a 100-mile radius.

**Claude:** It is no accident that we find hardly any reference to social classes in Sartre's work. For Sartre, what is most important is Man, and above all the individual. But he can't ignore Marxism. He can't ignore the lessons of history.

I believe that Sartre is not a Marxist. He never adhered to dialectical ma-

In May 1968, Jean-Paul Sartre protested the French government's decision to ban *La cause du peuple*, a Maoist newspaper. He put his words into practice by personally distributing the paper in the streets of Paris.





Jean-Paul Sartre in Cuba in 1960 and in Peking in 1955.



wanted to develop what we could call a philosophy of man, a sort of anthropological philosophy. It is the philosophy of the existentialists, suicide, despair, etc. In Sartre's novels we find all of this: prostitution, despair, suicide, lies. Hell is found in the others. Men devour men... In other words, human nature is such that men devour each other.

I think that Sartre was a progressive person who contributed in his own way to revolution, but who did it from the point of view of the petty bourgeoisie, without ever turning to the masses. He was a progressive intellectual who spoke to the petty bourgeoisie to tell the petty bourgeoisie that it is in its interest to make revolution, because he saw communism as a sort of humanism to which we should aspire.

**Gilles:** When I read Sartre, I found that he raised questions which communists no longer spoke about: the question of the relationship between the individual and the society, the question of the role of the individual in social history. In his early writings, he spends much time on a concept which I think is typically idealist, and that is the concept of freedom.

His concept of freedom refers to the individual's ability to choose his future, to choose what he wants to be, given the limits of his own existence. Again the question of freedom is seen from the point of view of the individual and his life, and not from the point of view of the role of the individual in history and how the individual can act upon an historical trend. If you speak to a person on welfare of the freedom he has to change his life right away, it does not mean very much! He can, of course, commit suicide, and that would change his life right away...

This concept of freedom does not help very much in the struggle, nor does it shed much light on reality. It does bring to light a small part of reality, which is usually neglected by materialists, all the questions of psychology and all the questions pertaining to life. On these questions, no one responded to Sartre from a materialist point of view. During his lifetime, no one brought these questions back into a perspective where class struggle becomes more than simply the context in which life develops. Because that's about what it boils down to for Sartre.

I would say that Sartre's philosophy is a philosophy of revolt but not a

revolutionary philosophy. It is up to the individual to revolt against the limits which his social class imposes on his life. It is always the individual which has to free himself. As a philosophy of revolt, Sartre's ideas were progressive for they pulled many people away from bourgeois ideology. But they did not bring people to adhere to a revolutionary ideology. It's as if he stayed in the middle.

I would describe Sartre as somewhat "counter-cultural". He opposes the dominating culture but does not show how class interests are at stake. This philosophy of revolt could very well have led to very anarchistic actions and individualism; to breaking with the dominating ideology only to assert oneself.

**Robert:** The more I think about it, the more it seems clear to me that Sartre can be counted among those men that have helped things move forward. He is among those who gave the final blow to religious idealism which was dominant at the time. He demarcated from philosophical pluralism and absurd subjective idealism. Also, on some scores,

he makes legitimate criticisms of Marxists. However, he cannot provide answers and when he tries, he falls into subjective idealism. I would say that, while his personal tendencies and class origins push him towards individualism, class struggle calls him to order regularly. But we must recognize that Sartre never really succeeded in breaking away from idealism. We could say that he represents the left fringe of subjective idealism. And subjective idealism is still the dominant ideology today.

**Claude:** I agree it is important to have a balanced viewpoint on Sartre but I'm not sure I agree with you all the way. When you say that Sartre's atheist existentialism is progressive as compared to the predominant ideology of the period, you in fact forget that Marxism exists and that it also struck hard at religious idealism. Sartre did not precede Marxism. The main aspect of his philosophy I think, is idealism.

**Gilles:** But we mustn't forget that, during Sartre's time, there were no longer any materialist philosophers who opposed the contemporary idealist philosophers. In that sense, Sartre was

in the vanguard because he fought bourgeois philosophy when no materialist philosophers were speaking up.

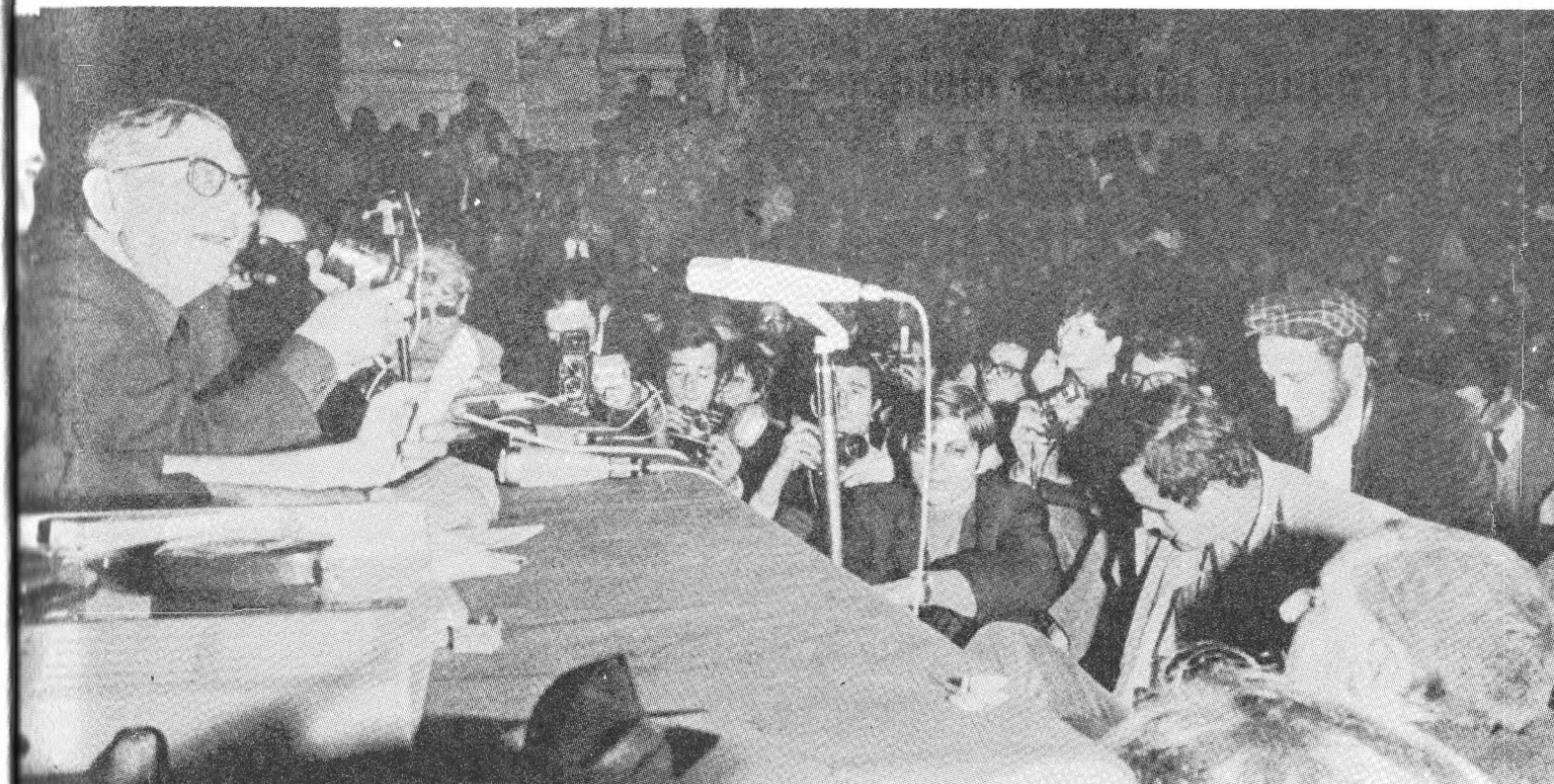
Nor must we forget that after the war, the Communist Party of France called upon the people to put down their weapons and to help rebuild capitalist France. It must have sounded rather strange to a progressive person. And you don't become materialist just by reading books. But in France at that time, there weren't any circles where you could have materialist debates. First, everyone was too busy with the war. Then, after the war, the French Communist Party began degenerating.

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### Postscript

The points of view presented above are in many ways in conflict with one another. The debate is therefore far from being over and we invite our readers to give us their points of view by writing to PROLETARIAN UNITY.

Jean-Paul Sartre with students at the Sorbonne in May 1968.



# What had become of the socialist camp by 1960?

At its last meeting, the Central Committee of IN STRUGGLE! reaffirmed its intention to pursue the struggle against revisionism, in conformity with the basic orientation decided upon by the Organization's Third Congress. If this struggle is to help us answer the questions raised by the revolutionary struggle today, we must turn to history and see what lessons it holds for us.

Few will deny that the stands defended and actions taken at a given time in the communist movement can only be fully and properly understood in the light of history and the prevailing conditions of the time. In analysing things from this point of view, it is not enough to simply compare quotations from Mao or Stalin with quotations from Marx or Lenin. We must also examine the conditions in which communists have struggled for socialism over the past fifty years and more. This is why articles aimed at making known and analysing the history of the international communist movement will be a major feature of the journal in the coming months.

The following article discusses an important event in the history of the communist movement: the November 1960 meeting in Moscow, attended by 81 communist parties. The statement that came out of this conference is of importance because it was the last document agreed upon by the communist movement as a whole. It was subsequently used as a basic reference point by all those who struggled against Soviet revisionism.

In November 1960, representatives of 18 communist and workers' parties met in Moscow for another conference of the international communist movement, which was then composed of 87 parties with 36 million members (according to the documents produced by the conference). This meeting followed that of 1957, which had brought together representatives of 68 parties. Thirteen of these parties came from countries in the socialist camp: Albania, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Korea, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, Vietnam and Yugoslavia. Except for the Yugoslav party, the parties of all these countries had signed the **Declaration of Twelve Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries** which was later endorsed by all the parties present.

The purpose of the 1960 meeting was the same as that of the previous meeting and the one held subsequently in 1969: to unify the communist movement. Important contradictions and differences were being openly displayed, especially since the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

(CPSU) in 1956. The 20th Congress was when Khrushchev, who had already consolidated his hold on the Soviet Party, launched his campaign to denigrate Stalin, under the cover of the struggle against "personality cults".

**An Albanian engraving depicting the November 30 Moscow Meeting of 81 communist and workers' parties.**



But 1956 was an important year for a number of reasons. In the fall of 1956, major unrest came to a head in both Poland and Hungary. Soviet troops played a hand in quelling the disturbances — most notably in Hungary — and in both cases new leaders took political power. 1956 was also the year the secretary-general of the Communist Party of Italy, Palmiro Togliatti, set out his theory of what was called "polycentrism". This theory in practice denied the unity of the international communist movement as it had existed since the founding of the Comintern. Finally, 1956 saw new and heightened differences between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and the emergence of differences between the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and China and Albania, on the other.

In fact, however, the lack of unity in the communist movement dated back to long before 1956. This division went far beyond the line debates that had always characterized the history of communist forces. There were acute contradictions in the movement that reflected contradictory interests. As early as 1948, there was the split

between the Yugoslav party and the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav party was condemned by the Cominform (Information Bureau) in June 1948, less than a year after the Cominform was created — in part for the express purpose of bringing the Soviet Union and the East European countries closer together. Indeed, the East European parties (with the exception of the Albanian party) were, along with the French and Italian parties, the only members of the Cominform. Later, after the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, it took nearly three months of discussion between Stalin and Mao Zedong (who went to Moscow) to work out agreements that satisfied both sides.

Before 1956, the contradictions in the socialist camp and the communist movement were perhaps satisfactorily resolved — and the condemnation of the Yugoslav party helped in part to preserve the unity of communist forces. But this was no longer the case after 1956. Meeting or conferences of the communist parties thus came to be seen as necessary means of rebuilding the unity which was under attack from all sides.

After lengthy preliminary discussions and sometimes stormy debates during the conference, the parties represented at Moscow in November 1960 finally managed to agree on a joint statement that was to constitute the "programme

of the international communist movement" at that time.

This statement (which we will refer to as the **1960 Statement**) is of considerable importance in the history of the communist movement.<sup>1</sup> It is the last document to which all the parties that came out of the Third International subscribed. It was also the document used by Marxist-Leninists, and notably the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA) and the Communist Party of China (CPC), as the basis for their struggle against revisionism in the 1960s. In its well-known **Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement**, the CPC stated that the documents of the 1957 and 1960 Moscow Meetings "are the common programme of the international communist movement".<sup>2</sup>

This was a somewhat surprising statement for the CPC to make, since the **Proposal Concerning the General Line...** was in many ways a criticism of the **1960 Statement**. But the whole period of the 1960s in the history of the international communist movement needs to be examined more attentively at some point. This was the period when Marxist-Leninists undertook to demarcate from the revisionist positions of the CPSU and the majority of communist parties. As closer study will show, however, this demarcation was only partial on many points.

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The **1960 Statement** certainly helped preserve the illusion of the unity of the communist movement. In practice, it prolonged the agony for the communist forces which had originally been organized on Leninist principles when the Comintern was founded in 1918. The **1960 Statement** was already profoundly marred by revisionist points of view.

But if this was the case, why couldn't the political unity of the parties that participated in the 1960 Moscow Meeting be rebuilt? Why were the contents of the statement that came out of the meeting foreign to the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat on several basic issues? Basically, we think the reason the communist movement was unable to rebuild its unity in 1960 was that the parties belonging to it represented increasingly divergent interests. We also think that the deviations in the **1960 Statement** reflect the

1. This text was published in full in *La nouvelle revue internationale*, Paris, no. 12, December 1960, pp. 157—203. This and all other passages quoted are translated by us from the French.
2. *A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement: The letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in reply to the letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of March 30, 1963*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1973, p. 3.

**1956 was an important year in more ways than one. New leaders took political power in Hungary and Poland. Below: Soviet troops invade Hungary.**



fact that the Moscow Meeting was dominated by political forces that did not represent the interests of the revolutionary proletariat.

### The programme contained in the 1960 Statement was not a communist programme

Essentially, the 1960 Statement said: the balance of power between the imperialist camp and the socialist camp is increasingly favourable to the socialist camp; consequently, it is both possible and necessary to envisage new kinds of transitions to socialism. To put it another way, the 1960 Statement affirmed that the trend towards socialism had progressed far enough in 1960 to permit and even justify a new outlook on socialist revolution. This was a key affirmation, because it assumed that the international situation in 1960 was qualitatively different from the pre-war situation, for example. This questionable analysis of the prevailing situation cleared the way for all kinds of deviations from the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the lessons previously accumulated in the struggle for socialism.

The 1960 Statement was divided into six major sections. The first section reiterated that we live in the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism. The world was characterized in 1960 by the opposition between the imperialist camp in decline and the steadily progressing socialist camp. Imperialism, dominated by the United States, threatened the world with another war. The socialist camp was the leading defender of world peace.

In the second section, the 1960 Statement reviewed the extraordinary progress made by the socialist camp since October 1917. It said that the U.S.S.R. had already arrived at the stage of building communism. The socialist camp as a whole was in the process of overtaking and surpassing the imperialist camp in terms of economic development, a phenomenon which aroused growing interest among the proletariat and peoples of the world. This new situation, brought about by a socialist camp getting stronger and stronger, meant that it was possible to

use new methods and means to make socialism triumph on a world scale.

The third section of the Statement was entirely taken up with the problem of war and peace, described as "the most burning issue of our time". Capitalism leads to war and the United States was trying to control the entire world. Imperialism wanted to destroy socialism. The peoples, however, wanted peace. The U.S.S.R., the socialist countries and the forces for peace around the world could win out against imperialism and prevent the outbreak of another world war. So it was very much in the interest of the peoples of the world, who wanted continued peace, to strengthen the socialist camp, inasmuch as this camp applied the principle of peaceful coexistence and fought for world disarmament.

The fourth section dealt with national liberation struggles. There were more and more of these struggles in the oppressed regions of the world and colonialism was headed for total defeat. These struggles developed in the wake of the October 1917 Revolution. They were the doing of all the anti-colonial forces, including the bourgeoisies that were not tied to imperialism, and the main problem with which they were confronted was how to solve the land question correctly. The path chosen by the liberated peoples was their own internal affair. The masses in newly independent countries wanted "non-capitalist development". The situation in these countries in 1960 encouraged the emergence of "independent States of national democracy". The communist parties in these countries were struggling for "the successful conclusion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic revolution and the creation of States of national democracy".

The fifth section set out the historic tasks of communist and workers' parties, especially in the developed capitalist countries. These tasks were "the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism". The tasks of the communists were determined by the prevailing historical and social conditions, and more particularly the situation in their respective countries. The Statement said that in the non-European capitalist countries dominated by the United States, the monopolies were the main target of the struggle. In these countries, "the working class and the popular masses must aim their main blow at the domination

DOCUMENT DU MOUVEMENT COMMUNISTE INTERNATIONAL 50.25

## propositions concernant la ligne du mouvement communiste international

connue sous le titre: lettre en 25 points

réponse du comité central du parti communiste chinois à la lettre du 30 mars 1963 du comité central du parti communiste d'union soviétique 14 juin 1963

LIBRAIRIE PROGRESSIVISTE  
Montréal

### The Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement was in many respects a criticism of the Statement that came out of the Moscow Meeting.

of U.S. imperialism and at monopoly capital and the other domestic forces of reaction that betray the interests of the nation". Thus the struggle united the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie. To succeed, it was essential to unite trade-union forces and mass movements. Communists should condemn right-wing social-democratic leadership, but unite with the "masses of the social democrats". They were opposed to "exporting revolution" and hoped to make revolution peacefully. Conditions had now made peaceful revolution possible.

The sixth and final section of the 1960 Statement expanded on the affirmation that "the world communist movement has become the most influential political force of our era". The communist movement was engaged in a struggle against modern revisionism. It had already won some victories, including the condemnation of Yugoslav opportunism with its pretensions of remaining outside the "blocs", of remaining aloof from the worldwide struggle between the two camps. In its struggle against opportunism and revisionism, the movement remained conscious of the danger of dogmatism and sectarianism, and strove to preserve its unity. Although the parties were all equals and co-operated and settled differences through discussions among their leaders, the CPSU was and would continue to be the vanguard of the struggle of the world proletariat.

Marxism-Leninism was still the great and universal doctrine of revolution.

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Quite apart from the fact that the 1960 Statement analysed the international balance of power in a way that later proved to be thoroughly wrong, the statement issued by the Moscow Meeting said a number of things that were deviations from Marxism-Leninism and any truly revolutionary strategy. Further on, we will try to explain why the Statement analysed the contemporary situation in the way it did. But first, let's examine some aspects of this document that are utterly incompatible with any coherent strategy and tactics for the struggle for socialism.

From this point of view, the most striking aspect of the Statement is its emphasis on peace. This is a basic concern running throughout the entire Statement: the most important thing for the proletariat and peoples of the world is to prevent the imperialist powers, and notably the United States, from unleashing another major war. The danger is even greater, according to the Statement, because nuclear weapons can cause a degree of destruction unprecedented in human history.

It is true that the peoples of the world want peace; but from a revolutionary point of view, was it correct to put the fight for peace ahead of the proletariat's struggles to improve its living conditions and, beyond that, to overthrow the rule of Capital? The Statement's answer would have to be yes, if the arguments put forward in it are taken to their logical conclusion. Peace was to provide the necessary conditions for the development of the socialist camp, which was to be the main factor in causing the peoples of the world to put an end to capitalist exploitation.

This raises a second aspect of the Statement, namely the new possibilities of a peaceful path to socialism. It is rather astonishing to see this asserted when elsewhere the same text says that imperialism, and more especially U.S. imperialism, betrays a growing desire to dominate the world and establish its hegemony. How was it possible to think that the peoples of the world could achieve socialism peacefully when at the same time one said that the forces of the imperialist camp were seeking more and more aggressively to strengthen their hold on the non-socialist world,

and indeed to destroy the socialist world that then accounted for one-third of humanity?

This point of view on the peaceful transition to socialism is certainly not unrelated to the Statement's suggestion that the socialist camp will prove its superiority over capitalism through economic competition. This belittles and subordinates the fundamentally political nature of the revolutionary struggle. It is a clear expression of what has been called the "theory of productive forces". The 1960 Statement makes socialist revolution seem to be little more than the near automatic result of the general development — and more especially the economic development — of the socialist camp. But this "theory" ignores one very important fact, namely that in and after 1960, economic development — the development of the

productive forces — in the capitalist countries remained wholly in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The transition to socialism is only possible if the proletariat takes political power, and this is precisely what the proletarian revolution is: the overthrow of bourgeois State power so as to establish a political system that uses the productive forces in the interests of the majority instead of for the benefit of monopolies and Capital in general.

Real confusion sets in when the 1960 Statement turns to the question of national liberation struggles. It is true that the movement of national liberation had made extraordinary progress since World War Two; but what in fact was this new kind of economic development that the Statement termed "non-capitalist development"? And what exactly was this new kind of

1960 was also a year of mounting national liberation struggles in the colonies. Above: a bombing by the National Liberation Front in Algeria.



political system that the Statement called the "State of national democracy"? These confused and ambiguous phrases are all the more astonishing since the same Statement once again condemned Yugoslavia for advocating the development of the newly-independent countries outside the framework of the two blocs, the two camps. The position of the Yugoslav communists could seem to have something in common with the stand taken in the Statement, inasmuch as they both called for a new kind of development that would be neither capitalist nor socialist.

There is a similar ambiguity in the Statement's discussion of the struggle of the proletariat in the capitalist countries. Although it reaffirmed the fundamental contradiction between Capital and Labour, the Statement put more emphasis on another contradiction — the contradiction between non-monopoly forces and monopoly capitalists. The entire strategy and tactics of communists in the capitalist countries was to be oriented in terms of this second contradiction, instead of being shaped by what was still described as the fundamental contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

This all adds up to an over-all line. The 1960 Statement said that in both the oppressed and the advanced capitalist countries, the struggle was carried out between, on the one hand, a set of social classes and segments of classes embracing the peasantry and the proletariat as well as the non-monopoly bourgeoisie; and, on the other hand, the big monopolies, and in particular U.S. imperialism.

The big monopolies were to all intents and purposes presented as the main enemy of the proletariat and the peoples in the capitalist countries (and it was implicit in the Statement that they were also the main enemies of the peoples of the oppressed countries). Yet one of the demands of communists in the advanced countries was supposed to be the nationalization of "the leading sectors of the economy" — and such nationalizations can only result in the creation of State monopolies. And monopolies, whether privately-owned or nationalized, are still one of the pillars of the domination of the bourgeoisie.

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As we have already mentioned, the 1960 Statement presented this programme as a correct application of Marxism-Leninism to new conditions that were largely a result of the strengthening of the socialist camp and the weakening and impending downfall of the imperialist camp. In the light of what has happened in the twenty years since the 1960 Statement, such an analysis seems incomprehensible. Did communists simply misjudge the balance of forces in 1960, and on the basis of this erroneous analysis develop a programme doomed to failure?

It is entirely possible, and even probable, that many communists were in fact misled by the line put forward at the 1960 Meeting. But the content of the 1960 Statement itself cannot be explained away as a mere mistake, for it corresponds to clearly identifiable class interests. Like all ideologies throughout history, the political line adopted at the 1960 Meeting must be taken as the expression of the interests of a given class at a given point in time. Basically, the 1960 Statement was an expression of the interests of the ruling class in the Soviet Union rather than the interests of the political forces that made up the communist movement at that time.

### The political programme in the 1960 Statement was the political programme of the ruling class in the Soviet Union

The revisionism of the CPSU has been criticized on many occasions since the early 1950s. The **Proposal Concerning the General Line...** was undoubtedly the clearest statement of the major criticisms that were subsequently made of the basic positions the Soviet Union had begun to defend openly after the CPSU's 20th Congress. The **Proposal Concerning the General Line...** criticized the Soviet Union's erroneous positions very rigorously on the questions of war, the struggle for proletarian power and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Nor have Marxist-Leninists contented themselves with criticizing the CPSU's line errors. Since the beginning of the 1960s, they have also extensively condemned the fascist and imperialist behaviour of the Soviet Union.

Criticisms of the CPSU have often

reproached that party with failing to respect the programme defined by the 1960 Moscow Meeting. In our opinion, however, the Soviet Union's behaviour in the past twenty years is perfectly consistent with the 1960 Statement. This becomes clearer if we review some recent history and try to understand what the socialist camp had become in practice by the time of the 1960 Meeting. In looking at this historical situation, it should be kept in mind that from a Marxist point of view, all ideologies are an expression of the positions of social forces, of class interests, and a critical analysis of any ideology must try to identify these underlying social forces and class interests.

This leads us to criticize the way modern revisionism has usually been analysed in the past, as well as the explanation put forward for the capitalist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the East European countries, and more recently of China. Most of these analyses have been attempts to identify the stands taken by the parties in these countries that were distortions of or foreign to Marxism-Leninism. These stands were then presented as the decisive causes of revisionist degeneration and the restoration of capitalism. Needless to say, this kind of analysis is the very opposite of a Marxist analysis. One of Marx's major contributions to the understanding of the history of

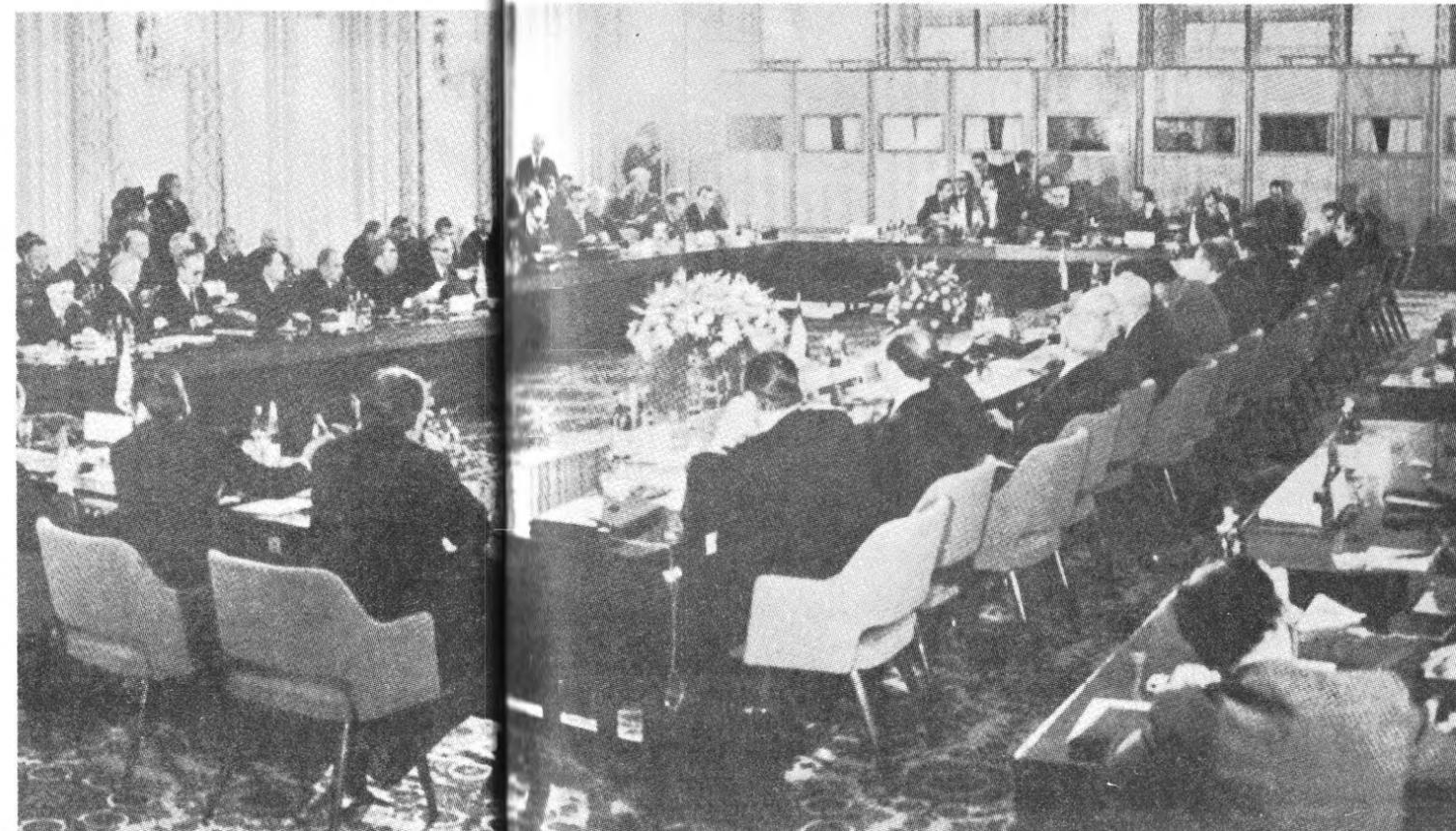
society was precisely to show how the predominant ideas in history have been the ideas that best reflected the interests of the ruling classes in the various class societies in the past. There is no reason for abandoning the point of view of historical materialism when it comes to analysing the evolution of socialist societies. Saying this implies, of course, that socialist society is class society, and this is indeed what Marxism-Leninism says: socialism is the period of transition between capitalism and communism, and during this transitional period the class struggle continues. It continues for the very simple reason that the material conditions for the abolition of classes have not yet been satisfied; and until these conditions are satisfied, classes will not disappear.

One of the major obstacles to a scientific analysis and understanding of modern revisionism is that the study of the evolution of socialist societies has usually been limited to a study of the stands taken by the communist parties in socialist countries, classifying them as correct or incorrect solely on the basis of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism. But neither Marx

nor Lenin nor any other communist leader ever claimed that Marxism-Leninism was a catalogue of rigid principles to be applied mechanically in any and all situations. On the contrary, Marxism-Leninism is a scientific doctrine that enables us to understand class contradictions and use this understanding to put forward a perspective for resolving these contradictions so as to advance the proletarian revolution.

So far, much effort has been put into denouncing theoretical errors — Tito's, or Khrushchev's, or even Stalin's or Mao's. But there has been very little study of the prevailing balance of forces on a world scale and in the various countries where there was an on-going struggle for socialism. It is almost as if Marx and Engels had analysed the 1848 and 1870 revolutions in Europe for the sole purpose of determining whether or not the parties involved in these bourgeois revolutions applied the slogans of "liberty, equality and fraternity" proclaimed by the bourgeois thinkers of the 18th century. As everyone knows, however, Marx and Engels never studied the social revolutions of their time in this way.

The Warsaw Pact gradually became an instrument to further the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union. Below: A conference of the Political Committee of the States belonging to the Warsaw Pact, November 22, 1978.



Going beyond the stands taken by the parties that led the socialist revolutions and studying the degeneration of the socialist countries in the light of the class relations that lay at the source of the development of these societies does not mean that one rejects the importance of the parties' line and political decisions. It does mean putting them in a proper perspective. It means situating them in terms of the objective, concrete limits that determine the scope of their real impact and significance.

### In 1960, the socialist camp had in practice become the camp of a new, hegemonic power — the U.S.S.R.

The socialist camp emerged at the end of World War Two, when communist and workers' parties took power in the countries of Eastern Europe. They did so in most cases with the help of the Soviet Red Army, although they had already been waging the struggle for many years. In the following ten years, this camp grew with the additions of China, Korea and Vietnam.

The socialist camp revolved around the Soviet Union, a socialist country since the October 1917 Revolution. It had made huge progress in its economic and social development, especially during the 1930s.

World War Two was extremely costly in social and economic terms for the Soviet Union, which in practice led the fight against fascism. The country nevertheless remained relatively powerful, thanks to the development of its industry and work force in the previous fifteen years.

In contrast, all the countries that were to join the Soviet Union in the socialist camp were relatively backward — i.e. non-industrialized — countries. China, for example, was an overwhelmingly (90%) agricultural country, as were Korea and Vietnam. The East European countries were also fairly backward in 1945. In other words, at the outset, the socialist camp was composed of one industrialized and relatively powerful country with experience in building socialism, industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture, and a series of relatively



**Egypt's President Nasser in the streets of Cairo. All through the 1960s, his name was closely associated with national liberation movements around the world.**

backward countries that had barely gotten rid of very reactionary political regimes, countries that had never experienced democracy.

This meant that there were already the material bases of important contradictions between the two major components of the socialist camp — the industrialized part (the Soviet Union) and the backward, agricultural part (Eastern Europe and the Asian countries). As we saw earlier, these contradictions soon became evident. By the end of the 1940s, Yugoslavia was already very reticent about what it identified as the Soviet Union's domination of the other countries in the socialist camp. Contradictions surfaced on several other occasions in the following years, and notably from 1956 on through to the end of the 1950s. These contradictions, which included military manoeuvres in Hungary and Poland in 1956, eventually led to the break in relations between the U.S.S.R., on the one hand, and China and Albania, on the other hand. This break put an end to all Soviet aid to these two countries, both of which were much less industrialized.

The internal situation in the socialist camp can hardly be explained solely by the political errors and deviations of Tito in Yugoslavia, Gomulka in Poland, Kadar in Hungary, Khrushchev in the Soviet Union, Liu Shaoqi in China, and so on. Reality is much more complicated. The socialist camp did not develop in a vacuum. Right after World War Two, the newly-created socialist camp was the target of concerted attacks by all the imperialist forces, which tried not only to prevent the proletariat from winning further

victories but also to reverse the victories it had already won.

Imperialism's multiple attacks on the socialist camp and revolutionary forces in general after World War Two are common knowledge, and we will not list them in detail here. There were, for instance, imperialism's manoeuvres in the European countries to get rid of the communists in the governments of France, Belgium and other countries; the imperialist offensive against the Greek communists, who were on the verge of taking power in their country at the end of the 1940s; all U.S. imperialism's incursions into Latin America and Asia in the 1950s...

The 1950s were the years of the Cold War, a determined and intensive struggle by imperialism to keep the influence of the socialist camp to a minimum and weaken it from within. The 1950s were also the years of McCarthyism — an unprecedented campaign of propaganda against progressive and revolutionary forces — in nearly all the imperialist countries.

The international situation was thus one of an all-out imperialist struggle against the camp of socialism and of communism. Linked to conditions within the socialist camp itself, this provides the material basis for understanding how and why the socialist camp degenerated and how the bourgeois forces were able to win out over the forces of revolution.

At a time when imperialism was doing its best to hinder the development of the socialist camp in every way imaginable, the socialist camp was experiencing considerable internal difficulties. As we have already mentioned, all the countries in the socialist camp with the exception of the Soviet Union were largely agricultural and relatively unindustrialized countries. And while the Soviet Union was industrialized, it still had a long way to go to catch up with the most advanced imperialist countries. The living conditions of the masses of the Soviet people were in many ways inferior to living conditions in the most advanced countries.

The situation was certainly ripe for serious clashes between the upholders of socialist development and the defenders of capitalist development.

What happened was that, as a result of the Soviet Union's drive for a level of economic and military development comparable and indeed superior to that

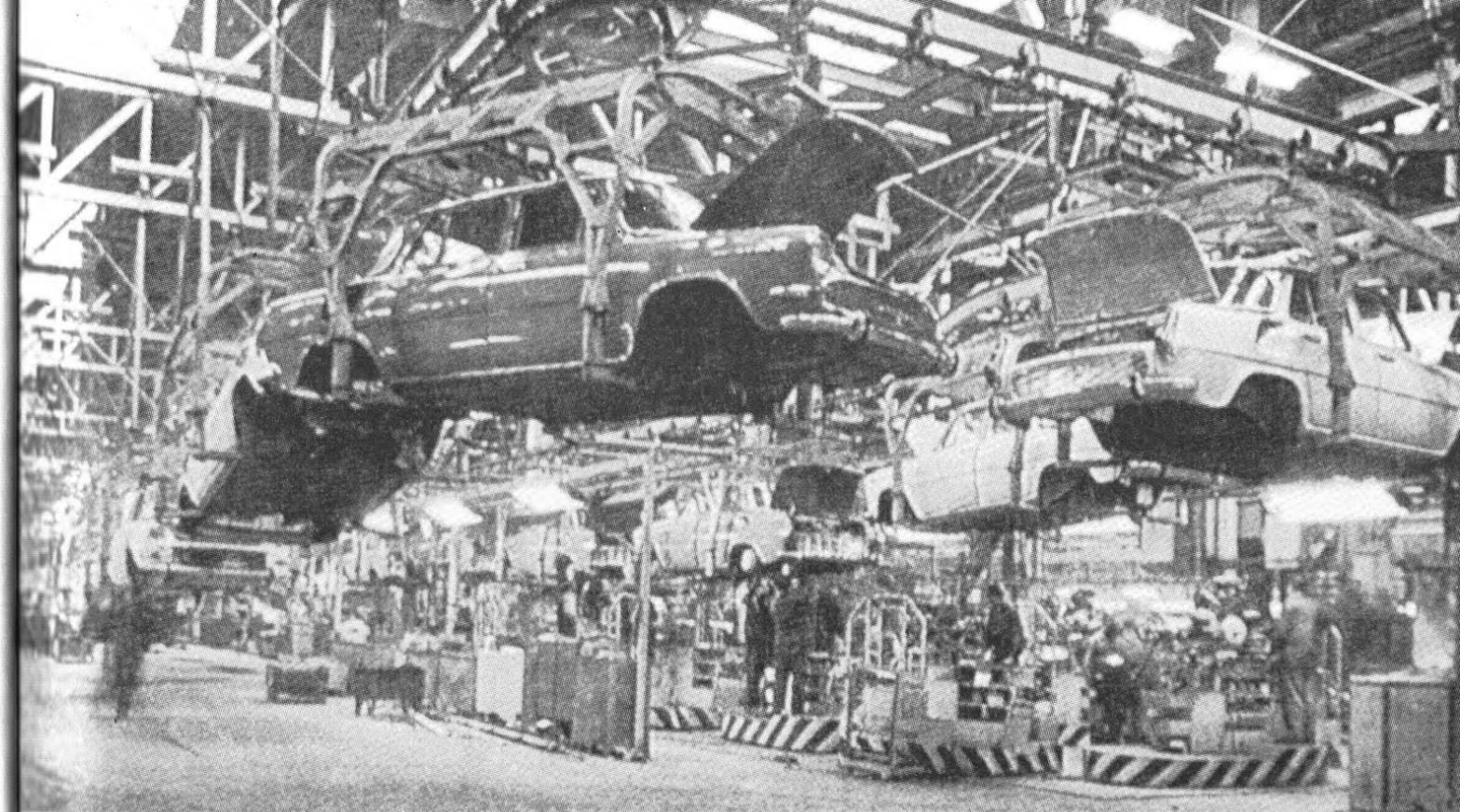
of the imperialist countries, it gradually came to define the interests of the socialist camp in terms of its own interests as a developing power.

Unequal development is generally the starting point for even greater inequalities. This rule of class society proved to hold true for the socialist camp as well. It was not long before the Soviet Union used the Warsaw Pact (concluded in 1955) and the COMECON (an economic agreement dating from 1949) more to serve its own interests than to harmonize the efforts of the various countries in the socialist camp in Eastern Europe. This was the main source of the contradictions that developed in the socialist camp during the 1950s.

This brief review of the concrete situation in the socialist camp and the international balance of forces at the time should help us better understand the programme contained in the **1960 Statement**. It brings out the realities underlying the various superficially Marxist-Leninist phrasings in this Statement.

The first aspect of the **1960 Statement** that calls for such explanation is the assertion that the socialist camp was developing steadily and to such an extent that it would eventually be more powerful than the imperialist camp. This assertion was based on the fact that the Soviet Union was in fact rivaling and in some regards surpassing the development of the Western imperialist powers. But in its efforts to surpass the imperialist powers, the Soviet Union was in urgent need of the unity of the countries of the socialist camp to ensure that it enjoyed an adequate market, diverse natural resources and total control of a series of countries of strategic importance in case of conflict with the Western powers.

In this light, it is easier to understand why the 1960 Statement attached so much importance to economic competition and peaceful coexistence. It was necessary to convince the communist movement and progressive forces that the economic development of the socialist camp was henceforth the decisive factor in the victory of what was still called socialism, but which was rather the victory of the U.S.S.R. itself over the Western imperialist powers. The Soviet Union needed economic development, and to develop it needed a relatively long period of peace, free of the



burden of military efforts like the Soviet war effort in World War Two.

Hence the **1960 Statement's** insistence on the struggle for peace, economic competition and peaceful coexistence. On the basis of these priorities, revolutionary struggles elsewhere in the world were reduced to struggles for reforms. In the former colonies, for instance, the **1960 Statement** assigned the communist movement the objectives of "non-capitalist development" — a meaningless phrase, strictly speaking — and a State of national democracy, a State that is hard to distinguish from the old-style bourgeois States.

In the advanced capitalist countries, the struggle of the working class was confined to the struggle for peace, of course, and the struggle for democracy and against monopolies, especially U.S.

**COMECON has become an economic union whose purpose is to serve the imperialist interest of the U.S.S.R.**

monopolies. This tactic served quite evident purposes. The United States was the main enemy of the Soviet Union in its aspiration for hegemony, the result of its emphasis on unlimited economic development. If the international proletariat were to unite in a struggle against U.S. monopolies, if the proletariat everywhere were to demand the nationalization of foreign, and especially U.S., monopolies, it would most certainly be a blow for U.S. imperialism, even if imperialism as a whole was not weakened.

In other words, the fundamental positions put forward in the **1960 Statement** were an expression of the interests of the Soviet Union in its struggle to become a great power and to weaken to

hegemonic position of U.S. imperialism. It sought to do so by directing the struggle of the proletariat and progressive forces in all countries against U.S. imperialism, presented as the chief instigator of war. It tried to pry away the former colonies from U.S. imperialism, which for its part was certainly striving relentlessly to gain and keep control of the colonies.

This is why it is correct to say that the **1960 Statement** was the programme of a new, developing power, not the programme of the international proletarian forces. What remains to be seen is how the socialist Soviet Union turned into a capitalist and imperialist country.

C. Gagnon

May 10, 1980

## Available at L'Étincelle and The Spark bookstores

- **Beat Back the Dogmato-Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought**, Theoretical journal *The Communist*, Number 5, May 1979, RCP Publications, \$2.50: reply to Hoxha's **Imperialism and Revolution**.

- **With Stalin, Memoirs**, E. Hoxha, Editions "8 Nentori", \$4.90

- **Introduction à l'oeuvre théorique de Staline**, Vol. 1, Introduction and choice of texts by H. Desbrousses, P. Vilar & B. Peloille, Editions Norman Bethune, \$10.80 (available in French only)

- **Visage de l'Albanie**, Editions "8 Nentori", \$6.80

## Fifth volume of Stalin's Works published

Editions NBE has just published the fifth volume of Stalin's *Works*, covering the period 1921-1923.<sup>1</sup>

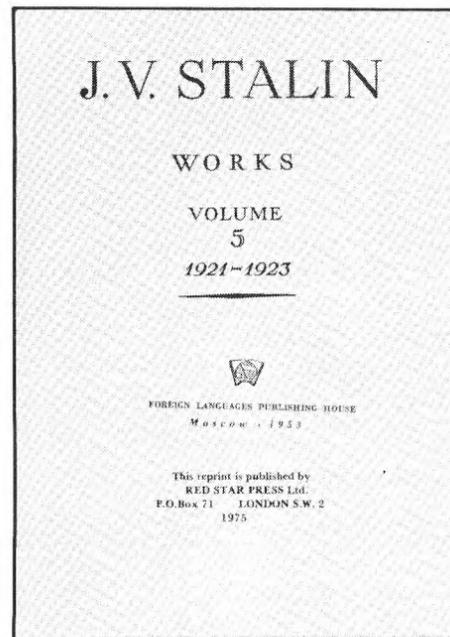
Volume 5 includes three basic kinds of articles: those dealing with the problems raised by the NEP (New Economic Policy), particularly by the new forms of the worker-peasant alliance; those dealing with Party life and its links with the masses; and those devoted to the national question.

Of particular interest are Stalin's articles on the national question in the Soviet Union during the first period of socialist construction. The national question was a central topic of the Xth and XIIth Congresses of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolshevik). The *Theses to the Xth Congress (The Party's immediate tasks in relation to the national question)* and Stalin's report to the same congress (vol. 5, pp. 38 and following) are a rigorous analysis of the development of the national question through the historical period from the formation of nation-States (emerging capitalism) through to the triumph of socialist revolution in a multi-national State like the Soviet Union.

## Pélagie-la-Charette by Antonine Maillet

### Deportation does not put an end to a nation

"*Pélagie-la-Charette*", the novel by the Acadian writer Antonine Maillet who won the Prix Goncourt, the most prestigious literary award in France, for 1979, was much talked about in literary



For the XIIth Congress (1923), Stalin wrote theses on *National factors in the organization of the Party and the State* (pp. 159 and following). The theses indicate how in building socialism it is essential to apply **in practice** the principle of the equality of languages and nations. The task is to progress from legal equality to full and complete equality in all aspects of social and economic activity, to "abolish all vestiges of national oppression and colonial slavery" so that the Russian proletariat can contribute "through effective and lasting

circles as well as in the population in general, both in Canada and abroad.

The publicity for this novel came at a very particular moment. It came at a time when the country was undergoing a political crisis and the Acadian question was increasingly present on the political scene (the 375th Anniversary of Acadia, the Acadian Orientation Convention, the Third Convention of the Parti acadien, etc.).

So probably independently of the author's own will, this novel took on a special political significance which it might not have had if it had been

aid, to the economic and cultural progress of the backward peoples of the Union". (p. 164)

Stalin's theses — which were adopted by the Xth and XIIth Congresses — are of interest because they link the legal equality of nations (and their voluntary co-operation in a multi-national State) to the Party's political tasks (the struggle against Great-Russian chauvinism) and the immediate improvement of the living conditions of the masses of the backward nations.

Besides improving our understanding of concrete conditions in the Soviet Union in the early 1920s, this volume provides communists and progressive people everywhere with clear indications on how to correctly understand and resolve the national question, both in the colonies and semi-colonies and in capitalist and revisionist countries. This volume also acquaints us with some relatively unknown texts by Stalin that contribute to our knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question.

**Volume 5 of Stalin's Works is available (in French) at l'Étincelle and Spark bookstores.**

1. Stalin. *Oeuvres (1921-1923)*, vol. 5, NBE, Paris, 1980. Volume 5 of Stalin's *Works* has been published in English by Red Star Press. However, the titles and passages quoted have been translated by us from the French, and the page numbers refer to the French edition.

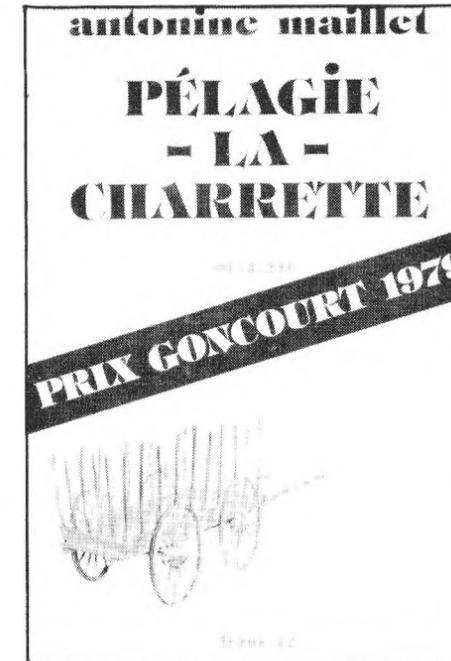
published at another moment. Antonine Maillet was a guest of politicians in Quebec, Ottawa and New Brunswick who were all equally anxious to make her work theirs.

*Pélagie-la-Charette* is the story of an Acadian woman who was deported along with her brothers and sisters in 1755 to Georgia in the United States. This woman, filled with the image of her country, decides after 15 years of exile to take her wagon and lead her "people" from the South of the U.S. to Acadia to settle there once again and thus settle accounts with history. The

author brings us right into the colourful and intense epic of the struggle of a people against annihilation. She describes the long journey of the procession of wagons which joined Pelagie each time she passed through a new American state.

This march back to their homeland is obviously not an easy one. It is spread over a period of ten years, from 1770 to 1780. During these ten years, Pelagie and her kin have to face terrible conditions. Nevertheless, they see their way through these difficult times thanks to the ingenuity of each member of the procession. The author and God seem to have given them this ingenuity to make up for everything they lost by being deported and as a guarantee that they will inevitably be victorious one day or another. But it is mainly because of Pelagie's unswayable determination that this "small people" succeeds in overcoming obstacles at each turn of the road. Even the Death wagon of Belonie-le-Vieux, the patriarch of the clan who lost his entire family the night of the Deportation, does not frighten Pelagie. She never hesitates to go out of her way to save Acadian families in some backward corner of a southern state. In the struggle to convince her kin not to give up halfway, she is always the winner.

In the end, Pelagie won: her people went back to Acadia, even if they went in "by the back door and on tiptoe". To do this, she sacrificed her love for Captain Beausoleil, the valorous son of Acadia who heroically, almost miraculously, succeeded in seizing one of the grim ships of the British navy in the middle of the night during the Deportation, and who has since then dedicated his time and energy to saving his people. But Pelagie also sacrificed her life for her dream of finding her native fields in bloom. But when she arrived, they had been burnt to the ground and were surrounded by villages permanently occupied by the English. Nevertheless, Pelagie left her mark. Her daughter, Madeleine, continued her work by cutting down a tree to



provide a shelter for her family when the cart people dispersed throughout the country. As the epilogue of the novel points out, the fruits of her work only began to appear over a century later when we once again heard the breath of Acadia, whose people had hidden away in the woods, trying not to awaken the sleeping bear (English colonialism). "Wait as long as need be," she had said.

Antonine Maillet certainly knows how to make very good use of the context of her novel to present the real historical character of the struggle of the Acadian people. This historical perspective is very different from that which has been presented until very recently by the local religious elites. For example, the wagons arrived in Philadelphia when the bells of American independence began ringing over the city in 1776. As they happened to cross a battlefield, two figures in the novel become involved in the battle and join the anti-colonial forces. In Boston, the cart people came to blows with the loyalists. When they succeed in freeing another Acadian who is chained to a

Black man in the slave-market, they also free the Black man and welcome him in their ranks. When they arrive in Acadia, they meet an Indian from the Mic Mac tribe and help him out, etc...

The form of the novel is perhaps not what we would have liked to see. It is not a realistic novel and the author has not tried to give an accurate and precise picture of historical truth. The figures in the novel do not represent classes or specific tendencies. We are sometimes led to wonder — more so for some figures than for other — whether they are motivated by personal passion or by historic trends.

Instead, the author has chosen a style which is very close to the rich Acadian oral tradition, in which tales of fantasy, adapted to actual history, play an important part. This undoubtedly gives the novel particular charm. As a matter of fact, the richness of the style is perhaps what strikes us most on first reading. However, on closer examination, we realize that this style is sometimes at the expense of the greater historical depth of the novel. Captain Beausoleil is probably the most glaring example of this. Throughout the description of his feats — for example when he risks his life to pull Pelagie's wagon out of the Salem swamp — the reader spontaneously shares the cart people's hope that the captain will be saved. It is a very natural sympathy for a just cause which arises among men of good will. But the form the author has chosen to use prevents this natural sympathy from developing into conscious support, into fraternity which has its roots in the understanding of the historical accuracy of the cause of the Acadian people.

Nevertheless, to conclude, we consider *Pélagie-la-Charette* to be much better than most of what is published today in the name of literature. *Pélagie-la-Charette* takes a clear stand in favour of the struggle of the Acadian people. This is enough reason to recommend that all read this novel.

1. Antonine Maillet, *Pélagie-la-Charette*, Editions Leméac, Montréal, 1979.

## Available at L'Étincelle and The Spark bookstores

### Now available

- **Inside the Company, CIA Diary**, P. Agee, Penguin Books, \$2.95
- **Nouveau guide du militant**, D. Langlois, Editions du Seuil, \$5.95
- **The Forces Which Shaped Them**, M. Ashworth, New Star Books, \$6.50. History of the education of minority group children in British Columbia.
- **Histoire de la Commune de 1871**, P.-O. Lissagaray, Petite collection Maspéro, \$8.50: Important history of the Paris Commune written by a man who fought for the Commune.
- **Unequal Union**, S.B. Ryerson, Progress Books, 1968
- **Gaz Métropolitain, inc. et le Parti québécois... la souveraineté-association à l'oeuvre**, Regroupement pour le gel des loyers, \$1.00
- **Nuclear Power**, W.C. Patterson, Pelican Books, \$3.50, In a single paperback all the basic technical information needed for a real debate.
- **The magic and Deadly Dust, Asbestos and Your Health**, Ontario Public Interest Research Group, \$1.50
- **Work is dangerous to your health**, J.M. Stellman and S.M. Daum, Vintage Books, \$4.95: A handbook of health hazards in the workplace and what you can do about them.
- **Women's Work, Women Health; Myths and Realities**, J.M. Stellman, Pantheon Books, \$4.95
- **Sahara Occidental: la lutte d'un peuple**, rencontre et développement, \$3.50
- **Poèmes, Lettres, Ecrits de prison**, Saida Menebhi, Comités de lutte contre la répression au Maroc, \$4.50: testimonies by Saida Menebhi, who died during a hunger strike in the prisons of Morocco. (Available in French only)
- **Black Cargoes**, D.P. Mannix & M. Cowley, Penguin Books, \$3.95, A history of the Atlantic Slave trade.
- **Black Bolshevik**, H. Haywood, Liberator Press, \$7.15, Autobiography of an Afro-American communist.

### Novels, essays and art

- **Adieu, p'tit Chipagan**, L. Haché, Editions d'Acadie, \$5.00
- **Pour sortir de nos cages**, G. Raymond, Les Gens d'En

Bas, \$5.00

- **L'affrontement**, H. Lamoureux, Editions du jour, \$4.50
- **Sans parachute**, D. Fennario, Parti Pris, \$8.95
- **La révolte vient de loin**, C. Tillon, Union Générale d'éditions, \$7.70
- **Les tambours de la pluie**, I. Kadaré, Folio \$4.95
- **Alone**, N. Virta, Red Star Press, \$4.55: a revolutionary novel
- **How the Steel Was Tempered**, N. Ostrovsky, Red Star Press, \$5.00; a revolutionary novel
- **Barricades in Berlin**, K. Neukrantz, Banner Press, \$3.60: Berlin workers' battle to march through the streets on May Day 1929
- **Le Mexique insurgé**, J. Reed, Petite collection Maspéro, \$8.50: history of Mexico
- **Petit organon pour le théâtre**, followed by *Additifs au Petit organon*, B. Brecht, L'Arche, \$6.75 (available in French only)
- **L'achat du cuivre**, B. Brecht, L'Arche, \$6.75
- **Théâtre complet**, Tome I, B. Brecht, L'Arche, special price: \$4.00
- **The Necessity of Art**, E. Fisher, Penguin Books, \$4.95: A Marxist approach to art

### Records

- **Willie Dunn**, W. Dunn, White Roots of Peace, \$6.95
- **Through Arawak Eyes**, D. Campbell, DEC, \$5.50 (the song book is available for \$2.50)

### Native peoples and their struggles

- **The People's land**, H. Brody, Pelican Books, \$3.50: Inuits and the white man in the Eastern Arctic.
- **Dene Nation the Colony Within**, edited by M. Watkins, University of Toronto Press, \$5.95
- **Destins d'Amérique, les Autochtones et nous**, R. Savard, L'Hexagone, \$8.95
- **Indians of Canada**, D. Jenness, University of Toronto Press, \$9.95
- **Autochtones: luttes et conjoncture I & II** in *Recherches amériennes au Québec* (Vol IX no. 3 & 4, 1979), \$3.50 per issue.
- **People from our Side**, a life story with photographs by P. Pitseolak and oral biography by D. Eber, Hurtig Publishers, \$8.95: An Inuit record of Seekooseelak — the land of the people of Cape Dorset, Baffin Island.

## International Communist Movement

# The manifesto of the Peykar Organization on current events

Down with U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the Iranian peoples

**The Peykar Organization is one of the Marxist-Leninist organizations active in the struggle of the Iranian people. In its Manifesto, the Peykar develops its analysis of the recent events which rocked Iran and drew the attention of the peoples of the world: the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Teheran, the confrontations in Kurdistan and the legislative elections.**

**The manifesto is followed by a brief history of the origins of this Iranian communist organization.**

The waves of revolt of our dominated masses' anti-imperialist struggles have caused the fragile system in power to tremble. Everywhere, voices can be heard shouting, "Down with U.S. imperialism". The fact that the U.S. imperialist State gave refuge to the assassin the Shah provoked the indignation and revolutionary anger of the exploited masses. They are categorically demanding the extradition, condemnation and execution of this American mercenary. This is a minimal demand in their just revolutionary struggle.

They are thus demonstrating, and rightly so, their profound class hatred for U.S. imperialism and its mercenaries. During the years that Iran's sovereignty was dependent on their capitalist system and ruled by an anti-popular regime, U.S. imperialism and its allies did nothing but pillage and repress in the cruellest way.

Although at the height of the insurrection the main goal of the revolution was side-tracked by traitors and conciliators, the Iranian peoples have clearly understood that the revolution is still aimed at U.S. imperialism and the thorough dependence of the Iranian capitalist system. Currently, this wave of mass revolt has frightened imperialism, and pushed it deeper and deeper into political crisis.

However, it is astonishing to see how a wing of the ruling team has undertaken a vast attack in order to take power by sacrificing the other leading

wing: it has adapted to the new conditions, taken certain actions and mouthed anti-U.S. slogans, thus trying to put itself at the head of the mass anti-imperialist struggles which it had previously opposed.

Only yesterday, individuals like Behéchi<sup>1</sup> and liberals like Bazargan<sup>2</sup> were agreeing to sit down at the same table as the hangman General Hoiwiser to prevent the revolution from moving forward. How is it that today they have suddenly become "anti-imperialists"?

How is it that Khomeini is all of a sudden damning the Bazargan government and accusing it of having negotiated with Brzezinski, the brain behind U.S. imperialism's plots and intrigues, when not so long ago he firmly supported it and launched an anti-revolutionary mobilization within the anti-popular army in Kurdistan?

How is it that at the present time, the Revolutionary Council is claiming to be

anti-imperialist and intransigent, that it is waging so-called anti-imperialist actions, when just yesterday it fully supported government policy and all of its anti-revolutionary activities, both big and small, which were leading to the re-establishment of a capitalist system dependent on imperialism, in order to assure U.S. domination and continue the repression against our peoples?

What is really happening? What analysis should be made of the new political activities of the hard-line and monopolist camp of the ruling team which is trying to grab all the power? We must look for the key to all these political theses, to all these new changes on the Iranian political scene, in the situation in the popular movement, in the political, economic and social crisis of society and in the situation of the dominant regime. Unless we begin with this, we will never be able to examine these political facts and events.

\* \* \*

The grand and heroic February 1979 insurrection clearly revealed the importance of our people's anti-imperialist

1. Ayatollah Behécheti is an influential member of the Revolutionary Council and Secretary-General of the Islamic Republican Party.
2. Bazargan was the prime minister after the February insurrection.

**Mass demonstration of Iranians in Tehran soon after the Shah was forced to flee.**



struggles. The profoundly revolutionary message of this insurrection included on the one hand the total disintegration of imperialism's domination, and the annihilation of all the elements and organs of the comprador capitalist system; and on the other hand, the creation of a popular system likely to serve the revolutionary interests of the exploited masses.

Our people were adamant about denouncing and repealing all the cruel and infamous contracts with imperialism. They wanted vengeance for all the years they were pillaged and massacred by imperialism. From the start, communists and the genuine revolutionary forces supported all these demands and the will of the Iranian peoples. Meanwhile, what were the bourgeoisie and its hard-line collaborators doing? Basically, they were preaching that capitalism, solidly linked to imperialism, had to be saved; they would be satisfied with a few reforms without changing the system. They refused to expose and denounce the major economic (like the oil agreements) and military (like the bilateral Iran-U.S. agreements) treaties publicly before the people.

Amir Entezam<sup>3</sup> insolently said that there were too many such contracts and that it took a long time to study them! Yazdi, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke of the "usefulness" of some of these contracts! Not only did they refuse to hold imperialism accountable, they even compensated it. Bazargan, the prime minister whom Khomeini is so fond of, talked about giving back so-called nationalized capital to the imperialists, because this would supposedly be "useful" for Iran.

Not only is it a fact that the government and the Revolutionary Council, which work hand in hand, do not and cannot serve the basic interests of the masses which sacrificed many martyrs to their cause; on the contrary, they are fiercely opposed to the people's interests. They attack and repress the most revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces, namely the communists, describing them as anti-revolutionary in the process.

But the ruling team wanted to re-establish a system which was already profoundly rotten and cracking. This rottenness was due to the system's



**A Moslem student displays a photo of the Shah and U.S. president Jimmy Carer in front of the U.S. embassy in Tehran.**

dependence on imperialism, which was due to the crisis. The crisis which also attacked the Shah's regime led, at a certain moment, to the overthrow of the Shah and his monarchy; but the crisis has nevertheless persisted, because the system is still just as rotten.

The continuation of the economic and social crisis in society; the impotence of the forces in power faced with the size of this crisis and its inability to avoid it; and finally, the direct effects of the crisis on the daily lives of the oppressed masses, have all aggravated the political crisis in our society, while at the same time orienting the struggle of the masses in a new direction.

The determination of the masses, and consequently their protest movements and struggles, have not faded away. In fact, they are spreading. In the meantime, the working-class movements, particularly the national movement of the peoples, which is progressively growing, have reached new heights in the revolutionary movement. The regime in power is under pressure from all sides. To get out of this impasse, it prepared a massive attack on the Kurds, the liberties gained during the popular insurrection and the revolutionary and communist forces in a vain attempt to bring together and unite the masses lacking political consciousness behind it. It hopes in this way to save itself from the crisis. This policy has not succeeded in saving the regime from the crisis; on the contrary, it has made the crisis worse. The defeat of the military solution in Kurdistan, the acceleration of the unemployed workers' movement (the number of unemployed is increasing by 2,500 people per day, according to the most in-

formed members of the regime), the growing high school students' movement, the proletarian movement, etc., have caused the regime to tremble and are adding to its internal decomposition. With the help of the vast denunciation campaign waged by the genuine revolutionary forces and the communists, and on the basis of their own daily experiences, the masses have been better able to understand the true anti-revolutionary nature of the regime's activities and policies. The reactionary forces, sliding rapidly into isolation, are trembling at the degradation of the situation and the instability of the regime.

The humiliating setbacks suffered by the regime during the municipal council elections, where only 8%-10% of eligible voters participated, and the disinterest and even repugnance of the masses with regard to the "Council of Experts" (Madjless Khebrekans), which is nothing but a front, all show that the masses' illusions are being smashed, and rapidly. Meanwhile, working-class movements and urban working people have occupied homes left empty by the fleeing capitalists and confiscated the land of the feudal landowners. The occupation of hotels by militants, students and the revolutionary movement of the fishermen at the port of Anzali<sup>4</sup> show how, by taking the initiative, the masses can cast aside the regime's laws and take their own destiny in hand. And all this has been taking place at a time when the economic situation of the

3. Former vice-prime minister, ex-spokesperson and ex-Iranian ambassador to Sweden under the Bazargan government. He was also a CIA agent in Iran.

4. A port situated on the Caspian Sea.

regime is headed towards inevitable bankruptcy.

From one day to the next, the team in power has been suspended in mid-air. All of its actions have had no other effect than to deepen the abyss under it. Obviously this deep social crisis could not help but directly influence the development of the internal contradictions of the regime in power. The differences between the regime's two camps on the subjects of Nazih<sup>5</sup> and the oil company and on the scandal around the minister of commerce, as well as the attacks and criticisms against the Bazargan government by the clergy in power and its supporters in demonstrations and meetings, are all obvious signs of the contradictions and differences which exist within the team in power.

The Bazargan government clearly showed how it was going to respond to the crisis and the will of the masses when it re-established and rebuilt the comprador capitalist system and repressed popular movements. It was sufficiently denounced and had nothing left to offer. Its answer could no longer save the regime.

The other wing of the regime, namely the clergy in power and its supporters, has organized some activities and demonstrations like the "Unity of Imam with Ommat"<sup>6</sup> over the past two months. It did so because of the extent of the crisis and to avoid a total loss of popularity. It has now realized that it must do something more "decisive" and "categorical" than that kind of meeting and demonstration if it is to win back its prestige and declining popular base. With the referendum on the constitution and the presidential elections on the immediate horizon, it absolutely has to avoid a downfall which would likely be even worse than its defeat during the municipal council elections.

The changes and internal contradictions of the regime, and the recent activities of the Revolutionary Council and Khomeini aimed at conciliating with a small part of the anti-imperialist desires of our people, can be understood in the light of this situation. Such a response to the economic and social crisis from the religious wing of the regime results in fact from the pressures from the increasingly widespread struggles of the masses, as well as the



**Riots In Tabriz against the Khomeini government.**

regime's internal contradictions and differences. But those who are using this method of adapting their policies to the anti-imperialist struggles of the masses and trying to rebuild their declining power will undoubtedly try to deflect these struggles so as to ensure the stability of the forces in power. At the very least, they will try to limit them and reorient them towards secondary goals. They are trying to make the masses believe that the main demand in their anti-imperialist struggles can be summed up as the extradition, judgement and condemnation of the traitor Shah. Nobody has any hesitations about demanding the Shah's extradition, condemning him in a popular trial and executing him a thousand times over. But this is but a tiny part of the anti-imperialist aspirations of the peoples of Iran.

The fundamental desire of the oppressed and exploited masses is to destroy once and for all the comprador capitalist system with all its links to world imperialism, headed up by U.S. imperialism. For years, this system has been the main source of the economic and social crises and the oppression and political and economic suffering endured by the toiling masses for all these years. Despite all the hot air and rhetorical propaganda, the current regime is incapable of fulfilling this fundamental aspiration. Up to now, thanks to its actions and the line it has followed since it has been in power, it has clearly shown the masses that it is quite determined to prevent the achievement of their basic goals.

So far, the communists have shown that their cause is just, historically and politically. They should have no hesitation about continuing to denounce the

nature of the current regime. **By actively participating in the masses' anti-imperialist struggles, which continue in the streets and which are spreading daily, and by defending genuine anti-imperialist slogans, among the masses, communists must show the masses that they are the most decisive anti-imperialist forces.**

Through active participation in the struggle, communists must show that the very class nature of yesterday's monopolists and war-mongers, whose hands are red with the blood of the Kurdish people, means that they can never fulfill the anti-imperialist aspirations of the people and that they objectively take advantage of the struggle to try to regain their popularity and prop up their power.

Again, through active participation in the struggle, communists must show that the liberal forces like the "Party of the Republic of Moslem People" (guided by the **Ayatollah Shariat-Madari**)<sup>7</sup>, the "National Front" and so on, which cleverly claim to be "anti-imperialist" today and which dishonestly talk about the need for "anti-imperialist struggles" in their manifestos and private press, are in reality trying to take control of the major struggles being waged by the masses against U.S. imperialism and those in power.

Communists must show how the revisionists of the "Tudeh Party", who

5. The former director of the National Iranian oil company.

6. Ommat: the disciples of the Prophet

7. Second-most famous religious personality, very powerful in Tabriz, firm defender of the Constitution during the time of the Shah and of the slogan "the Shah should reign and not govern". He is part of the liberal bourgeoisie.

## The characteristics of the current situation and the tasks of communists

The Tunisian newspaper *Ech-Choola* recently published an article on the current situation and the tasks of communists in its March 1980 issue. Through concrete analysis, the article shows how the Bourguiba regime is increasingly isolated from wider and wider sectors of the Tunisian population. It also explains how the Tunisian communists intend to actively intervene in this situation despite their weakness and dispersion.

The article is interesting, not only for its analysis of Tunisian reality, but also for its explanation of how the communists in that country are trying to find answers to a situation which is the same as the one faced by many communists around the world. An increasing number of still relatively weak communist forces are faced with what are, or what are likely to become, revolutionary situations. We can thus take inspiration from the example of these comrades.

The working class and the popular masses are commemorating the second anniversary of the Black Thursday massacre perpetrated by the Bourguiba regime against the union and popular movement on January 26, 1978. Two years after this event, which signalled the massive entry of the army into our political life, it is necessary to define the characteristics of the situation and the orientations of the struggle, and to affirm certain truths.

### The first truth: the Bourguiba regime pursues a hard-line and barbaric policy

After the massacre, which resulted in 400 martyrs and 2000 wounded, the regime hit out and indicted the leadership of the UGTT (General Union of Tunisian Workers) and all its honest cadres. It did so in a vain attempt to crush the union movement. This was followed by the arrest and trial of Ech-Choola militants and members of the "Initiative committees" of the UGTT who published the clandestine paper *El Chaab*. There was also the trial of the comrades from the Revolutionary Party of the People.

In addition to this campaign of arrests and unjust trials of trade unionists and revolutionary militants, we

should also mention the intervention of national and local police forces and the army against the sons of the people — for instance, the police intervention in the village of Dahmani in February 1979, and that of the army in El Jem, following the legislative election farce.

The continual and massive increases in the budgets of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of the Defence are clear indications of how the clique in power has chosen the "big stick" policy, which could lead to the establishment of a terrorist military regime. The 10th Congress of the Destourien Socialist Party (PSD) confirmed this hard-line tendency and revealed the role played by army leaders in the clan struggles within the PSD.

### Second truth: the regime continues to be isolated

The barbaric Bourguiba dictatorship's ultra-extremist and ultra-barbaric activities have meant that it has not even been able to draw together the compradors and the feudal lords and unite the ranks of the reactionary forces. This was indicated by the resignation of Tahar Belkhouja and his followers just before the January 26 events. After the resignation of Habib

Achour and his followers from the Destourien Party, liquidations within the regime continued with the removal of Abdallah Farhat, one of those responsible for the Black Thursday crises. As for the "Reflection committees", established by Nouira to attract those who hesitated, they did not succeed in rallying the moderate reactionary forces like Ahmed Mestiri's group — despite the propaganda orchestrated by the leaders of the "Communist" Party on behalf of these committees. And recently, the contradictions have sharpened between the clique in power and the religious factions.

The isolation of the regime from the masses in general, and from the working class in particular, is quite visible with the isolation of Abid's police front "union", which has come up against the resistance of the trade-union cadres and rank and file. Despite the efforts of the "Communist" Party and those who supported tactics of infiltration, the union boycott has continued under new forms which must be supported and developed so that they are increasingly adapted to the requirements of the situation.

The isolation of the regime can also be seen in the rejection of Ben Dhia's proposals by the majority of student groups and the student masses.

And although the regime was able to ease its isolation from other Arab countries with the transfer of the headquarters of the Arab League to Tunis and the designation of Habib Chatti to head up the organization of the Islamic Congress, this overture to Arab reactionary forces can only be considered as a temporary phenomenon which will not seriously influence the situation.

As for the third truth, it consists of **the rise of the mass movement**. The mass movement has been developing steadily since 1967, when the first popular anti-Zionist and anti-Bourguiba demonstration was held in Tunis. The movement continued to grow until January 26, 1978. Some of its more significant moments included the fall of Ahmed Ben Salah's cabinet, the February 1972 movement, and the April 1976 strikes. But confronted with this development and increasingly radical nature of the mass movement, the Bourguiba clique struck a terrible blow against the popular movement on January 26,

are on the payroll of social imperialism, are trying to cover up all the anti-revolutionary activities and policies of the regime and the wing that is currently most powerful. They must reveal how the revisionists' participation in the regime's "anti-imperialist celebration" and their very enticing speeches are nothing but ways for these revisionists to recuperate their part of the pie.

Communists must also show how the hated revisionists who defend the "three worlds" theory were excluded from the masses' anti-imperialist struggles aimed precisely against U.S. imperialism,

because of their revisionist and anti-revolutionary policies. In this way, they will unmask and discredit their rotten anti-revolutionary theory which says that in order to struggle against social imperialism one has to rally behind bloody U.S. imperialism.

Finally, communists must also show the vacillating democrats that, given this same context, they should not be impressed by the anti-American actions of the regime's religious wing and forget about its infamous past, for this can only lead to believing in its attractive promises and drowning in illusions and optimism.

### Yes, communists today are confronted with still more perilous duties.

Down with U.S. imperialism, main enemy of the Iranian peoples! Forward to a People's Democratic Republic!

PEYKAR

(Organization of struggle on the path to free the working class)  
November 11, 1979

Editor's note: Translation from the French by PROLETARIAN UNITY; minor changes were made by PU in the style of the French version to make the text more accessible to our readers.

## A brief outline of Peykar's origins

Because the background of Peykar is related to the Organization of the Mojahadeen of the People of Iran (OMPI), it is essential to understand this organization. The OMPI was formed in 1344 (in the Islamic calendar; 1966 in the Western calendar) on the basis of Islamic ideology. This organization believed in the armed struggle, and considered the fascist regime of the Shah and imperialism as the main enemies. They supported any revolutionary movement which held anti-monarchist/anti-imperialist positions. OMPI believed that so long as the main enemy is not defeated, all the revolutionary forces should work together regardless of their respective ideologies. On this basis they, with the class nature of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, also supported the Marxist-Leninist forces. This has great importance because there existed, and still exist, reactionary forces which suppressed the anti-imperialist struggle of the Marxist-Leninist forces under the cover of Islam. ("They don't believe in God...")

From 1352-54 (1974-76), after two years of internal organizational struggle, the majority of the cadre changed their ideology from Islam to Marxism-Leninism. This revolutionary change was indeed a progressive step forward, but because of the lack of a true understanding of Marxism-Leninism (mainly among the leadership), this change had a number of deviations. The bilateral trends in the OMPI (Islamic and Marxist-Leninist) should have split into two independent trends. The Marxist trend should have split from the OMPI (which was based on religious ideology from its formation), and attempted to develop a new organizational identity. But instead, the minority who were not won to Marxism-Leninism attempted a split which was fully suppressed by the dominant Marxist leadership. Some religious comrades who tried to organize themselves and split were executed by the leadership on charges of "treachery" and "conspiracy". We condemn execution as a general policy and attitude towards internal organizational contradictions and ideological differences; in addition, we evaluate these executions carried out by the leadership as counter-revolutionary, conspiratorial, and terroristic ac-

tions. Furthermore, we reject the idea of giving labels such as "traitor", "conspirator", and "opportunist" to the martyred comrades... and we consider them as martyrs of the revolutionary movement.

During the period 1354-57 (1976-79), from the executions and the consolidation of leadership with all its deviations up to the date the *Etelaieh* was published, the organization underwent a very intense and decisive internal struggle. The crisis was a direct result of the falsification of the organizational line and the incorrect methods of the leadership.

The dominant line of the organization was the "foco-line", a line which was fully supported by the leadership. But the other cadre began questioning its correctness as they observed the contradictions between the focoist line and the objective reality. Their criticisms, however, were answered with suppression imposed by the leadership.

This opposition (of the cadres — UIS) reached its peak when the leadership tried to claim for itself the cadres' revolutionary gains of negating and rejecting the foco-line. In spite of the exposure of many of its incorrect ideas and actions, the leadership tried to deflect the criticisms by attacking the non-proletarian line of the OIPFG.\* The cadres' force, talents, and political-ideological capabilities (which, under a non-democratic form of democratic centralism, had been underestimated by the leadership and either suppressed or used to consolidate the domination of the leadership) began to move independently of the leadership and to consolidate its own positions. In that period (during which the organization was paralyzed) a group was formed of cadres whose ideas were accepted by the majority of the organization, and this group took responsibility for criticizing the leadership. Through several meetings with leadership, the above-mentioned group succeeded in consolidating the organization around its criticisms of leadership, which ultimately forced the leadership to resign.... (taken from **Acknowledgement**, a pamphlet published by the Union of Iranian Students in the United States, in Berkeley, Calif.)

1. *Etelaieh*, p. 15, written by the Marxist-Leninist section of the OMPI. This organization chose the name Peykar, criticizes the past actions in this article, and gains an independent organizational identity  
\* OIPFG: Organization of the Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas.

1978. Since then, there has been an ebb in the mass movement, which has been on the defensive because the regime was able to break the UGTT, reverse the progress the movement had made and impose an atmosphere of terror in the country. But only two years after this terrible crime, the popular movement has begun to set itself back on its feet again. Proof of this is the increase in the number of workers struggles, which have reached a peak in the mines in the South, and the many student movements since the start of the school year at the university. These are signs of new growth in the mass movement despite the repression and terror exercised by the autocratic Bourguiba regime. But this in no way means that the situation has become a revolutionary one and that we are ready to directly confront the regime. On the contrary, all suicidal tendencies, all adventurism and all "leftist" phrase-mongering must be opposed, for they do not take into account the real relation of forces between Revolution and counter-revolution.

Finally, the fourth truth is **the weakness and dispersion of the forces opposed to the dictatorship and to compromises in general**, and in particular the weakness and dispersion of the patriotic and democratic forces and the Marxist-Leninist communists. Marxist-Leninist communist forces are very weak, due to police repression on the one hand and attacks by opportunism and their own subjective weaknesses on the other. The other patriotic forces are divided because of their lack of political clarity and the absence of a revolutionary programme. So the initiative still lies with the "Communist" Party, which is inclined to make compromises and is a hand-servant of the U.S.S.R. This party is trying to attract the reactionary forces to it and its programme, whose aim is to replace the domination of U.S. imperialism by that of Russian imperialism.

Genuine communists must solve their crisis and work to unite the patriotic forces around a line of anti-imperialist and democratic revolution, at the same time that they work to dismember the group led by the revisionists and attract the greatest number of moderate reactionary forces to oppose the Bourguiba dictatorship and the "Communist" Party, satellite of Russian imperialism.

But if the Marxist-Leninist communist movement is to really play its role, it must today, more than ever, achieve the political and ideological unity which has been lost over the years under the blows from the Bourguiba regime and attacks by opportunism, particularly ultra-leftism. The major question on the table today is that of political and ideological unity. This must come before organizational unity, which does not have absolute priority. Many ideological and political contradictions divide our movement (the question of strategic and conjunctural alliances; the conception of mass work; the conceptions of how to build a working-class party; the question of the struggle within the international communist movement; etc.). As well, our movement has accumulated a certain political backwardness because, throughout the events which have succeeded one another over the past two years, communists have not taken a unified position. This aggravated the crisis and promoted even more disunity. To mention just a few examples of these events, there was the role of the religious movement in Tunisia and in the Arab Party, the anti-dictatorship insurrections in Iran and Nicaragua and the conflicts and wars in Indochina and Asia.

It follows from this that much attention has to be paid to the ideological and political aspect so as to eliminate opportunism in general and leftist deviations in particular and to overcome the effects of repression and rebuild the unity of communists on solid grounds.

**January 1978: The army cordons off and searches Tunis, the capital city of Tunisia. There is brutal repression and the labour unions are dismantled.**



To accomplish this, we need an adequate instrument for waging the struggle which will defend an independent communist position. This instrument is a communist newspaper which is a weapon in the hands of all comrades, a weapon in which they can state their positions and benefit from the experience of others. It should also be a guide which points out the path to follow for all communists, sympathizers and democratic patriots. This is the key link in our struggle to create a revolutionary and organized Marxist-Leninist force, in the framework of the general activities leading to the construction of the party of the working class.

Alongside this, we must also pay attention to mass work, which must be done on the basis of a correct conception, and this in all fields, especially in the unions. We must make a break with sectarianism, activism, close-mindedness, fringe struggles and the tendency to arbitrarily pigeon-hole people. It is natural to wage ideological and political struggle within the mass organizations, but we must do so without breaking the rules set out for their struggles.

Finally, we must apply a policy of alliances in a correct and efficient manner and lay the foundations for a strategic alliance between Marxist-Leninists and patriots. We must also take advantage of conjunctural alliances with all the forces opposed to the dictatorship and to compromise, in the context of the struggle for political liberty.

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- *IN STRUGGLE!*, central organ of the Organization, published weekly in English and French and distributed across Canada. The newspaper IN STRUGGLE! also publishes supplements on current political questions as well as communist education pamphlets designed to give Marxist-Leninist principles as wide an audience as possible.
- *PROLETARIAN UNITY*, the Organization's theoretical journal published every two months in English and French.

## Pamphlets available

- *Programme and Constitution of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!*, April, 1979.
- *The Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Organization of Canada IN STRUGGLE!*, including the Political Report, the Programme, the Constitution, and other documents, 3rd trimester 1979.
- *For the Proletarian Party*, October 1972.
- *Against Economism*, concerning the Comité de solidarité avec les luttes ouvrières (C.S.L.O.), September, 1975.
- *Towards the unity of Canadian Marxist-Leninists, Fight the sectarianism of the CCL(M-L)*, July, 1976.
- *The tasks of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist movement today*, (IN STRUGGLE!'s second anniversary speech, May 1975), March 1977.
- *The unity of the Marxist-Leninist Movement passes by the Intensification of the Struggle Against Opportunism*, communiqué from IN STRUGGLE!'s Central Committee, April 1977.
- *Against Right Opportunism in International Questions*, Declaration of the Canadian Marxist-Leninist Group IN STRUGGLE! on the occasion of the Third National Conference of Canadian Marxist-Leninists held in Montreal September 9, 10 and 11, 1977, September 1977.
- *No revolutionary party without a revolutionary program*, On the tasks of Canadian communists in the present situation, February, 1978.
- *For the unity of the Canadian proletariat*, Brief notes on the present conjuncture, April, 1977.
- *Manifesto Against Bill C-73 and Wage Controls*, March 1977.
- *Uphold the revolutionary unity of the workers of all nations and national minorities in Canada. Fight against national oppression*, March 1978.
- *Men and women of the proletariat: one enemy, one fight*, March, 1978.
- *The goals and work of Canadian communists in trade unions today*, May, 1978.
- *The CPC(M-L) a revisionist organization of agents-provocateurs*, June, 1978.
- *The CCL(M-L), the voice of social-chauvinism in Canada*, February, 1979.
- *Who is manipulating the unions?*, June 1979
- *Manifesto for the labour movement, Dump McDermott! Dump the bourgeois policy in trade unions!*, September 1979.
- *Religious war or people's revolution in Iran? Behind the headlines*, January 1980.
- *To all Quebec workers, No to renewed federalism! No to sovereignty-association!*, February 1980.
- *Quebec has the right to choose!* February 1980.

All documents are available in English and French. The Organization's Programme and Constitution are also available in Portuguese, Italian and Spanish.

# A new publication

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