

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

Un service de presse ouvrier

Vol. 3, No. 2

January 8, 1965

21, rue d'Aboukir - PARIS-2

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"The appearance of nine Chinese in a Brazilian court, which found them guilty of engaging in espionage, reveals an attempted jump

onto the South American continent and all the way down to Rio. Brazil not only won the distinction of imprisoning the first Red Chinese agents caught in the Western Hemisphere. It also served notice on other American republics how far afield the Chinese Communists already have gone, and what they do when they get there."

The truth is that the nine Chinese were victims of one of the rawest frame-ups ever perpetrated in a capitalist court. It was so raw that the militarists sitting in judgment in the drumhead affair did not have the stomach to condemn the Chinese on the espionage charge. They condemned them instead on a charge of "subversion."

The stench of the Rio de Janeiro trial is indicated in the report sent by Irénée Guimaraes, special correspondent of the Paris daily Le Monde, a bourgeois newspaper like the New York Herald Tribune, but one with somewhat higher standards in reporting the news.

Guimaraes filled in the background for the trial that began December 21: "For foreign observers who have been following the first big political trial of the April 'revolution' in the military court in Rio de Janeiro since last Monday, many things must now be clearer. For nine months the authorities of the new regime carefully prepared to extract maximum effects from this 'good trial.' The business was in truth rather good -- nine Chinese 'spies' and nine Brazilian accomplices who had fallen into the Guanabara police net after the first days of April. Before the judges, an impressive amount of evidence: six big valises and twenty-three files of documents gathered by the security services of Governor Lacerda."

The prosecution talked for four hours before the judges -- a magistrate, a colonel and three captains -- about a "vast guerrilla plan aimed at overthrowing the regime." When he finished, he demanded thirty-year sentences for "espionage" and "subversion."

The first words of 71-year-old defense counsel Sobral Pinto, one of the most distinguished lawyers in Rio de Janeiro were:

"This trial is a farce. The farce is the worst I have seen in thirty-four years in the profession."

A devout Catholic, Pinto told the judges: "You are asked to be accomplices in an iniquity. Implicated in a movement of indiscipline that triumphed [the reference is to the coup d'état of last April 1], you are here as representatives of comrades in uniform, and you have been offered an opportunity to justify before the public the motives of your rebellion. If you recognize the innocence of the accused, who are in fact innocent, you condemn your chiefs. This trial is a monstrosity."

Sobral Pinto then went on to examine the main document presented by the prosecution as "evidence" of espionage. This was a

letter signed by an unknown person and mailed from Switzerland which the authorities claimed to have found April 3 hidden inside a flashlight, hidden in turn in the glove box of an automobile belonging to one of the defendants, a Chinese journalist. The letter was written in Chinese, but the names of a number of leftist figures in Brazilian politics were included in roman letters. It was because their names appeared in this letter that these Brazilians were accused of "complicity" in committing "espionage."

The defense attorney listed a series of errors in translating the document, in the dates, and in the names. All these pointed to the conclusion that the document had been deliberately forged by the police of the state of Guanabara with the aid of the Chinese nationalist embassy in Rio de Janeiro.

The proofs adduced by the defense of a crude forgery were so overwhelming that the judges refused to admit the letter and threw out the charge of espionage. In accordance with this decision, they unanimously acquitted six of the Brazilians named in the indictment.

As for the "evidence" on which the charge of "subversion" was based, this did not stand up much better.

The voluminous files introduced by the prosecution consisted of lists of addresses of members of the Communist party, messages from the former President Janio Quadros dating from 1961 and bearing on projects for establishing commercial relations with the People's Republic of China. "Dozens of pages of certain files were composed solely of business cards, all with the same name, each pasted on a single sheet."

As for the valises, they contained books on Marxism, Chinese magazines and works on the agrarian reform in China. Not a document contained anything indicating either espionage or subversion.

[The Hsinhua News Agency reported that another bit of "incriminating evidence" placed before the court by the prosecution was a "hypodermic syringe," evidently intended for carrying out poisoning operations. This deadly weapon, however, finally turned out to be nothing but a ballpoint pen!]

The embarrassed judges nevertheless decided to sacrifice the nine Chinese commercial representatives and journalists and three Brazilians. They gave the victims ten-year sentences for "injuring the security of the state."

Guimaraes reported that in "certain circles it is said that the federal government will soon exchange the nine defendants for Catholic priests jailed in China."

The defense attorney, however, is preparing to appeal the case. "I want to save these innocent men," he said.

LEFT SOCIALIST PARTY FORMED IN BELGIUM

BRUSSELS, Dec. 28 -- Some 600 enthusiastic militants, meeting in Liège yesterday, decided to hold a constitutional congress at Charleroi February 1 to set up a new left Socialist party. The projected name of the new organization is Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs [Socialist Workers party]. Its initial base will be in Wallonie; but as soon as similar organizations are set up in Flanders and Brussels, a federation will be organized on the basis of the three regional units.

The Liège meeting was chaired by Fernand Massart, a Socialist member of parliament from Namur, who left the Socialist party a year ago out of disgust over the opportunist policies of the coalition government.

The main report was given by Ernest Glinne, a Socialist member of parliament from Charleroi and the only Socialist in parliament who publicly denounced Spaak's neocolonialist intervention in the Congo.

Other key addresses were given by François Périn, a Liège University professor and main theoretician of the Walloon Popular Movement, and Ernest Mandel, editor of the left Socialist weekly La Gauche. Jacques Yerna, secretary of the Liège Trade Union Federation, sponsored the meeting. The main leaders of the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes [Socialist Youth organization] and the Socialist Students Federation were also present.

The central feature of the gathering was the presence of the principal shop stewards and direct representatives of the workers of Belgium's most important plants in the Liège and Charleroi heavy industry area. The overwhelming majority of the speakers were these workers representatives. Speaker after speaker went to the rostrum to denounce the disillusionment felt by the Belgian working class over the cynical betrayal of the objectives of the great general strike of 1960-61 by the reformist leaders who supported the strike so loudly at the time. Speaker after speaker denounced the abandonment of the fight for real socialist objectives by the leaders of the Socialist party, the many antiworking-class measures taken by the present coalition government, and the urgent need for a new party to prevent demoralization from spreading among the vanguard of the working class.

The Liège meeting was public and open to the press. The Belgian radio and television, as well as the daily papers, gave it extensive coverage, viewing it as an important turning point in the political life of the country.

Although it is too early to judge the weight of the new party in the parliamentary field (new elections will be held in Belgium not later than May 1965, and perhaps much sooner, leaving little time for the new party to become thoroughly organized and to prepare for an

electoral campaign), it is certain that it will have a mass base in several of the key working-class areas.

ECONOMIC POLICY IN THE USSR SINCE KHRUSHCHEV'S DOWNFALL

The discussions at the December session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, as well as the course of debates in the press, have confirmed the conclusion that Khrushchev's downfall did not herald a change in orientation by the Soviet bureaucracy but only greater emphasis on the production of consumer goods.

There are now many indications, in addition, that the policy of granting wider rights to factory managers and greater autonomy to factories or "groups of factories" combined in "firms" -- which was begun tentatively under Khrushchev -- is now gaining headway on a broad scale.

A key figure in analyzing current economic policy in the USSR is the annual rate of increase of the industrial sector that produces consumer goods in comparison with the rate of increase of the industries producing investment goods. In 1964 these two rates were respectively, 7% and 9%. But the planned rate of increase was not actually realized in the consumer goods sector. This signified that the real gap between the two sectors was wider than the planned gap.

Kosygin, the new head of the Soviet government, announced in his speech at the Supreme Soviet on December 9 that for 1965 the rate of growth in the consumer goods sector would be raised to 7.7%, while the rate of growth in the investment goods sector would be lowered to 8.2%. At the same time, he promised that these rates would be actually implemented and that construction of new apartments for the Soviet population would be stepped up.

In the Supreme Soviet meeting, for the first time since the Stalinist regime usurped power in the late twenties, differences were openly voiced. A delegate from the floor challenged one aspect of the 1965 plan and local delegates from the Baltic countries argued with a high economic official over the usefulness of setting up a central fishing board for all the ports on the Baltic.

The issues, of course, were minor. But the differences referred to an important problem in economic policy now being debated in the Soviet press; namely, the usefulness of the regional economic bodies called "Sovnarkhozes" that were set up by Khrushchev, and whether or not these bodies should be replaced by combinations of factories or "firms" of the same industrial branch. The issue is whether to revert from "regional" bodies to "vertical" ones. (The Sovnarkhozes replaced so-called "industrial ministries" which Stalin set at the head of each branch of industry.)

"WHY I AM RESIGNING FROM THE CHILEAN COMMUNIST PARTY"

[On November 27 Jaime Barros, a senator from the provinces of Valparaíso and Aconcagua (the second most important zone in Chile) announced his resignation from the Communist party. The following is a translation of the paragraphs explaining his basic reasons for this action.]

* * *

I have made up my mind to leave the Party definitively. . . . There are, after cold analysis, still deeper reasons. I have meditated on them lately alone with my conscience. Reading the Second Declaration of Havana has convinced me that we are sitting at the side of the road waiting for the funeral of imperialism. . . . That we are waiting for the high-paid parliamentary candidates to solve without trouble or glory, the crisis of hunger, despair and anguish. That comrades who live the passive existence of our bureaucracy, enclosed in the four walls of an ivory tower, or whose merit consists of having made some trips abroad, are now the candidates who are supposed to sense the feelings of the masses. The issue, according to you, is to coexist peacefully. We who are uneasy, who are sick and tired of tail-endism, of talk-fests, we are the reprobates, the wild men, the nuts, the ones playing the game of enemy, selling themselves to imperialism, to Peking, to the rotten bourgeoisie; in short, we are the ones on whom adjectives are heaped so that anyone at any time can say: 'You don't recognize Marxism; you're not a revolutionist; you don't read, comrade.'

I am leaving the Party in order to remain a Communist. I know what to expect from the central leadership. According to you, it is possible to coexist peacefully, interpreting Marxism through a monologue and the national ideologies. The dialectical process ends up, via collections, meetings, postponed conferences, in tooth-ache powders, when what is required at times is to pull the tooth and not think like revolutionary astrologists, for whom it is necessary to be completely identified with the Ministry of Labor. Invitations are sent to little nuns to have tea with us in parliament, to hold forums in Catholic temples in order to tell them not to be afraid of the lion. . . . In the recent presidential elections the deluded party had us play "cops and robbers," going to the president of the republic and playing the miserable role of asking the boss not to break with Cuba. . . .

"Yes, we must uphold Marxist morality; but this -- with the permission of Roger Garaudy -- begins with many of our Cato's at the navel and ends in the pubic region. I am leaving, comrade, with the great satisfaction of having worked in the vanguard. Was I not in Pachaçama de Artificio, in Natalia, when the land was seized? I am ruined, in very bad health, but I am not crossing over to the enemy camp.

THE MEANING OF BARROS' RESIGNATION

SANTIAGO DE CHILE -- The resignation of Senator Jaime Barros from the Communist party, which the newspapers and radio played up in a sensational way, has continued to make political news in this country.

For example, Marcos Chamudes, the well-known writer who publishes the magazine PEC with funds emanating from the U.S., addressed a letter to Barros.

The senator answered December 11 with a public response, stating that he was not crossing over to the camp of enemies of the working class; that he had broken with the Communist party bureaucracy because of its line on "peaceful coexistence," because of its giving up, during Allende's presidential campaign, the Communist party position of strong support for Cuba, because it "put the brakes" on the class struggle and the militancy of the workers, because it made an alliance with bourgeois sectors in hope of winning the election. Barros ended by saying that the road of struggle for socialism is not through elections but through revolutionary activity.

It is important to note that along with Senator Barros, one of the most important intellectuals of the Communist party, Marcos Portnoy, also resigned. His comments were a well-known feature of the official newspaper of the Communist party, El Siglo. In addition, José Vega, a former city councilman in Valparaíso, resigned.

Marcos Portnoy told the press that when he, Barros and Vega left the Communist party, some 2,000 members in Valparaíso went with them. He said that their position was neither pro-Peking nor pro-Moscow; what they sought was to follow "the Cuban road." Portnoy is the author of a recent book on the Cuban Revolution.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these resignations from the Communist party:

(1) That the defeat suffered by Salvador Allende September 4 touched off a process of criticism of the bureaucracy of the FRAP [Frente Revolucionario de Acción Popular]; i.e., the bureaucracies of the Communist and Socialist parties. The election results were a defeat for the policy of the "peaceful and parliamentary road."

(2) That this process of criticism now affecting the Communist and Socialist ranks as well as sectors of the workers and students of the vanguard of Allendism, precipitated the deepest crisis in the old reformist and revisionist leadership yet experienced in Chile.

(3) That the current crisis of the Communist party has not yet reached massive proportions, but constitutes a molecular process of criticism of the leadership among the ranks. The resignation of

a senator, of a noted writer and a contingent of militants, the extent of which cannot yet be determined, indicates that the Chilean Communist party is undergoing one of the worst crises in its history.

(4) That the resignation of Barros, Portnoy, Vega and others is not toward the right but toward adopting a left revolutionary fighting position. It cannot yet be determined whether Barros and his comrades will join the pro-Chinese groups, but the efforts of these groups to win over Barros have failed up to now. The only declarations made by Barros with regard to the international problem have been his decided support for the Cuban Revolution and its methods. Barros has not said a single word yet, whether of support or criticism, concerning the Chinese position. It is interesting to note that Barros resigned from the Communist party but not from his seat in parliament. Consequently, he continues to remain a senator.

(5) That the critical attitude of Barros, Portnoy, Vega and others who resigned from the Communist party, will accelerate the crisis not only in the Communist party but in the Socialist party, where the critical attitude of the ranks against the reformist course is of greater scope.

(6) That this crisis of the Communist party and fundamentally of the Socialist party opens the concrete possibility of overcoming the crisis of proletarian leadership in Chile through the formation of a revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist left composed of the existing revolutionary groups and the Communist and Socialist militants who are breaking from their old reformist and revisionist leaderships.

YOUTH BREAK FROM CHILEAN SOCIALIST PARTY

SANTIAGO DE CHILE -- A number of members of the Socialist party have broken from the reformist bureaucracy and joined the PSP [Partido Socialista Popular], which was formed last year through the fusion of various socialist currents and the Partido Obrero Revolucionario of Trotskyist tradition. [See World Outlook April 3, 1964.]

On November 10, a group of Socialist university students sent a letter to the head of the Socialist nucleus of the Teaching Institute, which said in part:

"Through this letter we are informing you of our decision to leave the Socialist party and join the ranks of the Partido Socialista Popular. We have seen day by day how, because of the course on which it has embarked, the Socialist party is selling out the revolutionary movement of the Chilean workers. In the development of the movement, the stumbling, reformist leadership has limited itself to playing a regressive, vacillating role that in fact blocks the perspective of socialist revolution. The popular movement requires the creation of

a revolutionary vanguard that would aim its potential forces at taking political power. This leadership, impossible to build in the SP because of the Social Democratic bureaucracy, is being constructed in the ranks of the PSP.

"This responsibility is an inescapable duty for every young revolutionist, and we, conscious of this, cannot refuse this duty. We know that there are still valuable elements in the official SP, but we are certain that as they deepen their experience within the party, they will finally join our barricade. At the present time we are in contact with many former comrades, and under the banners of revolutionary socialism held by the growing and vigorous PSP, we will be able to fight for the exploited on the road to their freedom. For revolutionary socialism! Long live the Partido Socialista Popular!

"Signed: Luis Poulers, Sergio Funez, Oscar Vallespir, Jorge Quezada, Julio Miranda, of the Teaching Institute of the University of Chile."

After this break with the reformist bureaucracy, the university students of the PSP, together with the Socialist youth and other revolutionary groups, made a united front, running a slate in the elections held by the Teaching Institute. This revolutionary slate won 442 votes, being defeated by the Christian Democratic slate (960 votes), but they topped the Communist party slate which won 342 votes.

This deepened the crisis in the Communist Youth, who want to go along with the revolutionary groups, but the PC stopped this, arguing that Trotskyist elements were involved.

At the beginning of December, the overwhelming majority of the adult regional committee and the Socialist Youth of the province of Llanquihue (in the south of Chile), broke with the bureaucratic leadership and joined the Partido Socialista Popular together with all their members belonging to eight sections in the province.

They were welcomed by Humberto Valenzuela, the well-known leader of the municipal workers who is general secretary of the Partido Socialista Popular. He noted that the party is doing well in the provinces, having already won members in Coquimbo, Talca and O'Higgins.

The decision of the Llanquihue Socialists is another symptom of the deep internal crisis shaking the old reformist party. The crisis was also indicated in the first part of December by the militant support which the Socialist Youth gave the strike movement here. It was also shown in a different way by the incapacity of the bureaucracy to hold a National Plenum of the Youth at the beginning of the month and by the gains registered by the left wing of the youth at the Congress of the Regional Committee of South Santiago (the most proletarian area in Chile).

CHILEAN REVOLUTIONISTS PAY HOMAGE TO LUIS EMILIO RECABBAREN

SANTIAGO DE CHILE -- The Vanguardia Revolucionaria Marxista, the Partido Socialista Popular, rank and file Socialists, and members of the independent left wing of the Allende movement held a meeting December 20 at the Teatro Roma in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the death of Luis Emilio Recabarren, Chile's outstanding proletarian leader.

Speakers criticized the newly inaugurated Christian Democratic government and the line of the Communist and Socialist parties which led to the electoral defeat of the popular movement. They raised the question of beginning a process of unification among the organizations present at the meeting in order to constitute a Marxist-Leninist party with mass influence as the only way to end the crisis in leadership in the workers movement.

Among the speakers were Clotario Blest, Enrique Sepúlveda and Oscar Waiss.

LUIS VITALE GAINS FREEDOM

SANTIAGO DE CHILE -- The campaign initiated by Clotario Blest and Oscar Waiss for the freedom of the well-known Chilean Trotskyist leader Luis Vitale won a quick success.

The campaign was begun before the inauguration of the Frei government in hope that sufficient pressure could be mounted to persuade officials of the new regime to release Vitale as one of their first acts in office.

It turned out, however, that the out-going Alessandri government made this one of its last acts, an order being issued October 28 by Minister of Justice Enrique Ortúzar for Vitale's release. The order seemingly got lost in bureaucratic channels but about the time the pressure began mounting on Frei, the order came through.

Vitale served seven months of a 541-day sentence of exile to the isolated town of Curepto in southern Chile.

Now back in Santiago, Vitale is seeking to regain his Chilean citizenship which was cancelled by the Alessandri regime.

Vitale was subjected to political persecution because of his leadership in a militant campaign in behalf of the Cuban Revolution during the tense period of the "missile" crisis in the Caribbean in the fall of 1962.

AMERICAN "JUSTICE" PROTECTS ITS OWN

By Evelyn Sell

The release of 21 men accused by the FBI of the murder of three young civil-rights workers in Mississippi last June, continues to be a topic of bitter discussion in the United States. Since the 21 still face a grand jury hearing, some people hope that they may yet be brought to trial. Others are not so hopeful, and it is to be noted that racists throughout the country have been encouraged by the action of U.S. Commissioner Esther Carter in dismissing charges December 10 against 19 of the accused because, in her opinion, a confession produced by the FBI was only "hearsay." (Charges against the other two were later dropped.)

The freed men were jubilant over their release, and put on smirks for the press photographers. As they left the courtroom they were surrounded by well-wishers. Their lawyers claimed that Miss Carter's action had the effect of exonerating their clients.

Against this gross violation of the most elementary justice, a group of civil-rights supporters staged a brief demonstration on the steps of the courthouse. Among them was the brave Mrs. Fannie Chaney, mother of one of the victims.

The whole world now knows that three local law officers were included in the group of 21 charged with conspiracy in the triple murder. They are Sheriff Lawrence Rainey, Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price and Patrolman Otha Neal Burkes. According to the FBI, Cecil Price played a key role in the murder plot.

"It was part of the plan and purpose of the conspiracy," states the FBI complaint, "that Cecil Ray Price, deputy sheriff of Neshoba County, Miss., acting under the color of his office, would arrest Michael Henry Schwerner, James Earl Chaney and Andrew Goodman without lawful cause, and detain them in the Neshoba County Jail, located in Philadelphia, Miss., and would release them from custody, and that [Price and the others] would thereupon intercept [the three youths] shortly after they departed from Philadelphia, Miss., by automobile, and would threaten, assault, shoot and kill them."

Not So Unusual

On what basis could a U.S. Commissioner dismiss such serious charges, backed as they were by evidence that included a confession?

The sad fact is that Miss Carter is a typical representative of "justice" in the South. She is not a lawyer, has no legal training. She was appointed to her post by Federal Judge Mize, who, in turn, was appointed to his post with the help of Mississippi Senator Tom Stennis. As an influential leader of the Democratic party, Stennis has long advised winners in the race for the White House on

appointments to the federal bench in his state. This was, of course, in strict accordance with the hallowed American custom of dipping into what is known as the "federal pork barrel."

It should not be overlooked that a cousin of the senator, who works as a law clerk for Judge Mize, advised Commissioner Carter during the December hearing which freed the 19 men.

The dismissal of charges contradicted a long-established procedure. A Justice Department lawyer stated, "It is absolutely routine at hearings for government attorneys to give an account of confession."

Other members of the department said they were unable to find a similar example in the entire body of American and British law where a commissioner refused to find such a reported confession sufficient grounds for prosecution.

Eight years ago the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on a case involving a virtually identical issue. A gambler, accused of tax evasion, objected that his indictment rested solely on hearsay evidence from government agents. The Supreme Court unanimously rejected this objection.

In the United States, naturally, tax evasion -- if committed by a gambler -- is a much more serious matter for the courts and public officials than the murder of civil-rights workers.

Anger among Negro People

Charles Evers, Mississippi state chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], called the dismissal "typical of Mississippi justice. . . No white man in Mississippi ever has or ever will be convicted of any crime against Negroes or decent white people until a firmer hand is taken by the federal government. Presenting the cases to the grand jury would be a repetition, because the grand jury would be made up of Mississippians who sympathize with and support the murdering, bombing, and beating of true Americans, both Negro and White."

The Rev. Martin Luther King issued a statement from Oslo where he had gone to accept the Nobel Peace Prize.

"I have long hoped that Mississippi would show signs of change and that an economic boycott would be unnecessary," he told reporters. "But unless the federal government or the state of Mississippi can find methods of maintaining justice for all men in that state, I will have no alternative but to call upon forces of goodwill of the nation to effect a complete boycott of Mississippi products as an attempt to demonstrate the revolt of the national conscience against this acceptance of murder, and attempts to absolve persons whom the government seeks to indict for murder."

Both the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality [CORE] supported the boycott call and urged investors not to underwrite Mississippi securities currently on sale.

But big Northern financial interests bid heavily on State of Mississippi bond issues on December 17. Mississippi Governor Paul Johnson commented, "The civil rights demand, rather than adversely affecting the sales, brought out more bidders than we have had in the past few years."

So much for the effectiveness of appeals to white capitalists to boycott racist Mississippi!

Another Farce?

What can be expected from the next step -- the calling of a grand jury to consider the murder charges lodged against the 21?

The grand jury has been meeting under U.S. Judge William Cox. This white Southern gentleman has referred in court to Negroes as that "bunch of niggers" and has compared them to "chimpanzees." He happens to be a former campaign manager for the notorious racist Senator Eastland, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

With judges like these and with all-white juries, it is no surprise to discover that although 825 civil-rights legal actions have been initiated in the South since 1959, there have been 811 acquittals and only 14 convictions.

On December 17, twenty U.S. congressmen urged the Justice Department to replace Judge Cox with an "unbiased" person. The congressmen also asked that a new "nondiscriminatory" jury be set up to hear the triple murder case.

It would be quite a departure for such a request to be heeded. Much more likely is continuation of the pattern we have seen up to now.

Both the FBI and the Justice Department refused to protect the students engaged in civil-rights projects in the South last summer.

The plot against the Freedom workers and the names of the murderers were common knowledge in the town of Philadelphia, where the lynching was planned and executed, but it took the FBI six months to arrest anyone; and then it was timed to come after the presidential elections.

The exclusion of Negroes from jury panels in the South and the appointment of known segregationists to the bench by Democratic presidents precludes equal treatment under the law for Negroes and their oppressors. The attitudes and actions of public officials, from state governors down to local officeholders encourage and shield the sadists, the bomb-throwers and murderers.

SOME LESSONS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN SOUTH AFRICA

LUSAKA, Zambia -- There is as yet no complete statement for the period from 1960 (the Sharpeville riots) up to present by Minister of Justice Balthazar Vorster on the exact number of riots, sabotage cases, bannings, house arrests, ordinary arrests, and arrests under the notorious 90-day solitary confinement law. One day the press announces 404. The next day, the figure jumps to 1,000. This, of course, does not take into account the average daily jail population of 67,000 charged with violating the racial laws.

It is clear that there is much to hide from the world. People are furthermore enjoined under threat of reprisal to keep silent about their arrest and subsequent release.

Among the political opponents of this savage racist system, the arrest and trial of Abram Fischer has become the occasion for a certain stocktaking on the matter of tactics. What is especially involved is the efficacy of the course sponsored by the banned Communist party. From an analysis of the evidence brought out in court, certain common factors come to light:

(1) The alleged bombings and dynamitings were directed at comparatively minor objectives like railway tool sheds, railway tracks leading to African townships, telephone booths, electric poles, etc., with but two exceptions.

(2) The leadership in the "sabotage" cases was composed of white middle-class intellectuals at the universities of Cape Town and Wits, lecturers and senior students from the COD [Congress of Democrats] and NUSAS [National Union of South African Students], in the name of the ARM [African Resistance Movement].

(3) The composition of these groups was such that part of the leadership held under the 90-day Detention Act broke down, repudiated their political affiliations and betrayed their former comrades.

A different pattern was observable in the Poqo incidents at Queenstown and Qamata in the Eastern Cape and Transkei in 1962. These involved peasants and peasant migrant workers and were spontaneous outbreaks chiefly directed at liquidating Kaiser Matanzima, Chief Minister of Verwoerd's Bantustan, who launched a series of vicious attacks on the peasantry for resisting rehabilitation, fencing and taxation in his area.

The savage sentences passed last November on Sedick Abrahams, a 24-year-old Cape Town graduate (he was given 12 years) and his two students (each got five years), for attempting to sabotage a post box, involved a more recent spontaneous outburst of youthful elements in a charged atmosphere.

In a police state like South Africa, the function of agent

provocateurs, spies and informers is to provide the necessary link between oppressor and oppressed where there are no bridges to span the growing gap between them. Capitalizing on the frustrations and resentments of the oppressed people who can find no outlet in ordinary democratic procedures, the chief task of the police agent is to draw out the militants and so behead them. Their function is to incite them, to urge the people to demand action from their leaders, any action, and loudly mouth these opinions in public places, in buses and trains, and in this way the wave is carried on to the most unpolicised and anarchical layers, who readily take this up.

Contrary to the expectations aroused by the propaganda in the liberal world press and by ANC [African National Congress] elements in Britain and elsewhere (each for their own reasons) that sabotage would spark a mass uprising, a mood of noticeable caution and wariness on the part of the masses soon became evident.

The bomb incidents first excited them and drew their sympathy. Later they grasped the fact that the decision for waging sabotage did not lie with them and that they were not consulted. Such decisions were made by white liberal elements whom they distrusted. These whites, they felt, were going to involve them in a battle not of their own choosing.

They recalled past experiences, the failures of various stunts launched by the ANC leadership, in which they were not consulted -- the many one-day strikes, the untold number of pass burnings, the hundred-and-one demonstrations in some of the towns and their aftermath: no release from the weight of the heavy racial laws but still greater police intimidation and new raids on a people already living under conditions beyond human endurance and patience. Thus they gradually divorced themselves from emotionalism, demagoguery and false promises. Indeed things went so far that the bomb incident at the Johannesburg station in which Harris was found guilty, was dismissed as "A white, bombing the whites in a white section of the station."

On the peasantry in the country and on migrant labour, the sabotage had even less effect. They dismissed it as "Ukudlala Ungcaka" (a boy's game). The waves that flowed from the towns for taking action, any action, were dispersed long before they reached the villages.

These events and the evidence that has now come to light prove to the hilt the correctness of the analysis made in the Memorandum presented to the Committee of Nine in November 1963 [see World Outlook October 16 and 30] in which it was pointed out that two separate struggles are going on at present, the first being the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples in which the African peasantry in the "Reserves" is involved; the second being the conflict between the representatives of imperialism in South Africa and the Boer or Afrikaner fascist wing, where the objective is to remove Verwoerd and to replace him by someone more acceptable to imperialism.

The sabotage incidents were attempts made by liberal elements to involve the people in their liberal struggle and to close the door to their real liberation.

Thus the Apdusa [African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa] policy that the nation must decide the kind of action to be followed and that individual acts of terrorism have no place in a nation struggling for freedom, became widely acceptable. The Apdusa holds that sabotage has a time and place -- it is a weapon to be employed in a military war where it fits strategic needs, but in other situations it recoils on a defenceless people.

The first chapter is closed. The people learned one major lesson; that the whole nation must act, but must act together in full understanding of the issues at stake and with their accord.

"CASE DISMISSED"

André Frossard, the well-known columnist of the Paris daily Figaro sometimes manages to voice some bitter truths despite his usual cynicism. Here, for instance, is what he said in his column of December 15 under the title "Case Dismissed," about the scandalous turn in the Mississippi case involving the murder of three civil-rights workers:

"The twenty-one presumed Mississippi murderers have been sent home, free, their money back. The judge decided that the euphemistic charge of 'violating civil rights' was not justified and refused to hear one of the suspects who had turned witness.

"Oh, it is known that the 'black problem' is hard to solve in the United States, all the more so since it's not something natural; it's an old account that owes a lot to the slave market.

"But decisions like the one just made by the Mississippi judge don't simplify the question. If you give some thought to the fact that in certain states, the murder of three antiracist youths is not a crime, nor a misdemeanor, nor even an infraction of minor police regulations, if justice doesn't want to hear those who have confessed and who, probably, are remorseful, it's not the 'black problem' that's felt by uneasy consciences with most acuteness, it's the white problem."

NEW AREA OF OVERPRODUCTION

"Present day atomic programs, including the weapon phases, are entirely too small to absorb the output of today's operating uranium mines." -- Arnold Kramish in The Dispersion of Nuclear Weapons.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC FEELS IMPACT OF REVOLUTIONS

By J. Ndele

BANGUI, Central African Republic -- The Congolese Revolution and the imperialist intervention have had immense repercussions here. This country (the former French colony of Ubangi-Shari), located to the north of both Léopoldville and Stanleyville, has been one of the "calmest" countries in Africa up to now, and the stability of the government of President David Dacko has never been threatened. Supported by a one-party system, the MESAN [Mouvement pour l'Evolution Sociale de l'Afrique Noire], Dacko has leaned toward the capitalist powers and ruled the country (which has a rather limited economy) with an at times severe paternalism.

The revolutionary convulsions in Black Africa, above all in Léopoldville and Brazzaville, have broken the "calm." In face of the radicalization of various groups, even within his own party, Dacko is being forced to take one road or the other. Leftist currents have appeared even at the government level.

The fearful poverty of the overwhelming majority of the population (a poverty in striking contrast to the opulence of the Europeans and some of the African officials), the steady rise in the cost of living, Dacko's discredited foreign policy -- all this, coupled with the influence of the revolutions in the neighboring countries, have stirred things up and brought politics here to a crossroads.

The government has been obliged to take measures against businessmen and foreign enterprises (taxes, etc.). As a result they are either leaving or displaying resistance. Half measures have failed to provide satisfying results. And so talk has begun to be heard about "Chinese socialism," about following the examples of Mali, Guinea, Congo-Brazzaville.

While American prestige has dropped (Dacko had placed great hopes in Washington), the Chinese are being welcomed. With the "left" turn, the government recognized the People's Republic of China and kicked out the representative of Chiang Kai-shek. A little later the USSR also set up an embassy in Bangui.

It is, however, necessary to note the difference in greetings accorded by the government and by the trade-union and political organizations to the Chinese and Soviets. A month ago, when a Chinese delegation arrived headed by the vice-minister of Foreign Trade, a real popular demonstration took place at the airport. Around 2,000 people, mostly youth, hailed the Chinese. This completely unexpected (and most unusual) occurrence greatly surprised the European colonists and functionaries, not to mention the American ambassador Ross, whose policy of small "gifts" ended in failure.

On the other hand, when the Soviet ambassador arrived two

weeks later, it was scarcely noticed. It can be said that no one expects much from Moscow. In addition, the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy in relation to the revolutionary African movements is under strong criticism.

Leftists here do not count on any serious aid being granted by the USSR. Government circles similarly no longer believe that Moscow will grant effective, long-time aid in developing the economy.

In a general way, it can be said that in the Central African Republic the Soviet bureaucracy has lost all the prestige it had at the time the new countries began winning their independence.

The failure (or lack) of Soviet policy in relation to the countries of central Africa is all the more stinging for the Kremlin since the Chinese have been gaining ground very rapidly both among the most leftist groups as well as among the "neutralist" governments.

CHE GUEVARA SCORES AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN THE CONGO

After a visit in Algeria, Che Guevara arrived in Mali December 26 on the next leg of a tour he is making of African countries. Just before leaving Algiers, the Cuban minister of industry granted an interview to the daily Alger Ce Soir in which he discounted the possibility of a world war flaring in the immediate future out of the crisis in the Congo.

"I think that the Congo business comes under the American strategy of no over-all war, but local wars to maintain dictatorships and hence areas of friction."

"I do not see the possibility at the moment of a world war," Guevara added. "But still, the danger in the Congo resides in the fact that if American imperialism becomes firmly entrenched there, it will become a base for launching aggressive actions against all progressive African countries, thus multiplying the neuralgic points in this so important part of the world. Consequently it is necessary in this struggle, which concerns all of us, to take a firm position against American intervention, because it tends to place in question our existence."

SPANISH POET GIVEN DOUBLE SENTENCE

Carlos Alvarez, sentenced to three years and two months for publicly protesting Julian Grimau's death sentence, was given an additional six months and one day December 26. His crime: "slandering the army" by what he said in his previous trial.

IS IT LEGAL TO SUE FOR DAMAGES DUE TO TORTURE?

In recent months, South Africa's racist apartheid government has continued its political witch-hunt trials, condemning a new series of victims to long terms in the country's foul prisons and executing some despite world-wide protests and appeals for clemency.

The use of torture by the police in securing "evidence" in these cases is becoming more and more brazen. Several recent incidents will serve to indicate the situation.

In October two young detainees took the extraordinary measure of suing for damages totaling R6,000 [one rand = \$1.40] because of injuries suffered during torture.

The two were Alan Brooks, a 24-year-old lecturer at the University of Cape Town, who sued for R4,000; and Miss Stephanie Kemp, a 22-year-old physiotherapist.

They sent letters of demand to Minister of Justice Vorster and the two cops whom they accuse of assault, Det.-Sergt. J.F.P. "Spyker" van Wyk and Det.-Constable T. T. Zandberg.

Both of these victims were detained under the infamous law giving the police the right to hold "suspects" for indefinitely renewable periods of ninety days without bringing charges.

Brooks stated that after being arrested July 22, he was held for a number of days. Then in the early hours of Sunday, August 2, he was taken into a sound-proof room at Caledon Square. There he was assaulted by van Wyk and Zandberg.

Among other injuries which he suffered during this session of "questioning" was a broken right ankle.

Stephani Kemp, an idealistic girl of great charm, was detained on July 12. Her siege of "questioning" began on August 1 at 11 a.m. and ran continuously until 2 a.m. on August 2.

Various members of the Security Branch questioned her during this period, subjecting her to "undue, harsh, physical and mental stress and strain." Sometime during the night and early morning, she stated, she was assaulted by Det.-Sergt. van Wyk and rendered dazed and semiconscious.

She has asked for R2,000 in damages from the Minister of Justice.

The attorney for the two victims said that he had not been permitted to see either of them while they were detained under the 90-day law. They were finally charged with "sabotage" along with three other defendants.

It is not likely that the legal action taken by Stephanie Kemp and Alan Brooks will get very far in the machinery of apartheid justice. In October, nine political prisoners and the wife of a tenth in 90-day custody appealed to the Supreme Court for an order declaring the methods of interrogation used by the police to be unlawful. Mrs. Adelaide Joseph, the wife of a detainee, appealed for an interdict restraining the police from maltreating her husband Paul Joseph.

She filed more than forty pages of affidavits from former 90-day detainees substantiating her charges on the interrogation methods used by the police on political prisoners.

A common affidavit was that victims are compelled to stand in one spot for up to sixty hours at a time and are often submitted to physical assault by the police.

The court postponed the application to give the police an opportunity to reply to the charges.

Johannesburg Security Police Chief, Col. Johan George Klindt made a "partial" reply. According to the October 21 Cape Argus, he said "he wanted to make it very clear that a person being interrogated could sit if he wished when undergoing questioning in a room in which there were sufficient chairs."

As for the rest, "It was not in the public interest to disclose the ways in which detainees were questioned, but that the police under his command had strict instructions never to assault a prisoner."

In the same account in the Cape Argus, a Johannesburg attorney, J. G. Joffe, "said he had taken scores of statements in the past year from 90-day detainees. In almost every subsequent case in which he appeared certain State witnesses -- not defence witnesses -- had testified under oath of assaults by the police."

In another suit of similar character, the Pretoria Supreme Court ruled November 6 in favor of the police. Mrs. Lesley Erica Schermbrucker appealed against an order by Justice Snyman in the Rand Supreme Court. She had asked the court to declare the method of interrogation being used on her husband to be illegal and to have her husband brought into court to give evidence.

Snyman ruled that he could not order Colonel Klindt, the head of the Johannesburg Security Police, to bring a detainee into court for any purpose.

When this decision was appealed by Mrs. Schermbrucker, the Pretoria Supreme Court upheld the judge in the lower court. They held that there were "other avenues left open by legislation for gaining information about treatment of detainees." Among these

avenues is "visits of the magistrate."

This alleged avenue, however, has been exposed by the "90-Day Protest Committee," as largely fictitious. The chairman of the committee, J. Hamilton Russell, declared that it was "doubtful" whether a visit once a week by a magistrate constituted an effective safeguard against abuse of the "vast" police powers during interrogation.

"At least two detainees have died by hanging and one jumped to his death during an interrogation," Russell pointed out. "Five have had their minds so affected that they have had to receive psychiatric treatment or be sent to mental institutions. There have been complaints of beatings-up and electric-shock treatment."

Under the law, a magistrate is under no obligation to take any action, even if a detainee complains of ill-treatment.

"Of course," stated Russell, "the magistrate may disbelieve the complainant because he sees no external signs of third-degree maltreatment.

"If a detainee has been electrically shocked or suffocated with a plastic bag, or been made to stand for 24 or 48 hours, there will be no visible signs of injury.

"Remember, too, that a magistrate is not qualified, as a doctor or psychiatrist would be, to notice mental deterioration caused by solitary confinement even if it were obligatory for the same magistrate to visit the same detainee each week. But no detainee has any right to see his own doctor, or for that matter anyone at all.

"In fact, he has no rights whatsoever.

"The police can do with him what they will.

"Let us presume that a magistrate comes across an obvious case of ill-treatment such as a broken leg or a broken jaw. It is true that he is under no legal obligation to do anything about it.

"As the law stands he need not make any further investigation of the complaint. He need not report it to any other authority. But obviously he would not wish to overlook such an abuse of power."

However, the law does not provide any instructions as to how a magistrate should act in such a case.

Russell cited evidence that detainees, even if they have been injured, are afraid to report it to the magistrate. They are afraid, even if he is not accompanied by the police, that he will tell them and that they "might revenge themselves by further maltreatment or torture."

AN END RESULT OF "TROTSKYISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

By Ernest Germain

The imperialist attack on Stanleyville, which led to temporary loss of the city to the Congo freedom fighters, has divided the world into two camps. Pro-imperialists, labor fakery, hypocrites and racialists of all stripes have banded together, shedding crocodile tears over the "white women and children" held hostage by the Gbenye government. . . while maintaining the most shameless silence over the slaughter of Congolese women and children, butchered in the thousands by Tshombe's gangs, the white mercenaries, Cuban counterrevolutionists flying American bombers, and the Belgian paratroopers. In this unholy front of foul reactionaries, British Prime Minister Wilson and his cabinet took their rightful place along with Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak. Against all of them a completely different kind of front came spontaneously into being. It includes the African, Asian and Latin-American masses, the colonial students in the world's capitals, beginning in Brussels where they faced the worst reprisals, and -- happily -- thousands of workers and students in the imperialist countries, in Belgium and Western Germany, in Italy and the USA, who have spoken out angrily against the imperialist aggression and its phony "humanitarian" cover.

Even such docile figures as the official liberal leaders of the American Negro movement, including Nobel Prize winner Rev. Martin Luther King, who are completely integrated into White House politics and the ruling Democratic party of the USA, had to take a stand. For the first time, they openly challenged the imperialist foreign policy of the rulers of their country, demanding that Washington stop helping the neocolonialist stooge Tshombe.

But there was a tiny, if shrill, voice of dissent in this mighty chorus of disapproval. The Newsletter, published in London by the Socialist Labour League, whose leaders call themselves "Trotskyists," had this to say about the Stanleyville events (in an article signed by P. Desai in the December 5 issue):

"Facts to the contrary have proved that the Chinese Stalinists, true to their teachings, of the 'storm centre of world revolution' being in the colonies, have indulged in military adventurism.

"It is thought that they have supported the Congolese rebels. Their action over the support of Indonesian paratroops being dropped in Malaysia is an open flouting of the Marxist-Leninist line of developing a revolutionary workers' vanguard in Malaysia in preparation for socialist rule.

"The Chinese tactics have led to misadventure for the Indonesians and open race conflict in the Congo.

"The shooting of helpless white and coloured women and chil-

dren, in the past week in the Congo cannot be condoned.

"Firstly, the avarice of world capitalism is held responsible.

"Secondly, Stalinist tactics stain the hands of the Peking clique, gory with the carnage of helpless children."

That's the entire analysis proffered by the Newsletter outside of some broader references to the Congo, plus the following brief reference further on:

"Sections of the world proletariat [!] are in danger of being consumed [!] in an imbroglio of racialist madness."

This position on the Stanleyville events is presented in a context of fine-sounding generalities about imperialist exploitation and the murder of Lumumba which are, of course, true (if you leave out the factual inaccuracies). How should such an outrageous analysis be characterized? If we were to follow the example set by the Newsletter in its usual diatribes against the "Pabloites"; i.e., the world Trotskyist movement (in which the faction headed by Pablo represents only a small minority today), we would have to say that it has been proved once again that sectarianism often ends up in the same bed with opportunism and that in this very serious test of international politics, the self-styled "Trotskyists" of the Socialist Labour League betrayed; and, under pressure of the racist hysteria whipped up by the imperialist press in their own country, sold out the Congolese revolution.

Such an infantile, sterile method of polemics, which teaches nothing at all to anybody, belongs to a different school than the one represented by Trotskyism. To understand the nature and meaning of the Newsletter's position, we must proceed patiently despite our anger over the insulting epithets thrown at the Congolese revolutionists at the very moment when the united front of world reaction placed them under intense fire.

In the first place, when and where have "helpless white and coloured women and children" been shot by the Congo freedom fighters?

Two leaders of the Stanleyville regime, Christophe Gbenye and Gaston Soumialot, have publicly stated that not a single white person was killed up to the time of the air drop of the imperialist paratroops at Stanleyville. And the chief plotter of the imperialist aggression, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak, has been forced to admit the truth of this statement. Spaak sought only to wriggle out by claiming that the Belgian and U.S. governments had "reason to believe" that the lives of the hostages were in such danger that it was necessary to send the paratroops on a "humanitarian rescue operation."

In the second place, is it the position of the Newsletter

that taking hostages is wrong and immoral? Don't the editors know that the Bolsheviks took hostages during the civil war in Russia although there the counterrevolutionists were, if anything, less savage than the practitioners of genocide in the Congo under American and Belgian auspices? Don't the editors know that this has been a perennial theme in attacks against Lenin and Trotsky, the bourgeois and centrist "moralists" pointing with the greatest indignation to the "crime" of taking hostages (in order to save thousands of innocent lives)? Don't they know that Tshombe's killers, using arms provided by the Americans and Belgians, have been ruthlessly bombing defenseless villages and towns? Don't they know that the white hostages were taken in hope of preventing the bombing of Stanleyville and that this proved successful, saving the lives of both white and colored inhabitants from indiscriminate slaughter up to the moment of the paratroop operation?

In the third place, while the killing of a hundred or more white men, women and children out of vengeance "cannot be condoned," an attempt can at least be made to understand it. Many of the Congo freedom fighters are in their early teens and even younger. During negotiations over the hostages, they were suddenly and treacherously attacked by a combination of mighty foreign powers, against whom they had nothing to throw but their bare bodies and weapons of the stone age. With bow and arrow they had to face tanks and planes. How should they be expected to react when they saw their parents and closest relatives and friends killed in the most barbarous way, when they saw their own comrades, who should have been treated as prisoners of war under the Hague Convention, summarily executed, "bound together in groups of 40 or 60, thrown into the crocodile-infested river and used as targets by the Tshombe soldiers"? (A French bourgeois journalist described such a scene immediately after the capture of Stanleyville.) Shouldn't one at least understand (although, of course, without "condoning") the fury, the despair, the raging grief of the young Congolese who were submitted to such an experience? Cannot it be understood why they turned on the whites? And cannot it be understood that such a reaction was in all likelihood anticipated by the imperialist plotters and coolly calculated as being rather to their own advantage since the "moralists" could certainly be counted on to indignantly argue that the killing of hostages "cannot be condoned"?

I certainly don't "condone" taking revenge on helpless women and children. But on the other hand -- and let the editors of the Newsletter make the most of it -- I feel a thousand times closer to the Stanleyville simbas even when they have done things in despair and fury which they would never do otherwise (only imperialists and imperialist agents butcher in cold blood!) than to the disgusting "moralists" who see no difference between the violence of the exploiters, the oppressors, the slaveholders, and the violence of rebellious slaves, fighting desperately for their freedom and their lives.

The Newsletter's sudden abhorrence of "violence" is all the stranger in view of the way this newspaper took the Socialist Workers party in the United States to task for condemning the act of violence in the assassination of President Kennedy. Look at the spectacle the Newsletter makes of itself: In the United States, to believe the editors, it is unprincipled to refuse to condone an act of individual terror which to this day remains mysterious, with the smell of foulest racist provocation against the labor movement and its entire radical wing. But in Britain it is held to be principled Marxism-Leninism to condemn the violence in the Congo whether it emanates from the imperialist and neocolonialist counterrevolution or from a revolutionary mass uprising of tens if not hundreds of thousands of colonial slaves.*

In the fourth place, it is pure nonsense to counterpose, as Desai does, the task of forming "a revolutionary socialist base among the workers" and the strategy of armed uprising. A party does not appear full fledged; it develops out of the struggles of the masses. In a colonial country the primary task is national liberation from imperialism. To imagine that a revolutionary socialist party can be built by refusing to participate in the national liberation struggle if it takes the form of armed uprising is as nonsensical as imagining that a revolutionary socialist party can be built in an industrialized country by refusing to participate in militant strike action. The truth is that the road of armed uprising against colonialism and its stooges can provide one of the main opportunities (if not the most important one!) for building a revolutionary socialist party in a backward country. The examples of Cuba and Vietnam offer eloquent evidence to this. And whatever one's position may be about the present stage of the Algerian revolution, it is quite illusory to dream about building a revolutionary socialist party there in any way except through the militants who showed their revolutionary qualities by making a revolution!

In the fifth place, it is not only nonsensical but criminal to assert that it was the "Chinese tactics" that "led to. . . open race conflict in the Congo." The fact is -- if the editors of the Newsletter don't mind our pointing to raw facts -- that it was the imperialist counterrevolutionary aggression that led to the "open race conflict" (if one is to be so careless as to call it that). We again remind the Newsletter -- not a single white person was killed in Stanleyville before the air drop of Belgian paratroops! In the

*In fairness to the Newsletter, it must be said that before the issues were posed at Stanleyville with extraordinary sharpness, a good, although quite short, article was published on the civil war in the Congo (in the November 21 issue), in which the lying propaganda about the "savagery" of the "rebel forces" was correctly and sharply denounced. All the more scandalous was the capitulation two issues later in face of the hue and cry in the British imperialist press over the fate of "white women and children."

face of this fact, to claim that the "race conflict" was the consequence of "Chinese tactics" (i.e., guerrilla warfare) is to do nothing less than cover up for an imperialist crime, using nothing less than the current propaganda of the imperialist butchers themselves. (Tshombe has held one press conference after another in which he asserts that the "rebels" were armed by China.)

It is unworthy of anyone claiming to adhere to revolutionary Marxism to reprove the People's Republic of China for sending arms in response to the appeals of the Congolese freedom fighters. In fact, the very opposite accusation should be levelled against the Chinese and Soviet governments; namely, that although the "rebels" held Stanleyville, with an airfield equipped for jet landings, for many months, only a trickle of material aid was sent them, and most of it came from Algeria.

A legitimate criticism can be made about that. But this, again, is just the reverse of Desai's drivel about "military adventurism." How can one honestly or intelligently compare the dropping of a few dozen paratroopers over Malaysia and an armed insurrection which, at its height, covered and administered nearly one-third of the Congo; that is, three times the area of the British Isles, an insurrection, moreover, that has been enthusiastically supported by the entire population? (Even the imperialist "witnesses" confirm this in order to justify the wholesale slaughter of town and villages because every one there "supported the bandits"!)

In the sixth place, it takes immense ignorance, arrogance, or hypocrisy (or a combination of them) to advise the Congolese that they should organize unions and parties instead of indulging in "military adventurism." Doesn't Desai know that anybody trying to organize a free trade union or a strike is immediately jailed? That military terror, worse even than in South Africa, reigns in the Tshombe-controlled territories, people being shot on sight without the least pretense at any kind of trial? Doesn't he know that genocide is being committed on a big scale there? Doesn't he know that the generic name for regimes like the one headed by Tshombe is fascism? Does he really think that a fascist dictatorship can be effectively fought by organizing a . . . trade union? Does he think that the tortured Jewish, Polish, Yugoslav and Russian peoples in the Nazi-held territories during World War II made a "mistake," engaging in "military adventurism" inspired by "Stalinist tactics," when they heroically defended their lives with bare hands against the butchers instead of letting themselves be slaughtered without defending themselves? Shouldn't they instead have built trade unions. . . in the gas chambers?

Do the editors of the Newsletter hold that there is a qualitative difference between the way the Jews, the Poles and the Yugoslavs were treated by the Nazis, the way the Algerians were treated by the French imperialists (more than 1,000,000 Algerians were killed), and the way the Congolese people are being treated today by

Tshombe (whole tribes have become infected with "Mulelism" and must be exterminated, declares the imperialist press in Belgium)?

And when this mixture of ignorance, arrogance and hypocrisy is advanced under the label of a "Marxist-Leninist line," the great founders of the revolutionary working-class movement are slandered most unconscionably! For they, especially Lenin, who lived to see the first uprisings of the colonial peoples against the imperialist yoke, had a different concept of the duty of a Marxist in face of the colonial revolution. Here is what Lenin wrote explicitly in the Theses on the National and Colonial Question, adopted at the Second World Congress of the Communist International:

"The Communist parties must. . . support by actions [my emphasis] the revolutionary movement in the dependent nations or those that do not enjoy equal rights (e.g., in Ireland, among the American Negroes, etc.) as well as in the colonies.

"Without this latter, especially important condition, the struggle against the oppression of independent nations and colonies and for recognition of their right to form a separate state, remains unreal, as is evident among the parties of the Second International."

And here is what Lenin wrote, even more emphatically, in the "Twenty-One Conditions for Admission into the Communist International," also taken up at the Second World Congress of the Comintern:

"Any party wishing to belong to the Third International, is obliged to denounce without reservation the machinations of 'its own' imperialism in the colonies, to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only by words but by actions [my emphasis], to demand that its own imperialists be chased out of these colonies, to create in the hearts of the workers of its country really fraternal sentiments towards the toiling population of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and to conduct systematic agitation among the troops of its country against any suppression of colonial peoples."

To talk about "Chinese tactics" that have led to "open race conflict" and to hands "gory with the carnage of helpless children"; to talk about "military adventurism" and all the rest, is not designed to create "really fraternal sentiments" in the hearts of the British workers towards the Congolese freedom fighters. The Newsletter does not even point out how the freedom fighters are seeking to "chase out" the British imperialist interests in the Tanganyika Concessions Ltd. It does not even mention the collaboration of the British government in permitting Ascension Island to be used as a springboard for the attack by Belgian paratroopers. Far from calling for action to support the Congolese freedom fighters, the Newsletter did not even support them verbally -- it injured their cause.

On the evidence of this article at a decisive moment in the history of the Congolese freedom struggle, no other conclusion is

possible: the Socialist Labour League would not have been eligible for admission to the Comintern under the rules proposed by Lenin.

Of course the SLL makes a special claim to being "Trotskyist." But there was no difference between Lenin and Trotsky on this question. In the last important political document which he wrote before his assassination, the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, Trotsky said the following:

"The perspective of the Permanent Revolution by no means implies that backward countries must await the signal of advanced countries, or that colonial peoples must patiently wait till the proletariat of the metropolitan centres frees them. Help comes to him who helps himself. The workers must develop the revolutionary struggle in each colonial or imperialist country, where favorable conditions exist, and thereby give an example to the workers of other countries. Only initiative and activity, resolution and temerity, can really materialize the slogan: Workers of the world, unite!"

In that sense the July 26 Movement of Fidel Castro, the heroic fighters of the Algerian revolution, the followers of Pierre Mulele in the Congo, of the Trotskyist Hugo Blanco in Peru, and the Bolivian Trotskyists at Sora-Sora, are much closer to the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, at least so far as their understanding of the colonial revolution goes, than the editors of the Newsletter.

On the level of theory, the source of the Newsletter's grossly incorrect position on the imperialist attempt to smash the regime of the freedom fighters by the assault on Stanleyville lies in utter lack of understanding of the colonial revolution. This has shown up in all the major policies of the Socialist Labour League for more than five years -- in relation to Algeria, to Cuba and now the Congo.

To be a genuine Trotskyist, it is not enough to offer lip service to the theory of the permanent revolution; the theory must be applied concretely to the present world situation. Those who are incapable of doing this are incapable of understanding what's going on in the biggest part of the globe today. Worse than that, those who try to "prove" from the theory of the permanent revolution that victory for the colonial masses is impossible "as long as the proletariat in the metropolitan countries has not arisen," greatly injure the Trotskyist movement and the image of Trotsky personally. They reduce the theory of the permanent revolution to the sterile caricature which the Stalinists at one time "refuted" year in and year out in view of their incapacity to refute Trotsky's real ideas.

On the political and organizational level we see in the gross blunder committed by the Newsletter an example of what comes from the illusion that Trotskyism can be built "in one country" no matter what happens elsewhere. It is materially impossible for a group of revolutionists, whether in Britain, France, Germany, or any country in the world -- however talented and devoted they may be -- to reach

a correct analysis of the social and political development and struggles of all countries in the world. It was still possible to achieve this when only a couple of dozen countries in the world played a "significant" role in international politics. This period has forever ended. Today "world politics" is shaped by 120 countries, including such tiny dots on the map as Zanzibar.* No genius or group of geniuses can completely appreciate developments in all these countries simply by reading the newspapers and books available in London, excellent as these may be. A much surer way, one in accordance with the Marxist method of knowledge, is to participate in a world-wide organization of revolutionists who learn the reality in their countries through co-ordinated revolutionary activity.

It is because the leadership of the Socialist Labour League has deliberately refused to participate in the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement, taking the opposite course of cutting their ties with the majority of the International Committee, and rationalizing their withdrawal into isolation with the fantastic theory that this was a step toward "reorganizing" the Fourth International, that the SLL is today unable to understand the colonial revolution, the real world situation as a whole, and much else that occurs outside the British Isles. "Trotskyism in one country" then periodically shows where its logic leads as in the position of the Newsletter on the Stanleyville events.

The Socialist Labour League has young and devoted members who sincerely and honestly want to build a revolutionary organization. They suppose that it is sufficient to be as active as possible and to learn theory, primarily as it is presented by the Newsletter or taught by the leaders of the SLL. They are denied the immensely fruitful experience of participating in a revolutionary-socialist Internation-

*Incidentally the Newsletter first sneered in arrogant fashion at the revolutionists there. "Rag-bag nationalists take over Zanzibar," a three-column headline proclaimed. "The comic-opera militancy of the coup's 'initiator' John Okello," said the Newsletter [January 18, 1964], "is no more than a cover-up for the fact that the new government has no policy for the solution of Zanzibar's acute economic crisis and for the alleviation of poverty amongst its working and peasant classes." Some four months later, in the May 2 issue, the Newsletter returned to the subject. A headline informs us that the union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika constitutes nothing less than formation of "a new bloc against Communism." It is insinuated that the Zanzibar revolutionists sold out; Babu, for instance, being "conveniently out of the country whilst negotiations for unity were going on." These "rag-bag nationalists" and "comic-opera" militants have singular powers! As clowns they amuse the editors of the Newsletter; as betrayers they furnish them with a convenient text for moral sermons. Unfortunately such rag-bag, comic-opera analyses of events in the colonial revolution appear with dreary frequency in the Newsletter.

al, without which it is impossible to build an effective party under present world conditions, particularly in an imperialist country. Experience will show them again and again that it is impossible to develop, or even retain, revolutionary theory, revolutionary Marxism, outside of a world movement. Experience will teach them again and again that a real revolutionary party can be built only by turning away from the blind alley of "Trotskyism in one country" and linking up with the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement.

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