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Nicaragua

Reagan Launches Secret War, but Propaganda Drive Backfires



Nicaragua's security chief, Lenin Cerna, at February 17 news conference with dynamite seized from counterrevolutionaries. Did CIA supply explosives? Arnold Weissberg/IP

Exclusive Interview

Israeli Workers React to Economic Crisis, War Threat

Stop the secret war against the Nicaraguan revolution!

By Fred Murphy

The Reagan administration is conducting an undeclared, covert war against the Nicaraguan revolution.

The March 10 *Washington Post* confirmed that Reagan has authorized a \$19 million plan for covert military operations inside Nicaragua. The plan "directs the CIA to begin to build and fund a paramilitary force of up to 500 Latin Americans, who are to operate out of commando camps spread along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border."

The *Post* said it "could not be determined" exactly when Reagan gave the CIA the green light, but that the proposal was first presented in detail by CIA Director William Casey to the National Security Council last November 16.

It was precisely in mid-November that terrorist attacks against Miskitu Indian villages along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border became serious. A series of incursions by counterrevolutionaries left some ninety persons dead and eventually forced the Sandinistas to evacuate the Miskitu population to a more secure location away from the border (see page 220).

U.S. officials cited by the *Post* claimed the CIA had decided "to focus on economic targets" inside Nicaragua, "in a manner that is relatively inexpensive and least threatening to the civilian population."

"If you blow up a dam," one top official told the *Post*, "you cause a lot of trouble but you're not killing people."

In fact, three Nicaraguans have already died in a terrorist bombing at the Managua airport on February 20. Had the bomb exploded on the Honduran airliner it was unloaded from, all forty passengers could have been killed.

Secret funds for capitalist parties

The CIA-sponsored terror is being complemented by another project to funnel millions of dollars to capitalist opposition groups inside Nicaragua. According to the March 11 *New York Times*, Washington hopes these secret funds will "help preserve moderate economic and political institutions."

The same *Times* article cited claims by unnamed officials that Reagan had really "rejected a proposal to finance and support the creation of a paramilitary force in Central America." These officials said that instead other governments, including those of Argentina and Venezuela, have been "working together to assemble paramilitary units that they plan to infiltrate into Nicaragua."

Nonetheless, the *Washington Post* reiterated its earlier reports on March 13, and noted that "senior administration officials have confirmed to the three major television networks

the presidential authorization for the paramilitary force. . . .

"NBC News said it had authoritative confirmation of the paramilitary force and quoted one White House official as saying the president was not especially upset about news leaks on the covert operations because the reports convey the president's determination to counter what he considers aggression in Central America."

Tardencillas turns the tables

But Reagan's "determination" is being met by massive antiwar sentiment among working people in the United States. To counter this, the State Department worked overtime during the second week of March. Special press briefings were held with the aim of portraying the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions as parts of a sinister Soviet-Cuban plot to take over all of Central America.

The propaganda effort went into high gear on March 9 with an elaborate presentation of spy photos taken of Nicaragua's defense preparations. But it collapsed in a shambles just three days later, when a nineteen-year-old Nicaraguan turned the administration into a laughingstock.

Reporters were brought to the State Department and informed that Orlando José Tardencillas Espinoza, who had been captured in El Salvador in January 1981, would repeat his year-old confession that he had been sent there by the Nicaraguan government.

Instead, Tardencillas declared:

"I acted alone. I did not receive any order from the Nicaraguan armed forces to go to war. I followed the mandate of my own conscience. I never saw a foreigner fighting in El Salvador. I am the only foreigner I know fighting in the country."

While dismayed State Department aides huddled nervously in the back of the room, Tardencillas explained to reporters that he had gone to El Salvador in April 1980 because he wanted to help the Salvadoran people "fight the criminal activities, terrorism and human-rights abuses of the Salvadoran government." He said he had "obviously been presented for purposes of propaganda."

'Confession' extracted through torture

"An official of the U.S. Embassy [in El Salvador] told me that they needed to demonstrate the presence of Cubans in El Salvador," Tardencillas said. "They gave me an option. They said I could come here or face certain death."

While imprisoned in El Salvador, he said, "I was tortured. They used physical force and scientific methods. I was batted about. I had to

be operated upon for a clot in my head from the beating."

As a result of such treatment, Tardencillas said, he had been forced to go before television cameras in El Salvador last March and say he had been trained in Cuba and Ethiopia. "They thought I would say the same things here. All those statements [in El Salvador] were false."

Tardencillas said he was aware that he might be risking his life by exposing the "publicity farce" of the U.S. and Salvadoran governments. He said he expected to be returned to El Salvador to face "a trial rigged by those powerful individuals there who have the courts under their control."

"I am aware of what is happening and very clear about what awaits me," Tardencillas went on. "I know whose hands I'm in. I'm a revolutionary and one of the risks is death. I am willing to accept it."

But the wide publicity Tardencillas's plight received in the United States forced the State Department to cut its losses and release the young fighter into the custody of the Nicaraguan embassy in Washington. According to the March 14 *Washington Post*, the State Department was "blitzed by calls from Americans concerned about the prisoner's safety and questioning the legality of the government's action in bringing him here."

Tardencillas departed Washington for his homeland on March 13.

Third lie in two weeks

The Tardencillas debacle marked the third time in less than two weeks that Washington had been caught lying about Nicaragua.

In late February, Secretary of State Alexander Haig cited photographs published in the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* to bolster his claims that the Sandinista regime was committing "atrocious genocidal actions" against the Miskitu Indians. But the State Department admitted March 1 that the photos were fraudulent. The following day *Le Figaro's* editor said the photos had actually been taken in 1978, when the Somoza dictatorship was devastating cities and towns all over Nicaragua in its attempts to terrorize the population and hold on to power.

On March 4, Haig told a congressional committee that "today for the first time a Nicaraguan military man was captured in Salvador, having been sent down by the F.S.L.N. [Sandinista National Liberation Front] to participate in the direction, which is so evident, of this guerrilla operation from Nicaragua." But Haig's "military man" turned out to be a Nicaraguan student from a university in Mexico who was detained at a customs post on the El Salvador-Guatemala border while traveling home for vacation.

It was in hope of restoring some credibility to the administration's claims that Deputy CIA Director Bobby Inman and John Hughes of the Defense Intelligence Agency went before reporters at the State Department on March 9 with a series of photographs taken by U.S. spy

planes that regularly violate Nicaraguan air space.

Inman began by expressing his exasperation at the reluctance of most people to take Washington's claims for good coin.

"I'm angry," he said, "because I've watched, over the past couple of weeks, public servants trying to grapple with the difficulty of conveying information while protecting critical intelligence sources and methods and finding that they're standardly greeted with, 'How can we believe you, unless you show us all the detailed evidence?'"

'Soviet-style obstacle course'

Inman introduced Hughes as the officer who in 1962 "briefed the evidence, from photography, of the introduction of missiles into Cuba." But this time the most the spies could produce were photos of Nicaraguan military garrisons and airfields.

Hughes pointed ominously to such features as a "Soviet-style obstacle course" and "the barracks area and the training facilities, all characteristic of Cuban design and construction."

The *New York Times* did its best to help out what it called the administration's "information campaign," devoting nearly four pages of text and photos to the briefing.

But except for the spy photos, the *Washington Post* observed, "the briefing was largely a reiteration of information that the administration previously made public."

What set the show apart, the *Post* continued, "was the almost theatrical flair with which it was staged. Administration officials also made clear it was only the opening salvo in a major effort to influence public opinion and counter the mounting opposition in Congress and elsewhere to President Reagan's backing of the military-civilian government in El Salvador and his hostility to Nicaragua."

It remains to be seen whether Reagan will pursue this campaign now that ridicule over the Tardencillas news conference is drowning out the cries of alarm over Nicaragua's so-called military buildup. As the *Washington Post* put it March 13, the administration's latest propaganda shot "misfired so badly that a big question was left as to whether the public can be induced to take seriously any future evidence that the administration might put forward about the alleged Cuban and Nicaraguan threat to Central America and the Caribbean."

Antiwar sentiment mounts

The sympathy displayed by Americans for Tardencillas was further confirmation of the depth of opposition that exists in the United States to any form of intervention in Central America. Haig's lies and the leaks about covert war have fueled this further. Members of Congress are feeling the heat, and several moves are under way there that could hinder the administration in its aim of smashing the Central American revolutions.

On March 4 the House of Representatives voted 396 to 3 for a nonbinding resolution call-

ing for "unconditional discussions among the major political factions in El Salvador in order to guarantee a safe and stable environment for free and open democratic elections."

On March 12, two senators announced plans to introduce legislation requiring prior and explicit congressional approval for any military operations or covert intervention in Central America and prohibiting the use of any special funds not specifically appropriated by Congress for aid to countries in that region.

U.S. allies in Western Europe continue to take their distance from Washington's war in El Salvador. Not even the governments with Christian Democratic majorities have agreed to send observers to the phony elections being held there March 28.

When French President François Mitterrand visited Washington March 12, he publicly lec-

tured Reagan at a White House ceremony on the need to oppose "poverty and exploitation" imposed by "bloody dictatorships" and to give additional assistance to "peoples who are rebelling against their fate."

The key force that can slow down or block Reagan's war drive remains the working people of the United States. The green light given to the CIA for covert action against Nicaragua underscores the importance of the antiwar march on Washington set for March 27.

As Nicaraguan government leader Sergio Ramírez put it in a March 8 interview with the *Washington Post*, "The people of the United States have become the principal element to stop any aggression against us or intervention in Central America." Without their pressure, Ramírez said, "we think people like Haig and [UN Ambassador Jeane] Kirkpatrick would have long ago invaded us." □

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Aid rushed to displaced Indians

Victims of rightist terror to get schools, housing, health care

By Jane Harris

MANAGUA—More aid is now on the way to Nicaragua's Miskitu Indian population.

Last month, the revolutionary government here was forced to relocate 8,965 Miskitus from their ancestral villages along the Río Coco. This was the only means of assuring their safety from counterrevolutionary terrorists operating out of Honduras.

Some ninety Nicaraguans — including many Miskitus — died in raids from Honduras between November and January. Kidnappings, rapes, robberies, and sniper attacks made life unbearable for the residents of the Río Coco villages. (See *Intercontinental Press*, March 8, p. 172.)

The Miskitus were brought to Tasba Pry — which means "Free Land" in Miskitu — a new settlement of some 76,000 manzanas (1 manzana = 1.73 acres).

Tasba Pry is divided into five separate settlements, guaranteeing the continuity of the customs of the previous communities. The chosen location will solve some of the age-old worries of the Miskitus, such as annual flooding, the unavailability of fertile lands, and severe transportation problems.

Government aid plans

In a statement issued March 7, the Junta of National Reconstruction detailed plans for Tasba Pry. In 1982, 58.6 million córdobas (10 córdobas = US\$1) will be set aside to construct more than 1,777 homes, four schools, and four health clinics.

Latin American intellectuals: 'Remember lesson of Vietnam'

MANAGUA—The Standing Committee of Intellectuals for a Sovereign America held its first meeting here March 3-7. Intellectuals from throughout Latin America participated, including such figures as Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, Cuban Minister of Culture Armando Hart, and Cuban painter and president of the Casa de las Américas publishing house Mariano Rodríguez.

The meeting, Argentine writer Julio Cortázar explained, "has a practical purpose, which is to find ideas and ways to proceed that will advance the process of liberation for the Latin American people."

During the five-day meeting, several public cultural events were organized. An



Arnold Weissberg/IP

Terrorist bombing at Managua airport February 21 killed three people. Counterrevolutionary terrorists have also murdered scores of people in Atlantic Coast region.

Another 6.3 million córdobas will buy 300 prefabricated homes. (Currently the Miskitus are living in tents.) This money will also serve to increase the number of beds at the nearby hospital of La Rosita to fifty.

On March 8, the first school, located in the Wasminoma settlement, opened with an attendance of 700 students. The figure will climb to 3,854 when children from the other settlements enroll. Seventy-four teachers will instruct the preschool through primary grades. More than fifty doctors have volunteered their

services to the settlement, which greatly increased the number of consultations made daily to a population that heretofore had completely lacked medical care.

With the help of Nicaraguans living in the western and central provinces, the government is in the process of sending 10,000 pairs of shoes to the Miskitus, as well as comparable quantities of pants, shirts, underwear, and other clothing. In addition, tools, kitchenware, and 2,190 pairs of rubber work boots are on the way.

Referring to the generous contributions of the Nicaraguan people, the revolutionary government pointed out, "In this way, we are burying the slanders from outside and inside the country, slanders aimed at manipulating the situation in order to hurt the advancement and consolidation of our revolution."

Account by visitors

The statement continued, "Testimony given by religious leaders, Latin American political figures, U.S. Congressmen, and others who have visited the new settlement and talked to the people living there shows that they have confidence that above all, the revolution has respect for the beliefs, religious practices, and customs of the Miskitus. . . ."

One account of a visit to the Tasba Pry settlement has been provided by a delegation from the Central American Historical Institute (IHCA), a research organization run by Catholic clergy and lay persons in Managua. "One thing that impressed us," an IHCA report said, "was the reaction of the children when we arrived. There was absolutely no fear of the mil-

— Antígona Martínez

itary or government people on the part of the children. On the contrary, they ran up, laughing and shouting, and accompanied all of us down the road. . . .

"We talked to many people in the camp. Many told us they were glad to be there. One man said the counterrevolutionaries had attacked his village and killed his brother, a teacher. He said when they went to their farms in Honduras, they were killed. On Christmas and New Year's they were hiding in the mountains, they could not even celebrate with their families. He said he had confidence in the government even though it is young and poor.

"Other people were sad, some bitter, at the move, especially those from villages that had not been touched by the violence. They are a very simple people who have lived in isolation and understand very little of the international politics that have created the situation in which the government was forced to take this drastic step."

History of oppression

Enemies of the Nicaraguan revolution have launched an international campaign of deceit and lies, charging the revolutionary government with violating the human rights of the Miskitu people.

In addition to the actions of the Sandinistas — which by themselves counter these lies — the office of press information here has issued a document complete with dozens of photographs of Tasba Pry to further illuminate the situation, including its historical roots.

The document explains that the Indian peoples of Nicaragua have suffered a 400-year history of colonial and neocolonial oppression.

In the 1600s, the Spanish and the English arrived in Nicaragua. Spain colonized the Pacific and central regions, while England, already based in the Caribbean, expanded to Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. Both countries sought to extract as much natural wealth from the land as rapidly as possible. To accelerate this, they brought in large numbers of Black slaves from Africa.

The English settlers, preferring the climate of what is today the United States, did not stay in Nicaragua in large numbers. They bribed many Miskitu leaders, and in turn the Miskitus dominated and enslaved other indigenous groups in Central America — such as the Sumos, Ramas, Tayas, Lempas, and Talamancas. Miskitus served as troops for England in its wars against Spain.

For almost three centuries, Nicaragua's economy was controlled by the Spanish on the Pacific Coast and by the English and the United States on the Atlantic Coast.

The English withdrew from Nicaragua in the 1890s, and the central government in Managua extended its control over the Atlantic Coast for the first time. (Spanish colonial rule over western and central Nicaragua had ended in 1821.)

In 1912, U.S. Marines occupied Nicaragua. Twenty years of occupation paved the way for U.S. corporations to gain political and economic control of vast areas of the Atlantic

Coast. The North Americans segregated the Blacks and the Indian peoples within the banana plantations, lumber camps, and mines.

Achievements of revolution

Coming to power in 1936, the Somoza family dictatorship was totally subservient to the foreign corporations, further aggravating the situation. Yet Gen. Augusto Sandino, who was murdered on Somoza's orders after defeating the marine occupation, had a different vision for the Atlantic Coast. His dream was to construct large-scale farming cooperatives along the Río Coco.

While the presence of the Somozaist terrorists along the Río Coco has so far made this impossible, Sandino's followers are hard at work to make sure this dream becomes a reality, on soil that is both fertile and safe from counterrevolutionary attacks.

This is a mammoth task, but already much has been achieved. In the national literacy campaign, 12,500 Indians learned to read and write in their native languages.

By the time of the revolution's second anniversary last July, the number of medical and paramedical personnel had tripled in the Atlan-

tic Coast region. The number of hospitals, clinics, and medical training centers had doubled.

The government's March 7 statement, addressed to the Nicaraguan people and "especially to our Miskitu, Sumo, Creole [Black], and Rama brothers," and to the people of the world, pledges that the revolution will actively oppose all forms of racial, linguistic, and cultural discrimination inside Nicaragua.

To this end, the revolutionary government will supply the means that are required to develop and enhance the various cultural traditions, including the preservation of the Indian languages.

In addition, the Sandinista People's Revolution will legalize the ownership of lands on which the peoples of the Atlantic Coast communities have traditionally lived and worked, organized either as communes or cooperatives. Land titles are to be granted to each community.

The Sandinistas inherited four centuries of problems left by the colonialists and the imperialists. But these revolutionary fighters will yet realize Sandino's dream, despite the attacks by U.S.-backed terrorists. □

Women will be on the front lines

MANAGUA—Thousands of women and men gathered here in the Omar Torrijos Plaza of the Nonaligned Nations on March 8 to say one thing loud and clear: Women will be on the front lines against any attack on the Nicaraguan revolution.

Women's militias assembled in front of the podium carrying a large banner that read, "Women are here to defend the Sandinista People's Revolution against imperialist threats."

The crowd went wild when a special contingent of mothers of heroes and mar-

tyrs of the revolution entered the plaza. A popular theme of the speeches and banners was solidarity with the women of El Salvador and Guatemala, struggling to be free of U.S. domination.

Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal and Commander of the Revolution Humberto Ortega spoke at length on the necessity for both women and men to strengthen the Sandinista Defense Committees and the Sandinista People's Militias.

Glenda Monterrey, general Secretary of the Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE), which sponsored the international women's day rally, pointed out that women have already been playing a big role in all aspects of Nicaraguan society.

"Nicaraguan women made up 60 percent of the literacy campaign teachers, 80 percent of health workers, and have formed seven reserve militia battalions. They constitute the majority of the vigilance committees and besides that have been in the vanguard of the struggle for social emancipation," Monterrey said.

In the AMNLAE leader's concluding remarks, she explained, "Since July 19, 1979, every day in Nicaragua has been a women's day, because every day we are constructing a new country, incorporating women in the work of national reconstruction."

The crowd sounded their agreement with an enormous round of applause.



GLENDIA MONTERREY

Barricada

—Jane Harris

Terrorist regime holds elections

Not even ultraright candidates safe from government

By Jane Harris and Antígona Martínez

MANAGUA—News of Gen. Aníbal Guevara's election as president of Guatemala came as a surprise to no one.

Mass murder, intimidation, and fraud were but a few of the means used by the government to ensure that Guevara's victory would come off without a hitch.

Some 200 men, women, and children in the town of Santa Cruz del Quiché were decapitated with machetes on election day, a fact that was covered up by the Guatemalan army for four days.

Eight delegates from the Christian Democratic Party were "disappeared" after leaving the polls where they had been working.

Organized by a regime that has been systematically murdering even its most moderate political opponents, the elections were merely a cynical public relations gimmick designed to put a better face on the savage repression carried out by the government. The only participants in the presidential race were rightists. The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union [URNG] called for a boycott of the electoral farce.

Prior to election day, a special Mobile Emergency Force was formed. Consisting of security troops, national police, and counterinsurgency forces, and armed with air force helicopters, the force was supposed to guard any installations that the revolutionary guerrillas might attack.

Despite incessant patrols of Guatemala City and nearby villages by helicopters and armored cars, insurgent forces stopped traffic, barricading roads with stones, old tires, and power and telephone poles. In addition, buses that were to have transported voters to the polls were burned.

Sixty percent of Guatemala's voters responded to the URNG's call to boycott the elections, even though not voting is illegal. (Guatemalans can lose their jobs for failure to vote.) Furthermore, 30,000 Guatemalans cast blank ballots as a means of avoiding victimization while registering their protest.

Right-wing opponents of Guevara were livid about election fraud. They told their poll watchers to leave at midday, when the evidence became obvious to them. Demonstrations organized by the losing rightist parties occurred in Guatemala City March 9. Police threw tear gas at groups of protesters and fired shots into the crowd. The number of dead and injured has yet to be revealed.

Because in some areas there were more votes than persons registered to vote, and because election officials were so slow in count-

ing the ballots, the rightist National Liberation Movement (MLN) has officially asked for an annulment of the election. They have taken their evidence to the U.S. embassy, hoping to put more pressure on Guevara's regime.



Election rally for Guevara. Heckling is not encouraged.

For protesting the election, three right-wing presidential candidates were detained in a clandestine detention center for an hour and a half and then released. Three reporters for the American Broadcasting Company were also beaten up and detained by the police.

Since election day, a dozen murders by the police have been reported. Renan Quiñonez, a spokesperson for the Christian Democratic Party, told the press that he had information concerning a death list containing the names of 100 persons. Included on the list were the three right-wing candidates who lost. □

Argentine socialist murdered

Protests blame military regime

By Joaquín Rivery

[The following article appeared in the March 7 issue of the English-language weekly *Granma*, published in Havana, Cuba.]

* * *

The kidnapping and murder in Buenos Aires of Ana María Martínez, a member of the Argentine Socialist Workers' Party, has aroused a wave of condemnation and led many to wonder if Argentina is returning to the era of unsolved killings.

Ana María Martínez, who was pregnant, disappeared on February 4. She was arrested near her home by a group of armed men and taken off in an olive green car. The car had a radio and no license plate and resembles those used by the Argentine repressive forces.

Ten days later her body was found in a garbage dump 25 kilometers from Buenos Aires. According to police evidence, it was absolutely unrecognizable. Identification was made from her fingerprints.

The military regime blamed ultraleft groups for the crime, but this version is widely disbelieved.

Human rights organizations, politicians and

political parties, and people active in the arts promptly joined in the wave of protest, and even organs of the mass media chimed in. Many blamed the crime on the state security services.

When it was announced that the parents of the victim were to request that the body be exhumed and a new autopsy performed, the police claimed the body was still in the morgue. Nobody knows why Martínez's body was not given to the parents. At the time of writing, the body has still not appeared.

Recently a mother told how her son had been kidnapped. The kidnapers forced her to sell her apartment and give them the money; then they disappeared. She has not heard from them or from her son.

A series of kidnappings recently has led human rights groups and observers to wonder if a new wave of disappearances is growing, such as that which took place in 1976 following the military coup, when thousands of people disappeared, never to be heard of again. Ever since 1976, groups of mothers and other relatives of the victims have been demonstrating regularly in the Plaza de Mayo, in central Buenos Aires, demanding to know the whereabouts of their loved ones. □

Big strides in workers' housing

Poorest benefit the most

By Pat Kane

ST. GEORGE'S—Ordinary people take their houses seriously, and Grenadians are no exception.

In countries around the world where the capitalists rule, construction workers are being laid off, housing stock is allowed to deteriorate, and rents are being pushed up. But on the small Caribbean island of Grenada, the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) has embarked on a massive program of house construction and repairs.

Making revolutionary changes in the island's housing was one of the first priorities of the new government. Here, there are three types of houses. The huge mansions built by rich Grenadians and North Americans, the well-built housing of the island's middle class, and the wooden buildings that the vast majority of Grenadians live in. It was the conditions of the majority that the government set about changing.

The government has developed a house repair program, started to build new housing, and is presently drafting a law to restrict rents and make landlords responsible for repairs to their property.

'Sky red'

The vast majority of the country's agricultural workers live in wooden houses. They either have one open room, or a small bedroom area for the parents. With large families, there is not much room if your home is only thirty feet by fifteen feet.

These workers have been the most exploited and underprivileged on the island. They had little or no education, health care, or sanitation. They had to put up with bad roads, inadequate water supplies, and lack of other services.

But these workers could also remember the events of 1951, when they rose up in an island-wide general strike to demand their rights. They call the strike "Sky Red," in memory of the silhouettes of burning estates against the darkness.

They were led, and eventually betrayed, by a young man, the son of agricultural workers, who had just returned to Grenada. He was Eric Matthew Gairy, soon to become one of the Caribbean's neo-colonial dictators. The agricultural workers called him "Uncle Gairy."

After the March 13, 1979, revolution, which ended Gairy's reign of repression and corruption, the agricultural workers still supported Gairy. But the new revolutionary government did not ignore them because of this. The PRG did not discriminate against these workers; it set out to demonstrate that the revo-

lution was for *them*, not for a privileged elite.

All the social programs of the revolution were introduced into the countryside. The Housing Repair Program (HRP) was one of the main ways that these workers were won to the revolution.

How the repair program works

In the first year of the revolution, the government allocated \$7 million [East Caribbean (EC)\$1 = US\$0.37] to housing, including \$100,000 for the HRP. Gairy had spent a similar sum on two cocktail parties in a St. George's hotel.

The HRP is open to the poorest workers — farm laborers, plantation workers, road repair workers, and others. Without the program, these workers would have been condemned to poor housing for the rest of their lives.

Under the HRP the government offers a loan of up to \$1,000 for building materials. The worker only has to repay two-thirds of the loan, which is interest-free. Repayments can be as little as \$5 a month (the minimum wage on state farms is \$8.50 a day), and the payments can be stretched out over ten years.

There are strict criteria for those eligible. People in the worst housing come first, then those with large families, followed by those with small children. Day workers have priority over those workers who also own small plots of land, or receive money from relatives abroad.

Deslyn Peters, a coordinator for the program in Grenville, the island's second largest town and the main center for agriculture, showed me around the various housing programs in the district. First I met Joyce Brown, an elderly woman who has a young daughter living with her. Her house was across from a row of brand-new government houses in the Telescope district of Grenville. She explained why she had applied for a loan.

"Well, to improve the condition. All these other houses looking nice, and this one [she points to her own wooden house] looking on. The old galvanize [steel roof] has a leak. When I lie down sleeping, it have a leak on the bed, and I'll now pay to get it fixed.

"This house only came down here two years ago, when I come for a job here. I had the house up in Paradise, so I brought it down here on a truck. I break the sides, and the roof and floor, and the truck take it and drop it here. I pay \$500 for it."

Joyce hoped to have enough money to repair the roof, door, and windows.

Peters explained that the individual receives the money from the government, "then they can organize their repairs. . . . They can

have the repairs done privately, or they can get government workers to do them. If they have little money after buying materials, then brothers and sisters from the mass organizations help through voluntary labor."

Peters also showed me the new houses, fourteen of them, that have been built by the government in Grenville in the three years since the revolution. Gairy only built nine in more than twenty years.

We went next to visit Teresa Croney, whose house had just been repaired. She was twenty-three years old, with six children, all living in one room. She had no basic services, but she was proud of the repairs that had been done on her house. It had a new roof, walls, and floor. She was waiting for the doors and windows to be installed.

"The repairs started in January," she told me, "and it's nearly finished. I think me house is good now." Teresa was on maternity leave from a local farm, and her children now attend a local nursery, two more benefits of the Grenada revolution for these workers.

At a rally near Grenville on February 19, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop explained, in concrete terms, how much of a financial savings the Housing Repair Program meant for an average agricultural worker attempting to raise money for repairs.

At a regular commercial bank, Bishop explained, the worker would first have to provide collateral, something that would automatically exclude many workers. If a \$1,000 loan were secured — the amount provided by the HRP — it would have to be paid back within one year, not ten, at an interest rate of 12.5 percent. That would translate into a repayment schedule of \$89.09 each month, compared to \$5 under the HRP. So far, 11,000 people have benefited from the Housing Repair Program, which is 10 percent of the island's population. Some 1,642 families have already received interest free loans, and bought materials. Nearly seventy families have benefited this year alone, and the government has just purchased another \$250,000 worth of supplies. Last year a total of \$784,000 in materials were distributed.

There is a boom in housebuilding across the island. Not only the government, but private contractors are building houses. These houses only solve the worst problems of the island's workers, and cater to the growing number of Grenadians who are returning from abroad to live here.

The houses built by the government are leased to tenants. For one at Telescope a worker would be given a government loan of \$31,575.92, at a 7 percent interest rate. Private

banks currently charge 12 percent, and it fluctuates. The repayment period is over twenty years, and then the tenant owns the house.

The government has just embarked on a new housing project at Grand Anse, near the capital, St. George's. Some 289 houses will be built in terraced rows along the slopes of Grand Anse Valley. Because a major campaign of the government is to grow more local food, houses have to be sited on nonproductive land. Under Gairy, many houses and commercial buildings were built on arable land in valley bottoms, which has resulted in the loss of hundreds of acres to farming. One result has been to drastically reduce the island's sugar cane crop.

Space has been allocated for a community center, shops, a daycare nursery school, and recreational areas and playing fields. The

houses will be allocated to families living in substandard housing, those who now have to pay high rents, and civil servants. The Ministry of Housing hopes that the majority of homes will be allocated on need, and it is presently looking at similar projects in the other parishes.

Rent control

Last year, the Ministry of Legal Affairs began the work of drafting a new Rent Restrictions Act. The demand for such an act was first raised in the parish councils, the island's mass assemblies. Many Grenadians live in rented accommodations, and these rents have been spiraling since the revolution. In St. George's, one can expect to pay between \$300 and \$500 a month for a two-bedroom apartment. Agri-

cultural workers pay between \$15 and \$25 a week. So rent takes a big part of monthly salaries.

Many of the private landlords have used the housing shortage to push up rents. The presence of 700 U.S. medical students at the private St. George's Medical School has pushed up rents even more. Local landlords can charge students up to 50 percent more than they can expect from local residents.

The high rents and lack of repairs were raised in the parish meetings, so the government produced a fact-sheet on the proposed act for discussion throughout the island. The fact-sheet outlined that

- It will be compulsory for all rented premises to have their rents fixed by a government board.

- These boards will be established in every area, composed of local people.

- Landlords or tenants must apply to have the rents fixed, or the board will do it for them.

- The government has the power to lower rents in any area of the island.

- Landlords will have to make repairs, without cost to low- or middle-income tenants.

- Where landlords fail to carry out repairs, tenants can organize the repairs, and deduct the cost from their rent.

- Overcharging of rent can be challenged in court, with landlords liable to repay excess charges.

- Breaches of the law by landlords may result in fines or prison sentences.

The law is still under discussion, and it should be introduced shortly.

A system of price controls already exists for basic commodities and many food items, giving Grenadians some of the lowest prices in the region.

Controversy over new tax

Another issue that affects homeowners is the controversial Property Valuation Tax, which was introduced by the government earlier this year. At the end of January, rumors were circulating that huge sums were to be demanded in taxes after the completion of a house valuation survey. The island's rich minority, which had paid the least in the past, were worried. They saw this as an attack on their tax dodges. So the rumors started.

The government launched a major campaign to tell the truth about the new tax. There had been no valuations for thirty years, and Gairy kept no records of taxes paid. There were no building regulations enforced, so wealthy people were encouraged to build large houses. What little taxes or regulations Gairy demanded could be easily offset by bribery. The result was that only homes that were over thirty years old paid tax, and they mostly housed working people. So the rich escaped the tax system.

The government explained through the radio, newspapers, and at mass meetings that the new tax aimed to cover social costs like sanitation. The valuation survey was to equalize the burden of taxation. The government explained

'Free West Indian' replies to Reagan

[The following editorial appeared in the February 27 issue of the Grenadian weekly *Free West Indian*.]

* * *

Any peace-loving and honest person must regard as dangerous and threatening to the people of the Caribbean statements made this week by US President Ronald Reagan attacking Grenada.

In his speech at the OAS [Organization of American States] conference in Washington, Reagan attacked our country by saying that Grenada was a threat to peace and that "Washington will do whatever is prudent and necessary to ensure the peace and security of the Caribbean area."

We question the right of Reagan and his gang of warmongers to pose as "defenders of peace" in the region.

It is Reagan and his government, not Grenada, who, faced with the most massive economic disaster in the history of imperialism since the 1930s and with 10 million working people unemployed, are trying to solve their problems by making weapons of war, threatening war and ultimately engaging in war.

It is Reagan and his government, not Grenada, who are slashing social welfare, pension and unemployment benefits for the poor while in 1982, 214.2 billion (US) is being spent on arms alone.

It is Reagan and not Grenada who has moved to abolish trade unions, such as the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO), whose union was destroyed by White House legislation.

It is Reagan, not Grenada, who has slashed health benefits to the US people, eliminating up to five million children from immunisation from poliomyelitis, while spending millions on chemical weapons, small amounts of which can eliminate whole cities.

It is Reagan, not Grenada, whose closest ally is the dictatorship in El Salvador, acknowledged as being mainly responsible for the murder of 30,000 of its own citizens in the last two years.

It is Reagan, not Grenada, who supports the equally genocidal dictatorship in Guatemala and the brutal "Baby Doc" dynasty in poverty-stricken Haiti.

It is Reagan, not Grenada, who, spitting in the face of world opinion, continues to support, and is the main ally of racist South Africa.

It is Reagan and his generals, not Grenada, who have 500,000 troops stationed outside his country in 2,500 military bases in 114 countries, together with 12,000 nuclear warheads.

No. We reject the notion that our small country is a threat to peace. The threat to peace in the entire world comes from US imperialism, now under the leadership of cowboy Reagan, heading more and more in the direction of fascism, walking in the footsteps of Adolf Hitler.

Despite our poverty, despite the threats from imperialism and the war manoeuvres directed against our country — such as Amber and Amberines and Red X183 last year, and the NATO "Operation Safe Pass" manoeuvres planned for next month — we are continuing to build a truly democratic and peace-loving society. We are continuing to construct our economy as in the last three years when we experienced an accumulated growth of close to 10 per cent.

We are continuing on the international level our struggle for peace, disarmament and nonalignment. Most of all, Grenada is continuing to choose her friends and will not be dictated to by any power as to who these friends might be.

We will never bow to the threats of Reagan or any member of his cowboy gang. We are not for sale.

that since the survey was carried out by inexperienced and unskilled people, homeowners should use the appeal forms given to them if they disagree with the valuation. Every homeowner "had a serious right to appeal," as the February 5 issue of the *New Jewel* put it.

The new survey will result in 50 percent of the island's homeowners — which include Joyce Brown and Teresa Croney — paying no tax at all.

Modernizing the island's housing is a slow job. Lack of resources, material, and skilled

labor all add to the problems. But the Grenadian government has started, while many of those in the region are content to see their people living in hovels. A new prefabrication factory will speed up the process, but it will be many years until every Grenadian lives in a house with running water, electricity, and sanitation.

Meanwhile, those who live in these houses can see that the government is trying to improve the housing situation. And while they wait, they always have the Housing Repair Program to keep the rain off their beds. □

First fishing cooperatives set up

Government helps improve conditions

By Baxter Smith

SAUTEURS—For generations, fishermen from this northern coastal town have punched through wind and seas out to the rich offshore fishing grounds — pursuing a daily ritual that takes place on every Caribbean island.

But unlike their brethren on neighboring islands, nowadays when Sauteurs fishermen return with their day's catch, they participate in yet another benefit of the March 13, 1979, revolution.

With the help of government funding, thirty-three Sauteurs fishermen on February 14 launched Grenada's first fishing cooperative.

The cooperative purchases the fishermen's entire catch and stores it in a cold-room facility. Also, the fishermen are able to obtain fishing and marine gear through the cooperative at reduced prices.

Edrick Adams, treasurer of the cooperative, explained what is involved.

"Before, the fishermen would come in early because they had to sell their fish or find a vendor to sell it for them," said Adams. "They had to stand around in wet clothes and try to sell the fish before it spoiled. Or they had to deal with the vendors who charged whatever they wanted.

"Now, they can stay out longer and have a guaranteed buyer and a standard price."

Government's plans

The government, through the National Cooperative Development Agency (NACDA), obtained for the co-op a market area, equipment, and a cold storage room that can freeze 3,000 pounds of fish.

NACDA underwrote a loan of about US\$25,000 to establish the Sauteurs co-op. At year's end the fishermen will share evenly whatever profits the co-op has earned after debts are repaid.

On February 28, in the western parish of St. John, NACDA helped to get two more fishing cooperatives off the ground.

Through interviews with officials and other figures in the fishing industry here, *Intercontinental Press* learned more about the emphasis

the government is placing on the industry.

In 1982 the government hopes to increase by fourfold the number of pounds of fish caught in 1981.

James Finlay, acting chief fisheries officer, explained that under deposed dictator Eric Gairy there was little priority placed on this industry.

"For some reason the colonial powers never saw fit to establish it as a real industry," Finlay said. "They preferred to supply fish from abroad.

"But after the revolution the government saw agroindustries, agriculture, tourism, and fisheries as pillars of the economy."

Scientific management

Finlay described the revolutionary government's conscientious approach to the fishing industry.

Charts he pulled out showed the types of migratory and indigenous fishes around the island. Catching lobsters, oysters, white sea ur-

chins, and sea turtles is not permitted during closed seasons.

Sea turtles are particularly endangered and a preservation society has been established to educate about them.

In glut times, when the Sauteurs and St. John fishing co-ops cannot store all the fish they catch, the National Fishing Company will take them off their hands.

The NFC supplies fish to the armed forces, the hospital, and the old peoples' home. It also sells fish to the island's hotels and does some exporting.

The NFC oversees the operation of the ten fishing boats given to Grenada by Cuba. These craft are set up to stay out for a week and do trolling and long-line fishing.

National Fisheries School

In September 1979 the government began a National Fisheries School. Emmanuel Roberts, the school's principal, said that forty-five students have graduated so far, four of whom are women.

The students are trained in operation of the Cuba-donated vessels and in navigation and other skills. They also study math, marine biology, Spanish, English, and politics.

The government provides food, housing, and allowances for the students; their training runs for five months.

Despite periodic hostile treatment from some neighboring regimes that oppose the revolution, the government here has written to officials in other Caribbean islands and extended scholarships to the school.

Plans are in the offing to expand the school to train captains, chief engineers, and radio technicians in a two-year program.

This year the revolutionary government hopes to launch the Artisanal Fisheries Development Project, a multimillion-dollar operation to assist small fishermen — and now fisherwomen as well. □



Cuban-donated fishing trawlers in harbor of St. George's.

Flax Hermes/IP

Deep crisis changing thinking of workers

Interview with leader of Revolutionary Communist League

[The following interview with a leader of the Revolutionary Communist League, the Israeli section of the Fourth International, was obtained by *Intercontinental Press* in New York on March 9.]

* * *

Question. What are the biggest questions on the minds of Israeli workers today?

Answer. The two biggest, and interrelated questions are the danger of war and the mounting economic problems.

The war threat presses heavily on the minds of the population. Since 1978 the Israeli government has been trying to convince world public opinion and opinion inside Israel of the need to wage another war in Lebanon.

And at the same time, the working class is in a state of shock over the growing unemployment, the 130 percent inflation, and the cuts in social services. The mood of the workers, and the relations between workers and bosses, is completely changing.

Q. Do you think that a war in Lebanon is likely?

A. We think it is a real danger. Israel has been directly intervening in Lebanon since the Lebanese civil war of 1975. The first steps were carried out by Yigal Allon, who was then the foreign affairs minister and was considered a "dove."

Since then, Israel has been continually trying to change the balance of forces that emerged from the cease-fire in the civil war. It tries to bolster the rightists against the Patriotic Front, which is composed of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Lebanese left-wing groups.

It is no secret that Lebanese rightists receive training at Israeli military bases and Israeli arms, and that the Israeli high command meets with leaders of the rightist forces.

Q. What is the goal of Israeli policy in Lebanon?

A. First, to crush the Palestinian movement there, and second to turn Lebanon into a vassal state. This is a very confrontationalist policy. It poses an immediate threat to Syria.

Syria and Lebanon are closely connected historically, economically, geographically, through road and port networks, etc. Israeli control over Lebanon would put the Syrians in the position of facing the Israeli army from two directions, from the Golan Heights and from Beirut.

Q. Why do you think that an Israeli invasion is likely right now?

A. The Israeli government has used all kinds of tactics in Lebanon. In 1978, the Israeli army launched a ground invasion, with the aim of seizing a big chunk of southern Lebanon and pushing the Palestinians far enough north so they could not threaten Israel itself.

But the invasion was a failure because it did not destroy the Palestinian forces. The Palestinians simply retreated northward before the Israeli advance.

The invasion did, however, wreak havoc in southern Lebanon. The Israeli army destroyed villages, there were massacres, there was wholesale looting by Israeli troops, and perhaps 300,000 people fled north as refugees.

That simply deepened the crisis in Lebanon itself. These new refugees, who had not previously been involved in the civil war, now became involved on the side of the Palestinians and of the Lebanese left.

The second phase of the Israeli intervention in Lebanon centered on trying to push the Christian Maronite forces into a confrontation with the Syrian troops who had come into Lebanon as representatives of an Arab peacekeeping force to stop the fighting in the civil war.

The 30,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon were playing a progressive role because they were protecting the Palestinians and because their presence held back the Israelis from intervening with troops.

Because the Syrian troops in Lebanon are supported by all the Arab states, including the most moderate ones like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which provide funds for them, a direct Israeli attack on the Syrians would be tantamount to an attack on all the Arab states.

Therefore the Israelis tried to push out the Syrians indirectly, using the Christian militias. But the Syrians retaliated very hard. Then the Israelis began shouting [in April 1981] about an impending massacre of Christians as a justification to send Israeli troops into Lebanon.

The Syrians, however, made it known that they would stand and fight if the Israelis invaded Lebanon, and neither the Israelis nor the Americans, who sent Phillip Habib to Lebanon as a special envoy, wanted a full-scale war at that time.

Now we have reached another scale of Israeli escalation, which comes at a time of growing U.S.-Israeli military cooperation with the signing of the strategic agreement between [U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar] Weinberger and Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

In this context, the Begin government is preparing to launch a full-scale war against the Palestinians. Before the June 1981 election, Begin declared that Israel would move to de-

stroy the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon once and for all.

Begin sent bombers to pound the Palestinian infrastructure in Lebanon, including in July 1981 the bombing of the PLO headquarters right in the middle of Beirut. But because of the world outcry, the Israeli government had to back down, and agreed to a cease-fire with the PLO.

Around the same time there was the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor near Baghdad.

Now we see the annexation of the Golan Heights, which is in effect a declaration of war against Syria.

Q. What makes you think that the Israelis are going to act soon in Lebanon?

A. All the political initiatives that Israel and the United States have carried out in the Middle East since the Camp David accords have been failures. And the Camp David accords themselves solved nothing. Israel promised to return "x" square kilometers of Sinai desert to Egypt, but in return the Egyptians lost all their political and economic ties with the rest of the Arab world.

Today Egypt and Israel are both totally isolated. And Israel's isolation extends throughout the world, as seen by the recent UN General Assembly resolution calling on all countries to break their economic and political ties with Israel.

The Israeli government thinks that the only way to break out of that isolation is by breaking the resistance to Israel in the Arab world. And to do that, it must first destroy the Palestinian struggle by smashing it in Lebanon, which is now the center of Palestinian resistance.

Q. Do working people in Israel see that the regime is driving toward war?

A. When the Golan Heights bill was passed, most workers felt that it was done because the Syrians do not want peace. But they also felt that if the Syrians agreed to peace, it would be simple enough to annul the law.

There is a big difference between the government's intentions and the way the workers saw it. The workers did not particularly agree with the law, but they also did not see that it was an open act of war.

However, when the Syrians did not respond to the provocation, the Israeli government began to openly proclaim that it wants to go to war in Lebanon to crush the Palestinians.

There was an incident in the West Bank at the end of January in which some Palestinian

guerrillas were captured. The Israeli government wanted to use this incident as an excuse to move into Lebanon. Ariel Sharon stated that this incident meant that the cease-fire with the Palestinians had been broken.

But suddenly the population of northern Israel began to protest, urging governmental restraint. These were people who had voted for Begin.

These residents of the north, who would be in the line of fire in a war, openly said that they opposed a war against the Palestinians in Lebanon and that they were convinced that the Palestinians were maintaining the cease-fire.

This opened up a new kind of debate in Israel. There had been a big debate during the Peace Now movement, which focused on how many concessions Israel should make to get peace with Sadat and consolidate the Camp David accords.

This is different because the northern residents see Israel as directly responsible for a potential war in Lebanon that no one wants. No one believes that another war in Lebanon will finally solve the "Palestinian question."

Q. What is public sentiment regarding the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories?

A. The workers do not like the settlements. Workers recognize that they have to spend their forty-five days of reserve duty in the West Bank because these settlers are stirring up trouble right in the middle of Arab communities. They see the settlers as directly responsible for the problems.

Q. How do you see French President Mitterrand's recent visit to Jerusalem?

A. We think that Mitterrand's visit was a blow to the national liberation struggle and ultimately a blow to peace in the Middle East. Only two weeks ago the UN passed its resolution calling on governments to cut their ties

with Israel because it is endangering world peace.

Even though Mitterrand dissociated himself from some Israeli policies, his visit bolstered the Israeli government.

Mitterrand paid lip service to the rights of the Palestinians, but so did Sadat when he came to Jerusalem in 1977.

Q. Turning to the economy, do you think that the regime hopes to solve some of its economic problems through war?

A. Certainly. If you want to see a country where a war is clearly connected to the economic situation, look at Israel.

Israel has several problems. There is almost no foreign investment in the country because of the problems in the Middle East. Furthermore, Israel's international isolation has economic as well as political implications.

In order to develop economically, Israel must break through its political isolation. The regime believes that if it can crush the opposition in the Middle East, this would lift the political pressure on African, Asian, Latin American, and European states, and would make Israel an attractive place to invest. So they think that with a decisive victory over the Palestinians and the Arab states, the economy would flourish. But this is a pipe dream.

Q. What are the biggest economic problems facing working people in Israel?

A. One big problem is unemployment, which is now between 5 and 6 percent. That may not sound high by American or Western European standards, but it is unprecedented in Israel and indicates that big changes are taking place in society.

Historically, in order to pull immigrants into the country, Israel guaranteed that there would be full employment. Everyone who came would have a job. To guarantee full employ-

ment, industries were given big subsidies to locate in the so-called development towns, where immigrants were settled.

Now these subsidies are being cut and these factories are closing down. This can have catastrophic results in the development towns since often only one or two factories provide the entire economic basis for the community.

The national unemployment rate of 5 percent is concentrated in the development towns, where the unemployment situation is much more acute, and where the population is mainly Sephardic Jews, that is, Jews from Arab countries.

And of course the unemployment hits very hard at the Palestinian population as well.

This unemployment is coupled with an inflation rate of 130 percent, and big slashes in social services such as health care and education. Taken together, all this means a significant decline in living standards.

Q. Have the economic problems changed the way people view the Israeli state, the way they were taught to think about Israel?

A. This is a key question that should be understood throughout the world. In the past, as I said, to draw in immigrants people were guaranteed a job, education, and social benefits. But today drawing in immigrants is not the main thrust of Israeli policy. The emphasis is now on profitability, and whatever is not profitable is being cut.

The result is a declining standard of living for the working class and a growing polarization of society. People are beginning to understand that the Zionist state was not built for Jewish workers. They can see that there are people making huge fortunes while the rest of us suffer.

A change is taking place in the consciousness of the working class. It had been developing slowly for a long time, but is now develop-



Israeli reinforcements move into Golan Heights following annexation of area by Begin regime.

ing more rapidly as governmental policy is presented more crudely.

Q. How are these changes manifested in the workplace?

A. For the first time, we are seeing very strict discipline imposed in the factories, which is new in Israel.

Furthermore, in many factories when you are hired, you have to sign an individual contract with the boss. The contract gives you no rights, and the boss can do whatever he wants.

In many factories employees are now hired through temporary agencies. You work in the factory, but your employer is the agency. The boss pays the agency, and the agency pays you. If you want to fight over working conditions or pay, you cannot go to the company management, because they say you do not work for them. You have to go to the agency.

This system is very widespread. It occurs even in some of the largest factories.

The bosses are also using the growing unemployment as a battering ram against workers with jobs. They say, if you don't like it here, there are plenty of others waiting to take your place.

Q. Has there been any fightback against the unemployment and dropping living standards?

A. Every day the television news shows demonstrations of workers from plants that have closed or are threatened with closing.

The fightback is hampered, however, by the fact that the Histadrut,* which claims to represent the workers, backs the government policies. From the start the Histadrut organized the working class against the Arab population, with the goal of building a Jewish state, with Jewish workers, under capitalism.

The Histadrut developed its own factories and businesses and is tied into the government's war policies and its fight against the working class.

As a result the struggle must develop outside the Histadrut. Committees have been organized in the biggest factories and strategic points in the economy — like the electrical power industry, El Al airlines, and the ports. This movement is being led by what has come to be known as the "Thirteen Committees."

These thirteen committees have worked together now for nearly two years. In January 1980 they put forward some demands against the government on overtime, taxes, and social security, and called a one-day general strike which shut down the whole country.

*The Histadrut calls itself a labor federation, but it was set up in 1922 as a Zionist organization that excluded Arab workers from membership and whose central function was to advance the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Although the Histadrut continues to operate a trade-union department and to present itself as a trade union, it is also the largest employer in Israel. It owns two of the four largest armaments companies in the country, the largest industrial conglomerate, the main insurance company, the largest construction concern, and a chain of banks.

During the El Al strike last December, the government tried to take on the workers and their committee, which is one of the thirteen. But the government retreated when the other committees intervened, and the workers won the strike and the boss was fired.

Q. Have the attacks on living standards changed the way the Israeli workers look at the Palestinian struggle?

A. In approaching the workers on the Palestinian struggle you have to begin with the framework I have outlined. In the context of the cuts in social services and living standards there is more and more resistance to the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories.

Take the example of the settlers now being moved out of the Sinai. These settlers took over land from the Bedouins for nothing, used the Bedouins as super-cheap labor, got huge government subsidies to build houses, and made a lot of money on government-subsidized agriculture.

Then they turned around and got giant cash indemnities for leaving the Sinai. These huge cash payments came just when a big fight was taking place around cuts in the educational budget.

These cash payments to the settlers drove the workers crazy. They could not believe that the government was giving all this money to the Sinai businessmen while the rest of the budget was being chopped.

People know that between the huge payments to the settlers, and the fact that we have to spend our reserve duty putting out the fires they have started in the occupied territories, we are the ones who have to pay for what the settlers do.

The other side of this is that several recent government moves against the Palestinians have been very unpopular among the Israeli population. One was the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Beirut, which people opposed and thought was too big a reaction.

Second, people are opposed to the policy of blowing up the homes of residents of the West Bank in retaliation for stones thrown by children at Israeli patrols.

There is also a lot of opposition to the continual closings of the Palestinian Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, which has become a big question in Israel.

Finally there was the opposition of residents of the north to another war in Lebanon, and widespread opposition to the Begin government's war plans in the press.

Taken together, these things show that attitudes toward the Palestinians are changing. On these questions we are with the majority and the government is not.

Q. But the government continues to push ahead. . . .

A. Yes. The government has not shifted, despite the big discussions and the breakdown in consensus.

The government sees that there are growing obstacles to its policies, but it is very serious about pushing ahead with the war and with its economic program. The government is forcefully, publicly campaigning to try to win over the masses on these questions.

Q. How much impact do the protests by Palestinians on the West Bank and by the Arab population of the Golan Heights have on Israeli politics?

A. It plays an important role because the resistance is penetrating deep into the consciousness of the people inside Israel.

After long years of experience with Israeli occupation, the whole population of the West Bank is being drawn into a front around the PLO. That is why the occupation is becoming so harsh, with the constant closings of Bir Zeit University, and so on.

The reaction of the Druze population of the Golan Heights to the annexation is also a blow to government claims. The Israeli government always said that the Druze population was quiet, that Israeli Druze serve in the army, and the Druze in the Golan Heights have been totally integrated into Israeli society.

The militant protests and the general strike of the Druze against the annexation shows everyone that Israel is far from reaching its goal of pacifying the occupied territories.

The Druze have gotten a good response in Israel. It is clear that they are simply fighting to maintain their status as civilians under occupation. People see the justice of this and can understand that if the Druze do not want to be part of Israel, this should be respected.

There is also a growing identity among Palestinians within Israel and their Palestinian brothers and sisters in the occupied territories. This is furthered by the impact of the economic crisis. All the legends about the Arabs in Israel being integrated are being shown to be false.

Q. What is the role of the Bir Zeit Committee in changing consciousness within Israel?

A. The Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University is having quite an impact in Israel. It has chapters in the three largest cities — Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem.

It was set up to protest the closing of Bir Zeit University by the occupation authorities in the West Bank and it represents a layer of peace forces inside Israel who are, for the first time, unconditionally supporting demands of the Palestinians.

This is a very big development. These forces are very important. They are a real component of Israeli society — intellectuals who want to do something to change the rightward

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drift of Israeli political life because they are afraid that if the present trend continues they won't have any breathing room.

Q. Are most of the people in the Bir Zeit committees connected with universities?

A. Their base is at the universities, but they have connections with broader layers of society.

They also understand that they cannot look to the Zionist establishment on this question, but have to look to the Israeli working class.

This is the real fight today inside Israel — the fight over who will win the masses to their side. The people in the Bir Zeit committees are convinced they must go to the workers and we are helping them in every way we can.

Q. Could you tell us what kind of activities the Revolutionary Communist League is carrying out?

A. Our organization is focusing on three central questions. First is the work against the war drive in Lebanon, which has been a major focus of ours for three years. We work with any forces we can on this question. For a while we were unable to get the Communist Party in-

involved, but today we think we can collaborate with the CP around this question.

Second, we are working in the Bir Zeit committees in solidarity with the Palestinian people. We hold forums on the question, and so on.

Third, we do a lot of work around Central America. This is very important to us for some very practical reasons. We know that Begin's war policies in the Middle East are tied in with Reagan's war plans in Central America. If Reagan is not stopped, Begin will be encouraged to launch another war in the Middle East.

Therefore we feel that the Salvadorans are winning time for us. So it is very important for us to solidarize with them.

In addition, the Israeli government plays a big role in Central America. It provided most of the arms to the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. Until recently, most of the Salvadoran army's weapons came from Israel, and the same is true in Guatemala.

We are trying to uncover and publicize all the concrete links between Israel and Central America.

Finally, we are working to help organize the fightback by the workers in the factories where we work. □

involved agreed to take Israeli IDs. Those who refused were subject to severe penalties.

D. The Bureau of Licensing notified the owners of motor vehicles that they had to change their licenses from the ones used for the Golan Heights to the regular Israeli licenses. The same thing was done for drivers' licenses.

E. When things reached this point, the population met on February 2, 1982, and agreed to send a memorandum to the authorities in which they demanded that their national feelings be respected and that the Israeli law not be imposed on the inhabitants of the four villages [in the Golan Heights], nor on their land.

F. Instead of the authorities taking the necessary measures to negotiate with the population for the sake of finding a solution to the problem, fifty vehicles were impounded and their permits withdrawn.

They didn't stop there. At midnight on Friday, February 12, 1982, police forces attacked the home of four of the inhabitants and arrested Sheik Salman Kanj, his brother Kamal, his son Kanj, and Mahmoud Safadi. This with the purpose of instilling fear and to serve as a warning to keep us from demanding our rights as inhabitants of an occupied area.

G. The arrest of the four and the charges against them (inciting rebellion) represent a conscious distortion of the truth. We totally reject this. There is nothing that incites us but our rights, justice, and peace. And there is no rebellion but our call for equity.

There is no rebellion in the distorted way that was broadcast by the Voice of Israel and the mass media. Of course this is not the place to explain the difference between a rebellion and a strike. Indeed it is known that the "security" authorities in the Golan Heights admit that there has not been any breakdown of order.

From everything that we have written here, we have no choice but to stand firm with the purpose of defending ourselves. Thus in the meeting of about 3,000 inhabitants of the Golan Heights it was decided to declare a general strike for an unlimited period of time.

Our aim is to demand that the Israeli authorities respect our national and moral sentiments. We demand that they not impose Israeli civil law on us, the inhabitants of the four villages — Majdal Shams, Masada, Bukatta and Ein Kuniya — not on the land and not on the people. They should relate to us as Syrian citizens living on our own land under the yoke of Israeli occupation since 1967, and nothing more than that. We also demand the release of the four persons arrested.

This statement is directed to local and international public opinion with sincerity and faithfulness to the truth.

We are calling on all international and local peace forces to learn what is going on in the Golan, to understand our situation, and to stand on our side and on the side of truth, justice, and peace. We bless all the forces and all the people with good intentions, supporters of our just struggle.

The Arab inhabitants of the Golan Heights

Arabs in Golan Heights explain their demands

[The following declaration by the Arab inhabitants of the Golan Heights was issued on February 13 following a mass meeting of 3,000 people. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.

* * *

In the Golan Heights a general strike for an unlimited period of time has been called. The mass media have published a lot of facts — on the one hand equivocal and on the other, distorted. For this reason it is our duty to set things straight.

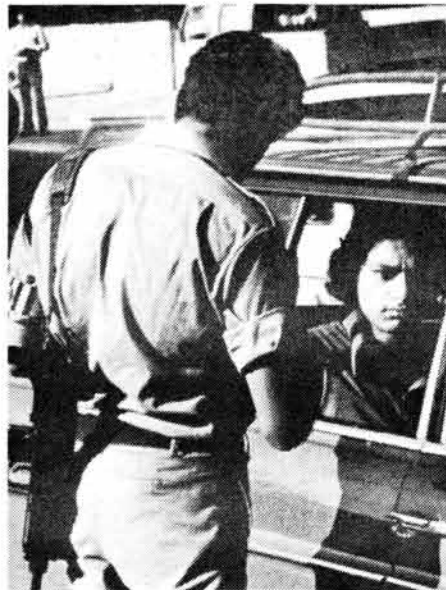
A. For more than a year the Israeli occupation forces have escalated their operations with the purpose of annexing the Golan Heights to Israel, both the land and the population. The government decided to give Israeli identity cards (to whoever would ask for one!).

But despite the strong pressure on us, the people opposed this action and we reached an agreement with the authorities by which the Israeli government withdrew its decision. This brought a certain degree of calm — but only temporarily.

B. On Thursday, December 14, 1981, the Knesset (parliament) suddenly and spontaneously passed the Golan Heights Bill, which was put into effect immediately. The situation exploded once more.

C. The state institutions in the Golan have refused to deal with the needs of the population unless the latter get their Israeli identity cards.

For example, the Ministry of the Interior would not register newborn babies or grant identity papers [of the kind previously granted by the occupation authorities] to those who had reached the age of sixteen unless the people in-



Israeli soldier checking identity papers. Arab population in Golan Heights is being pressured to accept papers identifying holders as Israeli citizens.

Was attack on 'Solidarity' progressive?

U.S. Communist Party compares it to Cuban role in Angola

By Suzanne Haig

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

* * *

Since the Polish government declared martial law on December 13, the *Daily World*, newspaper of the U.S. Communist Party, has campaigned in support of the crackdown.

Articles, editorials, and commentary have rolled out, full of convoluted logic and outright lies to justify Warsaw's repressive action.

One such apology, by Bruce Caraway, appeared in the December 29 *Daily World*. It attempted to equate the military crackdown in Poland with the Cuban government's response in 1975 to a request from the Angolan government to help repel the U.S.-backed invasion of Angola by South Africa.

The use of Cuban troops in Africa and the Warsaw regime's military crackdown, Caraway argues, are both in the interests of working people and the oppressed around the world.

"That the decision to call in the army is in the best interests of the Polish — and international — working class . . ." Caraway writes, "becomes clearer when we look at another case of an army being used in a manner which appears to violate socialist principles [Cuban troops in Angola]."

Caraway apparently hopes that he can erase any doubts *Daily World* readers might have about Warsaw's dishonorable action by equating it with the inspiring example of international solidarity shown by the revolutionary government of Cuba.

A brief glance at the facts, however, shows that these two instances are not equivalent, but totally opposite.

In his closing speech to the Cuban Communist Party congress in December 1975, Fidel Castro explained the motivation behind the Cuban action.

"We are fulfilling an elementary internationalist duty when we help the Angolan people," he said. "We do not remain passive when we see an African people, a sister people that the imperialists all of a sudden want to swallow up, and that is brutally attacked by South Africa."

The decision to send troops to Angola, moreover, was made with the enthusiastic support of the Cuban people. Hundreds of thousands volunteered, although only some 15,000 to 20,000 were sent.

As a result of Cuba's support, the South African invaders were repulsed. This victory in

Angola directly advanced the struggle of working people throughout the world by dealing Washington a major blow and by inspiring movements of the oppressed in Africa and elsewhere.

Cuba won broad support for its action, and its prestige among class-conscious workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world was greatly enhanced. In 1976, a meeting of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries in Colombo, Sri Lanka, hailed Cuba and the other governments which had assisted in repelling the South Africans.

Regardless of the different views working people and the oppressed around the world may have toward the Polish crackdown, it certainly has not similarly inspired them. It is not seen as a victory for the working class nor a step forward for humanity.

In Poland, by contrast to Cuba's action, the corrupt, ruling bureaucracy has used the elite paramilitary police and the secret police to crush a struggle by the workers and farmers to democratize the workers state.

That is the meaning of the demands made by Solidarity over the last year and a half for an end to bureaucratic privileges, such as special shops and managerial appointments; freedom of the press; and union participation in upgrading education, health care, housing, and child-care centers.

Solidarity was no minority organization "about to form its own paramilitary organization and . . . planning a coup," as Caraway contends.

Solidarity: a popular movement

It was a popular movement of millions of people. Through strikes and other actions over

the last year and a half it won certain democratic rights and better working conditions — gains that the bureaucracy is now trying to erase.

The leaders of Solidarity, moreover, were democratically elected to help lead the working class in this struggle.

It is no wonder that millions of Polish workers and farmers immediately recognized and opposed the reactionary nature of the government crackdown, even if Caraway did not.

Caraway claims that Solidarity leaders were trying to weaken socialism — "to create anarchy by aggravating the economic crisis."

Who has caused the economic crisis?

In addition to the decades of mismanagement, corruption, and squandering of wealth by the privileged bureaucracy, one must ask why, after martial law was declared, did the regimes in East Germany and the Soviet Union decide to bring in plane-fuls and truckloads of produce to Poland?

And why did the Kremlin wait until January 6 — after the crackdown — to loan huge sums to Poland, when the money could have been used last year to buy the spare parts needed to get the factories going?

Could it be that Warsaw and Moscow hoped to pin the blame for the crisis on Solidarity, while wearing down the population in preparation for imposing martial law?

For the last year, moreover, Solidarity leaders constantly put forward a program to help solve the economic crisis — workers control over production and distribution — but the authorities fought against it.

Caraway asserts that Solidarity leaders



South African troops in Angola. Are Polish workers in the same camp?

wanted to weaken the workers state. "Given the opportunity, they would remove Poland from the Warsaw Pact and upset the military balance in Europe to the advantage of NATO."

Again Caraway is attacking the wrong party.

Section two of Solidarity's program, adopted at its congress in Gdansk in October 1981, states that "A sense of responsibility compels us to recognize the relationship of forces established in Europe after World War II. We want to conduct the great work of change without breaking these international alliances, which can obtain more genuine guarantees than they have until now."

Solidarity supports workers state

Solidarity's objective is not to weaken the Polish workers state and lay the basis for capitalist restoration. Nor have its actions unwittingly increased the danger of this. To the contrary, the struggle to democratize economic and political life in Poland and to get the na-

tionalized economy to serve the interests of working people strengthens the workers state.

When millions of Polish working people believe that they have control over their lives, they will be far more willing to defend the gains made by the working class as a result of eliminating capitalism in Poland.

By keeping the working class demobilized and deprived of political power and by pursuing a policy of collaboration with imperialism at the expense of struggles with the oppressed around the world, the East European and Soviet governments have severely undermined the defense of the workers states — despite their military strength.

In fact, the military crackdown has provided Washington with a major propaganda weapon to justify beefing up NATO, moving against the revolutions in the Caribbean and Central America, and continuing draft registration. Already the imperialist powers have used the attack to try to disarm the growing anti-NATO, antinuclear weapons movement in Europe. □

Polish resistance group formed

'Solidarity demands genuine democracy'

[The following are two documents of the All-Poland Resistance Committee (OKO), a body formed by Solidarity leaders who have evaded arrest to help coordinate opposition to Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's imposition of martial law. The first is a statement on the OKO's establishment, and the second is a general appeal to the Polish people. Both were signed by "Mieszko," the pseudonym of the OKO's chairperson.

[The documents have been taken from the February 24 and March 4 issues of the New York Polish-language daily *Nowy Dziennik*. The translations are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

On January 13, 1982, a meeting was held of members of the Solidarity National Committee (KK) who are still at liberty and who have been continuing the union's activities. Other people connected with the activities of the KK also participated. After acquainting themselves with the situations in the regions and deciding on the best way to conduct the union's work under conditions of clandestinity, the participants in the meeting set up the All-Poland Resistance Committee (OKO) of Solidarity. The chairperson of the OKO is "Mieszko."

The All-Poland Resistance Committee will function as the highest body of the union until:

1. The state of war has been lifted and the legal rights of the Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union, Solidarity, have been restored;

2. Arrested and detained union activists, student oppositionists, and Polish intellectuals have been freed; and

3. The ruling group undertakes a genuine dialogue with the entire Presidium of Solidarity's National Committee, chaired by Lech Walesa.

The All-Poland Resistance Committee is a continuation of the National Strike Committee established on December 13, 1981, in the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. It takes upon itself the responsibility of coordinating the underground activities of the union throughout the entire country.

National Committee members who did not participate in the organizing meeting are required to contact the OKO. At the same time, we caution all Solidarity members against any attempt to represent the union in connection with the authorities.*

In the present dramatic situation, it is especially vital for all of us to be united and in solidarity.

* * *

The course of events has placed in your hands the fate of many Poles and many Polish families, in fact, the future of our nation, the future of Poland. With the utmost seriousness and hope, we ask you to pose these questions to yourselves: What is Poland, patriotism, the state and the interests of the state, justice, dignity, and conscience?

A difficult role has fallen to you: to fulfill your duties to the state in a situation of conflict between the state and the people. This conflict

*A reference to the authorities' attempts to set up a new, government-controlled union and their efforts to win the collaboration of some Solidarity activists for this purpose.

must certainly affect your conscience while you are carrying out your work.

Remember, human dignity and conscience, and thus honesty to yourselves and others, cannot be bought or sold at any price. They simply exist, and they will always triumph in people with genuine human values. It is the implementation — and not the concepts — that is an insult to the credibility and honesty of man. In the current situation, it is the conflict between truth and genuine justice — which is our aim — and their actual distortion through rules, pressures, orders, and propaganda that is an insult to these principles.

Truth is indivisible. To be honest to one's conscience, genuine truth must be sought out and put into practice. People cannot deceive their own consciences; they cannot extinguish the feelings of true human dignity within themselves. Consider: who and what do you serve? Consider: what, in Poland, are the common interests between the military regime and its own people?

Since 1945, our nation has been oppressed by a so-called "people's government," whose responsibility, as that of the people's state, was to serve the nation. But in fact, the exploitation of society testifies to the wastefulness of their policies, which led to extreme poverty and a deep economic crisis. This was a result of the incompetence and dishonesty of the governing apparatus — something that is today officially acknowledged, and is even being investigated by the courts.

The Polish nation was justified in protesting and acting against this deviation from the Polish constitution and the fundamental principles of socialist development. This cannot be called counterrevolutionary.

The people's basic aim was not so much to get rid of those individuals responsible for the crisis, but most of all to obtain institutional and legal guarantees that the causes of these cyclical crises would be eliminated from Polish life.

These causes lie in the political system, one governed by a politico-economic apparatus interested in maintaining and increasing its own privileges, outside of any controls. Totalitarianism was continually strengthened. The isolated government was protected by injustice, interference in the elections of the People's Councils and Sejm [parliament], control over the courts, a monopoly over the mass media, and command of the armed forces of the police and special services.

This is contrary to our constitution and all the international conventions to which Poland subscribes. All of this serves the authorities and not the nation. Proof of this is the continuation of the present state of war.

This is why Solidarity demands genuine democracy in public life. Of course this is a political goal, but in our reality it is closely bound up with the economic survival of the people. As the representative of the workers, Solidarity also has the full right to try to win agreement on this.

Think about these things and be honest with yourselves — be loyal to the nation. □

Fidel Castro meets with Iranian delegation

'Export the revolution to every country in the world'

[The following are major excerpts from a series of articles that appeared in the November 29 and December 1, 2, and 5 issues of the Iranian daily *Ettelaat*. The articles were written based on notes by Sayyed Ata'ollah Mohajarani. He was a member of the Iranian delegation to the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held in Havana in September 1981. In the articles he describes a meeting between the Iranian delegation and Cuban President Fidel Castro. Mohajarani's account was reprinted in the December 14 issue of the Iranian socialist weekly *Kargar*, from which *Intercontinental Press* has done the translation.]

* * *

Castro comes into the middle of the conference room at the end of a procession, in military clothes, to greet us with warmth. We each shook his hand and kissed in greeting. The room was small. Castro said, "What a big delegation!" and it was decided that we change rooms. We sat down in a bigger room.

Castro: How are things going in Iran?

Doai: Things are going fine, the people are on the stage and are following the Imam with all they have, to defend their glorious revolution. We are confident that the Cuban revolution has been a success, and that our revolution will be too.

Our revolution has important popular and ideological support, and Islam is the ideology which can lead our revolution. We hope that this stage, in which Islam is the pathfinder for the revolution, will be a glorious new beginning for the world.

Our revolution is like yours, we are sharply confronting imperialism. We believe that imperialism is the enemy of humanity.

Castro: It seems that these two countries, despite many differences, are both against America. But you know, you are further away from America than we.

Doai: But America has greater interests in our country.

Castro: Just so. Oil is a valuable treasure.

Doai: The more important question is this: if Iran succeeds, the region will be liberated. This is the reason for the intrigues against us. Like the Tabas plot. [The abortive U.S. raid and coup attempt in April 1980.]

Castro: That was madness. (Castro speaks at length, and there is simultaneous translation.)

Doai: The second American plot was economic. The third, propaganda.

On this mission, we have been pleased that, while participating in the conference, we have been able to visit you and the Cuban people. We have a great deal of respect for you as an individual. Our people have known about you for years, particularly now that you are the leader of the nonaligned nations.

We have been aware of your efforts with regard to the war imposed by Iraq. We hope that you defend the rights of the oppressed in the meeting in Baghdad which is coming up. Iraq's stubbornness in not removing its forces from our border, has not been accepted by you.

But we tell you this: we are behind our Imam and if the war drags on for a hundred years, we will fight until the overthrow of the invader.

[Our] revolutions have a lot in common with each other. . . .

As a result of the enemy's intrigues, seventy-two have been martyred, and now the president and the prime minister, Mr. Bahonar, too. The people said: what is the enemy thinking? Iran is full of Beheshtis. What is the enemy thinking? Iran is full of Rajais.*

Our revolution today does not depend on an individual. We thank you for declaring a period of general mourning in your country on the occasion of the martyrdom of our president and prime minister.

Castro: It was very painful, but we knew that you were prepared to bear such a blow.

At one time in our country, there were hundreds of secret and armed counterrevolutionary organizations, but then the people themselves took the leaderships of these organizations in hand. Security must be strictly observed.

[The counterrevolutionaries] used poisonous cigars, rifles with telescopic sights. After fifteen years, it was established in the American Senate as well. We had the help of the people themselves in neutralizing these plots. . . .

The shah had a big army. He had great power. The Iranian Islamic revolution was exceptional. The shah was defeated without weapons, relatively speaking. Your devotion was amazing. It was amazing that a people without weapons could make an insurrection. We know what revolution is.

America wants to defeat us any way they

*The June 28, 1981, bombing of the Tehran headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) resulted in the deaths of seventy-two top party leaders, including Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti. Two months later, on August 30, Iran's President Mohammed Ali Rajai and Prime Minister Mohammed Javad Bahonar were assassinated in another bomb attack.

can, every day it threatens to invade us militarily. They cannot fight the people. One million of our people are armed. You have given us a good lesson, in seeking out martyrdom and in courage.

Doai: We thank you for your sentiments. . . . On September 8 [1978] thousands were martyred. Most of them were Moslem women.

Castro: In one day?

Doai: The Imam gave the order for a demonstration, and the people obeyed. The shah thought to secure his position by killing the people, but it turned out the other way.

Castro: How many are there in the Iranian parliament?

Iranian delegate: 270.

(Castro asks questions referring to the Iranian presidential elections, the way in which the elections are carried out, the number of candidates, the candidates of the Islamic Republican Party, which the delegation answered.)

Castro: In the future, we must send some of our young men over to Iran to learn Persian. We have translators in every language: Chinese, Japanese, but since the shah didn't have relations with us, we didn't study Persian. I hope we can do something about this. . . .

[The current U.S. rulers] are fascists, their intrigues are fascistic. Others are imperialist and reactionary, these are asses. They are bringing the world towards war. So I spoke [at the Inter-Parliamentary Union's conference]. We must resist.

You know that this conference is full of formalities. I blew up the conference. The world is full of problems: the third world, hunger, arms, in fact, now is not the time for such conferences. A lot has been said about this conference.

The Yankees were furious, the British were disturbed, Australia and New Zealand went crazy.

Doai: Your friends were glad.

Castro: The next conference is in Rome.

Iranian delegate: We don't have much hope that it will succeed.

Castro: In the next conference, other countries will be there. Now Nicaragua, the Congo, Benin, Uganda, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe are members.

El Salvador also will be free. Angola and Ethiopia will also participate.

Iranian delegate: Your talk gave a new

spirit to the conference. In this conference, we were able to express ourselves. We remember your long presentation. After the victory of the revolution, you gave a four-hour presentation. We thank you for having met you.

Castro: I have a question, you are living in a real revolution. A revolution in which the people are undefeated. But power must be centralized. Are you arming your people against terrorists who are supported by America, and other problems?

Iranian delegate: We have formed the Army of 20 Million. The people consider it their duty to be armed. The Baseej [Mobilization Corps of the Oppressed] has the responsibility to organize the arming of the people. Today, old men of seventy and twelve-year-old kids are armed, and are fighting shoulder to shoulder against Iraq. . . .

Castro: When you took power, what was your program?

Iranian delegate: We tried to win total independence and self-reliance to serve the deprived of the world. To build a society in which there are no class differences. We are trying to realize progressive Islam. . . .

Castro: How much illiteracy do you have?

Iranian delegate: Less than three years of revolution have passed. Difficulties have impeded our ability to totally make plans. . . . The Jihad for Reconstruction is at work in the countryside, it has built thousands of schools.

Castro: How is the land divided?

Iranian delegate: The shah's land reform resulted in the uprooting of the peasantry to the cities. We must try to return [these] forces to the countryside.

Castro: Are there any feudalists left?

Doai: In a later stage we will uproot feudalism. In the space of two years, 22,000 schools have been built. We have mobilized our forces for the war.

Castro: What about your doctors?

Zargar: Fifteen thousand doctors fled abroad. Eight thousand of them are in America. America has stolen our brains. We now have 15,000 doctors left.

Castro: Fifteen thousand? Do they support the revolution?

Zargar: We have a training program for doctors. Currently, we look forward to training 5,000 doctors this year.

Castro: Every year in Cuba, we take in 5,000 medical students. Before the revolution, there were 6,000 doctors, of whom 3,000 left. But now we have 16,500 doctors. About 1,500 Cuban doctors are working in other countries. We have 5,000 students every year. Every region has a medical school.

In Iran, 15,000 doctors is neither good nor bad, but you need 60,000. One doctor for every 600 people. In Ethiopia, there were 125



Revolutionary Guards march in Tehran on third anniversary of revolution. Castro told Iranians, "It seems our two countries are both against America."

doctors. Now there are Cuban doctors there. Health and education are important. Of course, it takes time. There needs to be an opportunity to reconstruct the economic system. The shah was pro-West. He was leading his society toward consumerism. He did nothing for the people's health. He liked massive and expensive things.

A lot can be done. You are rich in natural resources. The shah stole money. He spent billions of dollars on arms. He frittered away the nation's wealth.

You can have an economic plan. You have a good future. Your problems will make you stronger. The people will get used to thinking in terms of self-sacrifice. You must drive consumerist thoughts out of the people's heads.

The shah wanted a society obsessed with consumerism. Everyone mustn't think that they will own a car. But a house, food, health, and education are necessary, and we are working for this. We have no oil — our capital is arable land, sugar, and internationalist consciousness, and a spirit of self-sacrifice.

Thousands work outside the country and help out. There are some soldiers in Angola and Ethiopia. The imperialists say there are 40,000 soldiers in Angola, but this is a lie.

After the victory of the revolution in Nicaragua, 1,200 of our teachers were asked of us, 25,000 volunteered. In Islam, the powerful force of spirituality mobilizes the people. We do not have such a force. A new ideology must be brought into existence. You have an ideology and spirituality based on devotion and world-consciousness and equality of power. All these thoughts, this ideology must be explained: All revolutionary demands, the ideas of Islam and the advance of Islam, classless society, what the revolution is, what the revolution does for the people, justice, equality, brotherhood, the sufferings caused by exploitation.

If revolution is inspired by Islam, it can also

be inspired by other religions. There is no Islam in Latin America. The people are Catholic. There are revolutionary priests who have joined with the people. We have said that here, Catholics and Marxist-Leninists can unite. You have no such problem.

The imperialists imagine that it is their continent. But Latin America will someday be free, although it will take a protracted war, a world revolution.

We have two outlooks, two philosophies, but they are similar. Islam is a powerful and important force which can play an important role. You should export Islam to the countries of the region. Export the revolution to every country in the world.

Doai: The Iraqis and Saudis have an outlook which is different from the outlook of our Islam.

Castro: I want to say that we were the first country to congratulate you on your revolution; for our part, we have had relations with Iraq for quite a while. I will say what I think. I am against war. Our aim is that there must be peace. The nonaligned must be united. War separates the nonaligned.

A bad situation has come about, but we haven't lost hope. We hope that a hopeful situation will come about and a solution will be found. I understand well what you say, how you feel. We have had the same experience, we had our own youthful vanity, and we overcame it.

Doai: We will help the nonaligned by crushing the invaders.

Castro: It is bad that countries in the third world should fight. No one is at peace. . . . I am glad that this opportunity arose. You must have a consulate. Our friends have gone to Iran and have seen the new spirit in the people. All our comrades have good memories of your people. I hope for your success. □

Reagan wields sanctions weapon

A blow against Libya, new ties with South Africa

By Ernest Harsch

Within a period of just two days in late February, the Reagan administration struck two new blows against the people of Africa, at opposite ends of the continent.

On February 25, administration officials revealed that the White House would soon impose an embargo against the import of Libyan oil by the United States. Washington is actively seeking to overthrow the Libyan government.

The next day, the U.S. rulers announced that some of the previously existing trade restrictions against the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa were being lifted, to allow the sale of supposedly nonmilitary equipment to the South African army and police.

This two-sided use of the sanctions weapon — a weapon the Reagan administration has been wielding more and more — is a clear expression of Washington's policy toward Africa, as well as to the rest of the world: fierce opposition to any movement or government that takes anti-imperialist measures, coupled with support for the most barbaric and reactionary forces.

The move against Libya comes on the heels of a series of provocations against the regime of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, which has come into conflict with Washington because of its support to Iran, Nicaragua, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and various anti-imperialist movements in Africa and the Middle East.

The embargo involves a ban on the sale of American oil production equipment to Libya as well as on the purchase of Libyan oil.

Since the United States accounted for between 15 and 25 percent of Libya's oil export market, this could put a further dent in the country's foreign earnings; because of the flooded world oil market, it may be difficult for Libya to sell the oil elsewhere.

The ban on the sale of oil production equipment and other high-technology items is also intended to further disrupt Libya's oil production.

Aside from the economic difficulties the sanctions will cause Libya, they are also intended to bolster moves to oust the Qaddafi regime.

State Department spokesman Dean Fisher, when he officially announced the embargo on March 10, stated that it was "necessary to complement other measures for dealing with this problem."

One Washington economic consultant, quoted in the February 26 *Washington Post*, was more specific. "Some serious opposition may be developing to Qaddafi internally," he said. "An action such as this could give a sig-

nal to those within."

The opposite signal was directed at the Black majority of South Africa. By overturning a four-year ruling that barred any sales whatsoever to the apartheid regime's brutal military and police forces, Reagan has reconfirmed his administration's increasingly close ties to the white supremacists and his utter disdain for the aspirations of that country's Black majority.

To drive the point home even further, that very same day Donald deKieffer, a White House trade representative, was dispatched to South Africa, where he was scheduled to meet with Trade Minister Dawie de Villiers and other officials. The discussions are likely to be cordial. Before he was appointed to his White House post, deKieffer was the South African government's official lobbyist in Washington.

Reagan's lifting of this trade restriction is largely a formality, however, a symbolic gesture of political support for the regime of Pieter Botha. The U.S. imperialists have often evaded the various United Nations sanctions against South Africa, which they claim to support.

In congressional testimony in early February, for instance, it was revealed that the U.S. Army Armament Research and Development Command was conducting joint research with South Africa's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The research involved how to increase the efficiency of gun barrels. One of the witnesses in the hearing termed this a



QADDAFI

"serious breach of United States law."

The outrage in Africa over Washington's stepped-up support to the apartheid regime was expressed in a resolution adopted at a February 28 meeting of the Organization of African Unity. The resolution condemned "certain Western countries, especially the United States, the United Kingdom and Israel, as well as those transnational corporations and other organizations which continue to maintain and/or increase their collaboration in economic, military and nuclear fields with the racist regime of South Africa."

Once again, the Reagan administration and its allies have shown themselves to be the deadly enemies of the entire African continent. □

Western Sahara admitted to OAU

In a significant diplomatic victory for the liberation forces fighting for the independence of Western Sahara from Moroccan rule, a meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) decided on February 22 to admit the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic as its fifty-first member.

The Moroccan regime — which annexed Western Sahara after the end of Spanish colonial rule over the territory in 1976 — immediately organized a walkout from the OAU meeting. Eighteen other proimperialist regimes participated in the walkout.

Earlier, during previous attempts to admit Western Sahara to the OAU, the Moroccan regime successfully blocked the moves by threatening to split the organization. But the support for the Western Saharan struggle has become so broad within Africa that this time the Moroccan monarchy was unsuccessful.

Western Sahara's admission to the OAU comes at a time of increasing aid to the Moroccan

regime of King Hassan from the Reagan administration in Washington. The White House has provided Hassan with \$30 million in military credits, surveillance planes, and more than 100 M-60 tanks. U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig visited Morocco February 11-12. He and Hassan set up a joint military commission and discussed the reactivation of U.S. military bases in Morocco.

"We never believed the U.S. would come to this stage of direct intervention," said Bechir Mustafa Sayed, the deputy secretary general of the Polisario Front, the Saharan liberation organization, in an interview in the February 28 *Miami Herald*.

"Our forces are not one-tenth of theirs [the Moroccans'] and we are a small people compared to 20 million Moroccans," he said. "But once decided, there is no force that can prevent us from winning. Even with the forces of destruction that the United States has. . . ."

"Now we will sing 'the U.S. is Satan.'" □

More misery for Haitian refugees

From dictatorship in Haiti to detention in U.S.

By Nelson González

[The following article is taken from the February 12 issue of the U.S. socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

* * *

The Reagan administration has condemned approximately 2,500 Haitian refugees to indefinite imprisonment in detention camps throughout the United States. Some have already been incarcerated for as long as ten months.

This policy includes the coercion and intimidation of refugees into signing "voluntary withdrawal" forms. They are then immediately deported. Other refugees are subjected to immediate exclusion hearings — kangaroo courts set up to deport them as fast as possible without informing them of their right to apply for political asylum.

The policy also includes "interdiction at sea," in which the U.S. Coast Guard — Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents on board — picks up Haitian boat people. The refugees are interrogated in the presence of Haitian naval officers, then forced to return to Haiti. There they are often met by the *Tontons Macoutes*, the feared Haitian secret police.

In a column in the January 13 *New York Times*, Robert Bernstein, chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Watch Committee, reports on a conversation with Jean Claude Bajeux, a Haitian professor at the University of Puerto Rico:

"Mr. Bajeux, who is actively involved in refugee affairs, believes that if the refugees are forced to return to Haiti they will be let alone by the authorities for two or three months. Once it is certain that the United States has forgotten them, however, they will be beaten or killed by the secret police."

"Persecution is endemic in Haiti." This, according to the October 17 issue of the *Nation* magazine, is the conclusion of documented reports by Amnesty International, the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the U.S. State Department.

The Reagan administration claims the refugees are fleeing Haiti for economic, not political, reasons. Therefore, it argues, they are not entitled to political asylum in the United States.

Flee unemployment, poverty

The fact is that the nearly 6 million Haitians under the dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier clearly understand the political connection between the massive unemployment levels and



Haitian refugees seeking asylum in United States. They are more likely to find harassment, detention, and deportation proceedings.

fierce repression that exist in Haiti.

The Haitian government admits to a nationwide unemployment rate of 14 percent. Underemployment is estimated at 65 percent. The U.S. embassy in Haiti estimates that 50 percent of the residents of the capital city of Port-au-Prince are unemployed.

Of the 75 to 80 percent of the population that still lives in the countryside, the World Bank estimates that 85 percent of these live at less than the absolute poverty level. Ninety percent are illiterate.

Haiti has an annual per capita income of below \$200, with half of all Haitians making less than \$135 a year.

Meanwhile, amidst this utter misery, "President for Life" Duvalier spent \$5 million for his wedding in 1980.

The Duvalier family fortune was estimated in 1976 at \$350 million. A later estimate put family holdings outside Haiti at \$600 million. Considering that the president's salary is a mere \$25,000 a year, one might wonder how such a fortune was amassed.

It so happens that projected U.S. aid to Haiti for 1979 through 1982 is nearly \$1 billion. Per capita, this is one of the highest amounts of aid to any country in the world. The Haitian people have not seen a dime of this aid.

Even the U.S. State Department admitted in a 1979 report, "Corruption is traditional at all levels of society, and significant amounts of

domestic revenues usable for development continue to be diverted to personal enrichment" — i.e., the personal use of "Baby Doc" Duvalier.

Haven for U.S. business

Sharing in the graft are the more than 200 U.S. corporations that have set up operations in Haiti. They profit enormously from the \$1-a-day wages and seven-day-a-week working conditions.

Anyone who dares to protest these barbaric conditions inevitably becomes a target of the *Tontons Macoutes*. This gang of murderers, together with the armed forces, insures the continued rule of the U.S.-backed Duvalier dictatorship.

Given these conditions, Haitians still attempt to escape in spite of the risk of being returned.

For those who survive and make it to the U.S. mainland, only additional misery and repression await them at the hands of the Reagan administration.

Krome detention camp

In the January 10 issue of *Tropic*, a magazine supplement of the *Miami Herald*, an article entitled "Inside Krome" by freelance writer Larry Mahoney provides a rare view of what Haitian refugees face.

A former journalist in Haiti, Mahoney was

the State Department's chief spokesperson at the Krome Avenue refugee camp, located near the Florida Everglades. Unable to stomach covering for the inhuman conditions there, Mahoney quit his job.

"It was an absurdity," he writes, "an abandoned Nike missile site replete with bunkers and hangars and barracks and military maps, still festooned with spraypainted Mickey Mouses and raunchy GI graffiti; but overrun with refugees, wretched and aimless, living in giant, flapping, blue-and-red striped circus tents. . . ."

"I saw women sleeping under blankets so soiled and threadbare I mistook them for the contents of vacuum-cleaner bags; guards so indifferent to suffering that they snickered at the helpless; sanitary facilities so squalid they turned your stomach. Above all, there was the crippling boredom. The people just slept and

ate, ate and slept."

Mahoney describes his job: "The press was not allowed free access to these compounds. It was part of my job to keep it that way."

When he was forced to talk to the press, "My basic strategy was to start by apologizing for Krome, then to point out that if the refugees from such a backward country were turned loose in the streets, they would be victimized; in short, that the Kromes were set up for their own protection. This was the government line. . . . But when the subject of conditions at Krome came up, there wasn't much to say: again, an apology."

Corruption of immigration cops

Mahoney exposes the corruption of Immigration and Naturalization Service authorities who would smuggle refugees out of the camp in the trunks of their cars for a price, or who would sell immigration forms. Telephone calls

were sold for \$20, especially in the early days when refugees were prevented from communicating with the outside world.

Mahoney describes one heartbreaking scene when children were being separated from their loved ones to be taken to other detention camps: "Friends of the departing children . . . threw themselves to the concrete with high piercing wails. It was a wrenching scene."

He recounts another incident in which a woman who had just had a miscarriage was taken to a medical trailer, caught a vaginal infection, and was diagnosed at a hospital as having tuberculosis. Seven days later, a correction came, explaining that the diagnosis had been made "by some employees not related to the medical field."

Mahoney concludes, "The Haitians believe the Promised Land is just beyond the gate. We know better." □

Haiti

The struggle against Duvalier

Interview with leader of Haitian Workers Party

[The following interview with a leader of the Haitian Workers Party (PTH) took place on December 10, 1981, in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, which shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti.

[The PTH and the United Haitian Communist Party (PUCH) are the main working-class organizations opposing the bloody regime of Haiti's President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier. Jean-Claude, known as "Baby Doc," was nineteen years old when he succeeded his father, François Duvalier ("Papa Doc"), who was the country's president from 1957 until his death in 1971.

[The interview was published in the January 25, 1982, issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. On various occasions we heard in the international press that in the late 1970s the government of Haiti was following a new orientation. What can you tell us about this?

Answer. More specifically, this concerns the period between 1977 and 1980. At that time there was talk of promoting in Haiti the type of economy that Hong Kong has, by making the country into a kind of Western showcase in the Caribbean. In fact, since 1972 a number of assembly factories have been set up. There is an economic free zone where about 40,000 workers are employed (in the neighboring Dominican Republic, there are



Duvalier's police in Haitian capital.

only half as many workers in the free zone).

The factories in this enclave only fulfill very fragmentary functions in the process of production. This is the case, for example, with production of baseballs. Nearly all the balls used in this sport that is so popular in the United States come from Haiti (although the Haitians prefer soccer).

Q. Have there been appreciable changes in the country's economy?

A. There has, in fact, been only very limited and precarious development. The free zone

itself has stopped growing and the overall picture remains literally tragic. The rate of unemployment and underemployment is between 40 and 50 percent of the active population, and is around 65 percent in the capital, Port-au-Prince, a city of about 800,000 people.

While the per capita income averages \$150 per year (placing Haiti in the ranks of the countries with the lowest income), 61 percent of the population gets only \$60 per year and 17 percent of the rural population receives no more than \$17. The threshold of absolute poverty is figured as an annual income of less than \$300.

Life expectancy is between forty and fifty years, and the infant mortality rate is 14.1 percent. Illiteracy stands at the record level of 95 percent. In the capital it is estimated that 40 percent of the population has no housing.

Haiti has remained a basically agrarian country. The percentage of farmers in the active population is one of the highest in the world: about 80 percent. Agricultural production represents 43 percent of the gross national product. The big landowners hold nearly two-thirds of the land, which they work with super-exploited agricultural laborers and through sharecropping. The penetration of typical capitalist forms into the countryside is much more limited than in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Q. Can you tell us something about the political developments in the 1977-1980 period?

A. Remember, that was period of Jimmy Carter's demagoguery regarding human rights. The United States applied pressure on Jean-

Claude Duvalier to begin a certain degree of "liberalization." Some openings did, in fact, take place. The press began to write more freely and, above all, there were radio stations that developed a large audience because of their independent and critical attitude toward the regime. The most significant of these was Radio Haiti-Inter.

At the same time, a significant theatrical movement developed. Theater pieces began to be performed in town squares and in the villages and, to the extent that they expressed the sentiments and aspirations of the people, they had a very great success.

In addition, the trade-union movement resumed some activity, and major struggles developed.

The same thing happened among students, where the communist-led National Union of Haitian Students (UNEH), founded in 1959, was reorganized. Moreover, we saw the birth of a movement that called for recognition of Creole as the official language.

For Jean-Claude Duvalier and his accomplices, the situation was becoming dangerous.

Q. How did they react?

A. They took the election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States as a signal. They lost no time. On November 28, 1980, they struck against the whole opposition, deporting or imprisoning the most representative elements. Radio Haiti-Inter was closed; the theater movement was outlawed. All the political parties and groups were again forced into the strictest underground status.

Q. What are the political forces in Haiti?

A. Before the November 28, 1980, crackdown, there were two legal Social Christian parties. Today they have almost completely disappeared. In the underground, therefore, there are only parties of the workers movement and organizations tied to those parties.

The party with the most influence is the Haitian Workers Party, the PTH, which was founded in 1966. For a certain time it had a Maoist position, but now it follows an independent orientation.

The PTH is part of the Union of Haitian Patriotic and Democratic Forces (IFOPADA, after its initials in Creole), in which there is also a Catholic socialist tendency. The IFOPADA puts forward an anti-imperialist, antifeudal, and antidictatorial orientation, and it tries to gather together all the anti-Duvalier forces.

In the second place is the United Haitian Communist Party (PUCH), which has a pro-Soviet orientation. The main forces of the PUCH are in exile, and its best-known leader is Gérard Pierre-Charles. The PUCH is part of the Haitian Democratic Union (UDEH).

Finally, two new communist groups have been set up outside the country, the May 18 and Forward groups.

Q. Could you tell us something about the history of the Haitian communist movement?

A. The Haitian communist movement goes back to the early 1930s. Between 1932 and 1945 it was represented by the Haitian Communist Party (PCH). After 1946, following a split, there were two parties — one maintaining the PCH name, the other being the People's Socialist Party (PSP).

In 1948, the PSP dissolved itself, under the influence of the ideas then being put forward by former U.S. CP leader Earl Browder.¹ Later the party reconstituted itself and was able to carry out legal activity. The communist movement, which had been legal since 1945, saw both these organizations dissolved in 1950.

In 1954 the People's Party of National Liberation (PPLN) was formed, and in 1959 intellectuals who had earlier been active in the PCH formed the People's Alliance Party (PEP). The PPLN and the PEP both described themselves as Marxist-Leninist. Both also underwent deep internal divisions that led to splits.

Finally there was a regroupment, out of which the PUCH and the PTH emerged.

For a whole period the PTH shared the criticisms that the Chinese Communist Party and the Albanian Party of Labor made of the Soviet leadership. But we changed our attitude toward these two parties in 1976, feeling that the Chinese had, themselves, adopted a revisionist line.

Q. What is the PTH's attitude toward Cuba?

A. We feel now that we must stress solidarity against the imperialist threats rather than criticisms. We think, however, that the Cubans are under Soviet influence and base themselves on the Soviet Union's economic model.

Q. What do you think of the events in Poland? [This was before martial law was proclaimed.]

A. I want to point out that in Haiti there has traditionally been interest in what is happening in Poland. During Haiti's war of independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Polish soldiers in the French army came over to the side of the Haitian patriots.

Also, we have criticized the Polish revisionist leadership since 1966, at which time we established relations with Polish Marxist-Leninists. We think that Solidarity is a diverse movement, in which there are currents that are under the influence of imperialism. But on the whole, this is a mass movement against the bu-

1. In 1943, as a gesture to his World War II allies, Stalin announced the dissolution of the Third International. In the same year, the U.S. Communist Party, led by Earl Browder, was formally dissolved, and a Communist Political Association was established. According to Browder, this was in accordance with "the international line."

But in 1945, when Stalin decided to dump Browder, the device he utilized was to have French CP figure Jacques Duclos write an open letter attacking Browder for having dissolved the U.S. Communist Party. Browder went into an immediate eclipse and was expelled from the CP in 1946.

reaucracy, which should be supported. Therefore, we solidarize with Solidarity.

Q. Can you tell us something about the Haitian trade-union movement?

A. We should recall that between 1958 and 1965 there was a very strong union movement in Haiti. This movement was united, with a single union in the factories and only one federation on the national level, the Haitian Inter-Union Federation (UIH), which was led by the communists. After 1965, the regime used the repression to impose scab unions.

In 1970, there were new movements and a phase of recomposition began. In 1978-79 especially, there was work among the rank-and-file to reorganize a national federation. The communists regained control over certain unions and strikes took place.

The Social Christians, for their part, formed the Autonomous Confederation of Haitian Workers (CATH), with the aid of Venezuela, but this was an artificial operation that did not have much success among the masses.

The crackdown on November 28, 1980, opened a new phase of repression, which included, among other things, the elimination of communists from the unions.

Q. What is the present situation?

A. The situation is bad in the sense that

Free Derosé and Chéry!

The life of Rock Derosé, a leading Haitian communist, is in danger, according to a report in the January 17 issue of the English-language Cuban weekly *Granma*.

Derosé, a member of the Secretariat of the United Haitian Communist Party (PUCH), was arrested in Haiti in early November and charged with carrying out "subversive activities." Arrested with him was Eloisie Chéry, a seventy-six-year old communist. They are being held in the Desalines garrison and are reportedly being subjected to brutal torture.

Derosé, who became active in the Popular Youth League of Haiti in 1959, while he was still in high school, was arrested with other activists in October of that year. They were later released, following a three-month strike organized by the National Union of Haitian Students (UNEH).

Derosé was studying abroad during the Duvalier dictatorship's 1969 wave of repression, but he returned to Haiti to help rebuild the PUCH.

No jailed PUCH member has ever been brought to trial. They are kept imprisoned indefinitely, and many have been murdered in detention.

To save Derosé and Chéry from the same fate, urgent protests are needed to demand their immediate release.

there are no longer activities by the mass movement. All activity must be carried out in strictly clandestine ways. We are trying to organize rank-and-file committees, especially among the peasants. I want to point out that the PTH places very great importance on work among the peasants.

Q. What is your strategic perspective?

A. The PTH is an anticapitalist party that is carrying out an anti-imperialist, antifeudal, and antidictatorial struggle. We feel that it is necessary to prepare for armed struggle. How else, in fact, could Jean-Claude Duvalier and his ferocious dictatorship be overthrown?

The PUCH, too, was for armed struggle after 1969. But in 1978 it dropped that orientation in order to take greater advantage of the regime's "liberalization." It did not adopt a new position after the new wave of repression.

Q. Has Jean-Claude Duvalier been suc-

cessful in consolidating his regime?

A. For years there have been conflicts within the regime. They reflect the antagonism between the landowners and the comprador bourgeoisie.² This is also tied to racial rivalry since the big landowners are Black, while the compradors are usually white or mulatto.

Today the compradors have the upper hand. They use, among other things, the position of Jean-Claude Duvalier's wife and her family — a powerful bourgeois family. They also control the police.

In addition, on several occasions the regime has been in serious conflict with Washington. For example, Jean-Claude Duvalier has always avoided creating too powerful an army, for fear that it might be seen as a possible alternative to his regime. He has concentrated instead

2. The term "comprador bourgeoisie" refers to those sections of the bourgeoisie that function as local representatives of foreign companies.

on building up his militia, the Tontons Macoutes, while Washington had an opposing view.

Q. Do you think that there is a conservative bourgeois alternative to Jean-Claude Duvalier?

A. I feel that it is very difficult for such an alternative to come together. That is, moreover, why Washington hesitates to let Jean-Claude Duvalier fall.

Q. Are there any other points you would like to make?

A. The Haitian people and all the victims of the Duvalierist regime need the solidarity of all the peoples and especially all the workers organizations in the world. It is absolutely essential that this solidarity be organized and demonstrated to a greater extent than has been the case up to now. □

Dominican Republic

Haitian workers in slave conditions

Thousands sold each year to cut sugar cane

By Livio Maitan

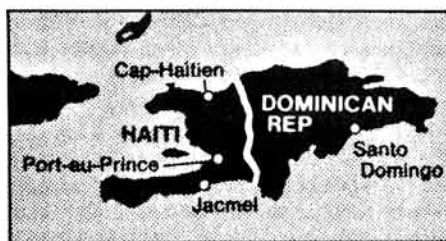
[The following article appeared in the January 25, 1982, issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

A certain number of Haitians flee their country in small boats in hopes of reaching the United States to find possible employment. But a much greater number are pushed by unemployment, chronic underemployment, and hunger in the most literal sense of the word to emigrate to the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. There, Haitians constitute a very important segment of the agricultural proletariat.

There are, first of all, a layer of more or less stabilized workers who have lived in the Dominican Republic for years and even decades. Often, their children have never set eyes on their country of origin. According to official figures, there are at least 250,000 of these workers, representing about 10 percent of the total economically active population. For the most part they work on the sugar cane plantations, the basic sector of the Dominican economy.

The reality of the living and working conditions of these Haitians is becoming known. The most significant and most complete report is undoubtedly furnished by Maurice Lemoine in a remarkable piece of reporting (Maurice Lemoine, *Sucre amer* [Bitter sugar], Paris: Editions Encre, 1981).



A visit to a *batey* (camp) and discussions with the people who work there only serves to confirm what Maurice Lemoine relates. Walking through the streets of the *batey*, the abject poverty is seen in all its aspects. The "houses" are actually broken-down barracks, where six, eight, or even ten people live in ten to fifteen square meters.

In these *bateys* there is a sinister division of labor, aimed at pitting the exploited against each other in a fierce battle for survival. Men who are exhausted and ravaged by malnutrition work the plantations. Some of them seem to be thirty-five or forty years old but turn out to be only twenty.

How much they can earn depends on the jobs they have, how efficiently the work is organized, and other factors like the season. To the extent that an average can be determined, in the harvest season the monthly wage varies between thirty and fifty pesos.

Officially one peso is worth one dollar, although on the street the dollar exchanges for

1.25 to 1.30 pesos. To give an idea of the purchasing power of such a wage, suffice it to note that a pound of rice — the basic foodstuff — costs forty to forty-two centavos (one peso = 100 centavos) in the *batey* stores.

In addition, a May 25, 1979, law fixed the minimum wage for an agricultural worker at 3.50 pesos per day. According to 1978 calculations, a family of six would need 205 pesos per month to live. Social services simply do not exist, and there is no recourse to medical help except in extreme cases.

Normally these workers are not organized in unions. Despite this, one peso per month is taken out of wages for the union, which furnishes work clothing in exchange.

The majority of these immigrants do not have permission to stay in the Dominican Republic. They are therefore at the mercy of the Dominican authorities, who can simply expel anyone viewed as undisciplined or "suspect." If the person expelled is delivered over to the Tontons Macoutes, Haitian President Jean-Claude Duvalier's private militia, he is thrown into prison or simply murdered.

Although it might seem absurd, these workers — known as the "old-timers" — have a relatively privileged position compared to the seasonal workforce that only remains in the Dominican Republic for the six months of the sugar harvest.

Officially, there are only 15,000 seasonal workers. But in fact, including the illegal immigrants, there are many more. This immigration is regulated by an agreement signed be-

tween the governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the application of which basically depends on the State Sugar Council (CEA), a nationalized company that has twelve sugar refineries on 100,000 hectares of land (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). The conditions of the contract (transport, housing, social security, etc.) are almost never respected.

The Haitian state receives a sum of \$1,250,000 from the CEA for providing 15,000 workers, a sum it augments through abuses of all sorts. Only an insignificant portion of this amount is expended on the workers.

In fact, it could be stated that the 15,000 Haitians are literally sold by their government. Moreover, the secretary of the United Haitian Communist Party (PUCH) explained in an interview that the government received fourteen pesos per head for Haitians delivered to the Dominican exploiters.

Considering that these immigrants do not have the right to leave their batey, which is watched by armed guards organized in a paramilitary body, and that they have no civil rights, the term "slavery" closely corresponds to the reality. It is significant in this regard that these workers are generally referred to as the "Kongos." The last slaves to arrive in Santo Domingo in the nineteenth century came from the Congo.

The recruitment of these workers takes place under conditions that expose them to all sorts of harassment and swindling. They are transported in trucks on roads that are barely passable, which is made even worse by the fact that they must often wait days and days at the border without shelter or food.

When they arrive at the batey — where they are lodged in barrack shacks that make the "houses" of the "old-timers" seem luxurious — they may be there five, ten, and even fifteen days before starting to work, during which time they are not paid. As a result they suffer hunger and fall into debt to the camp moneylenders in order to survive.

Once they begin to work, they are not paid until after the cane has been weighed (they are usually cane cutters or gatherers), which sometimes takes several days. In the meantime, the cane has dried out, losing weight, and their wages are therefore lower since they are paid by the ton.

In addition, these superexploited workers are the favorite victims of the constant anti-Haitian racism in the Dominican Republic, where the Haitian is considered an inferior being who will accept work that even the poorest Dominicans will not do, and who is thought to be capable of committing any type of crime. Mothers will even warn their children that they will call "the Haitian" to deal with them if they do not behave.

In reality, one can do just about anything to the Haitians in the bateys, and even outside. Killing a Haitian does not necessarily lead to a conviction: in most cases the murderers remain at large or are acquitted by compliant judges.

This is a tradition that goes back a long time.

Solidarity with Haiti

From September 18 to 20, 1981, more than 200 delegates attended the First Continental Conference in Solidarity with Haiti, which was held in Panama. The delegates represented Haitian organizations based in many different countries.

The purpose of the conference, according to its final declaration published in the October 11 Cuban weekly *Granma*, "was to inform the peoples of the Americas and the rest of the world of the situation of exploitation and terror that has been maintained in Haiti for the last 24 years by the Duvalier dynasty, which is supported by some of the world's capitalist powers, chiefly U.S. imperialism."

The conference urged "all anti-Duvalier forces to close ranks" to fight against the dictatorship.

It pointed out, "In Haiti, less than one percent of the population owns over 40 percent of the national wealth. Eighty percent of the GNP is distributed among five percent of the population. The average yearly

per capita income is 260 dollars. Property owners own 50 percent of the land. The country's 200 millionaires enjoy a life of extravagant luxury which is an insult to the Haitian nation. . . .

"The Continental Conference wants to make it clear to public opinion in the Americas and the rest of the world that the Constitution of Haiti is a dead letter. . . . Freedom of expression has been curtailed even in popular theater, where the language used is Creole, the national language. The right of habeas corpus is completely ignored. Freedom of association and assembly, even the slightest complaint, are considered an attack on the established power. The regime is one of absolute illegality, of absolute denial of democratic rights."

The declaration also expressed opposition to the political, economic, and military pressures being applied against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, and expressed "unconditional support for the heroic struggle being waged by the Salvadoran people."

The most dramatic episode was the cold-blooded massacre ordered by Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo in 1937 during a very serious economic crisis. The Haitians at that time were the subject of Dominican hatred as "Black foreigners in the country," "contemptible," "cattle thieves," etc. Between 30,000 and 40,000 of them were murdered in a little less than two weeks.

Black Dominicans were also killed during this massacre, since the criteria for "selection" were not overly rigorous. The gangs of murderers stopped every Black they encountered

and told them: "Say parsley" (*perejil*). Since Haitians have a hard time pronouncing the word correctly in Spanish, any person who could not say the word with a correct Spanish pronunciation was fair game.

During the last census the enumerators were told to note — among other things — if the person interviewed had a "Haitian" or "foreign" accent. This indicates that the Dominican authorities, while claiming to be "democratic socialists" since the election victory of the social democrats in 1978, still have ominous instincts. □

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CIA funds counterrevolutionary armies

Destabilization campaign reported in U.S. press

By Margaret Jayko

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

* * *

Washington has launched a major effort to aid counterrevolutionary groups trying to overthrow the regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Iran. Some of the details of this plan were made public in an article by Leslie Gelb in the March 7 issue of the *New York Times*.

Gelb explained, "The covert actions reportedly include financing two paramilitary units composed largely of Iranian exiles in eastern Turkey adjacent to Iran, providing several million dollars a year to Iranian exile groups in the hope of getting them to work together politically, and establishing a radio station to broadcast anti-Government information."

CIA operation

This effort is "reportedly run by the Central Intelligence Agency," Gelb wrote, adding that the U.S. Senate and House intelligence committees were briefed on this undercover operation by the Reagan administration. The American people, however, were not.

Gelb explained that "officials in the Reagan Administration said the operations were necessary to counter what they contended were far more extensive covert actions by the Soviet Union. . . ." This is the same basic justification Washington is using to drag U.S. working people into war in El Salvador.

But Gelb later got to the real reasons for this gross violation of the Iranian people's right to self-determination. "Concern in the Reagan Administration and in parts of Western Europe about the Khomeini Government is mounting," he explained. "This stems both from the evidence of growing Soviet-Iranian ties and from the threat that Iran's Islamic fundamentalist revolution will spread to countries important to the United States, such as Saudi Arabia."

Gelb's report is based on information from "Western intelligence officials and other sources" who insist that "no efforts were being made to overthrow or destabilize the Islamic fundamentalist Government." But Gelb's facts contradict these denials.

Gelb described the paramilitary groups backed by Washington.

"The larger of the two paramilitary units in eastern Turkey has 6,000 to 8,000 men, mostly Iranian exiles but also Kurds, under the command of former Rear Adm. Ahmad Madani."

Madani, in addition to being the commander



ARYANA: CIA's man in Turkey.

in chief of the Iranian navy under the shah, was governor of Khuzestan province after the monarchy was overthrown, where he directed the bloody suppression of strikes and other protests by the Arab workers in 1979.

Second terrorist unit

Gelb described the other U.S.-backed terrorist group: "The second unit, described by the sources as no more than about 2,000 men, is commanded by Gen. Bahram Aryana, the chief of staff of the Iranian Army under the Shah. This unit may be part of an organization of former monarchist military officers known as Azadegan, which General Aryana also leads."

Azadegan took responsibility last August for the hijacking of an Iranian gunboat which the hijackers said would be used as a "fighting unit" to overthrow Khomeini.

The hijacking, which was foiled, occurred in the midst of terror bombings in Iran against government officials. Some of these attacks were carried out by the Mujahedeen, a petty-bourgeois organization also bent on overturning the Khomeini regime. But Iranians believe monarchist forces are also involved in these reactionary assaults inside the country.

Gelb continues, "Agency [CIA] support for the two units was said to run to millions of dollars, but no reliable figure could be obtained. Some of the sources maintained that the United

States was also providing the units with arms, and the sources had documentary evidence to back this up."

One explanation given by the CIA and other administration officials for their support to these groups was that "a purpose of the units was to have some force able to enter Iran in a civil war or domestic upheaval to protect and bolster centrist forces." Perhaps like the "centrist" murderous military junta that the U.S. government is supporting in the Salvadoran civil war.

Reactionary radio station

According to Gelb, "Another part of the covert program has been the establishment of a radio station to broadcast anti-Soviet and anti-Khomeini information. Regular features include reports on long food lines, pockets of opposition and small uprisings against the clergy and revolutionary guards, reports of torture and killings by the Government and charges that Iranian Communists and other agents of the Soviet Union are gaining control of Iran. . . ."

"The C.I.A. is also reportedly financing Iranian exile groups said to be situated principally in France and Egypt," said Gelb. "Western intelligence sources said that the support had been available to groups on the left up to but not including Mr. Bani-Sadr [former Iranian president] and to groups on the right up to but not including the monarchist factions."

The British business weekly *8 Days*, on the other hand, reported in its January 23 issue that "US sources say Washington, Baghdad, and Riyadh would all like to see Abol Hassan Bani Sadr restored to power in Tehran, and US officials have had substantial contact with the former Iranian president and his entourage in Paris."

Washington has made no secret of its deepening concern over the potential of the Iranian revolution to spread throughout the Middle East, especially as Iranian soldiers continue to make military advances against the invasion by the Iraqi government.

Nor is support to paramilitary operations the only feature of the U.S. destabilization plan. Washington's continuing campaign to block trade with Iran and its propaganda efforts in the United States against the revolution are also part of the drive.

It all bears an unmistakable resemblance to the CIA's admitted role in previous destabilization campaigns, such as helping overturn the Guatemalan government in 1954 and the Chilean government in 1973, not to mention the twenty-three-year campaign against the government of Cuba. □