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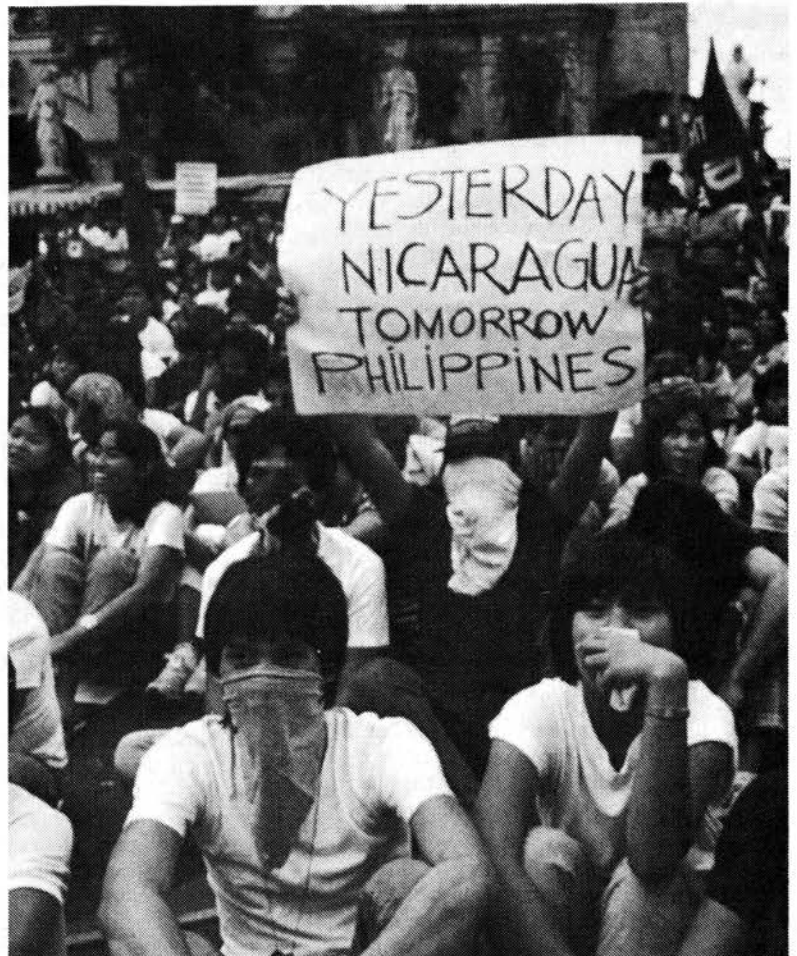
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Philippines

Marcos Regime Swept From Power



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Britain: WRP Leaders Repudiate Healyite Agent-Baiting

Arafat-Hussein talks collapse

By Steve Craine

Just a year after Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yassir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein agreed to a common approach to negotiations with the Israeli government, talks between the two leaders to concretize their joint position broke down.

Two weeks of discussions in Amman, the Jordanian capital, ended February 7 when Arafat and the high-level PLO delegation accompanying him left the country. The same day a special envoy from the Reagan administration also returned home. State Department adviser Wat Cluverius had been meeting separately with Jordanian officials to monitor the talks and to communicate Washington's views indirectly to the PLO.

On February 19 Hussein announced in a televised speech, "We do not want to deal with the PLO leadership anymore, it's over."

The Hussein-Arafat meetings proved inconclusive because the PLO leadership has refused to give up the basic demands of the Palestinian people for self-determination, despite enormous pressures to do so. Washington and Tel Aviv remain adamant that the Palestinians must relinquish that right.

Since Feb. 11, 1985, when Arafat signed the agreement with King Hussein, Tel Aviv and Washington have been pressing the PLO to abandon its fight for Palestinian rights. These imperialist governments have used the Hussein regime as the fulcrum in their effort to pry substantial concessions from the Palestinians. Their strategy has meant stepping up the pressure on both the Palestinian movement and the Jordanian regime.

Last February's Amman agreement raised hopes in the imperialist camp and fears among some supporters of Palestinian rights that the PLO was moving toward an accommodation with imperialism. PLO opponents of Arafat's leadership called the agreement a sell-out.

But the agreement actually signed by Arafat and Hussein a year ago was unambiguous. It clearly called for self-determination for Palestine and reiterated that the PLO is the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people. It also demanded Israeli withdrawal from all the territories taken in 1967 and proposed a "comprehensive peace as established in United Nations and Security Council resolutions."

What was new in the February 11 accord was the suggestion that "Palestinians will exercise their inalienable right of self-determination when Jordanians and Palestinians will be able to do so within the context of the formation of the proposed confederated Arab states of Jordan and Palestine."

In keeping with this goal of eventual Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, Hussein and Arafat also called for an international peace

conference in which Palestinian and Jordanian representatives would work together in a joint delegation.

From the time the Amman document was signed, Hussein has interpreted it differently than has the PLO. Particularly, Hussein claims the accord constituted PLO acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations with the Israeli government. The U.S. government endorses Hussein's view on this.

Resolution 242, adopted in November 1967, calls for Israel to withdraw from most of the territory it had occupied in June of that year. But it also supports the "sovereignty" of the Israeli state over other Palestinian land. Furthermore, the resolution refers to the Palestinians' rights only as a refugee problem. The PLO has therefore consistently rejected the resolution as a starting point for negotiations. By referring to all United Nations and Security Council resolutions, the February 11 agreement based itself on the many UN resolutions that do recognize Palestinian sovereignty.

The PLO Executive Committee clarified its interpretation of the Feb. 11, 1985, agreement one week after it was signed. The Executive Committee approved the plan, but stipulated that joint Jordanian-Palestinian action must be based on "ending the Zionist occupation of the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem . . . rejecting capitulatory plans and unilateral deals such as . . . UN Security Council Resolution 242 . . . [and] rejecting authorization of any party to represent the Palestinians, or having any share in the right."

In a recent interview, Yassir Arafat described his agreement with King Hussein as a "political tool that can be effective to force the execution of the Fez summit resolutions." The Arab League summit meeting at Fez, Morocco, in 1982 called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Attempts to exclude PLO

The imperialist governments sought to use Arafat's closer relations with Hussein to begin to shove aside the PLO leaders as the only representatives of their people. The Jordanian government, which administered the West Bank from 1948 to 1967, has often tried to assert its right to speak for the Palestinians.

Washington and Tel Aviv attempted to dictate which Palestinians could participate in negotiations along with Hussein's delegation and which would be excluded. In mid-1985 the U.S. government expressed a desire to meet with Palestinians, but it vetoed several individuals proposed by the PLO, including people who were not formal members of the liberation organization.

Throughout the past year the PLO leadership has faced mounting pressures on other fronts as well. The Israeli bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunisia in October was followed by an all-out campaign of slander against the organization as the *source*, rather than the victim, of terrorism.

Diplomatic openings like a scheduled meeting of PLO representatives with officials of the British government were slammed shut. Divisions within the Palestinian movement were widened by opponents of cooperation with Hussein, further undermining the authority of the PLO.

The Israeli government has tried to exacerbate Palestinian fears of a Jordanian double-cross. While the recent discussions in Jordan were under way, Prime Minister Shimon Peres implied that Hussein was about to dump Arafat and link up with West Bank Palestinians outside the framework of the PLO.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has also sought to pressure Arafat. "Time is running," he said in late December, "and if Arafat doesn't recognize [UN Resolution 242] he will be the big fat loser." He also implied that Hussein is likely to make a deal with Tel Aviv behind the back of the PLO.

Washington blackmails Jordan

At the same time, the U.S. government was blackmailing Hussein to do its bidding. In October the U.S. Congress held up a proposed \$1.9 billion arms sale to Jordan, which would have included 40 modern jet fighters, anti-aircraft missiles, and other top-of-the-line military hardware. It made closing this deal contingent on Hussein beginning direct negotiations with Tel Aviv before March 1, 1986.

Under this deadline, Hussein was anxious to bring Arafat and the PLO under his control within a joint delegation. The series of meetings in Amman began January 25 for this purpose.

Tel Aviv and Washington hoped these meetings would accomplish what last February's accord did not — to get the PLO to recognize Israeli sovereignty over at least part of Palestine even before formal negotiations were to begin.

But the PLO leaders were asked to concede even more than this in Amman. Hussein reportedly conveyed Washington's demands that the PLO suspend all armed operations, condemn terrorism, and exclude from any peace talks all members of the PLO Executive Committee and any Palestinians who have had anything to do with armed actions.

The PLO leaders refused to go along with these conditions as the price for maintaining their cooperative negotiating position with the Jordanian government.

The outcome of a year of diplomatic maneuvering around the concept of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian approach to Israel has been the clear refusal of the PLO to compromise the Palestinian struggle. As the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Shaab* noted on February 4, "The Palestinian 'no,' which has contradicted the calculations of some circles, is an effective response to those who excessively accused the PLO of selling out." □

French troops sent to Chad

By Ernest Harsch

For the fourth time since Chad gained its independence from France in 1960, French troops have been rushed to that impoverished Central African country. As on the previous occasions, the aim has been to rescue a subservient, French-backed regime confronted by domestic rebellion.

This most recent French imperialist intervention came in response to a series of military actions initiated on February 10 in central Chad by rebel forces of the Transitional Government of National Union (GUNT), headed by former president Goukouni Oueddei. The GUNT, based primarily in the north, is seeking to overthrow the proimperialist regime of President Hissène Habré.

At first the French government of François Mitterrand reacted by stepping up its arms shipments to Habré. Then several hundred French commandos were dispatched to Ndjamená, the capital. Finally, on February 16, French warplanes, flying from bases in the neighboring Central African Republic, bombed a GUNT-held airstrip in Ouadi Doum, in the far north.

Goukouni accused the French government of seeking to "internationalize Chad's internal conflict." He condemned the bombing of Ouadi Doum as a "flagrant violation of the people's desire to settle matters themselves." While reaffirming the GUNT's readiness to negotiate a settlement to the civil war, he likewise proclaimed its "firm determination to have done with the moribund group that France has imposed on our people."

When an unidentified plane dropped a few bombs on Ndjamená's airport the next day, apparently in retaliation for the Ouadi Doum attack, Paris seized on it as a pretext for yet further intervention. French government sources announced that a dozen warplanes would be transferred to Ndjamená and that the number of French troops would be increased to 500. According to a report in the February 18 Paris daily *Le Monde*, this could be increased to as many as 1,500 troops, with some of them posted to Abéché, near the battle lines in central Chad.

Washington has also rushed in. A State Department spokesperson announced that \$6 million in U.S. military aid was being speeded to Ndjamená and that discussions were being held with the French and Chadian governments about further U.S. steps. The CIA had previously provided Habré with considerable assistance, enabling his forces to overthrow Goukouni's government in June 1982.

This stepped-up French and U.S. intervention is directed against the right of the Chadian people to determine their own affairs. But it is also aimed against neighboring Libya, which has long provided military and other assistance to Goukouni's forces.

The dispatch of French troops to Chad has

been accompanied by an incessant propaganda campaign in the French and U.S. mass media designed to portray the GUNT's recent actions as "Libyan aggression." This is part of the broader imperialist campaign of slanders, threats, economic embargoes, and direct mili-

tary provocations against Libya.

On February 13 — as Paris was escalating its intervention in Libya's southern neighbor — U.S. naval and air forces resumed their threatening maneuvers in the Mediterranean, dangerously close to Libyan waters. □

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Marcos regime swept from power

Two decades of rule toppled by mass protests, military rebellion

By Will Reissner

Only hours after he had himself sworn in for a new term as president of the Philippines on February 25, Ferdinand Marcos fled the presidential palace en route to exile.

While Marcos and his entourage were still at the U.S. Clark Air Base near Manila, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz announced that Washington had recognized a new provisional government headed by Corazon Aquino, Marcos' opponent in the February 7 Philippine elections.

Shultz added that over the years "Marcos showed himself to be a staunch friend of the United States" and would be welcome to spend his exile there.

As the news of Marcos' flight from the presidential palace spread, huge crowds turned Manila's streets into a carnival of joy.

Marcos' final crisis began on February 22, when two top military officers — Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff of the armed forces Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos — quit their posts and demanded that Marcos resign.

The military men stated that they had concrete evidence that Marcos had stolen the February 7 election and had abused his powers as president for years.

When Marcos attempted to send loyal troops to retake the Defense Ministry, where Enrile and Ramos had set up their headquarters, tens of thousands of Filipinos surrounded the headquarters forming a human buffer to prevent the Marcos forces from assaulting the ministry.

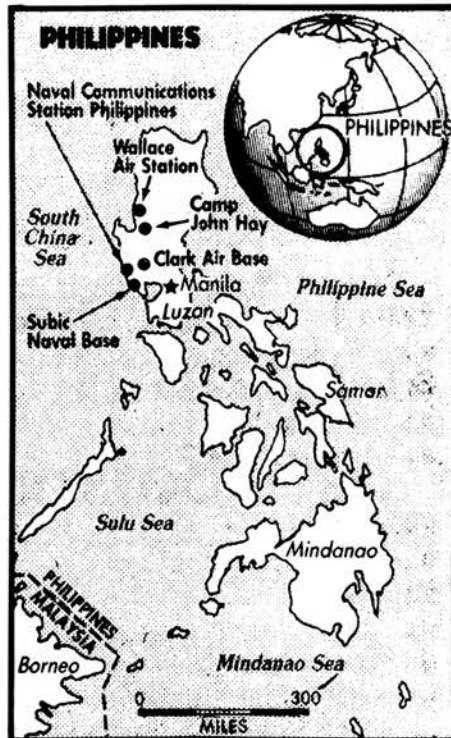
After several days of military stalemate, marked by the growing involvement of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in opposition to Marcos' attempts to hold on to power, Enrile and Ramos announced on February 24 that they were backing Corazon Aquino as the legitimate president of the Philippines, and were forming a provisional government with her.

That same day the Reagan administration publicly deserted Marcos. A White House statement called for "a peaceful transition to a new government" in the Philippines.

For months Ferdinand Marcos had been under growing pressure from Washington to clean up his act before a revolutionary upsurge swept away his regime.

After a stream of private emissaries from President Reagan to his Philippine counterpart failed to secure Marcos' agreement to institute reforms, the Reagan administration, on Oct. 16, 1985, began a highly publicized drive to pressure Marcos.

On that day, U.S. Senator Paul Laxalt delivered a three-page letter from Reagan to Marcos



U.S. military installations in Philippines.

reading Marcos the riot act.

Washington stressed that in order to save his regime, Marcos had to undercut the growing opposition by carrying out reforms and curbing the rampant corruption that marked his rule.

The Marcos regime had been facing mounting protests since Aug. 21, 1983, when opposition leader Benigno Aquino (Corazon Aquino's husband) was murdered at Manila's international airport as he returned from exile in the United States.

Evidence indicated that Aquino's assassination had been organized by armed forces chief of staff Gen. Fabian Ver (a Marcos cousin) and other military officers. But Ver and 25 other defendants were acquitted of complicity in the murder on Dec. 2, 1985, after a Philippine court ruled that the evidence against them was not admissible.

Aquino's murder and the acquittal of Ver sparked a wave of protests against the "U.S.-Marcos dictatorship." Filipinos recalled the close ties Marcos had maintained with Washington since he came to power in 1965 and U.S. support for his regime during nine years of brutal martial law.

On a visit to the Philippines in 1981, U.S. Vice-president George Bush had lavishly praised the Philippine dictator. "We stand with

you, Sir," Bush told Marcos. "We love your adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process."

Regime's erosion

Even before the protests following the Aquino assassination, the Marcos regime was being severely challenged. A guerrilla insurgency waged by the New People's Army (NPA), which is led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), was spreading across the 7,000 islands that make up that Pacific Ocean country.

While the NPA guerrillas were expanding their base among the impoverished peasants, CPP-led organizations were also extending their influence among workers and other urban dwellers.

There was growing revulsion with the regime's rampant corruption and deepening despair caused by a staggering economic crisis, the worst since World War II, which has driven down the already precarious living standards of Filipino workers and peasants.

As Marcos' regime began to erode, officials in Washington feared that with the U.S. government so closely associated with the tyranny, the dictator's overthrow could imperil U.S. influence in the strategic islands.

Laxalt's delivery of Reagan's strong warning to institute reforms was followed a few days later by an open suggestion by the editors of the influential *New York Times* that "an enlightened military may finally have to supervise the transition to democracy that Mr. Marcos refuses to arrange."

These public pressures convinced the Philippine dictator to announce on November 3 that elections would be held.

Washington breathed a sign of relief. The Reagan administration hoped the February 7 election would solve the growing crisis. The vote, Washington felt, would either provide Marcos with a new mandate to continue his rule over the 53 million Filipinos, or would bring the opposition ticket of Corazon Aquino and Salvador Laurel into office.

The Aquino-Laurel ticket, Reagan administration figures were sure, could provide an orderly transition of power and a continuity of Washington's strong influence in the Philippines.

Corazon Aquino, as the widow of the most prominent opposition leader, had become a symbol of the mass revulsion against Marcos' rule. A member of one of the wealthiest and most politically influential Filipino families, Aquino was viewed by Washington as an acceptable alternative to Marcos.

Her running mate, Salvador Laurel, is also a

member of a wealthy landowning family that has held important government posts through four generations. Laurel was a founder and member of Marcos' New Society Movement (KBL) until he broke with Marcos in 1980.

Washington's stakes in the Philippines are very high. U.S. corporations have massive investments in the former U.S. colony.

In addition, the Philippines is the site of the two largest U.S. military bases outside the United States.

Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station are key installations for Washington's military presence throughout Asia and the Pacific and Indian oceans.

But the Reagan administration's hope that the February elections would calm the situation in the Philippines proved to be misplaced. While Marcos was willing to bend to U.S. pressure and call an election, he was not willing to risk defeat in the poll.

Throughout the election campaign, Aquino drew gigantic crowds of Filipinos seeking a way to end the Marcos reign. Her final rally on February 4 in Manila's Luneta Park drew a crowd estimated to be as large as 1.5 million people.

One of Marcos' closest associates confided to the *New York Times* that Aquino could win 60 percent of the vote.

Despite all the advantages of incumbency, including unrestricted use of the government treasury and the state apparatus, despite preferential access to the mass media and violence against Aquino supporters, it became clear that Marcos would go down to defeat in a fair election on February 7.

Marcos, however, had no intention of stepping aside. Instead he resorted to such widespread and flagrant fraud in counting the votes that the election deepened the regime's crisis rather than solving it.

On election day itself, 30 people were murdered. Marcos' thugs openly stole ballot boxes from polling places at gunpoint.

The process of counting votes was so fraudulent that 30 government election workers left their computers and took refuge in a Manila church, where they publicly assailed the wholesale fraud.

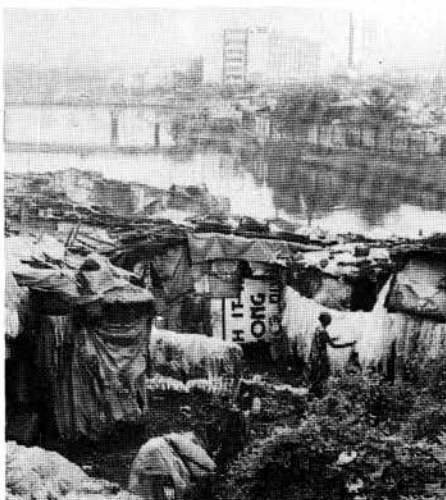
In the days after the February 7 election, however, the Reagan administration hoped that the voting, however fraudulent, would calm the situation and that Aquino could be convinced to accept the results.

Reagan: 'fraud on both sides'

At a February 11 press conference, President Reagan dismissed the charges of vote fraud. "I think that we're concerned about the violence there and the possibility of fraud, although it could have been that all of that was occurring on both sides," Reagan told the reporters.

He added, "we're encouraged by the fact that it is evident that there is a two-party system in the Philippines."

Reagan stressed to reporters that the critical issue for Washington is the survival of U.S. bases in the Philippines. "One cannot



Manila slum. Economic crisis adds to woes.

minimize the importance of those bases, not only to us, but to the Western world and to the Philippines themselves. I don't know of anything more important than the Philippines bases," he stated.

On the very day Reagan was speaking, six gunmen connected with a local pro-Marcos politician chased Aquino-supporter Evelio Javier through the crowded town square of San Jose de Buenavista and shot him dead.

On February 15 the Marcos-controlled National Assembly pronounced him the winner with 53.8 percent of the vote.

Contrary to the hopes of the Reagan administration, Aquino refused to accept the fraud and announced that she would lead a campaign of demonstrations and strikes to protest the election.

On February 16 Aquino opened this campaign by addressing a giant rally of up to 1 million people in Manila.

In addition to calling for a nationwide work stoppage and school boycott on the day after Marcos' scheduled February 25 inauguration, Aquino called for a boycott of corporations controlled by Marcos associates and of pro-Marcos newspapers. She also urged supporters to withdraw funds from banks linked to the Marcos political machine.

The boycott call received an immediate response. Heavy withdrawals from the banks and sharp drops in the circulation of pro-Marcos newspapers were reported. The price of San Miguel Corporation stock, a key target of the boycott, dropped 20 percent in one day.

Left-wing groups that had boycotted the election itself announced that they would join with Aquino supporters in protesting the Marcos regime's theft of the presidency.

Habib mission

Concerned that the developing confrontation could escape its control, Washington sent Philip Habib to Manila to try to arrange a settlement between Marcos and Aquino.

Two days after Marcos was declared the election winner, Habib pressed Marcos and Aquino to agree to some sort of power-sharing arrangement, the *Washington Post* reported on

February 19.

According to Leslie Gelb, writing in the February 19 *New York Times*, Habib's mission had a two-fold purpose. He was to inform Marcos of the growing sentiment in the U.S. Congress for a cut-off of U.S. aid to his regime, and he was to get "the point across to Corazon C. Aquino, the opposition leader, that Washington would not like the issue of who rules to be settled in the streets."

But it was becoming increasingly clear that the "issue of who rules" would indeed be decided in the streets as Marcos' scheduled inauguration approached and Aquino reiterated her "determination to vindicate the people's verdict and assume the presidency" herself.

Once again the *New York Times* editors stated openly what the Reagan administration was only hinting at. In a February 21 editorial entitled "Marcos Must Go," the *Times* editors described Marcos as "a usurper who needs to be quickly driven from Manila's presidential palace."

The editorial encouraged Philippine military officials to move quickly. "Military aid should be suspended, with assurance to army leaders that it will be quickly restored if they reject repression and facilitate a swift transition to democratic rule," the *Times* proposed.

The editors added that a cut-off of military aid "will prove to Philippine generals that Mr. Marcos can no longer deliver American funds and arms."

Washington's friends in military

Washington has long been cultivating segments of the military to act as a backstop for U.S. military and economic interests in the Philippines. As we wrote in these pages on Nov. 18, 1985: "Among those Washington has been preening for a possible post-Marcos role is Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, who helped Marcos plan the 1972 martial-law takeover. Enrile and acting armed forces chief of staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos have been pointed to as figures who could move to protect U.S. interests in the Philippines if opposition to Marcos threatens to topple the regime."

It was precisely Enrile and Ramos who seized the headquarters of the Defense Ministry in Manila on February 22 and issued a call to Marcos to resign.

But Enrile and Ramos were unable to rapidly topple the Marcos regime, leading to what Washington feared most: the entry of the Filipino masses into the resolution of the succession question.

Many of the soldiers sent by Marcos to dislodge the rebels mobilized around the Defense Ministry headquarters were not enthusiastic about their assignment to protect the faltering dictator. As John Burgess reported in the February 24 *Washington Post*, when 1,000 marines arrived with orders to retake the Defense Ministry headquarters, "many flashed the *laban* ("fight!") hand signal of the opposition." Unable to disperse the crowd surrounding the ministry headquarters, the marines were withdrawn without fulfilling their mission. □

Philippine left on election policy

Discussion of boycott or support to Aquino-Laurel ticket

[Groups on the left in the Philippines took a variety of positions regarding the February 7 presidential election. Some urged a boycott of the election, while other groups and individuals called for support to the Corazon Aquino-Salvador Laurel ticket.

[In the following selections, several of these groups and individuals explain their positions. All the statements were made before the election took place. In all selections, emphasis is from the original.]

* * *

Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy

In a January 1986 statement entitled "Cast away illusions; boycott the sham snap election!" the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy (NAJFD) argued that the Philippines is under "the joint rule of U.S. imperialism and the Marcos clique," a partnership in which "the U.S. occupies the decisive role."

The Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy is a coalition that claims 500,000 supporters.

The NAJFD statement argued that the February 7 election would deal with only "the rule of Marcos as chief puppet. . . . U.S. domination of the country is not even being raised by the electoral opposition as an issue."

The opposition ticket in the election, the statement maintained, has "reduced the anti-dictatorship struggle into a purely anti-Marcos fight." It added that getting rid of Marcos would be "a victory for the antifascist movement," but "retaining U.S. domination will not alter the substance of state rule in the country."

The statement maintained that "even the hope of merely ousting Marcos" would not be possible because Marcos "has designed the election to give him 'fresh mandate' and prolong his fascist rule."

According to the NAJFD, "hopes are now being fostered that if the people will not allow themselves to be cheated, Marcos will be forced to allow himself to be defeated."

But the NAJFD argued that "nothing is farther from the truth," and "regardless of repercussions, Marcos shall again ride roughshod over the people's will to maintain himself in power."

The only force that could prevent Marcos from stealing the election, the NAJFD stated, is the U.S. government. But it argued that such a move by Washington "is still not in the U.S. imperialist agenda. Marcos is still viewed by the dominant faction in the U.S. government as the best lapdog in town."



Manila rally protesting February 7 presidential election.

The statement noted that while Washington "keeps on issuing statements supposedly pressing for 'reforms' to uplift its democratic pretensions, it has unabatedly propped up the regime with various forms of economic, military, and political assistance."

If Marcos' ouster through the election is improbable, the NAJFD statement maintained, even more improbable "is the attainment of basic social changes."

The ouster of Marcos as an individual "is no guarantee for the eventual resolution of the nation's basic problems," the NAJFD argued. It asserted that no genuine change could take place "as long as U.S. imperialism holds sway over our national life, feudal relations persist in the countryside, and bureaucrat capitalists dominate public office."

The NAJFD statement maintained that it was wrong to simply focus on the human rights issue "while ignoring the basic ills of Philippine society."

"We recognize and support the opposition candidates' antifascist blows against the dictatorship in so far as they contribute in further isolating the regime and awakening the unpoliticized masses," the NAJFD stated.

"But," the organization added, "to deliberately detach antifascism from the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, much worse, reduce it to an anti-Marcos fight, is to distract the people from the correct path of the anti-dictatorship movement and dilute the substance of this struggle."

No candidate in the elections, the statement said, "campaigns on the platform of the people's fundamental demands."

The Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom, and Democracy argued that "since the snap election shall not bring about the end of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, shall not bring about meaningful changes in Philippine society, and shall not bring about concrete gains in arousing, organizing, and mobilizing the masses on the basis of their fundamental demands, there is no other principled option but to boycott this sham election."

The statement concluded that "the broad masses of the Filipino people, highly politicized and organized, conscious of correct political leadership, fighting shoulder to shoulder in their millions. . . . can truly and fully assert its might not in sham elections which render it impotent, but in direct, actual combat with the fascist state, in the various arenas of struggle in the cities and countryside."

National Ecumenical Forum for Church Response

The National Ecumenical Forum for Church Response (NEFCR) described the February 7 election as "a U.S.-Marcos plot to delay the people's real victory."

In a statement, the NEFCR argued that "the Marcos regime is on the brink of collapse, and the snap elections are concocted to prolong his

term and to arrest the momentum gained by the progressive movement to decisively dismantle this regime that has caused so much suffering."

It added that "the U.S. government, shamelessly pursuing its interventionist policy, is not really ready to junk Marcos."

Rather, the church group stated, Washington had two aims: "one, to stage 'clean elections' to get a new mandate for Marcos; and two, provide an arena for the opposition elite from whom will emerge the replacement of Marcos, but still playing Marcos' role: U.S. puppet."

The real issues are not being addressed in the election campaigns, the group argued. "No one, for instance, is stating unequivocally what to do about the U.S. bases, the nuclear plant, billion dollar foreign loans, genuine land reform, proworker laws, victims of terrorism, etc."

The NEFCR called on "all believers and people of goodwill" to "opt not to vote as a moral and theological option" and "to use the allotted time for the campaign of candidates to tell the people the critical issues, particularly the real schemes of the U.S.-Marcos unholy alliance."

The key goal in the "fight against the U.S. and the Marcos dictatorship," the group wrote, is "a real victory of a people and a nation, and not just a victory of an oppressor class."

Task Force Detainees of the Philippines

The Dec. 15, 1985-Jan. 14, 1986, issue of *Philippine Human Rights Update*, published in Manila, reprinted a statement by Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) as an editorial.

The statement began: "Mr. Marcos has once again pulled another rabbit out of his political hat. His newest trick called 'snap polls' has entranced both local and international circles alike."

The statement argued that the election's aim was "to divert the people's attention from the fundamental, more urgent issues that confront the nation, for one, the Marcos regime's unmitigated violations of human rights."

The human rights group argued that "meaningful participation in any electoral exercise is an impossibility against the backdrop of rampant cases of arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, extrajudicial killing, abduction, the use of the Preventive Detention Action (PDA), and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus."

The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines stated that an end to political terrorism is "a prerequisite to participation in any political exercise."

In a subsequent issue, the *Philippine Human Rights Update* noted that the opposition candidates had stepped back from their original call for the release of all political prisoners and now pledged only to grant "general amnesty" to political detainees who disavow violence.

But the editorial argued that "to set condi-

tions on the freedom of the political prisoners would be tantamount to repudiating their significant role in advancing the people's movement to end the much-hated rule of the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship."

National Democratic Front

The National Democratic Front (NDF) outlined its views on the elections in a January 13 statement issued in an interview format. The NDF is a clandestine coalition of mass organizations. It claims that 1 million people belong to its constituent groups.

The NDF argued that the election "comes at a time when the Philippine economy is reeling from its most severe crisis in over 40 years." This crisis "has been rapidly eroding the dictatorship's political base and has severely limited its political elbow room."

Marcos wanted to win a "fresh mandate," in the NDF's view, not from Filipinos but "from the Reagan administration" and "foreign creditor governments and institutions."

The NDF argued that U.S. military and financial aid to the Marcos regime belied any U.S. attempt to get rid of Marcos. Rather, "the Reagan administration wishes to strengthen the fascist dictatorship, as long as the latter proves itself the more capable puppet in terms of U.S. strategic interests in the country."

U.S. support of the election, the statement said, "is a wily maneuver to ensure that the increasingly bitter conflict between the Marcos camp and the anti-Marcos opposition does not spill over into open armed confrontation — which, the U.S. fears, will only favor the revolutionary movement. What better way to achieve this than to channel these factional conflicts into a relatively harmless electoral contest."

The campaign "affords the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship some breathing space from a spate of increasingly militant popular actions that have reached unprecedented proportions over the last year or so."

In the NDF's view, "U.S. pressure on the Marcos government to institute mainly cosmetic reforms [is] designed precisely to take the edge off the people's movement and to see to it that the legal Opposition is kept from taking up more fundamental issues or, worse, participating actively in the vigorous drive to dismantle the joint rule of U.S. imperialism and the Marcos clique."

The NDF saw three tendencies in the legal opposition regarding the election.

The "conservative section" hoped to "replace the Marcos regime by openly courting U.S. favor," the NDF interview stated. "They hope to ride the crest of the developing antifascist temper of the people as well as U.S. promises of support, to catapult them to power."

The "middle sector of the Opposition," the NDF interview continued, is wary of the elections but has "generally been drawn to participate . . . in the hope that the popular antifascist mood may be enough to sweep the dictatorship from power." This sector also wants "to influence the main Opposition slate to adopt some

progressive demands."

"The left section of the legal Opposition," said the NDF, has "repudiated the election as another U.S.-Marcos maneuver to prolong the dictatorship in power" and views the election as a "sham, that is mainly designed to blunt a rapidly developing popular protest movement."

The NDF itself called for a boycott of the elections.

The interview stated that "while calling for boycott, the NDF calls on the patriotic elements within the traditional Opposition to sharpen their attack versus the fascist dictatorship, raising the people's basic demands, and arm themselves politically and organizationally against the massive fraud and terrorism that will doubtless characterize the coming polls. In all of these, the legal Opposition can count on the NDF's full support."

The NDF does not reject all electoral activity on principle. The organization stated that "the most effective means to overthrow U.S. imperialism and the local reactionaries is through a revolutionary people's war." But "within the context of people's war, the parliamentary struggle, in particular electoral struggle, may play a significant role."

But electoral struggle, said the NDF interview, "must be undertaken with a clear view to advancing the armed as well as militant mass struggles and should not detract nor be separate from other revolutionary means of fighting a well-entrenched and well-armed enemy. Otherwise, electoral struggle becomes a mere diversion."

Communist Party of the Philippines

In a statement on the February 7 elections, *Ang Bayan*, the paper of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), predicted that the election will be rigged. "After two decades in power, Marcos has a firm grip on the state institutions traditionally used for electoral terrorism and fraud," it wrote.

The paper maintained that under "prodding of its imperialist masters, the Marcos clique has extended some concessions to the traditional oppositionists. But these are meant only to lure them and the people into participating in its electoral sham."

The Reagan administration "has made a big show of demanding 'fair and clean elections.' But it has been tolerating Marcos' political skulduggery," the paper stated.

"While posing as an impartial referee, imperialism wants to gradually moderate the conflicts among the local reactionary classes, reconcile them, and consolidate their ranks within the framework of puppet fascist rule," *Ang Bayan* contended.

The purpose is "to broaden the political base of such rule and lay the ground for the orderly transfer of power when Marcos dies or when it finally wants to get rid of him."

According to the CPP's organ, "Corazon Aquino has been carrying on a vigorous anti-

fascist campaign, thus making valuable contributions to the people's overall antifascist struggles."

But it argued that "her campaign against the fascist puppet Marcos is flawed on several counts."

Ang Bayan said that "Mrs. Aquino's more recent pronouncements show that she has abandoned her previous progressive stand on a number of vital issues. And baited by Marcos — and applauded by U.S. imperialism — she has been making increasingly strident anticomunist and antirevolutionary utterances. All these indicate that, well-meaning though she may be, she is politically naive or that she has not transcended her own comprador-landlord class background."

The CPP stated that "even with all her defects and shortcomings, she could easily defeat Marcos under ideal circumstances. But . . . Marcos is using every trick in the book to ensure his 'victory,' with his imperialist masters cheering him on."

Ang Bayan reported that "the Communist Party of the Philippines is fully aware, as are most of our people, that no election under the present ruling system has brought about basic change in the exploitative and oppressive setup in our country."

For that reason "the Party has taken the position that boycott is the correct response to frustrate the antinational and antipeople objectives of the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship."

In addition to calling for boycott, the CPP urged people "to seize every opportunity to project your just demands and intensify the just struggles for our national and democratic interests."

It argued that "only through our revolutionary struggles — and never through a sham election under fascist auspices — can we change the present semicolonial and semifeudal system in our country."

According to *Ang Bayan*, many people "are participating in the belief that they can attain genuine change or at least strike a blow at the dictatorship."

"For all its meaninglessness as a means of overthrowing the hated U.S.-Marcos dictatorship, the snap election will teach many more among our people a most valuable political lesson: *that revolution, not a rigged election, is the correct path to change.*"

The statement called on boycotters and participants to join together after the election "to broaden and intensify the antifascist and anti-dictatorship struggles, in urban and rural areas alike, in the armed sphere and in the open mass movement."

Jose Maria Sison

Since 1977, Jose Maria Sison has been a political prisoner. Sison, who acknowledges having been the head of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was interviewed in jail on Dec. 26, 1985.

Sison expressed the view that the Aquino-Laurel ticket would be "a sure winner by a landslide" in an honest election.

"The unity of the opposition political parties and the enthusiasm of the people for the opposition ticket are very encouraging," he stated.

Asked whether the boycott advocated by the CPP and other groups would not take votes away from Aquino and deliver the election to the regime, Sison drew a distinction between "a boycott campaign waged to the maximum," which he said would have that effect, and a "minimum" boycott.

"As revolutionary organizations determined to overthrow the regime and carry out the people's democratic revolution," said Sison, the CPP, the NPA [New People's Army], and even the NDF must boycott the snap election. However, for the sake of flexibility but still adhering to revolutionary principles, they can limit boycott to the minimum extent of not openly and not directly participating in the selection of presidential candidates and in the electoral campaign or not endorsing and supporting legal opposition candidates."

The organizations "can thus allow the opposition candidates to seek votes from their organized mass base, which is sizeable and can be decisive."

"The minimum boycott," Sison stated, "would be just enough to draw attention to certain principles or certain wrongs."

Sison argued, "I do not think that the choice is a simplistic one between *maximum* boycott and *uncritical* participation." In his view, "maximum boycott is too rigid a position in view of the fact that many organizations and . . . political parties and the spontaneous majority of the people are for critical participation" in the election.

He stressed his view that supporters of minimum boycott and advocates of critical participation could "stay and work together in the same democratic alliances and mass organizations."

In Sison's view, "those who are for minimum boycott objectively extend indirect support to the opposition ticket," while "those for critical participation extend direct support to the opposition ticket but make clear that they do not place their hopes mainly or entirely in an electoral exercise arranged by the fascist dictatorship."

Sison argued that supporters of minimum boycott could stage their own rallies expressing their views, and could share the same platforms with those supporting the opposition ticket "without being obligated to express direct support for any candidate."

The key point, he said, "is to maintain anti-fascist unity."

Asked which of the two tickets he personally preferred, Sison responded, "To me personally, the opposition tandem of Aquino and Laurel is far, far better and more acceptable."

Sison stated that "the Aquino-Laurel tandem has pro-U.S. inclinations and big comprador-landlord interests. I do not expect much from it in terms of outright anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism. . . . But we can expect much from the opposition tandem in terms of antifascism."

Sison warned that "it is wrong to think that

Marcos is a pushover. He is still in a position to ram through his sham reelection."

Although some criticism of election fraud could be expected from Washington, said Sison, "by and large, the U.S. will accept the *fait accompli* and push the regime to hunt down and kill the revolutionaries and to extend the life of the U.S. military bases beyond 1991."

Union of Democratic Filipinos

One group that took a strong position in favor of the Aquino-Laurel ticket was the Union of Democratic Filipinos (UDF), a group of exiles in North America.

An editorial in the December 1985 issue of *Ang Katipunan*, a monthly published by the UDF in California, called for "all Filipinos on this continent to unite and render all possible assistance to the Aquino-Laurel campaign and the people's effort to hand the Marcos dictatorship a resounding defeat."

The editorial argued that "this snap election comes at a time when the Marcos dictatorship is in the midst of an unprecedented and irreversible governmental crisis."

It maintained that "for the very first time, there is broad consensus in U.S. ruling circles and institutions that Marcos has become a burden and must be replaced, gracefully, if possible."

The UDF monthly stated that "Marcos is now faced with a very rare combination of a deeply dissatisfied sponsor looking forward to his exit and a profoundly discontented people looking forward to his political, even physical, demise."

"In a rare historical moment, U.S. imperialism and the people's movement agree on one thing though obviously for different reasons — that Marcos must go."

Ang Katipunan wrote that Corazon Aquino "symbolizes the broadest expression of the people's discontent. This campaign . . . has the potential of mobilizing millions to an open confrontation with the hated tyrant."

The election "can lead to either Marcos' ouster or further isolation," the editorial stated. But "it *cannot* accomplish . . . the fundamental reordering of the exploitative and oppressive social structures that have produced the likes of Ferdinand Marcos."

The removal of Marcos would "weaken the fascist structures he has built, put his minions in disarray and free Philippine politics from the stifling grip of autocracy."

The editorial saw the campaign as presenting "the opportunity for forging the broadest unity among the people to isolate or defeat their most immediate enemy, and to take a big step towards the long-range goal of national and social liberation."

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Masses press junta for real changes

Reject 'Duvalierism without Duvalier'

By Will Reissner

The six-man military-civilian junta ruling Haiti since dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier fled on February 7 is attempting to maintain Duvalierism without Duvalier.

The junta, however, faces a population demanding deep-going changes.

In the face of these pressures, the junta has tried to appease Haiti's impoverished masses by focusing on symbolic changes, while trying to stave off significant reforms.

The junta, placed in power by Duvalier himself only hours before the dictator left for France, has taken Duvalier's name off the capital's international airport. It also announced that the Haitian flag will revert to the colors in use before the Duvalier dynasty came to power in 1957.

Duvalier-Ville, a new capital city that was planned but never completed by dynasty-founder François Duvalier, will again be called Cabaret.

Desire for big changes

These cosmetic changes, however, have not satisfied the Haitian population. The students, workers, and peasants who toppled the Duvalier regime through a wave of mass protests beginning in late November 1985 are demanding more substantial changes.

On February 18, army troops used tear gas outside the National Palace in Port-au-Prince to disperse crowds demanding the ouster of officials who had served under Duvalier. Thousands of people held similar demonstrations in the southern cities of Les Cayes and Jacmel.

In an attempt to defuse the new protests, the junta announced that evening that all the property of the former dictator would be seized and that all financial and economic transactions arranged by Duvalier in the six months before his departure would be annulled.

The junta has also been forced by mass pressures to abolish the Volunteers for National Security, popularly known as the Tontons Macoutes ("bogeymen" in Haiti's French Creole). The Tontons Macoutes were the thugs and murderers organized by the Duvalier tyranny to suppress all opposition to the regime among Haiti's 6 million people.

The junta also dissolved Duvalier's Legislative Assembly, suspended the government newspaper pending reorganization, and freed dozens of political prisoners.

The key demand of the Haitian masses, however, has not been met — removal of the old-line Duvalierists from the government. Both the junta and the cabinet it appointed to run Haiti are loaded with collaborators with the

old regime. Several cabinet members fill the same posts they occupied under Jean-Claude Duvalier when he was still president-for-life.

Duvalierists dominate junta

Four of the six junta members were high-ranking military officers under Duvalier. The head of the junta, General Henri Namphy, was appointed Haitian army chief of staff in 1984 and had been a close collaborator of the founder of the Duvalier dynasty.

Col. William Regala was named inspector-general of the armed forces in March 1984.

Col. Max Vallès commanded the presidential guard in the last year of Jean-Claude Duvalier's rule.

Col. Prosper Avril was an officer in the presidential guard, who had had a falling out with the Duvalier family in September 1983 but returned to the family's good graces several months before the end of the regime.

Alix Cinéas, one of the two civilians on the junta, served as minister of public works, communications, and transport under Duvalier.

Of the six junta members, only Gérard Gourgue, chairman of the Haitian League for Human Rights, had a record as an opponent of Duvalier's rule. Gourgue and his wife were severely beaten in 1979 when the regime's forces broke up a meeting of the human rights group.

The preponderance of officers in the junta reveals that the real ruling force in Haiti is now the 8,000-man army.

The army and the Roman Catholic church are the only two institutions that emerged from the nearly three decades of Duvalier-family rule with national scope and cohesion.

Despite the seeming continuity of Duvalierist rule, a profound change has taken place in Haiti's political life. When Jean-Claude Duvalier was driven from power by months of protests and demonstrations, which his repressive forces were unable to contain, a new relationship of forces was established in Haiti.

Many Haitians now speak of a revolution that was cut short by a military coup. The new regime confronts a population that is deeply suspicious of the junta for its strong links to Duvalier. But it has thus far been unable, and for the most part has not attempted, to reinstate the repression that marked Duvalier's rule.

Two cabinet members named by the junta were prevented from entering their offices on February 10 by furious government employees. Odonel Fénestor, minister of commerce and industry, and Montaigu Cantave, head of the ministry of agriculture, had each filled those same posts under Jean-Claude Duvalier.

Workers in private industry have also prevented managers with links to the old regime from returning to their positions. Angry crowds have ransacked stores owned by prominent Duvalier supporters.

Petitions circulating

Students in Gonaïves, where the wave of protests against Duvalier began in November, are circulating petitions demanding fundamental changes in the government. These 25-point petitions have also been circulating in Port-au-Prince.

The petition, dated February 10, called for dissolving the Tontons Macoutes, prosecution of all Tontons Macoutes who had committed crimes against the people, and expulsion of Macoutes from the army.

The students' petition also called for lifting the state of siege and curfew; removal of Cinéas, Avril, and Vallès from the junta; formation of a representative cabinet; and adoption of the pre-Duvalier constitution.

The petition demanded prosecution of all those guilty of embezzlement of public funds, extradition of the Duvaliers and their accomplices, and recovery of the money stolen from the Haitian state.

It called for cancellation of the requirement of entry visas for Haitians living abroad, reductions in prices and taxes on basic necessities, and higher wages for workers, peasants, teachers, and soldiers.

Other points in the petition included demands for free functioning of trade unions and political parties and direct elections on all levels of government.

The petition concluded by demanding the expulsion from the cabinet of three prominent Duvalierists: Social Affairs Minister Tony Auguste, Commerce Minister Odonel Fénestor, and Information Minister Georges Valcin.

Students in Gonaïves began a school boycott when the junta reopened the schools on February 17. Duvalier had ordered schools in Haiti closed in December in an attempt to halt the spread of protests against his regime. They reopened for one day on January 8 and then were ordered closed again.

Student leaders in Gonaïves stated that their boycott was aimed at forcing the junta to set a date for general elections. Although the junta has repeatedly promised that elections will be held, one source close to the government told a Caribbean news agency that "the question is not one of having [elections] quickly, but of having them properly. I think it could be three years before the ground is prepared."

Many opposition political figures, most still in exile, have called for a change of govern-

ment to take place much sooner.

Duly Brutus, Paris representative of the Haitian Union of Patriotic and Democratic Forces (known by its Creole initials, IFOPADA), told Agence France-Presse that the junta should turn the government over to a broad civilian coalition within one month.

Sylvio Claude, a prominent Christian Democratic opponent of the Duvalier regime, stated on February 12 that unless the authorities form a new government that excludes Duvalierists and includes representatives of all sectors of the opposition within one month, "the people will take the measures they took with Jean-Claude Duvalier."

Leslie Manigat, head of the Assembly of Progressive National Democrats (RDNP), said in Caracas, Venezuela, that a "provisional government of social consensus," made up of representatives of the church, the armed forces, business, labor, and peasants, should be named. This provisional government, he argued, must carry out a policy of de-Duvalierization and prepare for general elections within 9 to 18 months.

[For the views of left-wing political leaders, see the article on page 133.]

For decades, most politically active forces in Haiti have been driven into exile. Many are now attempting to return. And new forces inside Haiti have emerged out of the months of anti-Duvalier protests.

New heroes

A Barbados radio broadcast reported that on February 11 tens of thousands of people in Gonaïves who were attending a huge rally and mass to celebrate Duvalier's flight came together "to cheer and try to touch a secret hero of the rebellion that toppled three decades of dictatorial rule by the Duvalier government."

The object of the crowd's enthusiasm was 24-year-old Jean Tatoun. Tatoun, who like most Haitians is illiterate, had waged an underground war with six companions against the Tontons Macoutes. In the process, Tatoun became one of the most hunted men in Haiti and one of its heroes after the fall of the Duvalier regime.

Tatoun stated that he is not happy with the new junta. "We want quick elections, we want freedom," he said bluntly.

Since the fall of Duvalier, clandestine trade union organizers have also begun to surface and function openly. On February 12 a strike shut down the Haitian-American Sugar Company's mill in Port-au-Prince. Two days later, police intervened against this strike, the first to take place since Duvalier's flight.

The strike was supported by the Independent Federation of Haitian Workers (CATH), a federation formed by Social Christians in 1980 that had functioned semiclandestinely until the fall of Duvalier.

Exiles still kept out

In hopes of maintaining control over the political situation, the junta has retained Duvalier's law that all Haitians residing abroad must secure an entry visa before returning to

the country. This rule was used by Duvalier to control the activities of Haitian exiles.

As Jacques Hasday reported from Port-au-Prince in the Montreal daily *La Presse*, "The new regime is retaining this visa, anxious to avoid the influx of certain oppositionists considered to be potentially destabilizing forces."

One of the few prominent exiles who has been able to return to his homeland is Jean-Claude Bajeux, who spent 22 years in San Juan, Puerto Rico, before showing up at Port-au-Prince's airport on February 14 without an entry visa. Bajeux, a former priest, was detained for five hours before being released.

Junta won't seek Duvalier's extradition

Another likely bone of contention between the junta and the population is the fate of Jean-Claude Duvalier. The new regime's minister of education, Rosny Descroches, said in Paris February 17 that the new government does not want Jean-Claude Duvalier returned to Haiti to stand trial for his dictatorial rule.

"It would be better that the ex-president remain outside Haiti," Descroches argued. He added, "I do not believe the Haitian people want" Duvalier's extradition back to Haiti.

But the demand for Duvalier's return, and the return of the wealth he plundered from the country, is widely supported in the general

Duvalier: 'I'm being persecuted'

In an interview in the February 15 French daily *Le Figaro*, ousted Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier argued that he should be allowed to remain in France as a political refugee.

Duvalier was originally given permission to remain in France for eight days. He is fighting to remain in France, which he describes as "the only country in the world which I feel close to."

The former president-for-life argued that he is the target of political persecution for his beliefs and is therefore entitled to protection under Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations convention on refugees.

"I have well-founded fear of being persecuted solely for my political opinions," the exiled despot told *Le Figaro*. As evidence for this, Duvalier pointed to "the desecration and destruction of my father's tomb" and "the massacre of members of the popular militia," the hated Tontons Macoutes.

These acts, said Duvalier, were aimed against "the doctrine of Duvalierism," of which he is the symbol.

In the same interview, Duvalier boasted that he had acted responsibly when leaving Haiti, having departed only "after having organized the transition" and "personally naming each member of the junta."

population. Even many of those willing to leave Duvalier in exile have raised the demand that any country that gives Duvalier permanent asylum should first insist that his ill-gotten riches be returned to his impoverished homeland.

Estimates of Duvalier's personal fortune range from \$200 million to \$500 million. Most of it is invested outside of Haiti and is therefore unaffected by the nationalization measures announced by the junta on February 18.

According to Agence France-Presse, during the last years of Jean-Claude Duvalier's rule, he diverted some \$300 million per year from state funds into his personal fortune. Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere.

Many Haitians are demanding, the French press agency noted, that Duvalier's stolen fortune be returned to Haiti and applied toward payment of the country's foreign debt.

In recent years figures in the Roman Catholic clergy have played an important role in helping to organize opposition to the Duvalier regime.

While the church as a whole took no position on the regime, individual priests and bishops were active in the opposition, and the church-run Radio Soleil played an important role in spreading news of the mounting protests until it was closed down by Duvalier.

Since Duvalier fled, Radio Soleil has become a forum for anti-junta views and for calls for the ouster of Duvalier supporters and the return of the funds stolen by the dictator.

Many of the students who were active in organizing the protests against Duvalier have been strongly influenced by the "liberation theology" current in the church and by Willy Romélus, the bishop of Jérémie, who is the church's officially designated pastor for youth.

Romélus was active in encouraging the formation of "Christian base communities," which took up social issues.

Since the ouster of Duvalier, however, many figures in the church hierarchy are preaching reconciliation with leaders of the former regime. The archbishop of Port-au-Prince, François Ligonde, said during a February 9 sermon that "we do not have the right to hate anyone, even those people we call our enemies or the enemies of our nation."

Claudius Agenor, bishop of Les Cayes, stated that with Duvalier's departure, "we now have a need for peace, for tranquility, for unity."

In the huge demonstration and mass in Gonaïves celebrating Duvalier's ouster, the bishop of Cap-Haïtien, the country's second-largest city, gave an openly political sermon arguing against radical changes. Bishop François Gayot told the crowd, "I am not for communism. We must reject any atheist system."

Reporting in the February 13 Paris daily *Le Monde*, Denis Hautin-Guiraut wrote that many people in the crowd were shocked by Gayot's statement, and some began calling out the name of Bishop Romélus of Jérémie, who is considered the bishop most committed to real change. □

Meeting calls for anti-intervention actions

Anti-imperialist groups pledge solidarity with revolutionary struggles

By Mac Warren

MANAGUA — The Anti-Imperialist Organizations of Central America and the Caribbean, meeting here February 8-9, called for international protests on April 28 against imperialist military intervention in their region.

The gathering also called for a February 27 international day of protest against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and backed plans for protests against U.S. President Ronald Reagan's trip to Grenada February 20 to inaugurate the new airport there.

Thirty organizations from 19 countries were represented at the meeting. They came from Barbados, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Nicaragua.

Origins of group

This was the second consultative meeting of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations. The group was founded in June 1984 in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Grenada revolution and the U.S. invasion and occupation of that island. Caribbean and Central American organizations came together in Havana in response to that invasion and the imperialist militarization of the entire region.

Delegates to the Havana meeting recognized the challenge of uniting groups from these various nations, with many different languages and cultural traditions, which have been historically divided by the imperialist powers.

Between the first meeting and the second one here, the Anti-Imperialist Organizations has attempted to establish an effective, region-wide mode of communication and collaboration on political campaigns and activities. The second meeting registered some advances in this process.

Invited to the gathering were delegates from organizations in Central America and the Caribbean who agree with the group's purpose. The meeting was not open to the press, but a news conference was held to announce the results of the meeting and present a declaration adopted unanimously by the participants.

The fight against imperialism and U.S. aggression in the region was the central concern of the meeting.

Haitian victory celebrated

The delegates celebrated the victory of the Haitian people in overthrowing the hated Duvalier dictatorship. This victory was seen as a powerful incentive to cement the growing



Mary-Alice Waters/IP

Press briefing by leaders of anti-imperialist conference. From left: Clement Rohee, People's Progressive Party of Guyana; Rafael Taveras, Socialist Bloc of Dominican Republic; and Lumberto Campbell, Sandinista leader on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

collaboration and solidarity among anti-imperialist organizations.

Solidarity with Nicaragua in its fight against Washington's dirty war was a central focus of the meeting. The fighting people of El Salvador, Guatemala, and South Africa were saluted.

The group's declaration called for the Caribbean region to be declared a zone of peace, independence, and development. The combination of IMF-imposed austerity and the increased deployment of imperialist military forces throughout the region came in for heavy condemnation.

The group's declaration pointed out that "these policies are behind the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which seeks to tie the Caribbean region to the political and military plans of the United States, without at all resolving the region's serious social and economic problems."

The visit by Reagan to Grenada February 20 was called "an attempt to formalize the neocolonialism of that sister country" and condemned as "an act of imperial arrogance, an insult to all Grenadian patriots, and an affront to the peoples of the Caribbean."

Anticolonial struggles

The declaration also backed "all the people who are still waging fights against colonialism, as in the case of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyana, and the Dutch Antilles."

Many participants commented on the significance of the group's ongoing effort to achieve political coordination and solidarity among the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean in the fight against imperialist

domination.

Rafael "Fafa" Taveras, president of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations and general secretary of the Socialist Bloc (BS) of the Dominican Republic, explained to this reporter that the Caribbean islands historically were "isolated from each other, separated by language, and many only recently winning independence. This meeting makes it possible for many militants to discover the historical dimensions of the region and the possibilities for action."

Nicaraguan autonomy

The advances being made by the Sandinista revolution in uniting the six different racial groups that make up the Nicaraguan population were clearly recognized by participants in the meeting. There was great interest in the project to establish regional government autonomy on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, inhabited by Afro-Caribbeans, Indians, and mestizos.

Guerrilla Commander Lumberto Campbell, head of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the Atlantic Coast's Southern Zelaya Province, addressed the meeting. He explained that Nicaragua historically has been part of the Caribbean as well as Central America.

Campbell told the delegates that "the autonomy of the indigenous peoples and communities will serve to create a true national unity where all the social sectors that were previously exploited and oppressed will participate in the construction of a new, multiethnic and multilingual Nicaraguan society."

The participation of Nicaraguans from the Atlantic Coast in the meeting was greeted with

enthusiasm by other conference participants, who recognized the important contribution the Nicaraguan revolution can make.

The meeting reelected those who had been serving as its officers and coordinating committee. Taveras is the group's president, and Clement Rohee, international affairs secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, is the coordinating secretary.

The coordinating committee consists of representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador, Communist Party of Cuba, Workers Party of Jamaica, Dominica Labor Party, Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), and the Workers Revolutionary Movement of St. Lucia.

Participants in the meeting also attended the February 10-12 conference of Latin American and Caribbean political parties, sponsored by the FSLN. They played a significant role in the discussion.

Role of Grenada revolution

Among the delegates from the Anti-Imperialist Organizations to address the FSLN-sponsored gathering was Don Rojas of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement of Grenada. He pointed to the role of the Grenada revolution in laying the foundation for the development of a new region-wide consciousness.

Rojas recalled that "on May 1, 1980, speaking to over 1 million Cubans in Havana's Rev-

olution Plaza with Daniel Ortega and Maurice Bishop at his side, Comrade Fidel Castro said that Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada were three giants rising up at the very threshold of imperialism, proclaiming the dignity and integrity of the peoples of our Americas."

Rojas stated that "it was our revolution, more than any other recent historical phenomenon, which linked our fraternal peoples across the Caribbean Sea."

Summing up the importance of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations meeting here, "Fafa" Taveras said, "I think that perhaps the best thing that will come out of this is a strengthening of the determination of the political organizations in each country to increase solidarity actions." □

Sandinistas host broad conference

Delegates of 115 political parties discuss peace in Central America

By Harvey McArthur

MANAGUA — "You have expressed your conviction that much of the fate of Latin America is at stake in the fight now being waged by the Nicaraguan people," Commander of the Revolution Bayardo Arce told 170 delegates who came from 115 political parties in Latin America and the Caribbean. "You have affirmed that this small country of Nicaragua can count on the support of the peoples of the world and in particular of all Latin Americans."

Arce was addressing the Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean on Peace and Nonintervention in Central America. It was held here February 10-12. The Sandinista government sponsored the meeting to promote broader discussion and stimulate greater solidarity in the struggle against U.S. intervention in Central America.

At the opening session, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega told the delegates that "the will and the fighting determination of the people" had changed Latin America in the last decade. It is no longer the same as the 1960s, Ortega said, when the United States could isolate revolutionary Cuba, back Anastasio Somoza, François Duvalier, and similar dictators, and count on servile support from other Latin American governments.

Who was there

The conference selected Rubén Berríos, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) to speak on behalf of all the delegates at the opening session. Berríos denounced the U.S. colonial occupation of Puerto Rico and called for support to the Puerto Rican independence struggle.

"The Sandinista revolution is the struggle of all the Americas," said Berríos.

Exiled Haitian leader Gerard Pierre-Charles was the third speaker at the opening session, along with Ortega and Berríos.

The number of participants in the conference exceeded the Sandinistas' expectations, Arce said when the meeting closed. Delegates came from communist, social democratic, liberal, social Christian, Christian democratic, and conservative parties as well as left-wing, anti-imperialist, and populist groups and national liberation forces such as the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Seven delegations came from parties that head governments: the American People's Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in Peru, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) in the Dominican Republic, the People's National Congress in Guyana, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua, the Colorado Party in Uruguay, and the Conservative Party in Colombia.

Of the governments that make up the Contadora Group, only Colombia's governing party participated in the Managua conference. The Contadora Group is made up of the Colombian, Mexican, Panamanian, and Venezuelan governments. Its stated goal is to negotiate a settlement to the military conflict in Central America.

The governments of Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay have formed a support group for Contadora known as the Lima Group. Of the Lima Group, representatives from Uruguay and Peru participated in the conference here.

Some Social Democratic figures were present at the conference, including delegates from the Dominican Revolutionary Party, the Peruvian APRA, and Guillermo Ungo, president of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador. However, Latin American Social Democratic leaders from countries such as Chile and Venezuela did not attend.

Those parties that did not accept the invitation of the FSLN clearly felt that to do so was

more of an identification with the Nicaraguan revolution and a sharper rejection of U.S. policies than they were willing to make.

At the time of the Managua conference, representatives of the Contadora and Lima groups were in Washington meeting with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.

Ortega noted in his opening speech that these governments are subject to the "pressure, blackmail, and threats of the U.S. government," which seeks to make the Contadora and Lima groups complicit with the U.S. aggression against Nicaragua. He called for Latin Americans to fight so that Contadora will stand up to these pressures and "resolutely defend Latin American interests."

Discussion on action

Ortega explained that the purpose of the conference was "strengthening the unity of Latin America around and in defense of the Nicaraguan revolution" and "militant and active solidarity" against U.S. intervention in Central America.

Some delegates raised proposals for actions to implement this solidarity. Pascal Allende, representing the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left, was applauded when he proposed that the conference draft a "Declaration of Managua" in favor of peace and against intervention. Allende suggested the formation of an international peace brigade to carry out ongoing solidarity projects in Nicaragua. This brigade would fight to defend Nicaragua in case of a U.S. invasion, Allende said.

Allende also proposed that parties with representation in government introduce measures for economic aid to Nicaragua.

Members of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America met here immediately before the February 10-12 conference. Delegates from 19 countries attending the first meeting adopted a schedule of dates for common protest and solidarity actions this year. They then participated in the

broader conference, where they urged support for the activities on the planned dates.

Other conference delegates demonstratively avoided discussion of any specific action proposals.

Luis Negreiros, personal representative of Peruvian President Alán García, was a featured speaker at the final session. He stressed his support for "political pluralism" and "mixed economy" in Nicaragua. Negreiros said Peru would continue to support the Contadora and Lima groups, but made no public commitment to further aid to Nicaragua.

Armando Hart, of the Cuban Communist Party Political Bureau, also addressed the closing session. He reported that Cuba has pledged to increase its aid to the Nicaraguan people in response to any increase in U.S. aid to the mercenaries trying to overthrow the Sandinista revolution. He called for broader and stronger denunciations of U.S. intervention and for appropriate initiatives for action to be taken in each country.

Throughout the conference many delegates spoke of the continentwide impact of a possible U.S. invasion of Central America. Several said that the experiences of the U.S. support for Britain's war against Argentina in 1982 and the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983 showed the need for greater unity against future interventions.

Due to the range of political views among those at the gathering, however, delegates did not come to any agreement on common activity coming out of the conference.

Foreign debt

Many of the participants in the meeting had been at the continental conference on the foreign debt held in Havana, Cuba, in August 1985. The problem posed by the growing foreign debt of Latin American and Caribbean countries was frequently raised in the Managua discussions.

Armando Hart explained that the problem of the debt had become interwoven with the U.S. intervention in Central America and that this had led the different parties to seek a way to unite.

"We must banish forever all sectarianism," Hart told the delegates, "and try to unite in our cause all patriots who are willing to fight."

In closing the meeting, Bayardo Arce described the conference as a "successful and productive experience." The discussions and exchanges of opinions were useful, he said. The delegates from different countries came to know and understand the Nicaraguan revolution better.

Many parties held bilateral and multilateral meetings during the course of the conference. These laid the basis for future collaboration, said Arce. All the specific proposals raised in the discussion would be circulated to all the participants so that each party could decide which actions it would undertake.

The success of the Managua conference served to send another warning to Washington that any invasion of Nicaragua will meet with massive opposition in Latin America. □

March 10, 1986

Conference hails Haitian victory

Left groups prepare for post-Duvalier struggles

By Harvey McArthur

MANAGUA — "We opened this meeting of Latin American political parties by listening to the message of a people who just expelled the Duvalier dictatorship," declared Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega in his opening speech to the Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean here.

Gerard Pierre-Charles, a well-known Haitian historian and leader of the United Haitian Communist Party, was a keynote speaker at the opening ceremony. He shared the platform with Ortega and Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) leader Rubén Berríos.

"I bring you a message of joy and dignity," said Pierre-Charles. "The people of Haiti have liberated themselves from one of the most horrendous dictatorships in the world.

"Tomorrow, it will be Chile and the day after, Paraguay," he added.

Pierre-Charles paid tribute to the "extraordinary, quiet, difficult, and heroic struggle of the Haitian people." He also pointed to the example set by the Nicaraguan revolution. "I tell you that Sandino is ours," he explained. "The Sandinista revolution has inspired the Haitian youth who defied and finally defeated the [Duvalier] dictatorship."

The United Haitian Communist Party (PUCH), the Haitian Workers Party (PTH), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Haiti (FPLH) had delegations at the Managua conference.

The overthrow of Duvalier, the character of the current military junta, the future course of the Haitian struggle, and the role of U.S. intervention in Haiti were the topics of many discussions at the conference.

New junta condemned

All the Haitian delegates condemned the newly installed military junta and characterized it as an attempt to continue the old regime without Duvalier. They pointed out that four of the six members are officers of the Duvalierist army.

"The Haitian people have not struggled, have not invested so many human lives, so that a military junta would be installed in power," said Pierre-Charles. "The struggle has been for an advanced democracy, and while the accomplishments so far represent a big advance, we know that the Haitian revolution has many demands and has barely begun. It is a question of resolving the problems of a country with 85 percent illiteracy, resolving problems of misery and malnutrition, problems of the most oppressed, the poorest country in Latin America."

The Haitian delegates also agreed that a key test of the new government would be whether it allowed the unconditional return of all political exiles. This will be important for the development of the revolutionary movement in Haiti, according to a delegate of the FPLH.

Many leaders have been forced to live in exile for years, some since the early days of the Duvalier regime in the late 1950s.

The junta has said it will allow the return of exiles, but only according to current legal restrictions set up by Duvalier, according to PUCH General-Secretary René Theodore. This means exiles will have to apply for visas from the Haitian government. A Duvalierist law outlawing the Communist Party is still in effect, and this would be used against any opponent the junta does not approve of, said Theodore.

Antonio Polo, a leader of the Union of Patriotic and Democratic Forces of Haiti (of which the PTH is a component), explained to this reporter that the U.S. government had decided Duvalier was no longer able to control the Haitian people and defend U.S. business interests. With the outbreak of massive protests last year, the United States decided it was time to change the Haitian government, he said.

Tontons Macoutes

The junta and its U.S. backers are attempting to shift all the blame for the bloody repression suffered under Duvalier onto the hated Tontons Macoutes, said Polo. This political police force backed up Duvalier's rule through violence and terror. Members of the Tontons Macoutes stole land from peasants and robbed workers and merchants. They have been the targets of popular anger since Duvalier's overthrow, and some have been executed by angry crowds. On February 10, the junta announced that the Tontons Macoutes had been dissolved.

However, Polo emphasized, the army and regular police were also used to repress the Haitian people. The Leopards, an elite army unit trained by the U.S. Army at bases in Panama, was especially brutal in attacking demonstrations. Many government and military officials were responsible for the massive corruption in Haiti. In May 1984, for example, demonstrations broke out in Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves against officials who had taken food donated by relief organizations. They sold it instead of distributing it to hungry people.

Thus, by putting all the blame on the Tontons Macoutes, the new regime hopes to keep the army, police, and old government structure intact, said Polo. They would serve to stabilize the new regime, repressing any popular challenge to it.

"The people are demanding land, work, and freedom," said Polo. "Freedom means freedom to organize unions and peasant, student, and women's organizations. Without these organizations, there can be no guarantee of freedom."

For united action of left

The Haitian delegates at the conference strongly supported the perspective of united action by Haitian left organizations. These

groups are small, and most exist mainly in exile, although some, including the PUCH, PTH, and FPLH, also have underground organizations inside Haiti.

"The Haitian struggle lacks a fundamental element, as we have learned from the Sandinista revolution," said Pierre-Charles. "[It lacks] a political-military vanguard that can take power."

Antonio Polo said that the return of the exiles would be crucial to building a united revolutionary movement. "We need concrete projects of unification," he said, "but it is not clear what these could be now." The parties that exist clandestinely in Haiti are small and have little experience working with each other, he noted.

"A common demand we can unite around now is for the unconditional return of all the exiles," explained Polo. "Then we will see what other common actions we can take. That will give us a chance to sit down together and discuss political perspectives."

Delegates at the conference reported that the struggle in Haiti has had a big impact in the Dominican Republic. Haiti and the Dominican Republic are the two countries that share the large Caribbean island of Hispaniola. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians live in the Dominican Republic, including tens of thousands of seasonal workers who cut sugar cane.

The impact on the Dominican Republic has been extraordinary, Rafael "Fafa" Taveras, general secretary of the Socialist Bloc (BS) and a leader of the Dominican Left Front (FID), said.

"The situation in Haiti has brought forth the immense sympathy and solidarity the Dominicans have for the Haitian people," he said. This has undercut the traditional racist, anti-Haitian prejudices fostered in the Dominican Republic and will have "tremendous repercussions" for the struggles in both countries, he added.

Taveras is also president of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of Central America and the Caribbean. Parties and movements from 19 countries met at a plenary of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations immediately before the Conference of Latin American Political Parties. They issued a declaration to the conference that saluted "the courage of the Haitian people" as an inspiration for other Caribbean peoples.

The Anti-Imperialist Organizations also "solidarized with the struggle for a true democracy in Haiti" and opposed any U.S. military intervention there.

Taveras reported that a large solidarity rally with Haiti had been held in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, on February 8. Any U.S. invasion to crush the popular rebellion in Haiti, he said, would be seen as an attack on the Dominican people. There would be mass support for Haiti, and contingents of Dominicans would go to Haiti to fight the invasion, he concluded. □

Cuba

Economic battle a 'people's war'

Communist Party congress makes advances in defense, economy, leadership

By Mary-Alice Waters

HAVANA — There have been "two genuine revolutions" in Cuba in recent years, Fidel Castro told the delegates to the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, held here February 4-7. "One in the field of defense and the other in the economic field."

In both spheres, Castro emphasized, there have been fundamental gains. Both defense of the revolution against imperialist aggression and developing the country's productive capacity have come to be understood as genuine "people's wars," he said.

The character of these two revolutions was registered as well in a third development at the party congress, one with equally revolutionary implications: the renewal of the party leadership bodies.

Following an extensive party discussion, 40 percent of those elected to the Central Committee were new members, selected in line with the explicit criteria of the need to advance youth, women, and Blacks into leadership positions. Setting an example for all Cuban society by adopting and implementing such a policy, Castro said, was decisive for the future of the revolution. (See article on page 139.)

The interconnected advances on these three battlefronts — defense, economy, and political leadership — came through strongly at the congress in resolutions, reports, and discussions with the delegates. On each front the fundamental challenge being met is the same.

The delegates to the Cuban Communist Party congress were dealing with the most pro-

found issues of proletarian democracy. They were seeking to develop the forms and institutions that will enable the revolution to continue deepening the participation of the masses of working people in actively defending their revolution, administering their state, deciding on and controlling their economic progress, and renewing their political leadership so it will continue to be a vanguard that is organically part of today's working class in age, composition, experience, and conditions of life.

On the economic front, the issue that received the greatest attention was the need to revitalize the planning mechanism, the driving force of the Cuban economy.

In a capitalist economy, maximizing the profits of a handful of gluttonous private owners of the factories, mines, and fields determines everything. The brutal, anarchic system "corrects" its dislocations through periodic crises, of which the principal victims are the working people themselves — the producers of all wealth.

A planned economy places the welfare of human beings first, and such a qualitative transformation of Cuban society was made possible by the revolutionary expropriation of capitalist property there in 1960. The working class is no longer subject to the ravages of capitalist crises.

But the creation of a self-correcting planning mechanism as the driving force of economic development is not automatic. Like all other tasks of the revolution, it has to be consciously led. It demands a continual battle

against bureaucratism and vested interests, routinism, incompetence, and corruption.

It is a battle that can only be won as the working class itself develops the organizational forms through which it can continually increase its educational level, technical training, and political capacity to democratically assert control over the planning process and its implementation and moves toward management of the economy.

That is why the advances Cuba is making in defense, in production and planning, and on broad political leadership questions are inseparable, and why the forward steps registered at the Cuban Communist Party congress are so important.

Revolution in defense concepts

In the Main Report to the congress, delivered by Castro in his capacity as first secretary of the party's Central Committee, he referred to several speeches he had made at the end of 1984, in which the meaning of the two revolutions in defense and economic management had been explained to the entire Cuban people.

In an address to the National Assembly of People's Power on Dec. 28, 1984, Fidel reminded the congress, he had discussed the circumstances that led to the decision, in the spring of 1980, to launch the Territorial Troop Militia.¹

In response to a series of U.S. provocations

1. This speech was reprinted in the Pathfinder Press book *War and Crisis in the Americas: Fidel Castro*

in April and May 1980 that led to the Mariel exodus, the Cuban people expressed their renewed revolutionary vitality, boosted by 1979 victories in Nicaragua and Grenada. They poured into the streets three times in million-strong Marches of the Fighting People.

Out of that mass upsurge — “one of the most important political, ideological, and moral victories the revolution has won in its entire history,” as Fidel said in December 1980 — came the decision to launch the Territorial Troop Militia.

This popular militia system has since organized, trained, and equipped 1.5 million civilians, the majority of them women, and integrated this force into the defense plans of the country.

The tense international situation and the threat of imperialist aggression in 1980, Castro recalled in 1984, was what “led to a revolution in defense concepts.”

It is not that popular participation in defense was lacking before, Fidel noted. It was there “right from the start.” But over the years, he explained, as the capabilities of the armed forces grew, so did the view that “defense was strictly a problem for the armed forces.”

In 1979, as the U.S. government began to search for ways to crush the advancing popular struggles throughout Central America and the Caribbean, the danger of new U.S. aggression against Cuba intensified.

Under this pressure, Fidel pointed out, “we reached new and revolutionary ideas in the concept of defense. We went from the old idea to the idea that the military defense of the country, on the battlefield and in all the backup work in any form of attack — blockade, war of attrition, invasion, total or partial occupation of the country — was a task for both the armed forces and the people as a whole, so the people had to be organized and prepared for that struggle.”

This is the strategic conception that has been implemented in the last six years, Castro told the Third Congress. As a result, nearly 80 percent of all “men and women of all ages who are capable of fighting” are now organized, and “the means exist” for them to actively participate in Cuba’s defense.

Application to economic battles

These same concepts, Fidel explained, are now being implemented in the economic sphere.

“The international crisis, the world economic disaster, the intensified imperialist blockade of our country, maneuvers to drive down the price of sugar, have all led us to another profound revolution of ideas and concepts,” Fidel had explained to the National Assembly of People’s Power at the end of 1984.

In theory, he went on, the Cuban leadership always thought in terms of people’s war, but this idea had not been put into practice. “Our

people were not fully organized to fight.”

Likewise, “in the economic field there was also talk of certain ideas and concepts but . . . no collective awareness, no collective will, no total determination to implement the idea.” Just as the revolution in defense concepts has gained ground, Fidel then noted, so will the revolution in economic concepts. “This must be the economic battle of the entire people, the economic war of the whole people.”

Production brigades

This economic war of the whole people was at the center of much of the discussion at the Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. It was the main thing delegates wanted to talk about following the presentation of the Main Report, which dealt extensively with economic perspectives.

“Has dealing with the challenges of Cuba’s economic development as a ‘people’s war’ meant anything different for you?” I asked Carmen Sánchez Reyes, a delegate from one of the giant agro-industrial sugar producing complexes in the province of Holguín.

“I’m a *machetera*,” she proudly told me. A cane cutter. She was standing chatting with another *machetera*, Celia Hernández López. Before the revolution, they assured me, there were no women in the cane fields. But the revolution changed everything for women, Hernández said. “Today, we have equal rights.”

Before, women who worked for employers were mostly maids, Sánchez added. “Now we’re proving there is nothing women can’t do.”

The big change in the last year, Sánchez went on, has been the formation of comprehensive work brigades on the state farm where she works. At first these brigades were tried on an experimental basis in a few places. Now, in line with the resolutions adopted by the congress, she said, they will be generalized throughout industry.

“What is a comprehensive work brigade?” I asked. Sánchez explained, with obvious enthusiasm, that she and other members of her brigade are now responsible not only for cutting cane in their subdivision, but they follow the process through from start to finish. Their brigade, as a collective, plays a bigger role than previously in determining concrete production goals. It is their responsibility, not someone else’s, to ensure that adequate supplies are ordered and delivered on time so they won’t lose production days.

They harvest the cane, clean the fields, fertilize and prepare the ground, plant the next crop, and make sure the proper pesticides are used. As a result they know at each step how the final yield is being affected.

They feel and are responsible for meeting the production goals they have set themselves. Emulation contests between the brigades and bonuses for meeting and surpassing production targets are added incentives.

Several other workers who had gathered around us explained that similar production brigades were being introduced in their workplaces — one an oil refinery, another a cement

plant, another a textile and garment factory.

“What is the effect of the reorganization of the work along these lines?” I asked them.

“We’re more efficient and more productive,” Sánchez replied, without a moment’s hesitation. “The quality of our work has improved. And that means Cuba will develop faster.”

The plenary session of the congress was about to reconvene, but Sánchez and Hernández insisted on one final thing.

“You must take a message to the women of the United States,” Sánchez said with a smile. “Women in the United States need a revolution like ours. You must liberate yourselves as we have. And then you must send a delegation to our next congress.”

I promised the message would be passed on.

Economic gains

The comprehensive Main Report to the congress, as Castro indicated in his opening remarks, was an “encouraging review of what has been done, a vehement criticism of what has been left undone, and an optimistic and resolute projection into the future, confident of our revolutionary strength, our fighting morale, and the immense possibilities of socialism.”

The economic and social achievements of the last five years have been impressive. This is even more evident when the progress in Cuba is compared with the devastating economic and social panorama of other Latin American and Caribbean countries in the same period.

The last five-year period, Fidel noted, has been one of the most disastrous ever for the domestic economies of Latin America: “all economic indicators dropped, many of them registered negative growth, and some fell back to the rates of 20 years ago.”

In the same period in Cuba, the Main Report noted, the gross social product grew at an average annual rate of 7.3 percent — considerably higher than the 5 percent rate that had been projected at the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1980.

Industrial production increased by 8.8 percent over the five-year period.

Labor productivity increased at an annual rate of 5.2 percent, and personal consumption at an annual rate of 2.8 percent. The corresponding rate for social consumption — which includes items like transportation, health services, and availability of education — grew by 7.1 percent.

Indicators of the relative standard of living showed impressive gains. The number of doctors and dentists rose faster than population increases, and a new comprehensive family doctor program was inaugurated. And this in a society in which medical care is free.

Statistics also showed important increases in the possession of durable goods (such as refrigerators, washing machines, and televisions), daily per capita calorie and protein intake, enrollment in child-care centers (and the number of mothers benefiting), and school en-

Speeches, 1984-85. Available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014; 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL, England; or P.O. Box 37 Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 4020, Australia.

rollment and average educational level.

The number of non-food items that are rationed decreased from 150 to 68. Construction of housing units rose threefold compared with the 1976–80 period.

These impressive gains were the result of planned economic and social investments which are only possible because in Cuba the basic means of production have been taken out of the hands of private profiteers.

Furthermore, as the Cubans always point out, their gains are possible only because Cuba's production and trade are coordinated with the economic planning of the Soviet Union and East European countries, along with Vietnam and Mongolia. Through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), Cuba receives favorable terms of trade that are helping the country develop its industrial infrastructure and overcome the 450-year legacy of colonialism and imperialist plunder.

Having eliminated the uncontrolled anarchy of capitalist production, Cuba is able to decide on and implement an economic development strategy.

Discussion of economic strategy

The fundamental guidelines of Cuba's economic strategy from now to the year 2000 were discussed and voted on at this congress.

These guidelines have been under intense discussion on all levels of the party, government, and trade unions for more than a year.

At the end of November 1984, Castro noted, there was a special joint meeting of leaders of the party, the government, and the mass organizations — such as the trade unions, farmers' association, women's organization, and neighborhood committees. The purpose of this exceptional gathering was to make an in-depth study of the persistent problems in the country's economic and social development. "Decisions were adopted," Castro noted, "that have had far-reaching repercussions in revolutionary activity to date and will have even greater repercussions in the future."

The main decisions adopted were publicly outlined by Castro in several speeches given in December 1984, to a National Forum on Energy, to a congress of the Federation of Students in Intermediate Education,² and to the National Assembly of People's Power.

Castro referred to all three of these speeches in his Main Report.

On the basis of that review of Cuba's economic situation, emergency measures were taken last year to restructure economic priorities. The purpose was to ensure the future long-term economic development of Cuba's industrial base and a rising standard of living based on real growth of labor productivity.

A working committee, known simply as the Central Group, was established. It was composed of top-level government and party leaders, including members of the Council of Ministers, secretaries and heads of Central

2. The first half of this speech appeared in the March 18, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.



Mary-Alice Waters/IP

Fidel Castro addresses congress session.

Committee departments, and presidents of provincial People's Power bodies. In a matter of weeks the Central Group completely recast the 1985 plan — as well as could be done on the eve of the new year itself — and began revising both the 1986 projections and the long-term plans for 1986–2000.

The fundamental guideline, Fidel reiterated in the report to the party congress, was the determination not to "sacrifice our future to consumerism" — not to become willing victims of the commodity fetish, which rules and warps the capitalist world.

Given the fundamental material and social problems already solved, Castro emphasized, "our problem is development, our problem is the future."

'Speed up industrialization process'

The main economic objective of the development strategy is "to speed up the country's industrialization process." Given what has already been accomplished, in health and education especially, it assumes that spending on social projects will decline slightly as a percentage of overall investments.

Absolute priority will be given to "those investments which result in savings on imports from the hard currency area," that is, imports that have to be paid for in currencies that are readily convertible in the world market. This development strategy also assumes that there will be a greater degree of economic integration within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

The resolution "Improving the Economic Planning and Management System," also adopted by the congress, summarized the economic objectives of the next period in the fol-

lowing terms:

"In the next few years, the country's purchasing power must be ensured through export growth and import substitution; sustained growth of social production profitability; increased savings of material resources, especially energy; better use of installed production capacities and greater efficiency in the investment process; greater labor productivity through wider use of new forms of labor and wage organization [such as the production brigades and wage structures that encourage workers to raise their levels of technical proficiency]; consistent application of austerity policies in budgetary expenditures; higher quality in production and services; and the promotion of a much more effective and dynamic application of science and technology."

Taken as a whole, Fidel emphasized, the decisions made at the end of 1984 and the measures adopted to implement them meant Cuba "embarked upon a new, qualitatively superior stage of the Revolution."

The results, he added, are already notable. "Undoubtedly, 1985 was the year that afforded the greatest savings and efficiency, the year in which the Revolution obtained the best economic results."

However, he added, "this is just a beginning," and "the Central Group will continue its work."

One of the organizational measures taken in the past year as part of this new stage has been the demonstrative removal from their posts of a number of prominent government and party figures charged with incompetence and failure to carry out policies decided upon. Antonio Pérez Herrero, for example, was removed from his post as an alternate member of the Po-

litical Bureau and member of the secretariat of the Central Committee in January 1985 due to "shortcomings and repeated errors committed in the fulfillment of his duties."

Castro pledged that this process would continue where necessary. "Improvements in the structure of state agencies and replacement of unsatisfactory officials will continue," Fidel announced to prolonged applause. "There will be no tolerance whatsoever for laziness, negligence, incompetence, or irresponsibility."

Deficiencies and shortcomings

What are the problems and deficiencies that required extraordinary measures to eradicate them? Why is it so important to call to order and if necessary remove officials whose functioning is an obstacle to deepening workers' involvement and control over economic decisions? Why must the Central Committee and party itself be constantly renewed as part of this process? These questions, too, were explicitly dealt with at the congress.

In a section of the Main Report, Fidel enumerated some of the problems that are all too familiar to the Cuban people. As important as the advances of the last five years may have been, he said, "nevertheless, we could have made better use of our resources and our efforts. Our work has been far from its best. Deficiencies and shortcomings still persist, and we must call them by their names and fight against them with all our might. Only thus will we be worthy of the name communist!"

The country's main economic problem during 1981-85, Castro said, "was that although overall growth rates were satisfactory, they proved sluggish where we most needed them: exports of goods and services and import substitution."

In a similar vein the resolution on improving economic planning noted that the last five-year period "witnessed a deficit in the balance of payments, particularly in the area of hard currency. This situation became acute in 1982 as a result of mass credit freezes by capitalist banks, high interest rates, drops in sugar prices, and the reduced availability of financing sources for the National Bank of Cuba."

Emergency measures were taken, with immediate results. But the fact remained that growth rates were being achieved through "imports that exceeded the country's possibilities, excessive energy and raw materials expenditures," and failure to increase and diversify exports.

In his report Castro detailed the kinds of waste and inefficiency that have to be eliminated.

In relationship to sugar production — Cuba's major industry — Castro noted that "growth rates have not matched the possibilities created by invested resources. By-product development has not been adequately planned. Sugar-cane production targets were not met because of insufficient planting and unsatisfactory agricultural yields. Inadequate soil preparation, short supplies of agricultural machinery drawn by high-power tractors, and improper field leveling and drainage resulted

in high crop losses. Delays in the development and introduction of new, more productive, and disease-resistant varieties; low-quality seeds; ill-timed planting; weeding and cultivation delays" all contributed to inadequate agricultural yields.

Specific problems detailed

The purpose and usefulness of the comprehensive production brigades that the *macheteras* explained becomes clearer when placed side-by-side with the concrete problems detailed by the report.

A similar critical evaluation of other branches of industry and agricultural production followed in Castro's Main Report:

"We have not made the best use of industrial capacities. Lack of skills and labor force instability are basic factors in the slow assimilation of new facilities."

"Shortages of all kinds of packaging consistently affected several production lines."

"The machine industry is still not making full use of its facilities and is facing difficulties with technological requirements and quality."

"Low efficiency in construction freezes resources and disrupts the construction process."

"Cost effectiveness is still hampered by idle raw materials, spare parts, and other goods and [by] resources frozen because of problems in planning and administering supplies."

"Our scientific and technological work has not been sufficiently linked to research topics that will provide concrete solutions to our main economic problems."

"We are behind in developing our electronics industry" and introducing computer technology.

"Although there has been growing awareness of the need to protect the environment, little progress has been made in the struggle against pollution, and industrial waste recycling is being done at only a small number of plants."

"There has been an inadequate and unstable supply of consumer goods . . . as well as lack of variety, inappropriate sizes, poor finishing, and outdated and repetitive designs, aggravated by irrational distribution."

In the service sector, "there are instances of insensitivity to the population's problems, treatment that is incompatible with the Revolution's principles, administrative attitudes that allow for irregularities which discredit the state's role."

"Procedures for solving simple legal problems remain excessive and bureaucratic."

"Despite undeniable progress in public health, insistence on quality services is still inadequate."

"The quality of our education still leaves much to be desired."

"Checks on administrative positions and work to reduce administrative overstaffing has been weak throughout the state apparatus."

"As regards employment, one of the fundamental rights of the people [in Cuba, every worker is guaranteed a job], many parts of the country have a labor shortage while others have a surplus."

The harshest criticism of all, however, was directed to the failures of the economic planning system.

"One of our most serious problems has been the absence of comprehensive national planning for economic development," Fidel said, "particularly where individual sectors have planned and executed investments on their own initiative without adequate centralized control. Examples abound: new industries and agricultural projects in sparsely populated areas lacking housing facilities for the labor force; extremely important agricultural plans, such as the citrus fruit plan, where we still have areas planted without irrigation; irrigation systems where there are no pumping stations or electric power to run them; workshops and facilities without the corresponding power supply; housing developments completed without the necessary urban infrastructure, etc."

Following the initial thrust in implementing the Economic Planning and Management System in the mid-1970s, Castro stated, "there has been no consistent follow-through to improve it. The initiative was lost, and the creativity needed to adapt this system to our own conditions — a system largely taken from the experience of other countries — never materialized."

How to increase the creative input of the Cuban workers, in other words, remained the central challenge.

During the greater part of the five-year period, Castro went on, "the budget continued to be ineffective. Rather than regulating spending, it, in effect, promoted it along with improper social consumption."

The Economic Planning and Management System could become "a complete farce," Castro underlined, "if we attempt to achieve enterprise profitability by raising the prices of products, construction, and productive services," rather than by improving efficiency and labor productivity.

"Prices in maintenance, construction, and transportation, to mention just a few sectors, are scandalously high, covering up for inefficiency, over-staffing, and over-spending."

Fidel concluded his remarks on the deficiencies and shortcomings of the Cuban economy with the remark that if these kinds of defects are not overcome, "the Economic Planning and Management System will cease to be the driving force of our development."

The accuracy of the report's summary of the challenges faced on the economic front was registered by the delegates' applause and by their contributions to the discussion of how to move forward.

Leadership challenge

Delegates spoke to many different aspects of the economic and social tasks facing Cuba, but more than anything else they stressed that the greatest challenge is one of leadership.

Members of the party themselves, they insisted, must set the example in terms of work discipline, commitment to constantly upgrading educational levels and skills, and eradicating favoritism, buck-passing, red tape, and bu-

reaucratic insensitivity to people's needs.

Arquímedes Morales López, a delegate from the province of Ciego de Ávila, for example, discussed the importance of the production brigades, which, he said, were initiated in his province in 1981. They now involve more than 3,000 workers in six industrial centers in that province.

He stressed their important role in developing and implementing production plans and stimulating interest in and a sense of responsibility for the efficient fulfillment of production goals. Brigade members are not only involved in strictly productive tasks, he stressed, but are also assuming what are considered management responsibilities.

One positive result, he noted, is an acceleration in the process of developing leadership cadres in the workplace.

Another delegate, from Santiago de Cuba, Neilia Ramírez Estévez, who works as a tourist guide, discussed the justified criticisms the Cuban people make of the very real deficiencies in the quality, efficiency, and courtesy of services in the hotels, restaurants, and other tourist facilities.

She discussed the importance of the formation of Model Units in the service sector, an experiment that began in 1982 in the Sierra Maestra mountains.

Like the production brigades, they strive to set the example and raise standards of efficiency and discipline, thus making life more pleasant for the Cuban working people, who are the main users of the facilities.

The fundamental lesson, she stressed, is that when work is shoddy or absenteeism high the problem does not lie with the workers but with the leadership. And that is where solutions lie and progress must be made. "When administrative cadres are capable of clearly explaining the very real problems that we have, workers not only understand them, but identify and join in the search for solutions," she said.

Yet another aspect of the leadership challenge was dealt with by a delegate from the province of Havana, María Luisa Suárez. "We have to break with old habits," she told delegates. We have to get rid of the deep-rooted tendency to give preferential consideration to those *compañeros* we know the best, she said, to those who for one reason or another have ties with us.

In party units, she went on, there are thousands of *compañeros* who meet all the prerequisites, who have talent, merit, and leadership abilities. "Our responsibility is to bring them forward, educate them, and advance them."

This is especially important, Suárez insisted, in relationship to moving young comrades into leadership positions. As for bringing more women into the leadership, she said, "this is an old problem, but one we are now addressing with new determination." In addition to developing greater consciousness on this, she noted, practical measures should now be implemented as well.

The most comprehensive treatment of the measures to be taken to mobilize the working

people of Cuba in the people's war on the economic front were contained in the resolution adopted by the congress on Improving the Economic Planning and Management System.

Improving economic planning

The resolution stressed the progress made over the decade since the system was introduced in increasing labor productivity, making more efficient use of raw materials and resources, and in raising the educational level and technical training of the work force.

It also emphasized that the mechanisms in place had failed to correct shortcomings and problems and that the system "lacked the dynamism needed to tackle economic problems with speed and flexibility." Management methods, the resolution continued, "have hindered broad participation in the elaboration and implementation of plans."

To overcome these problems, the resolution outlined steps to make the system both more comprehensive and centralized in long-term allocation of resources and more democratic in increasing mass input into, and control over, the planning process and its implementation.

Forms of work organization and wage structures that encourage this as well as promoting increasing technical proficiency and efficiency are to be utilized.

The resolution called for a decentralization of everyday decision-making at the operational stage of production and a closer relationship between various enterprises and unions of enterprises.

For this to be workable, "the concept of democratic management based on collective discussion, and the process of decision-making inherent to it, should be further developed. . . .

"Greater individual responsibility in the decision-making process will be linked to enhanced executive decision-making at all levels of the economic process in order to eliminate bureaucratic procedures" in management.

To ensure the active participation of workers at every level in the process of drawing up and implementing plans, the resolution stated that "special importance will be attached to the broadest participation of workers' collectives — and their production and service meetings

— in the elaboration of plans and the adoption of measures that guarantee the greatest possible efficiency in the use of material and financial resources.

"The higher echelons should give their utmost attention to the opinions and proposals of workers' collectives. These proposals should be examined jointly. All instances of dogmatism will be vigorously eradicated; this includes the lack of explanations by superior levels regarding proposals submitted by the workers."

As virtually any worker in Cuba will tell you, few things are more resented than the fact that suggestions and proposals for accomplishing such agreed-on aims often disappear into a bureaucratic maw, never to be heard of again, responded to, or implemented.

Deeds first

Resolutions, reports, and congresses of the Cuban Communist Party occupy an important place in the political life of Cuban working people. Reports and resolutions are printed in the daily papers. Many congress sessions are broadcast live on television and radio and often rebroadcast at a different time the next day for those whose work schedules prevented them from hearing them.

The congress is an occasion to draw a balance sheet and record the progress, problems, goals, and objectives of the revolution. That process is itself an education and orientation for the broadest layers of Cuban working people.

What is decisive, however, is not the words — printed or spoken. What is happening in the factories and fields, in the militia and army units, in the trade unions, women's organizations, and neighborhood committees, in the units of the party and Union of Young Communists, in the government ministries and departments — that is what counts.

That is why the three "revolutions," affecting defense, the economy, and the leadership, that were registered at this congress are so important.

Progress on any one of the three battlefronts would be important, but not necessarily decisive. Taken together they confirm a direction of motion, a new step forward in the revolution that has continued to deepen and broaden the

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revolutionary mobilization of the Cuban people for 27 years.

Moreover, these advances are combined — as they would have to be — with the deep-going internationalism of the Cuban revolution. The commitment of the Cuban people to “pay their debt to humanity,” as they proudly say, is registered by the fact that more than 100,000 Cubans completed internationalist missions in the last five years, working as doc-

tors, teachers, engineers, and, when necessary, soldiers in dozens of countries around the world, from Angola to Nicaragua to Vietnam.

The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, more than any other single thing, registered the continuing impact on Cuba of the 1979 revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada and the ensuing years of struggles. Revitalized and renewed, the “people’s war” goes on. □

CP congress renews leadership

More youth, women, Blacks elected to top committees

By Mary-Alice Waters

HAVANA — The Third Congress of the Cuban Communist Party concluded here February 7 with the election of a new Central Committee and presentation of a new Political Bureau. In addition, Fidel Castro Ruz was unanimously reelected first secretary of the party and Raúl Castro Ruz second secretary.

The four-day congress culminated a year of preparatory discussions on all levels of the party. The document on the guidelines for economic and social development for the next five-year period was also discussed outside the party ranks by broad layers of the population. Through factory and workplace assemblies and meetings of farmers, armed forces personnel, leaders of the communist youth, and students in the last year of their studies, more than 3 million Cubans participated in shaping the final document presented to the delegates.

After the commissions elected by the congress incorporated proposals for final changes and adjustments, the 1,784 delegates who had been elected by the nearly 500,000 members of the party adopted a number of important documents. In addition to the economic and social guidelines, they approved resolutions on foreign policy, the political-administrative organization of the country, guidelines for improving the system for economic planning, a number of modifications in the party statutes, and the Main Report, presented by Fidel Castro on the opening day of the congress.

Draft program adopted

In addition, the congress adopted a draft program that will now be submitted to all the mass organizations for discussion — to trade unions, women, farmers, neighborhood committees, students, and others. At the end of that discussion, final changes in the draft program will be made and the document submitted to a special congress at the end of 1986. Once adopted, it will replace the shorter Programmatic Platform adopted by the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in 1975.

The congress also listened to greetings from some 30 fraternal delegations, including those brought by Daniel Ortega for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua, Schafik Jorge Handal for the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador, and numerous other national libera-

tion forces and communist parties.

On the final day of the congress, while the delegates were meeting in closed session to elect a new leadership committee, some 60 solidarity meetings were organized in factories, workplaces, and schools throughout the Havana region. These enabled the foreign delegations to bring their salutations directly to the Cuban people, who greeted their guests with warmth and pride.

New Central Committee elected

One of the most important points on the congress agenda was the election of the new Central Committee. The changes made in the composition of the newly elected body were the result of a thoroughgoing discussion on all levels of the party, extending over many months. Forty percent of those elected to the Central Committee at this congress were individuals who had not served on the outgoing committee. Fifty percent of the regular and alternate members of the new Political Bureau are new.

At the concluding session of the congress, which was broadcast live on radio and television, Fidel Castro presented the new Central Committee and Political Bureau. In summing up the work of the congress, he explained the decisive challenge facing the revolutionary organizations of Cuba on all levels — party, government ministries, mass organizations, and armed forces.

The renewal of leadership is indispensable,

Moroccan activists jailed

Twenty-six left-wing activists in Morocco were sentenced February 13 to prison terms ranging from 3 years to 20 years. Another defendant was acquitted.

During the course of the trial, which was held in Casablanca and lasted for more than a week, the 27 defendants were accused of belonging to the outlawed Ilal-Amaam (Forward) group and of having taken part in the January 1984 price protests. Those actions, which erupted following a sharp price hike, were crushed after security forces killed scores of demonstrators.

Prosecutors in the trial focused in particular on Ilal-Amaam’s opposition to King Hassan II’s war against the independence struggle in

he said. “We must have confidence in our young leaders and recall that the average age of those who began the armed struggle was 22. We must promote young people without fear.”

If a broad policy of renewal and promotion of young cadres had not been carried out at this congress, Fidel noted, by the time of the next congress the average age of the Central Committee could reach 57.

In the past, Fidel observed, efforts to renew the leadership bodies had been more symbolic in character. Attempts to promote younger leaders tended to be interpreted as a criticism of the work of older leaders. This was often a “traumatic” process, he noted.

Result of broad discussion

The changes in the new Central Committee were the result of a broad discussion about communist attitudes toward leadership positions. “Vanity is not a communist attribute,” Fidel stated. “If we aspire to honors and promotions, we would not be communists.”

The Central Committee itself must set the example in this renewal process, he said.

In addition to the promotion of younger leaders, the criteria that guided the selection of the new committee also included the preferential promotion of women and Blacks.

“We must change what history has created,” Fidel told the Cuban people. “This cannot be left to spontaneity.” Women and Blacks have been discriminated against throughout our history, he said. Only “hypocrites” can refuse to recognize the legacy of this reality or fear to say it openly and work to change it.

The same general guidelines were applied in the election of the new Political Bureau. Four long-time regular members, including Blas Roca and Ramiro Valdés, stepped down. The new Political Bureau includes prominent leaders of the Cuban revolution such as Vilma Espín, head of the Cuban Women’s Federation, Roberto Veiga, general secretary of the Cuban Workers Confederation, and Esteban Lazo, the first secretary of the party in the province of Matanzas. Eight of the 10 alternate members of the Political Bureau are also new. □

the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony forcibly annexed by Moroccan troops in 1975. During the January 1984 protests, for example, Ilal-Amaam distributed leaflets condemning “the war that the criminal Hassan II is waging against our brothers in the Western Sahara.”

The 27 defendants were accused of maintaining “close ties” with the Polisario Front, which is leading the Saharan struggle.

According to two French lawyers who observed the trial on behalf of the International Movement of Catholic Jurists, the defendants were subjected to physical mistreatment while in police custody with the aim of forcing confessions out of them. □

South African 'Women's Charter'

'We march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation'

[Women have played a key and prominent role in the massive upheaval that has been shaking South Africa's apartheid system for the past year and a half. As trade union organizers, community activists, and student leaders, they have taken part in numerous protest demonstrations and meetings, have been detained, and have been shot down by apartheid police and assassins.

[The United Democratic Front (UDF), which has been in the leadership of many of these protest actions, has a number of prominent women leaders and spokespersons. These include Winnie Mandela, Albertina Sisulu, and others. Victoria Mxenge, a UDF leader in Durban, was murdered by assassins in August 1985.

[Since the early 1980s, a number of anti-apartheid women's groups have been formed, many of which are now affiliated to the UDF. Among them are the United Women's Organisation (based in the Cape Town area), the Natal Organisation of Women, and the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw).

[The latter organization, which functions primarily in the Transvaal region, is a revival of the old Federation of South African Women (FSAW). First established in 1954, the FSAW was a national women's organization that was allied to the Congress Alliance, an anti-apartheid front led by the African National Congress. The ANC is leading today's revolutionary struggle to overthrow the apartheid system and establish a democratic, nonracial South Africa in which everyone, Black or white, will have equal rights. By the early 1960s, the FSAW fell into decline after the ANC had been outlawed and fierce repression unleashed against all anti-apartheid organizations.

[In addition to those women's organizations that are today functioning legally, there is the ANC's Women's League, which is forced to operate clandestinely.

[Many of the women's groups now active in South Africa support the Freedom Charter, the program of South Africa's national, democratic revolution. (For the text of the Freedom Charter, see the Nov. 18, 1985, *Intercontinental Press*.) Many also support the Women's Charter and Aims, which was adopted at the FSAW's founding conference in Johannesburg in April 1954.

[The ANC, which declared 1984 the Year of the Women, commented on the continued importance of the Women's Charter and Aims in a statement it issued that year. "This Charter," the ANC said, "remains as relevant today as it was when it was adopted. Women are still subordinate in society and this hinders their maximum involvement in the freedom struggle. The majority of women in South Africa

are still oppressed and exploited by the racist apartheid system. Today, as in 1954, there is no possibility of their achieving freedom as women, while they are shackled in impoverished servitude under white minority rule."

[The following is the full text of the Women's Charter and Aims. We have taken it from a 1984 pamphlet issued by the ANC.]

* * *

Preamble

We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indian, European, and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions, and customs that discriminate against us as women and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities, and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.

A single society

We women do not form a society separate from the men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.

Test of civilisation

The level of civilisation which any society has reached can be measured by the degree of freedom that its members enjoy. The status of women is a test of civilisation. Measured by that standard, South Africa must be considered low in the scale of civilised nations.

Women's lot

We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers, it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. It is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick. It is our lot to keep and care for the homes that are too small, broken, and dirty to be kept clean. We know the burden of looking after children and land when our husbands are away in the mines, on the farms, and in the towns earning our daily bread.

We know what it is to keep family life going in pondokkies [huts] and shanties, or in overcrowded one-room apartments. We know the bitterness of children taken to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training, or jobs at a living wage.

Poor and rich

These are evils that need not exist. They exist because the society in which we live is di-

vided into poor and rich, into non-European and European. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. We women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination, and the evils of the colour-bar.

National liberation

As members of the national liberatory movements and trade unions, in and through our various organisations, we march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people. We pledge ourselves to keep high the banner of equality, fraternity, and liberty. As women there rests upon us also the burden of removing from our society all the social differences developed in past times between men and women, which have the effect of keeping our sex in a position of inferiority and subordination.

Equality for women

We resolve to struggle for the removal of laws and customs that deny African women the right to own, inherit, or alienate property. We resolve to work for a change in the laws of marriage such as are found amongst our African, Malay, and Indian people, which have the effect of placing wives in the position of legal subjection to husbands and giving husbands the power to dispose of wives' property and earnings and dictate to them in all matters affecting them and their children.

We recognise that the women are treated as minors by these marriage and property laws because of ancient and revered traditions and customs, which had their origin in the antiquity of the people and no doubt served purposes of great value in bygone times. There was a time in the African society when every woman reaching marriageable age was assured of a husband, home, land, and security. Then husbands and wives with their children belonged to families and clans that supplied most of their own material needs and were largely self-sufficient. Men and women were partners in a compact and closely integrated family unit.

Women who labour

Those conditions have gone. The tribal and kinship society to which they belonged has been destroyed as a result of the loss of tribal land, migration of men away from the tribal home, the growth of towns and industries, and the rise of a great body of wage-earners on the farms and in the urban areas, who depend wholly or mainly on wages for a livelihood.

Thousands of African women, like Indian, Coloured, and European women, are employed today in factories, homes, offices,

shops, on farms, in professions as nurses, teachers, and the like. As unmarried women, widows, or divorcees they have to fend for themselves, often without the assistance of a male relative. Many of them are responsible not only for their own livelihood but also that of their children. Large numbers of women today are in fact the sole breadwinners and heads of their families.

Forever minors

Nevertheless, the laws and practices derived from an earlier and different state of society are still applied to them. They are responsible for their own person and their children. Yet the law seeks to enforce upon them the status of a minor. Not only are African, Coloured, and Indian women denied political rights, but they are also, in many parts of the Union [of South Africa], denied the same status as men in such matters as the right to enter into contracts, to own and dispose of property, and to exercise guardianship over their children.

Obstacle to progress

The law has lagged behind the development of society; it no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic position of women. The law has become an obstacle to progress of the women, and therefore a brake on the whole of society.

This intolerable condition would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of a large section of our menfolk to concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves. We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate them-

selves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and in practice.

Need for education

We also recognise that large numbers of our womenfolk continue to be bound by traditional practices and conventions and fail to realise that these have become obsolete and a brake on progress. It is our duty and privilege to enlist all women in our struggle for emancipation and to bring to them all realisation of the intimate relationship that exists between their status of inferiority as women and the inferior status to which their people are subjected by discriminatory laws and colour prejudices.

It is our intention to carry out a nationwide programme of education that will bring home to the men and women of all national groups the realisation that freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage.

An appeal

We women appeal to all progressive organisations, to members of the great national liberatory movements, to the trade unions and working class organisations, to the churches, educational and welfare organisations, to all progressive men and women who have the interests of the people at heart, to join with us in this great and noble endeavour.

Our aims

We declare the following aims:

This organisation is formed for the purpose

of uniting women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic, and social disabilities. We shall strive for women to obtain:

1. The right to vote and to be elected to all state bodies, without restriction or discrimination.

2. The right to full opportunities for employment with equal pay and possibilities of promotion in all spheres of work.

3. Equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage, and children and for the removal of all laws and customs that deny women such equal rights.

4. For the development of every child through free, compulsory education for all; for the protection of mother and child through maternity homes, welfare clinics, crèches, and nursery schools, in countryside and towns, through proper homes for all, and through the provision of water, light, transport, sanitation, and other amenities of modern civilisation.

5. For the removal of all laws that restrict free movement, that prevent or hinder the right of free association and activity in democratic organisations, and the right to participate in the work of these organisations.

6. To build and strengthen women's sections in the national liberatory movements, the organisation of women in trade unions, and through the peoples' varied organisations.

7. To cooperate with all other organisations that have similar aims in South Africa as well as throughout the world.

8. To strive for permanent peace throughout the world. □

Burkina

Women organize for their liberation

New national women's organization launched

By Ernest Harsch

Before August 1983, when a revolutionary upsurge began in Burkina, women in that West African country were virtually ostracized from political life and suffered from the worst social and economic conditions.

But the status of women in Burkina today is changing noticeably.

"Daycare centers, women's associations, and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are among the new realities in this Sahelian country," correspondent Carole Beaulieu reported in a dispatch from Burkina in the January 14 and 15 issues of the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*. "Segregated until now from any political power, Burkinabè women have been speaking up more and more since Capt. Thomas Sankara came to power."

"The Burkina Faso of 1986," Beaulieu observed, "now benefits from women in the government, women in the police, and women in every Committee for the Defense of the Rev-

olution."

In recent months, women have taken part in numerous marches, rallies, and meetings, not only in Ouagadougou, the capital, but also in rural provinces such as Bulkiemde, Bam, Kossi, and Sanmatenga. They have done so to advance their own interests as women and to deepen their involvement in Burkina's broader revolutionary struggle.

Women's union

As part of these activities, women have taken the first concrete steps toward setting up a national organization, known as the Women's Union of Burkina (UFB).

In late September 1985, women in Ouagadougou and in villages in the surrounding Kadiogo Province gathered in mass assemblies to elect members of local UFB executive committees. These assemblies were organized by leaders and activists of the mass-based Committees for the Defense of the Rev-

olution (CDRs).

A few days later, on October 5, women from throughout Kadiogo rallied in the capital to hear the results of the elections. Speaking to the gathering, Alima Traoré, a national CDR leader and the central figure in the Directorate for Women's Mobilization and Organization, stressed the key importance of establishing a national women's organization. She said that to unite women to take part in the revolution and to "eliminate all the fetters on their genuine emancipation," it was necessary to "struggle in close ranks, not in a diffuse manner."

Since then, local leadership committees of the UFB have been elected in other provinces as well.

The groundwork for the launching of these women's committees had been laid shortly after the August 1983 revolution. Each CDR elected at least two women to leadership positions, one as vice-chairperson and the other to head up women's mobilization. They in turn

helped draw other women activists in the CDRs into local "women's cells," which sought to increase women's participation in the CDRs' various activities, such as community development projects, literacy classes, and militia training.

Then in March 1985 some 3,000 women came to Ouagadougou from every province in the country for a major conference on women's emancipation. There they discussed the difficult social and economic conditions confronting women in Burkina and how to combat those conditions. The conference also resolved to work toward the creation of a national women's organization.

In response, the National Secretariat of the CDRs issued a directive outlining the goals and general organizational structure of the Women's Union in Burkina, which is to be open to all women in the country.

According to the CDR directive, the UFB will aim:

- to unite women by organizing and preparing them to participate concretely in the realization of the revolution's objectives.

- to encourage them to work to eradicate all the fetters on the genuine emancipation of women.

- to make women into a decisive force in the struggle for a new society free of all forms of exploitation."

'Like beasts of burden'

The oppression women face in Burkina is severe. Like Burkinabè men, women suffer from the country's legacy of imperialist domination. They live in one of the poorest countries in the world. With 7 million inhabitants, Burkina's per capita income is just a little more than US\$100 a year. The illiteracy rate is more than 90 percent, and infant mortality is high.

But women are particular victims of this poverty and imperialist oppression, as well as of the country's social backwardness. Illiteracy among women reaches 98 percent. In the countryside — where the vast majority of all Burkinabè live and work — women perform most of the labor in the fields and in the home, commonly working 18 hours a day. It is the woman who is expected to go to the market or to fetch water, in some parts of the countryside having to walk 10 or more kilometers each day to do so.

"The women are there to make babies and to work like beasts of burden, nothing more," Environment Minister Béatrice Damiba has said, summing up women's customary status.

Although forced marriage was legally abolished in 1940, it still persists, particularly in the countryside where tribal traditions run deep. Female circumcision continues to be practiced, despite public campaigns to explain its dangers and oppressive nature. Among some peoples in Burkina there are prohibitions against women eating certain kinds of foods, such as eggs, meat, or dried fish. "These prohibitions are only designed to allow men to monopolize the best foods," Delphine Ouédraogo, a CDR activist in Ouagadougou, explained to a reporter.



Pat Wright/IP

Women marching in Ouagadougou, Aug. 4, 1985, at celebrations of second anniversary of revolution.

Women themselves are drawing attention to these many problems. At an October 1985 women's conference in Kongoussi, the capital of Bam Province, in the north, women discussed the social ills that most concerned them. In addition to problems of inequality within the household, the Ouagadougou daily *Sidwaya* reported, the women raised themes "such as circumcision, forced marriage, divorce, sex education. The theme that had received the most cautious public attention was that of the banishment of young girls who become pregnant outside of marriage."

Gains and hurdles

Since the beginning of the revolution, women have made modest, but important, gains.

Together with men, they have benefited from efforts to expand health care throughout the country. By the end of January 1986, more than 7,000 new health clinics had been built, one for every village in Burkina. Preparations are now under way to launch a national literacy drive, with local UFB leaders playing a role in helping to organize it. Daycare centers have been built in some cities and towns.

Agrarian reform and increased government assistance to agriculture have benefited peasant women, providing them with new tools, wells, and mills (traditionally, most women have had to mill grain by hand). Special aid is also being provided to agricultural cooperatives, some of which are organized specifically by and for women.

A new family code is now being studied. According to *Le Devoir's* Beaulieu, among the issues it will tackle are "the setting of a minimum age for marriage, the establishment of divorce by mutual consent, recognition of a widow's right to inheritance, and suppression of the bride-price and levirate, the practice that forces a widow to remarry a member of the deceased's family."

But adoption of the family code will not by itself make these changes a reality. One

woman told Beaulieu, "In case of divorce, the children are handed over to the father because the woman has no financial means. Changing the law without changing women's economic situation means changing nothing."

Getting rid of prostitution poses similar problems. In a Jan. 3, 1985, speech, President Sankara said that prostitution would eventually be outlawed, but first "we must give every woman a job, we must give every woman the means to earn her living honestly and with dignity."

One measure the government planned to implement in January, the "essential wage" for women, has now been put off. Originally announced by Sankara during the celebrations of the revolution's second anniversary on Aug. 4, 1985, it was intended to guarantee that women received part of their husbands' wages to buy food and pay for other essential household needs. But it quickly became one of the most controversial issues in the country, meeting considerable resistance from men. Discussions on the "essential wage" proposal raised other questions as well: How would it be implemented? Why should urban women be favored while the vast majority of women belong to rural families engaged in subsistence cultivation, with very little cash income?

Joséphine Ouédraogo, the minister of family affairs and national solidarity, explained in an interview in the January 14 *Sidwaya* that the government is no longer raising the "essential wage" proposal publicly. She observed that "certain decisions had been made hastily," without taking into account all the repercussions. The problem of assuring women an adequate income would be studied further, Ouédraogo said, and may be tackled through other, more effective measures.

Another question that has been approached with considerable caution is that of abortion, which is not now legal. At the March 1985 women's conference in Ouagadougou, abortion was the one issue that provoked consider-

able disagreement among the participants. While some favored its legalization, others did not, citing considerations of religion and custom or the lack of adequate medical facilities. No resolutions on abortion were adopted, and the issue was referred for further public discussion. Such discussions have been taking place. Most recently, for example, a "revolutionary women's week" in late December in Ouagadougou's Sector 1 included a conference on family planning and abortion.

Drawing women into active political life has also not been easy. An article surveying women's participation in the CDRs in Kadiogo Province, published in the Nov. 7, 1985, *Sidwaya*, noted "the lack of understanding of some husbands or parents, who are opposed to female militants participating in the CDRs' activities." The article also observed an "indifference and lack of interest" among some women themselves, who continue to believe that "politics is not a woman's concern."

But such attitudes are changing — among both women and men. Women are increasingly taking part in CDR activities, including in leadership positions. In a few rural CDRs, women hold a majority of the positions on local executive bureaus. The prominent involvement of women in the government — both as cabinet ministers and as provincial governors — has provided an example to all women and increased their confidence.

So has the growing participation of women in the CDR militias and in the regular armed forces. Hundreds of women have already joined the army. Women helped actively defend the country when troops from neighboring Mali briefly invaded in December.

"The handling of arms is no longer the preserve of men alone," the Ouagadougou weekly *Carrefour Africain* commented. "The military training of different CDR activists includes women as well. Parallel to this, one can note the presence of women in the Burkinabè army. This is a first in the history of our revolutionary defense. In a word, women — whom some prefer to call the weaker sex — pursue military training with the same conviction and diligence as men. The woman in uniform is no longer a curiosity as before, but an incontestable reality."

The formation of the Women's Union of Burkina is a further step in this process of women standing up for their rights. It gives them an organization of their own, through which they can deepen their participation in Burkina's anti-imperialist, democratic revolution. □

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Canada

Abortion rights fight grows

Movement organizes tribunals across country

By Bill Burgess and Lynda Little

[The following article is taken from the February 17 issue of *Socialist Voice*, a fortnightly published in Montreal that reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

"We find the government of Canada in contempt of women. We find the Canadian abortion law *guilty* of denying women the right to choose if, when, and where to have children. We find the Canadian abortion law *guilty* of discrimination against women because access to abortion procedures is dependent upon wealth, language, and proximity to urban centres. We demand that all antiabortion laws be repealed. We demand the legalization of free-standing clinics providing medically insured abortion services."

This was the verdict of a jury numbering more than 400, who participated in a tribunal on Canada's abortion laws held in Vancouver January 25. Organized by the Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion (CCCA), the tribunal was the first in a series planned by the abortion rights movement for cities across English Canada and Quebec. The series will culminate with an action in Ottawa against the antiabortion laws in the late spring.

The tribunal judges and jury heard several hours of moving and powerful public testimony by over a dozen women on the effects of laws and institutions that restrict women's right to control their bodies.

Following the testimony, a broad panel of judges presented their conclusions to the jury. Judges included: Art Kube, president of the

British Columbia Federation of Labor; Grace MacInnis, former NDP [New Democratic Party] MP and long-time champion of abortion rights; Lauris Talme, president of the National Women's Liberal Commission; a woman psychiatrist; a Vancouver United Church minister; and Lorna Zaback of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective.

In his summary to the jury, Art Kube explained that for the trade union movement there could be no social equality without freedom of choice on abortion. "Rich women," he said, "could always go and get an abortion, but poor women had to go get butchered. . . . It is the responsibility of society to provide everyone the services and resources necessary to ensure freedom of choice."

The expanding struggle for women's right to abortion was evident in Montreal February 8 when the Quebec Coalition for the Right to Free Abortion on Demand was founded.

At its founding meeting the coalition decided to organize a tribunal in Ste-Thérèse in April or May in response to attacks by the anti-abortion forces in that town on the CLSC's (community clinic) abortion services. These forces took over the administrative council of the Ste-Thérèse CLSC last fall and decided to end its abortion services.

More than 150 people representing 92 organizations from across Quebec were part of the meeting. Participants were from Quebec's three largest trade union federations, women's groups, the CLSCs, and student organizations and included several women from the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics.

The new coalition demands the repeal of Canada's antiabortion laws and will be part of the Ottawa action against the laws. □

Montreal rally on abortion rights hears U.S., Quebec socialists

MONTREAL — Nearly 40 people gathered here February 15 to hear socialist activists from the United States and Canada speak on the fight for the right of women to choose abortion. The four women who spoke are supporters of the Fourth International.

The public meeting was chaired by Geneviève Baril-Gingras, a leader of Gauche Socialiste (Socialist Left), which sponsored the event. She opened the meeting by describing a series of recent attacks by opponents of abortion rights in Quebec. These include a successful effort in the town of Ste-Thérèse to take over the administrative council of the community clinic and end its abortion services.

Pat Grogan, women's liberation director of

the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, described the stepped-up bombings against abortion clinics in the United States in the past several years. The mounting opposition against this and President Ronald Reagan's drive to overturn the 1973 Supreme Court decision declaring abortion a constitutional right, she said, led the National Organization for Women (NOW), the largest women's liberation organization in the country, to call for a march on Washington, D.C., on March 9. A West Coast action on the same theme of abortion rights has been called for Los Angeles on March 16.

"This is the first national women's rights action in nearly a decade," Grogan noted. "And

it's the first time NOW has ever called an action like this on abortion rights." She described the growing support for the action from the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Grogan also pointed to the significance of the public discussion on abortion that has been opened up in Nicaragua by the Sandinista leadership.

Joanna Misnik, representing Socialist Unity, a U.S. group, stated that the effects of the women's liberation movement have led to "enormous social changes in the United States." She said that just as there is a "Vietnam syndrome that prevents Washington from using U.S. troops" in Central America, there is

a "feminist syndrome" that makes it difficult for the ruling class to oppress women the way it used to or would like to.

The final speaker was Susan Caldwell, a leader of Gauche Socialiste. She described a meeting held in Montreal one week earlier that established the Quebec Coalition for the Right to Free Abortion on Demand.

More than 150 people from a wide range of organizations participated in the meeting, Caldwell noted. She emphasized the importance of the growing connections between the abortion rights struggles in Quebec and English Canada and the opportunities to involve union women in the fight. □

New Caledonia

Interview with Kanak leader

Refutes Australian foreign minister's terrorist-baiting

By Deb Shnookal

SYDNEY, Australia — While Washington was beating the war drums especially hard against the Libyan government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden expressed his concern about possible links between Libya and the Kanak independence movement in the French colony of New Caledonia.

Hayden stressed that the Australian Labor government favors a peaceful transition to independence in New Caledonia. "Australia remains particularly concerned about any action which could lead to the use or threat of violence and terrorism in New Caledonia or elsewhere in our region," Hayden said.

His remarks were designed to pressure the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) into not attending an international conference of national liberation movements in Tripoli in February.

In response to Jean Peu, the FLNKS representative in Australia, who had commented that Hayden's statement amounted to diplomatic "blackmail," Hayden said that the Labor government may reconsider its agreement to the establishment of the Kanak information office in Melbourne.

When I interviewed Peu, he drew attention to what he saw as the real source of terrorism in the South Pacific — the repression and open attacks by right-wing French settlers (known as the *caldoche*) in New Caledonia against the Kanak people. Only shortly before Hayden's statement in January, a yacht had been discovered trafficking arms to New Caledonia through Australia and New Zealand.

"Who has reason to bring in arms to New Caledonia?" asked Peu. "The FLNKS now controls everything except Nouméa [the capital]. We have economic power. The French government has its own military forces. To traffic arms you need contacts, money, and ships. The Kanaks don't have these things.

"On the other hand," he continued, "the *caldoche* don't even control Nouméa anymore. And they *do* have the means and the contacts. They have already had the experience of Algeria, so they know what will happen in New Caledonia. They are getting ready. And Australia should be aware of this."

How responsible is the Australian government for this situation? I asked. "This arms trafficking has been going on for five years," replied Peu. "Three ships have been caught through random searches. How many more have got through?" Two questions, he said, should be asked: "Firstly, what if the Australian government knew about the arms trafficking? It means they are collaborating with the French," Peu concluded.

"Secondly," he continued, "what if the Australian government simply fails to catch the arms traffickers? Does it mean they don't care about how these weapons are used against the Kanak people? If they are going to talk about terrorism around the world, they should look at home first. There are already terrorists here in the South Pacific. The arms trafficking is to terrorize the Kanak people, who have no arms."

Nuclear testing is 'terrorism'

"We also consider it terrorism for the French government to continue nuclear testing in Mururoa," Peu added. "The Kanak people are called 'terrorists' because we claim our right to self-determination. But the French don't see themselves as terrorists when they blow up the *Rainbow Warrior* in New Zealand.

"We also call the Australian government terrorist when it gives aid to the Philippines or Indonesia to kill thousands of people," commented Peu.

What about the FLNKS's links with Libya? "We don't have links as such with Libya," said Peu. "We were invited by Libya to attend the

international conference for national liberation movements there. Ninety liberation movements, including the East Timorese and the West Papuans, will be there.

"Until now, we have never received an invitation from the Australian, American, French, or other 'democratic' countries' governments to hold a liberation movement conference. The only one who asked us to come and share our problems and to learn from others was Libya. So we are going to go."

I asked Peu what he saw as the relationship between the antinuclear and independence struggles in the Pacific region. "To ask that," he said, "we have to ask: Why is there nuclear testing in Mururoa and not in Vanuatu? Because Mururoa is a French colony and Vanuatu is an independent country [since 1980]. The first step to a nuclear-free zone is therefore independence."

South Africa and Kanak

Peu discussed the significance of the events in South Africa for the Kanak people: "We see our struggles as very similar," he said. "It has not been called apartheid in Kanak. But, for example, in the 1950s the Kanaks could only leave their reserves with permission. We had the same status as the Aborigines in Queensland [Australia]," explained Peu.

"We did not have the right to work. We were considered like cattle or dogs — not citizens. We didn't have the right to go to school or the right to vote. The situation has evolved since then, but the problems are still basically the same."

Peu then described how the strategy of the Kanak struggle for independence has been adjusted over the past year. "In the confrontation with the French government over the election boycott in 1984, we lost more than 25 Kanak lives. We realized we didn't have the means to win in a physical confrontation against the white. So we had to change our strategy and find another way to gain our independence," said Peu.

"Now we see that the economic struggle is the only way. That's why we made the compromise to participate in the [1985] regional council elections — so as to control New Caledonia without the town of Nouméa and to have an economic blockade against Nouméa. The FLNKS policy now is economic blockade," Peu explained.

This blockade takes many forms, according to Peu. "There are the cooperatives, the popular schools, and other projects run by the Kanak people. We have our own trade between the regions, excluding Nouméa. But there are problems. Firstly, we need money from the French government for our projects. Then, there are the [French parliamentary] elections in March, when we expect the right wing and Jaques Chirac to win.

"So our strategy has two sides. We compromised and participated in the elections. We won in the parliamentary way." However, he said the election of Chirac might overturn every gain the Kanaks have made. Chirac, Peu noted, has already proposed abolishing the re-

gional council system established under French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius' plan for New Caledonia.

"The FLNKS," explained Peu, "therefore works both within the French constitution and also with our own provisional government." Members of the provisional government cannot also serve as elected representatives in the regional councils.

"This is to make sure," Peu said, "that two or three people don't control every post in Kanaky. The Kanak liberation movement is a *people's* liberation movement. We want the Kanak to take responsibility for his own future."

"We realize," Peu continued, "that although we might have economic power, the political and military power remains with France. But we don't have the means to fight against that power. That's why we concentrate on the economic area. But if we have to defend ourselves, we will."

Anticolonial struggle

Peu emphasized that the Kanaks see their struggle as an anticolonial struggle, not a class struggle. "In New Caledonia, there is a colonized people — the Kanaks — and the colonizers — the French," he said. But he also stressed that "anyone can be a Kanak after independence — if they support the independence struggle now. That includes French people, as well as Polynesian and Asian peoples."

"How can it be a working-class struggle when more than 85 percent of Kanaks don't work?" he asked.

Information center

Finally, Peu explained why the FLNKS had established the information center in Australia. "Australia," he said, "is one of the powerful countries of the South Pacific, and all the small countries with economic ties to Australia, like Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa, do as it says.

"Besides this, we realize that there is a very large antinuclear movement in Australia," Peu said. "We want to make the link between the antinuclear movement and the struggle of the Kanak people."

The Kanak information center is sponsored by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, through the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union. But Peu is conscious that the Labor government is very wary of the Kanak independence movement. "Despite the terrorism in the South Pacific with the *Rainbow Warrior* and the nuclear testing, Australia considers its economic ties with the EEC [European Economic Community], including France, as more important than the lives of Kanaks or other native peoples of the South Pacific," Peu commented.

He explained this was because the Australian government "has its own problems with the Aborigines. But also," he added, "Australian business has a free run in the Pacific, for example in Fiji or Vanuatu. And so Australia doesn't want Kanaky to become a small Cuba,

to destabilize their business."

They particularly don't want "the contagion of socialism to spread from Kanaky to other Melanesian countries like Papua New Guinea and other Pacific countries," Peu concluded.

In what way would the FLNKS describe their struggle as "socialist"? I asked Peu. He

explained that the Kanak people "are already socialist, without knowing it. If you talk about Marx to a Kanak, he will ask you what village he comes from. But in traditional Kanak communal society there is no private property — nothing belongs to just one person. Kanak society is based on a clan structure." □

Fiji

Labour Party registers growth

Aim is 'creation of true democracy'

By Russell Johnson

[The following article is taken from the January 31 issue of *Socialist Action*, a fortnightly newspaper published in Auckland, New Zealand, that reflects the views of the Socialist Action League, New Zealand section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Fiji's newly formed Labour Party scored an important victory in its first electoral contest. In municipal elections in the capital, Suva, held last November 16, the party won eight out of the 20 seats. This enabled it to appoint a new mayor, bank workers' union secretary Bob Kumar.

The party followed up this achievement a month later by almost defeating the ruling Alliance Party in a by-election for the central parliament in the sugar-growing area of the main island of Viti Levu. The Labour candidate, Public Service Association secretary Mahendra Chaudhery, received 36.4 percent of the vote compared to the Alliance candidate's 37.5 percent.

A further contest was prevented when officials barred Nurses' Association leader Ms. Jokapeci Koroi from contesting a by-election on Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's home islands of Lau.

Union-sponsored

The Labour Party was founded at a conference in July 1985. It is sponsored by the Fiji Trades Union Congress, which has 40,000 members and includes most of the major industrial and white-collar unions.

The party is the first to emerge in Fiji that consciously seeks to base its appeal on all Fijians, regardless of race. Newly elected president Timoci Bavadra told the founding conference that Labour "must be a party for all Fijians no matter where they live, what their race, or how they earn a living."

This is no small question in Fijian politics. Of a population of 700,000, more than 50 percent are descended from Indian indentured sugar plantation labourers, and about 45 percent are of native Fijian descent, the balance being descended from European, Gujarati, and Chinese immigrant business families.

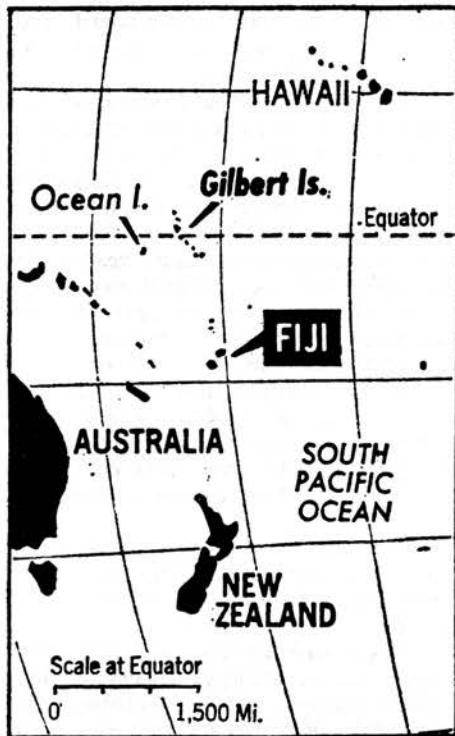
Since independence in 1970, a complex system of elections to central government on a racial basis has been institutionalised. This system has been aimed at perpetuating the racial divisions between Indo- and native Fijians, which obstruct the development of effective trade unionism and other democratic forms of organisation.

Racial politics

Racial politics helps to maintain the authority and privileges of the traditional chiefs over the native Fijians and ensure their continued rule over Fiji in alliance with the local business community and the imperialists, underneath a democratic veneer.

Alliance is the party of the traditional chiefs and the richest businessmen. The opposition National Federation Party (NFP), led by lawyers and businesspeople of Indian descent, has sought to present itself as the party of all Indo-Fijians.

The NFP is presently paralysed by factional



in-fighting. It was the biggest loser to Labour in the recent elections, which picked up large numbers of votes among Indo-Fijian wage workers and sugar cane farmers.

But the reasons for Labour's gains go deeper than the crisis of the NFP. They reflect the increasing polarisation of Fijian politics in recent years, as the Mara government has moved to the right in response to a growing economic crisis and deepening class struggle in the Pacific.

Economic crisis

Capitalist austerity has been imposed on Fiji working people. Workers have had their already low wages forced even lower through the imposition of a wage freeze since November 1984. Combined with massive unemployment, especially among the youth, this situation is leading to widespread urban poverty.

For example, a recent survey in the Suva suburb of Raiwai-Raiwaqa revealed an unemployment rate of 75 percent and a weekly household income of between \$15 and \$50 [NZ\$1 = US\$0.53] to support an average of six adults.

Conditions in the countryside are no better. Fiji's sugar industry has been hard hit by a series of droughts and hurricanes. However, it has not felt the effect of plunging world sugar prices as badly as other sugar-producing countries because of favourable long-term sales arrangements with Britain, New Zealand, China, and the United States. In fact, because of drought, the government has had to import sugar from Malaysia for domestic consumption in order to meet its export commitments.

Sugar farmers

Nevertheless, many of the 22,000 mostly Indo-Fijian cane farmers face depression conditions under the impact of the drought and government austerity measures. According to the *New Zealand Herald*:

"When the Fiji Sugar Corporation this month paid farmers the second of three instalments for the 1985 harvest, about 6,000 farmers received nothing because of deductions made for the repayment of loans and fertiliser advances."

The newspaper wrote that the head of the Fiji Sugarcane Growers' Council reported that another 6,000 "received very little" and that "net earnings for many large farm families will be under \$2,000 a year." The paper continued:

"The worsening depression in cane-growing areas is causing some unrest, with farmers demanding government support and calling for the cancellation of the repayment of \$24 million advanced to them last year to assist them out of difficulties then."

Conditions are also worsening in the villages where most native Fijians continue to scratch out an existence as semi-subsistence farmers.

In recent years the Mara government has adopted an increasingly strident pro-imperialist foreign policy, including the strengthening of military and political ties with

Washington.

More than 1,500 Fijian soldiers serve with imperialist "peace-keeping forces" in the Middle East. The government has imposed a ban on Soviet vessels entering Fiji ports, while in 1984 it reversed an earlier ban on nuclear ships to allow U.S. warships to dock.

The Labour Party has addressed itself to a number of these issues. Timoci Bavadra explained in his address to the founding conference:

"As the economic crisis worsened through the late 1970s and early 1980s the unions tried their best to work with the government in seeking equitable solutions. The unilateral imposition of the wage freeze late last year indicated clearly that the government was no longer willing to discuss matters with the representatives of the working people of Fiji.

"As responsible trade unionists we felt compelled to react strongly to government policies that threaten the well being of our members and, in fact, of all Fijians. We recognised that it was time for the working people of Fiji to form their own political party rather than to continue to rely on the goodwill of existing political parties that increasingly had demonstrated that they represent only the narrowest of interests. . . .

'True democracy'

"Our aim is . . . to create a political force that truly represents and is responsive to the

needs, aspirations, and will of the people of Fiji. Our aim is the creation of true democracy in this country and to put an end to the many undemocratic features that dominate the political life of Fiji. . . .

"Our party is for the ordinary people . . . for all the workers of this country, for the farmers, the shopkeepers — for everyone who has the interest of Fiji at heart, everyone who cares about maintaining a sincere and open relationship between the government and the workers and the people of this country, everyone who cares simply for goodwill, honesty, and peace among all."

Bavadra called for "legislation that strengthens the rights of working people," and for a minimum wage for the manufacturing sector.

On foreign policy, he advocated "an active policy of nonalignment" which must "manifest itself in trade and diplomatic relations and in our support for the struggles of common people around the world against oppression. . . . Two areas that we must come out strongly on are the nuclear-free Pacific movement and support for our neighbours who remain under French colonial domination."

Last October 28, Fiji police harassed a demonstration against the arrival of two U.S. warships, the USS *Reid* and the USS *Brooke*. The police justified their actions on the grounds that the marchers were members of the Labour Party, and "not genuine protestors." □

New book on exploitation of women published by Pathfinder Press

An important new book on the oppression of women has just been published by Pathfinder Press in New York. *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, by Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed, is a collection of articles and letters from a lively debate that developed in 1954 in the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

The controversy, sparked by an article by *Militant* editor Joseph Hansen exposing the profiteering of the cosmetics industry, took up a broad range of questions related to the oppression and exploitation of women. Among them are: how wealthy owners of the cosmetics and fashion industries play on women's insecurities to sell products and make profits; how standards of beauty are determined in capitalist society; why the powers-that-be promote the "feminine mystique" and glorify the family; and how increased participation of women in the labor force changed their view of themselves and their potential.

The articles by Hansen and Reed, both leaders of the SWP at the time, provide a Marxist analysis of the pressures bearing down on women — and men — in capitalist society, especially during periods of political reaction or working-class retreat.

During the party debate, differences also emerged over the origins of the family and its

relationship to women's oppression. One of the articles by Reed deals with this question. This was an early presentation of the views she later developed in her 1975 study, *Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family*, which has been translated and published in five languages.

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women includes an introduction by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters, which places the debate in its historical framework. She relates the "cosmetics controversy" to the capitalist ideological offensive against women's rights today. Waters also assesses the significant changes in women's social conditions since World War II, especially their increasing incorporation into industrial union jobs. Waters' introduction appeared in the Dec. 2, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.

The 138-page book is available in paperback for \$4.95 plus \$.75 postage from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

It can also be purchased from Pathfinder's distributor for Africa, Europe, and the Middle East: 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL; and its distributor for Asia, Australia, and the Pacific: P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia. □

Giant blow to agent-baiting campaign

'Workers Press' repudiates Healy's big lie

By Doug Jenness

A staggering blow has been dealt to the agent-baiting campaign conducted for more than a decade by the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the U.S. Workers League (WL) against the Fourth International, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, and other individuals and organizations in the workers' movement.

The WRP/WL big-lie campaign was launched in the 1970s. Those organizations charged that leaders of the Fourth International and the SWP are agents of the FBI and CIA, as well as of the GPU, the Soviet Union's secret police.

The smear job initially singled out Joseph Hansen, a long-time leader of the SWP who died in 1979; it was then extended to include George Novack, another veteran SWP leader, and subsequently broadened to encompass younger leaders and members recruited to the SWP in the 1960s.

Now an entire wing of the WRP, one of the largest organizations in Britain claiming adherence to Trotskyism, has publicly turned its back on this campaign of lies and slanders branding political opponents as police agents of the U.S. and Soviet governments.

In an article in the February 7 issue of *Workers Press*, published in London, WRP leader Michael Banda declared that this campaign is "the most sinister and reactionary manifestation of Healyism." (An excerpt from Banda's article is reprinted in this issue, along with several other documents and articles from *Workers Press*.)

For many years the political course of the WRP and its predecessor, the Socialist Labour League (SLL), had revolved around a cult figure, Gerry Healy. Healy's expulsion from the WRP on Oct. 19, 1985, precipitated a split in this ultraleft sect, resulting in two organizations, both calling themselves the WRP.¹

Healy, Alex Mitchell, Sheila Torrance, and Corin and Vanessa Redgrave are central leaders of the group that is publishing *News Line* (the name of the WRP's daily newspaper at the time of the split). Having appeared only twice a week since the split, *News Line* became a daily once again on February 1.

The majority of the WRP leadership, including Banda, Cliff Slaughter, Bill Hunter, Dave Good, and other WRP leaders, are now producing *Workers Press*, which started publishing twice a week, but is now coming out once a week.

1. For an account of this split see "Shattering of a British Sect: the Politics behind the Workers Revolutionary Party's Degeneration," by Doug Jenness, in the Dec. 2, 1985, issue of *IP*.

The majority of the leadership of the Workers League, the WRP's followers in the United States, had originally aligned themselves with the wing of the WRP that broke with Healy.

Banda, a long-time central leader of the WRP, replaced Healy as the party's general secretary in 1976. "No one who honours Trotsky's impeccable and scrupulous regard for absolutely verifiable facts and irrefutable evidence," Banda now writes, "will have anything more to do with this monstrous frame-up based entirely on circumstantial evidence and political innuendo."

Another article in the same issue of *Workers Press* also takes up the Healyite disruption campaign. Editor David Good notes, "Most leaders of the WRP are of the opinion that the whole thing is a frame-up of Hansen and Novack, whose only 'crime' was to revise Marxism, not spy for the FBI/CIA or GPU."

A January 26 resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the *Workers Press* wing of the WRP stated, "We recognise that Security and the Fourth International [the Healyite term for its agent-baiting campaign] was a substitute for a real struggle against revisionism and for Trotskyist principle."

This wholesale repudiation of the Healyite slander campaign includes condemnation of a court suit against the SWP in the United States that has been vigorously promoted by the Workers League and the WRP for nearly seven years. This lawsuit was filed in July 1979 by Alan Gelfand, a lawyer for Los Angeles County in California. It is a central part of the international disruption effort against the SWP and the Fourth International.

'Sent North wild'

This rejection of the Healyite agent-baiting campaign has met with considerable wailing and gnashing of teeth in the U.S. Workers League. Good reports that WL National Secretary David North is "very touchy" on this subject. The repudiation of the slander campaign "has caused panic in the leadership of the Workers League," he writes. Good adds that the WRP (*Workers Press*) Central Committee's proposal that the WL settle the Gelfand case out of court "sent North wild."

In the months since the split with Healy, North has won a majority in the leadership bodies of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the international outfit to which the *Workers Press* supporters and the WL adhere. When the British leaders refused to subordinate their policies to the tin-pot dictator from the United States, he engineered their expulsion.

North then proceeded to organize a split in the *Workers Press* wing of the WRP. The split-

ters held their own conference on February 8-9, where they affirmed "that the struggle carried out for over 10 years on Security and the Fourth International and continued by the Workers League with the Gelfand case represents an historic gain in the fight against Stalinism, revisionism, and for the training of a cadre against state attack."

This meeting also voted to send "its warmest fraternal greetings and support to Alan Gelfand for his struggle to expose the state agents within the SWP in America."

According to *Workers Press*, North's supporters in Britain have begun distributing Workers League pamphlets defending the agent-baiting campaign. *Workers Press* predicts that "before long, North and his minority faction will link up with Healy's supporters." (This is possible, but it should be recalled that relations between the WL and the Healy group had reached a low point by the time of the October split. One of the things that came out at that time was that Healy had accused North, agent-baiter par excellence, of being a CIA agent himself.)

Nothing has appeared in *News Line* since the split about the agent-baiting campaign nor about the repudiation of it by the *Workers Press* supporters.

Connected to political degeneration

The origins and evolution of the Healyite slander operation are totally connected to the WRP's political degeneration, which can be traced back nearly 30 years to its repudiation of the Cuban revolution in 1959.

For more than a quarter century the WRP and its predecessor, the SLL, have contended that the leadership around Fidel Castro is not revolutionary. This leadership, the Healyites claim, did not lead the workers and peasants in overturning capitalist property relations and establishing a workers' state in Cuba. Rather, they say, Cuba's government is a capitalist regime with radical nationalist and socialist rhetoric like many others in the semicolonial world.

The Healyites maintain that socialist revolutions are only possible if they are led by Trotskyist parties. When the living class struggle has turned out different from Healyite schemas, they have solved the contradiction by denying reality.

The big majority of the Fourth International and the SWP, in contrast, hailed the Cuban revolution and its leadership. They recognized it as a stunning blow against U.S. imperialist oppression in the Americas. They understood that the revolutionary expropriation of both foreign and Cuban capitalists by the workers' and peasants' government by the end of 1960

meant that a workers' state had been established for the first time in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1963 the SLL refused to participate in the reunification of the Fourth International, which had been split into two wings for 10 years. The SLL broke from the International and set up its own rump outfit, the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The SLL had been thrown off the rails by opposing a genuine workers' and peasants' revolution, led by leaders whose unflinching support to the revolutionary working people brought them to Marxism. The Healyites' persistent defense of their erroneous position on the Cuban revolution for nearly three decades led them to wander further and further from Marxism.

Disastrous organizational consequences accompanied the SLL's abandonment of its Marxist bearings. The organization created a bloated apparatus that became a substitute for pursuing a political course of active involvement in the existing mass organizations of the working class. This was reflected above all in the WRP's sectarian and abstentionist approach to the reformist-led Labour Party in Britain. This elevation of the apparatus over politics helped generate bureaucratism and the gutting of party democracy.

One result of this was the emergence of hooliganism. The Healyite apparatus began resorting to heavy-handed methods for dealing with dissidents inside the organization.²

Violent purges

Banda comments on this in his February 7 *Workers Press* article. He points out that violence was used against the leaders of a group of 200 party members who were expelled in 1974. Those purged included Central Committee members Alan Thornett, John Lister, Tony Richardson, and Kate Blakeney. Banda states that Thornett was "bureaucratically expelled" and "physical violence was used against Richardson."

The February 22 issue of *Workers Press* carries an open letter from Thornett and Lister, currently leaders of a group called the Workers Socialist League, which takes up Healy's gangster methods. "Central Committee member Tony Richardson was beaten personally by Healy," Lister and Thornett write. The letter adds that "when Kate Blakeney complained against this on the Central Committee she was charged, suspended from membership, and ejected from the party meeting within four minutes!" Blakeney today is a supporter of the Fourth International in Australia.

Good writes that a reexamination of these expulsions is currently under way and that the findings will be reported to a future party conference.

2. See *Marxism vs. Ultraleftism: The Record of Healy's Break with Trotskyism*. This 254-page Education for Socialists Publication is available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014; 47 The Cut, London SE1 8LL; and P.O. Box 37, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW 2040, Australia.

Healy's abusive approach, designed to squash disagreements inside the party, began long before the 1970s. Many party members were victimized by these methods as far back as 25 years ago.

One example is Connie Harris, a veteran of the Fourth International in Britain, who was expelled from the SLL in 1960. Harris had worked part-time in the SLL's headquarters, and one day was physically prevented by Healy from carrying out her assignment. A group of Healy's cohorts forced her to leave the party offices. Subsequently, she was purged from the party.

In addition to waging a permanent witch-hunt inside the SLL, gangster attacks like those of the Stalinist movement have been employed against political opponents. Two cases are particularly noteworthy.

One occurred in 1966 when six SLL goons, under the personal supervision of Healy, brutally beat British Fourth Internationalist Ernest Tate. They smashed Tate's glasses and kicked him until passersby pulled them off. Tate had to be hospitalized.

This shameful and cowardly act was widely condemned in left circles and unions in Britain.

A similar incident took place in 1976 in Sydney, Australia. David Deutschmann, a Fourth Internationalist who was then a member of the Australian Socialist Workers Party, was badly beaten by Healyite thugs from the Australian Socialist Labour League. A leader of the Spartacist League was also injured by the Healyites in the attack.

Deutschmann required hospital attention as a result of a kick to the side of his head as he lay on the ground from a previous blow.

The hooligan attacks in London and Sydney were aimed at preventing members of other political organizations from distributing literature outside public meetings organized by the Healyites.

More support needed!

The Political Rights Defense Fund is organizing the effort to halt the U.S. federal court's unconstitutional interference in the functioning of the Socialist Workers Party and to get the Gelfand slander suit thrown out of court.

It has organized dozens of meetings and hundreds of messages protesting the violation of democratic rights posed by this case, not only for the SWP but for all working-class organizations.

PRDF has raised tens of thousands of dollars for court costs and attorneys fees, and as long as this case continues many more dollars will be needed.

Messages of support and contributions can be sent to: Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 649, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Accompanying this thuggery was a vitriolic slander campaign against the Fourth International and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. The Healyites used violently factional rhetoric and concocted falsifications to cover up their rapid retreat from Marxism. As this campaign reached a fever pitch, another element began to be introduced — agent-baiting, a deadly poison to the workers' movement.

Agent-baiting

In October 1972 the *Workers Press*, the official organ of the British SLL at that time, had attempted to smear Bala Tampoe, a prominent Sri Lankan Fourth Internationalist and trade union leader. The SLL alleged that Tampoe had "associated with the CIA."

A week later the United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a statement condemning this smear attack. It pointed out that the only source offered was a former factional opponent of Tampoe's in Sri Lanka. "An investigation undertaken by us in 1969," the United Secretariat stated, "showed that the slander was cooked up and put into circulation originally by the former Trotskyists in Ceylon who betrayed the movement and accepted posts offered them by [Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo] Bandaranaike, and who were under heavy fire from Bala Tampoe."

Then in 1974 Healy whipped up a campaign against Nancy Fields, a leader of the U.S. Workers League and companion of WL National Secretary Tim Wohlforth, charging her with being a CIA agent. They were both purged when Wohlforth refused to submit to this baseless charge against Fields.

Banda, in his article in the February 7 *Workers Press*, states that "the crisis with Wohlforth was artificially exacerbated by Healy with his paranoid ravings about security and his total failure to deal with the Workers League's problems of perspective and policy.

"The issue of Nancy Fields," he continues, "was exaggerated and distorted beyond all proportion. In my opinion Wohlforth's weaknesses were maliciously exploited by Healy to drive him out. . . . The case of Nancy Fields must be reexamined in the same way as Thornett, Blick, and other victims of Healy's malice and bureaucratic sadism."

Soon after he was unceremoniously forced out of the Workers League, Wohlforth wrote a long account of the treatment Healy and his cohorts dished out to him and Fields. Joseph Hansen, editor of *Intercontinental Press* at the time, published this account in early 1975.³

Slanders against Hansen, Novack

Following the publication of these articles, the Healyite agent-baiting campaign took an insidious new turn. Hansen was charged with complicity in the 1940 assassination of Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. Hansen was the author of many of the SWP's principal resolutions and articles on the Cuban rev-

3. This document was published by *Intercontinental Press* in four installments in the issues of Feb. 24 to March 17, 1975.

olution and played a central role in exposing Healy's sectarian political degeneration and bureaucratic organizational methods.

Hansen was serving as a secretary for Trotsky in Mexico at the time of the assassination, which was incontestably proven to be the work of Joseph Stalin's secret police.

When George Novack, another long-time SWP leader, wrote an article defending Hansen, the Healyites also labeled Novack an "accomplice" of the Soviet police.

The Healyites later added to their campaign of lies that Hansen was an FBI agent.

The Healyite presses rolled out article after article and pamphlet after pamphlet presenting "documents" and "evidence" to bolster their frame-up. But there was not one bit of truth to any of it. It was a concoction of lies.

One of the pieces of "evidence" produced by the Healyites to show that Hansen collaborated with the FBI was a report from an aide in the U.S. Consulate in Mexico City about a conversation with Hansen in 1940. Hansen responded by explaining the circumstances around the inquiries he made at the consulate following the assassination of Trotsky. He thoroughly refuted the contention that this report showed that he was an accomplice of the FBI.

Another piece of "evidence" churned out by the Healyite lie machine was that Hansen had held discussions in 1939 with a GPU agent in the United States.

Hansen documented that the meetings were conducted under the direction of Trotsky and the SWP leadership for purposes of gaining knowledge about the GPU in the United States. It proved nothing, he pointed out, in regard to the assertion that he was a GPU agent.

Banda now admits that "it is entirely possible, nay probable, that Trotsky did advise Hansen to 'play ball' with the GPU agent as part of a plan to elicit information and that he also advised him to contact the FBI. Even if he didn't, it doesn't prove that Hansen was guilty," Banda argues, making the key point.

"North, I fear, is hoist on his own petard," Banda continues, "and faces the charge of being an accomplice with Healy and the execrable Mitchell in the murder of Trotsky's finest tradition" of scrupulous regard for facts.

'The Carleton 12'

When Hansen died in early 1979, the Healyites proceeded to charge that Hansen had recruited and trained a younger group of agents and had "elevated" them into positions of leadership responsibility in the SWP.

They asserted that it was highly suspicious that a number of younger SWP leaders had been students at Carleton College, a small liberal arts school in Minnesota. Extensive biographies of 12 of them were pieced together out of half-truths, outright lies, and innuendoes and circulated in a pamphlet entitled, "The Carleton Twelve."

This frame-up was hatched to keep the slander campaign against the SWP and the Fourth International going. And CIA-baiting became a more prominent part of the campaign. For example, an article in the September 1982 issue of

the Healyite magazine *Labour Review* asserted, "The leadership of the SWP has been taken over directly by the CIA and it is being used as an instrument to destroy revolutionary movements in Central America and internationally."

Regarding the revelation that some SWP leaders went to Carleton College, Banda aptly says, "I can only retort: So what?" He asks, "Where is the concrete evidence of their work for the FBI? Put up or shut up, North!"

Banda points to a feature of the Healyite agent-baiting operation that Hansen often noted — its paranoid character.

"History records," Banda states, "that the antirevisionist struggle was transformed for over a decade into a manic witch-hunt, a desperate forensic diversion to be precise, to ratify Healy's paranoid schizophrenia as well as his anti-theory empiricism. In this respect Hansen's charge against Healy was right."

Hansen in an article in the March 31, 1975, issue of *IP* explained that the "preferable and perhaps more precise" term to describe Healy's performance was "paranoia."

"If the term fits," he observed, "then the true explanation for Healy's obsessions about CIA agents, police agents, and plots against his life, as well as his rages, 'extreme reactions,' and strange version of dialectics is to be sought not in his politics, philosophical methodology, or models like Pablo or Cannon, but in the workings of a mind best understood by psychiatrists."

It's a fact that an organization plagued by bureaucratism and substitution of abusive methods for democratic discussion and decision-making offers a good spawning ground for paranoia.

Despite the intensity of the WRP/WL slander campaign and the huge sums poured into financing it, the Healyites have been strikingly unsuccessful in winning support outside their own ranks.

Banda, commenting on this, states, "There is an even more damning question I would like to address to Healy's political bloodhounds, North and Mitchell. Why is it that not a single radical intellectual, not one conscientious professor, trade union leader, or dissident Stalinist responded to the call for an inquiry into the murder of Trotsky by [Stalinist assassin Ramón] Mercader and presumably, Hansen and Novack? To ask the question is to answer it."

From the beginning, the SWP and the Fourth International waged a counteroffensive against the Healyite slander crusade. Hansen wrote several major articles refuting each lie and exposing the entire frame-up nature of the campaign. These articles, as well as many statements and articles by other leaders and sympathizers of the Fourth International and by leaders of other groups considering themselves Trotskyist were published in *Healy's Big Lie: The Slander Campaign Against Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the Fourth International* and widely circulated.⁴ Virtually every organization and current con-

4. This 88-page Education for Socialists Publication is available from Pathfinder Press.

sidering itself Trotskyist, or sympathetic to the Trotskyist movement, condemned the Healyite agent-baiting campaign.

A meeting of nearly 1,200 was organized in London in January 1977, where Fourth International leaders and sympathizers attacked Healy's big lie. Among the speakers were: George Novack; Ernest Mandel, a long-time leader of the Fourth International from Belgium; Pierre Lambert, a leader of the International Communist Organization (OCI) of France; Michel Pablo, a leader of the International Revolutionary Marxist Tendency; veteran British Trotskyists Betty Hamilton and Harry Wicks; and Tamara Deutscher, the companion of the late Isaac Deutscher, the author of the well-known biography of Leon Trotsky.

Gelfand case

Since 1979 the centerpiece of the Healyite agent-baiting campaign against the SWP and the Fourth International has been the Gelfand case, which makes the *Workers Press* denunciation of it particularly significant.

Moreover, a ruling by federal judge Mariana Pfaelzer in this case is still pending — a ruling that could have far-reaching implications for democratic rights in the United States.

Gelfand, who entered the SWP in 1976 to disrupt it from within, was expelled from the party in January 1979 after he filed a legal brief in federal court charging that the SWP is a front for the FBI. This slander coincided with the WRP/WL disruption operation against the SWP.

After Gelfand's expulsion, the WRP/WL initiated the lawsuit against the SWP, asking a federal judge to remove the party leadership and reinstate Gelfand into membership. The spurious ground for this demand is the claim that Gelfand was expelled by U.S. government agents who had taken over the SWP. He claims that his constitutional rights were violated, and the Healyites have presented the suit as a significant civil liberties case.

The WRP leaders who have now denounced this suit accurately point to its threat to civil liberties, noting that it sets "an extremely damaging precedent in calling on the state to determine the membership of a working-class political organization."

If the court were to rule in favor of Gelfand, it would mark a big blow against the constitutional freedom of association and the fundamental right of a political party to determine who its members are and to choose its own leadership.

It would mean that the government can dictate to a political party whether its activities are in conformity with its stated program and historic goals. It would open the door to the government intervening in the decision-making process of unions, civil rights groups, and all similar organizations.

For four years U.S. District Court Judge Pfaelzer rejected every effort by the SWP to have the case thrown out of court.

While Pfaelzer delayed setting a trial date, the SWP was forced to divert big financial and personnel resources to defend itself. For exam-

ple, Gelfand's attorneys, the Los Angeles law firm of Fisher & Moest, subpoenaed many SWP members in order to take more than 350 hours of depositions. In addition to draining SWP resources, this harassment was designed to produce an "official court record" that could be selectively published at a future date.

The case finally came to trial in March 1983 in Los Angeles. During the days leading up to and during the trial, a nationwide campaign supported by unionists, civil rights activists, and civil libertarians demanded that Pfaelzer halt the intervention by the courts into the SWP's functioning and throw Gelfand's case out of court. This public pressure contributed to Pfaelzer's admission at the conclusion of the trial that Gelfand had never produced "one shred of evidence" to support his slanderous charge that the SWP's elected leaders are FBI agents.

Pfaelzer declared to Gelfand and his attorneys: "You have not proved anything that you said you were going to prove. Nothing. . . . I can only assume that there was a motive somewhere in here to paralyze the Socialist Workers Party. I don't know how much the rival political party [the WRP/WL] paid for your attorneys fees. I suppose in another forum that will come up as an issue. . . ."

Despite this statement, Pfaelzer issued no decision on the case at the time.

At a federal court hearing a couple of weeks after the trial, the judge stated that she would give favorable consideration to a motion by the SWP that she require Gelfand and his attorneys to pay the SWP's legal fees and expenses. The SWP subsequently filed such a motion.

The *Workers Press* supporters urge that a means be found "to resolve this outside the courts including an approach by the Workers League to the SWP."

Actually, shortly after the trial an approach was made by the lawyers representing Gelfand and Fisher & Moest to settle out of court the question of legal fees and expenses. The SWP agreed to this and began negotiations. But Gelfand and Fisher & Moest refused to carry discussions further, and the SWP is still waiting for a proposal.

Meanwhile, Pfaelzer still has made no ruling on the Gelfand suit or on the SWP's motion for legal fees and expenses.

As part of its agent-baiting campaign, the Healyites have demanded several times that the Fourth International participate in a commission of inquiry into the security questions surrounding Trotsky's assassination. This proposal has been consistently rejected by the leading bodies of the Fourth International. The recent repudiation of the Healyite campaign by an entire wing of the WRP helps confirm the correctness of that course.

Accepting involvement in such a commission would give credence to the notion that there might be something to Healy's calumnies.

The entire WRP/WL frame-up assumes that Hansen, Novack, Fields, Tampoe, and other victims of Healyite slanders are guilty or at least suspect, even though no facts have been

produced to substantiate the charges against them. The Healyite approach assumes that a person is guilty until proven innocent.

The method of the Fourth International leadership, the SWP, and all serious revolutionary leaders, on the other hand, is that party members are innocent until verifiable proof is produced to establish their guilt. In the revolutionary workers' movement unsubstantiated rumors, gossip, suspicions, or anonymous tips are insufficient to prove that someone is an agent. Such behavior is very destructive, pitting members against each other. One of the stock methods of the cops, in fact, is to attempt to plant suspicions that certain members of an organization are agents.

In an article that appeared in the Aug. 28, 1950, issue of the *Militant*, a socialist weekly published in New York, SWP National Secretary James P. Cannon pointed out, "A 'spy scare' caused by planted 'disinformation' can do a hundred times more damage than any spies by undermining the confidence of comrades in each other and disrupting the comradely collaboration which is necessary for fruitful work."

Moreover, reports and documents produced by cops, police informers, and professional red-baiters or "verified" by so-called handwriting experts or emanating from closed-door proceedings of grand juries and other such in-

vestigative bodies are not a reliable source for determining whether members of a revolutionary organization are agents.

Banda makes an important point related to this when he argues that the testimony of Louis Budenz, a former Stalinist who became a notorious perjurer, should not be relied on for ascertaining whether members of the SWP (or anyone else) are GPU or FBI agents.

One of the WRP/WL's charges was based on taking for good coin Budenz's slander that Sylvia Caldwell (whom the Healyites refer to as Sylvia Franklin) was a secret Soviet police agent. Caldwell was a secretary to Cannon in the 1940s.

Some WRP leaders supporting *Workers Press* have announced that they plan to conduct a public discussion on the political and organizational degeneration of the WRP and the entire history of the Fourth International and its place in the international workers' movement today. It is already apparent from the article by Good that a probe is under way to engage former WRP members such as Lister and Thornett in such a discussion.

By renouncing the Healyite agent-baiting campaign, these WRP leaders have taken the first, necessary step toward having their views taken seriously as a legitimate part of the political debates that are occurring among revolutionists today. □

'IP' back issues useful for education

Regular readers of *Intercontinental Press* know that last May we began a column, "10 and 20 Years Ago," that excerpts brief items from earlier issues of *IP*. This feature has been well received and we plan to continue it.

These short excerpts, however, give only a taste of the considerable volume of material that has been published in *IP* and its predecessor, *World Outlook*, for more than 22 years. Since September 1963, when the first issue appeared, the magazine has printed hundreds of documents, speeches, interviews, and articles that are not available or readily accessible anywhere else.

Materials related to the revolutions in Cuba, Algeria, Nicaragua, and Grenada and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa are an especially important part of what's in these issues.

Moreover, the back volumes of *IP* and *World Outlook* are the best source in English of articles about and documents from the Fourth International, following its reunification in 1963 after a decade-long split.

Fortunately, readers who weren't subscribing for all those years are still able to obtain copies of back issues for research and education. The 1968 to 1985 volumes are available in bound form for \$25 per volume or for \$15 per year unbound. If you order five or more years the cost is reduced

to \$20 per year bound and \$12 per year unbound.

When we advertised this special offer a few issues ago, a reader in Reykjavik, Iceland, immediately sent a check for the unbound volumes from 1968 to 1979. "I've been a subscriber for several years," he wrote, "and I find *IP* indispensable for my understanding of world politics. I rely very much on *IP* for facts and arguments in my political work here. Keep up the good work." With an endorsement like that, what more do we need to say?

On another topic, a reader from Richmond, Vermont, wrote that he "really appreciated *IP*'s reprinting of Yevtushenko's speech" to the Soviet writers' congress in Moscow last November. He said that he liked the article we ran with it about Yevtushenko and the significance of the speech.

He also brought to our attention an error in the article. "You made a factual error in stating that Solzhenitsyn spent World War II in a Soviet camp. Solzhenitsyn was one of the few Red Army soldiers to survive the Nazi POW camps, having been captured in one of the great encirclements at the beginning of the war. Because of his personal knowledge of Stalin's fallibility, he was sent to the *gulag* in 1945 when he was repatriated, not being released until 1953."

WRP leaders hit Healyite agent-baiting

U.S. Workers League goes wild, organizes split

[The following articles are taken from the February 7 issue of *Workers Press*, published in London by the Workers Revolutionary Party.]

* * *

A minority faction, led from the United States by David North, secretary of the U.S. Workers League, has split from the Workers Revolutionary Party.

They were discovered on Monday this week to be secretly preparing an edition of the *Young Socialist* devoted entirely to attacking the Party.

The main article in this pirate newspaper was to have been a 35-point letter from the Workers League, denouncing the WRP leadership as "renegades from Marxism who have capitulated to the pressures of British imperialism and are placing themselves in the service of the class enemy."

They have also withdrawn from a bank account the entire funds of the national committee of the Young Socialists, totalling £1,644.80.

The splitters are known to be seeking premises in Yorkshire to establish their own separate headquarters. They intend to seize control of the Manchester YS Youth Training centre in Broughton.

The antiparty group have been preparing for weeks to desert the WRP. The whole operation has been directed from the Workers League headquarters in Detroit, Michigan.

One of North's main aims in splitting the WRP is to uphold the investigation, "Security and the Fourth International," which he carried out on instructions from [Gerry] Healy, together with Alex Mitchell.

This investigation purported to prove that the entire leadership of the American Socialist Workers Party were agents either of the FBI or the GPU, or both!

The Workers League is embroiled in an expensive law suit brought by former SWP member Alan Gelfand, who claims the alleged agents infringed his civil rights.

North's supporters have already begun distributing pamphlets printed by the Workers League, but marked with prices in sterling, defending "Security and the Fourth International" against the widespread suspicion that it is a Healyite frame-up.

We predict that before long, North and his minority faction will link up with Healy's supporters, now led by Sheila Torrance, the one-time assistant general secretary of the WRP.

Three members of the WRP Central Committee, Dave Hyland, his close friend Colleen Smith, and his daughter Julie, are the leaders of this minority faction in Britain.

They claimed minority rights within three weeks of the desertion of G. Healy and his Redgrave-Mitchell-Torrance clique from the WRP in October last year.

North politically dominates what is left of the International Committee of the Fourth International — the organisation founded by Healy and his associates in 1953.

The Greek and Spanish sections of the ICFI defected with Healy last October, leaving groups in West Germany, Australia, Peru, and Sri Lanka.

Since the split with Healy, the IC has been politically dominated by North, although his organisation is not formally affiliated to the IC.

Last month, on the basis of a trumped-up report by a so-called International Control Com-

mission, the IC suspended the WRP, by far its largest section.

The WRP central committee voted overwhelmingly to reject the suspension. Only the Hyland family group were prepared to accept it.

Disquiet about the IC's bureaucratic move is growing in a number of IC affiliates, and this may have prompted North to move quickly to a full-blown split.

North was only prepared to maintain relations with the WRP provided the party and its members agreed in advance to subordinate themselves to the IC.

This would have had the effect of preventing a real struggle against the Healyite renegades and a thoroughgoing examination of the history of the party and the IC. □

'Workers Press' urges discussion with opponents of Healy's methods

By Dave Good

In November last year the Workers Revolutionary Party held a meeting at Friends Meeting House on the question of "Revolutionary Morality and the Split in the WRP." Speaking on behalf of the Central Committee, Cliff Slaughter pledged that "We are at the beginning of an objective analysis, and all those who wish to really learn the lessons can certainly participate. We will examine all questions as Trotskyists."*

That was more than two months ago. Many other groups have produced material on the crisis in the ranks of our movement, and a public discussion on the degeneration of the WRP is under way.

In the February issue of *Socialist Viewpoint* there is an article by John Lister on the internal discussion now taking place within the WRP. He was one of those expelled from the WRP in 1974, along with Alan Thornett and supporters. The 1974 expulsions have been viewed with some criticism by a lot of members of the WRP since the expulsion of Healy in October 1985. Indeed Cyril Smith, the chairman of the Control Commission in 1974 which called for the expulsion of Thornett, described it as a "controlled commission" in the pages of the *Workers Press*.

The present Control Commission of the Workers Revolutionary Party is reexamining

the 1974 expulsions and will present a report on its findings to the party's 8th Congress in February-March 1986.

In the article, Lister makes the following point in relation to the WRP Central Committee's decision to engage in public discussion on the degeneration of the party:

"The very notion of discussion with other left-wing currents was sufficient to send the Healy group into near apoplexy, denouncing Slaughter and others as 'centrists and liquidationists' for contemplating such a course.

"Under this withering fire (from such withered sectarians) sections of the WRP majority appear to have quailed and retreated somewhat from the bold stance in favour of open discussion outlined by Slaughter in the first public meetings on the split."

Formerly

Lister does have a point. Since November 1985 there has been a certain reluctance within the leadership of the WRP to engage in the public discussion which was decided upon. That is not to say that there has been no change in the public stance of the party, but there have been some questions which have been considered almost taboo in the pages of our press.

The silence of the *Workers Press* on a number of questions, especially matters which would formerly have been considered "internal" party matters, has hindered the party's struggle against Healyism and even led to covering up for some of its defenders internation-

*For report on this meeting see "Meetings on Healy Split" by Alan Harris in Dec. 30, 1985, issue of *Intercontinental Press*. — IP

ally. I believe that this is an unprincipled way for our party to proceed and one which must be changed forthwith.

In particular we have remained silent on the political frame-up being hatched by the International Committee of the Fourth International against the present leadership of the WRP. Alas, this silence can be continued no longer, unless our party is prepared to ignore the discussion taking place publicly, or even worse to attempt to deny the truth.

In the *Socialist Viewpoint* article Lister states, in relation to the present leadership of the WRP, that "they have been challenged by an opposition promoted and encouraged by Dave North, leader of the WRP's American sister party, the Workers League. North, donning the barely convincing guise of a long-standing opponent of Healy, has used the remnants of the WRP's 'International,' the International Committee, as a lever against the Slaughter wing of the movement. The WRP is currently suspended by the International Committee, at North's urging."

It is indeed true that on Monday 16th December 1985 the International Committee decided to suspend the WRP from the IC. The WRP is the British section of the Fourth International, affiliated to the International Committee. This decision was taken on the basis that the WRP had "carried out an historic betrayal of the ICFI and the international working class.

"This betrayal consisted of the complete abandonment of the theory of the permanent revolution, resulting in the pursuit of unprincipled relations with sections of the colonial bourgeoisie in return for money" (ICFI resolution on the suspension of the WRP, 16th December 1985).

At the IC meeting the WRP was suspended without written charges and no opportunity to prepare a defence. The comrades who expelled Healy and his rotten clique were suspended from the IC on the basis of a frame-up.

Interim

In October the IC set up an International Committee Commission "to investigate, but not limited to, the corruption of G. Healy, the cover-up by the Political Committee, and the financial crisis of the WRP." This interim report was supposedly the basis of the suspension, but it was not made available to the IC delegates until *after* the meeting had finished.

Lister and Thornett will find the IC's method familiar: call a control commission into the corruption of G. Healy — and use it to find his opponents guilty!

The ICC interim report does not take up the corruption of G. Healy, but attempts to frame the present leadership of the WRP for the actions of Healy. In fact any of the practices of Healy which implicate the leaders of the IC are deliberately left out of the report. The BMW car (£16,000) and the £20,000 slush fund are not mentioned, because the money was provided by the Socialist Labour League of Australia. So much for the fight against Healy's corruption!

The suspension was opposed by the WRP Central Committee, but supported by a minority, led by Central Committee members Dave Hyland, YS National Secretary Julie Hyland, and Colleen Smith. This minority follow the political line of Dave North, secretary of the Workers League in the United States. At its meeting on 29th December 1985, the Central Committee of the WRP passed a resolution rejecting "the suspension of the British section of the ICFI. It is an abrogation of international leadership that the IC takes this action at a time that the discussion is under way for the WRP congress.

Arbitrary

"The arbitrary, administrative action of the IC can only aid the Healyite clique and is meant to prevent a full discussion on the degeneration of the IC in the last 10 years as expressed in its repudiation, in practice, of the Permanent Revolution and building of a world revolutionary leadership."

The resolution went on to say that "we accuse the IC of splitting the WRP at a time when the Party is under vicious attack from the Healy clique and we believe that this shows the irresponsible, unprincipled nature of the IC and shows its adherence to the methods of the Healy clique."

An intense discussion is now taking place within the WRP, and in the other sections of the IC, on the issues involved in the degeneration of the WRP and the ICFI, together with the consequences of the expulsion of Healy and the rump who defended his corrupt practices within the WRP.



MICHAEL BANDA

Lister goes on to take up the question of the relation of the WRP to the IC. He raises the fact that "North and his cothinkers . . . refer repeatedly and apolitically to the need for the WRP leadership to 'recognise the authority of the International Committee,' and stress their defence of what they regard as a 'continuity' of the IC tradition."

This is the heart of the differences between the WRP and the IC. North says that the degeneration of the WRP was a nationalist deviation from Marxism. He goes on to assert that the IC is the embodiment of internationalism and the continuation of the struggle of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

If the WRP subordinates itself to the IC the national chauvinism of the WRP can be overcome with the assistance of the IC which North claims is the world party of socialist revolution.

But comrades from the WRP have repeatedly asked what is this IC tradition which we are supposed to subordinate ourselves to? Furthermore, where does the IC get its authority from? After all it was led by G. Healy for many years and followed his political line which is now recognised within the IC to have been thoroughly revisionist.

The international work of the IC has consisted, over the last decade, of three main aspects. Firstly the establishment of relations with the national liberation movements and national bourgeoisie in the Middle East. Secondly Healy's so-called cadre training. Thirdly Security and the Fourth International and the Gelfand case.

Over the past 15 years the WRP, and the IC, have established relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the national bourgeoisie in the Middle East. It has been pointed out, quite correctly, both within the IC and the WRP (not to mention by many other groups over a period of many years) that these relationships were opportunist. They led to support for the murder of 21 Iraqi communists by the regime of Saddam Hussein, the characterisation of the Libyan Jamahiriya [state of the masses] as socialist, and the assertion that the Iranian revolution was the greatest blow to imperialism since the Russian revolution.

These relations meant the repudiation of the theory of Permanent Revolution in practice despite many declarations in favour of it. It meant the abandonment of any perspective of building sections of the FI in the Middle East.

Opportunist

The IC complains that these opportunist relations were established behind their backs. There is no doubt that Healy and his clique did many things without informing the IC, the WRP central committee, or the WRP membership. But abandonment of the theory of Permanent Revolution and opportunism in the Middle East was done *publicly*. Strange leaders these that didn't notice these publicly wrong positions and complain that it was all done behind their backs.

But North and the IC go further, accusing the WRP of establishing mercenary relation-

ships with reactionary and nonproletarian forces. This is the cover for North's abandonment of the side of this work which was correct.

The defence against imperialism and the PLO and those bourgeois national regimes fighting against imperialism is not something that the WRP is going to abandon or apologise for. We will continue to take our responsibilities as revolutionaries in a metropolitan capitalist country seriously, and tirelessly defend all those in the fight against imperialism, no matter how much we disagree with them.

We do recognise the need for criticism of those fighting imperialism, but we oppose those who see this as an excuse for denouncing the enemies of imperialism as reactionary and nonproletarian at every turn.

We understand that the pressure of imperialism on this question leads to a desire by North to ditch this principled position, but we will oppose this national-chauvinism in the same way that we fought Healy.

To characterise the PLO, the Libyan Jamahiriyah and other bourgeois national regimes as "reactionary and nonproletarian forces," as the IC does, has nothing in common with Marxism. Read Lenin's report on the National and Colonial Question to the Second Congress of the Communist International! These national revolutionary movements must be supported in the struggle against imperialism by anyone who wishes to call themselves a Trotskyist.

Inability

In actual fact, support for the national revolutionary movements, together with criticism of the inability of the national bourgeoisie to carry through the tasks of the national revolutionary struggle, is the only basis for the building of Trotskyist parties in these countries.

The question of "cadre training" has been discussed at some length in WRP meetings and articles in our press. From the theoretical standpoint Healy's "philosophical work" was an attack on the ideological foundations of Marxism. There can be no revolutionary movement without rigorous defence of the theoretical basis of Marxism — principally dialectical materialism, historical materialism, and Marx's political economy.

But Healy's "cadre training" goes much further than attacking the ideological foundations of our movement, it also created the conditions for it to be carried out. It was, in reality, the systematic moral, political, theoretical, personal, and physical destruction of the cadres of our movement. It was not just what Healy said, but also what he did. Those like North who raised criticisms of Healy's "Studies in Dialectical Materialism" only tackled one side of the problem. It was not merely a question of being right as opposed to those who are wrong.

The question of cadre training must be viewed from the standpoint of revolutionary practice. In order to overcome the legacy of Healyism it is necessary to change the social relations within the party which enabled Healy to carry out his vile barbaric practices which



David North, leader of Workers League in United States.

were not just anticommunist but also antihuman. This is the degenerate ideology of the bourgeoisie, and no matter how much North protests it is a *near-fascist ideology*.

In the IC meeting of December 16 North asserted that in the fight to regenerate the WRP, "numbers do not matter." I have a message to him, and all those in the IC who think like him, from the membership of the WRP:

Numbers do matter, after all "numbers" are only our members, our cadres. In the WRP things have changed; with the expulsion of Healy came the fight for the rights of members. We will not stand idly by and see our cadres destroyed by "leaders" with no respect for the rights of members. We will fight for communist relations within our movement and break with all those who reject the communist need for respect and dignity as well as determination and sacrifice. We dealt with Healy and we are quite capable of dealing with the remnants of his supporters in the WRP and the IC.

North and the IC are presently supporting a minority within the WRP who have disrupted our meetings and trampled on our party's constitution. They have made communist relations in our meetings, at all levels, impossible. This is the continuation of Healy's destruction of cadres, and we will fight it every inch of the way. North may have disagreed with what Healy had to say on the question of cadre training, but he took part in Healy's destruction of cadres and is continuing to do so. North wants Healyite "cadre training" without Healy's "dialectics" — let the destruction of cadres continue: we say no more, our cadres are the heart of our movement.

Panic

The third aspect of the IC's work is Security and the Fourth International, with the Workers League's involvement in the Gelfand case in the U.S. This is a very touchy subject for North. The WRP Central Committee has called for a reevaluation of the whole of Security and the Fourth International, and most leaders of the WRP are of the opinion that the

whole thing is a frame-up of Hansen and Novack, whose only "crime" was to revise Marxism, not spy for the FBI/CIA or GPU. This has caused panic in the leadership of the Workers League.

The "forensic science" of Healy, Mitchell, and North will have to be reevaluated. It is untenable to contend that "Security and the FI" is the high point of the international struggle of the working class against the capitalist state, as North does and indeed the WRP used to.

The position of the WRP Central Committee is that we will not subordinate ourselves to these traditions. Anyone who will defend the work of the IC as the "continuity of Trotskyism" is no Trotskyist.

In October last year the IC proposed a re-registration of the membership of the WRP "on the basis of an explicit recognition of the subordination of the WRP to the IC." This was endorsed unanimously by the WRP central committee on the basis that it was aimed at the exclusion from membership of the Healyite rump. In practice they split with the WRP before the reregistration began, and those excluded from membership were constitutionally expelled with full rights of appeal to the party's 8th Congress.

The form of the reregistration was the signing of a form recognising the authority of the IC, and the subordination of the WRP to its decisions.

Unjustifiable

Hundreds of party members who had taken part in the fight against Healy refused to sign such a Healyite loyalty oath. Under pressure from the membership, the central committee withdrew the form which was politically and constitutionally unjustifiable.

At the same meeting of the WRP central committee a resolution was passed on the crisis in the IC. This resolution calls quite mildly for:

- 1) All evidence presented and conclusions drawn be reexamined.
- 2) That such an investigation, including a full financial account, be carried out internally at this stage.
- 3) That we recognise that the Gelfand case has set an extremely damaging precedent in calling on the state to determine the membership of a working-class political organisation.
- 4) That the IC strive to find a means to resolve this outside the courts, including an approach by the Workers League to the Socialist Workers Party.

This has sent North wild. The Workers League Central Committee is calling for the expulsion of the majority Central Committee members in the WRP. The 8th Congress of the WRP, taking place this weekend, is described as a "bogus conference packed out with anti-Trotskyists."

So be it. If North, Beams, and the IC want to defend the stinking corpse of Healy's IC, they are welcome to do so. But I would point out to them that the truth is a powerful enemy.

To John Lister and other interested parties, the public discussion will proceed in earnest. □

WRP condemns agent-baiting

Says Gelfand case has set 'damaging precedent'

[The following resolution was adopted January 26 by the Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party that supports *Workers Press*. Footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

1. That the IC, under the leadership of [Gerry] Healy and the WRP, has undergone a political, theoretical, moral, and organisational degeneration.

2. During that time the policies and perspectives of the IC have turned further and further away from Trotskyism. The theory of Permanent Revolution and revolutionary strategy and tactics were never developed in relation to Vietnam, the Middle East, and other national liberation struggles, the degenerated workers' states, or the metropolitan capitalist countries.

3. The theoretical work of the IC, increasingly dominated by Healy's subjective idealist and mystical version of philosophy, degenerated.

4. Increasingly, Healy's decadent and anti-communist morality and anti-Bolshevik methods of organisation affected both the WRP and IC. This gave rise to a bureaucratic conception of a centralised world organisation under his control.

5. That the IC is neither "the world party," nor even the "nucleus" of the world party.

6. That the perspectives, theory, and organisation of Trotskyism can only be elaborated in a fierce struggle against all aspects of Healyism.

7. That the degeneration of the IC under Healy cannot be separated from the problem suffered by the FI over the entire period of its existence. After the founding of the FI, the first devastating blow was the assassination of Trotsky; then came the liquidation of the IEC during the war and its reconstruction under the leadership of the SWP. Under the impact of contradictory developments of the class struggle, particularly in the metropolitan capitalist countries, after the war, one leadership after another capitulated — Haston and company in the RCP leadership, Pablo,¹ the SWP leadership, Healy and the IC leadership.

8. This whole history of the FI must be gone over and reexamined; a discussion must take place in every section on all these questions. Documents excluded from the six volumes² must be circulated.

1. Jock Haston was a leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, British section of the Fourth International, from 1944 to 1949. Michel Pablo was a leader of the Fourth International following World War II. He left the International shortly after it was reunified in 1963.

2. *Trotskyism Versus Revisionism, a Documentary History*, edited by Cliff Slaughter and published by New Park Publications, London, in 1974 and 1975.

9. That the IC sections, having carried out a thorough internal discussion, must as soon as possible initiate jointly a public discussion on the history and the tasks of the Fourth International, appealing to all those all over the world who are for the Transitional Programme to take part.

10. That in line with the points made in (5), the IC sections recognise that the IC cannot claim political authority as an international leadership. Neither can sections be subordinated to an international discipline determined by the IC. The task ahead is for international perspectives to be elaborated in joint discussion, for the IC to lead the fight to elaborate such perspectives, in the course of a fight to establish a genuine centre for building the Fourth International.

11. That since the IC has no political au-

'The most sinister and reactionary manifestation of Healyism'

[The following is an excerpt from an article by Workers Revolutionary Party General Secretary Michael Banda. The article, entitled "Twenty-seven reasons why the International Committee should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built," appeared in the February 7 issue of *Workers Press*.]

* * *

27. No examination of the IC would be complete or honestly objective if it didn't include the most sinister and reactionary manifestation of Healyism in the IC — Security and the Fourth International. No one who honours Trotsky's impeccable and scrupulous regard for absolutely verifiable facts and irrefutable evidence will have anything more to do with this monstrous frame-up based entirely on circumstantial evidence and political innuendo. The IC proved nothing which we didn't already know about Sylvia Callen [Caldwell] or [Mark] Zborowski. The letters on Hansen prove nothing either.

It is entirely possible, nay probable, that Trotsky did advise Hansen to "play ball" with the GPU agent as part of a plan to elicit information and that he also advised him to contact the FBI. Even if he didn't it doesn't prove that Hansen was guilty. North, I fear, is hoist on his own petard and faces the charge of being an accomplice with Healy and the execrable Mitchell in the murder of Trotsky's finest tradition.

Two further questions arise:

When North contends that the struggle against revisionism was abandoned he is only half right. History records that the anti-

thority and is not a genuine international leadership, that it must acknowledge that the suspension of the British section was an organisational manoeuvre which it had no right to carry out, designed only to obscure the real issues arising out of the split with Healy and the class betrayal which the WRP and IC carried out under his leadership.

12. That we recognise that Security and the Fourth International was a substitute for a real struggle against revisionism and for Trotskyist principle. That all evidence presented and conclusions drawn be reexamined, together with material published by the American SWP or anybody else on this question. That such an investigation, including a full financial account, be carried out internally at this stage.

13. That we recognise that the Gelfand case, while having revealed important facts about Sylvia Franklin etc., has set an extremely damaging precedent in calling on the state to determine the membership of a working-class political organisation; that the IC strive to find a means to resolve this outside the courts including an approach by the Workers League to the SWP. □

revisionist struggle was transformed for over a decade into a manic witch-hunt, a desperate forensic diversion to be precise, to satisfy Healy's paranoid schizophrenia as well as his anti-theory empiricism. In this respect Hansen's charge against Healy was right. Never in the history of intelligence work of state bodies has any agent devoted the whole of his life — as Hansen did — to building a reformist party. That is not the style of the GPU or FBI. Hansen lived and died a revisionist. A GPU agent — never!

There is an even more damning question I would like to address to Healy's political bloodhounds, North and Mitchell. Why is it that not a single radical intellectual, not one conscientious professor, trade union leader, or dissident Stalinist responded to the call for an inquiry into the murder of Trotsky by [Ramon] Mercader and presumably, Hansen and Novack? To ask the question is to answer it.

No one except the paranoid North and his cronies in the IC will believe this damnable fantasy which paradoxically ended with a similar charge against North adduced by none other than Healy! It is incredible that North should now point to [Louis] Budenz's testimony that Hansen was a GPU agent. Applying North's own rotten yardstick how are we not to presume that Budenz was doing this as part of his own filthy deal with FBI and State Department?

As for North's amazing revelation that the entire leadership of the present SWP was recruited from the same Midwestern college, I can only retort: So what? Where is the concrete evidence of their work for the FBI? Put up or shut up North! □

Nicaragua's new agrarian reform law

Big steps taken to distribute more land to peasants

[The following is the text of the decree amending Nicaragua's Agrarian Reform Law, which went into effect on January 11.

[This measure represents a major expansion of the country's agrarian reform in order to meet the demands of hundreds of thousands of peasants with little or no land.

[At a rally of 3,000 peasants on the day the law was signed, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega explained that the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had decided in May 1985 to accelerate the agrarian reform program. As the government began distributing more land, he said, it found that the old Agrarian Reform Law, adopted in 1981, was "no longer functional." It did not allow expropriation of estates smaller than 500 manzanas (875 acres) in the Pacific Coast region or smaller than 1,000 manzanas (1,750 acres) in the eastern area of Nicaragua. The new law removes these lower limits on expropriation.

[The immediate targets of the new decree are the large tracts of abandoned and unused land, as well as the property of landlords openly collaborating with the U.S.-backed mercenaries. However, the big capitalists who are using their land productively can also be affected under the law. A clause stipulates that "public necessity or the interests of society" can be grounds for taking over land, in which case the government will negotiate with the

* * *

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA, by virtue of the powers vested in him by Article 24, Paragraph 13, of Law No. 3, General Statutes of the National Assembly,

DECREES the following changes in Decree No. 782, "Agrarian Reform Law," published in the *Official Gazette*, No. 188, Aug. 21, 1981. With the incorporation of these changes into said law, it will read completely and exactly as follows:

WHEREAS

I

It is imperative to reaffirm the principles of society's redemption for which Sandino fought and for which thousands of the homeland's best children died.

II

Under the Somoza regime, agricultural development exclusively favored a few privileged groupings, submerging the peasants and agricultural workers in poverty, backwardness, and ignorance, and preventing the full use of the natural resources of the country.

owner on compensation.

[Previously, only idle or underutilized lands or lands on which peasants were exploited through sharecropping or similar forms of tenancy could be expropriated.

[Since the enactment of the 1981 Agrarian Reform Law, 83,167 families have received 2.5 million manzanas (4.4 million acres) of land, according to Ortega. Yet hundreds of thousands of peasants in this country of 3.5 million people still have no land or not enough to support their families. Ortega stressed that the new law would guarantee land titles to small and medium peasants who continue to work the land.

[In an interview in the FSLN daily, *Barricada*, Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform Jaime Wheelock estimated that 20 percent of the peasant population is without adequate land.

[Pressure for land has sharply increased as the U.S.-backed war has driven peasants off their land in the far northern parts of the country. A quarter of a million Nicaraguans have been displaced by the war, most of them peasants.

[The decree printed below includes the full text of the Agrarian Reform Law as amended by the January 11 measures. The text is taken from the January 13 issue of *Barricada*. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

III

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to promote a thoroughgoing transformation of the rural social structures inherited from the previous regime, in such a way as to establish conditions to advance to higher forms of productive organization and to guarantee constant material and cultural improvements for the peasants and rural workers.

IV

The Sandinista People's Revolution has historically championed the right of the peasantry to live with dignity through working the land and to guarantee their complete integration into the national plans of agricultural development through appropriate forms of organization, credit, supply, marketing, technical assistance, and other factors.

V

It is necessary to overcome the rental forms and the forms of extensive and inefficient property and land use, which are an obstacle to progress and development, as well as to eliminate the unjust exploitation of peasant labor through *mediería*, *aparcería*, *colonato*,¹ and similar forms.

VI

The Sandinista People's Revolution seeks to promote production and productivity, to guarantee the best and most rational use of the land, as well as to protect the soil and improve the use of water and other natural resources.

VII

It is of utmost importance that the Sandinista People's Revolution bring the benefits of health, housing, education, and other services to the rural sector and steadily eliminate the differences that now prevail between the countryside and the cities.

VIII

Recommendations from the United Nations and the most prestigious international institutions that fight hunger and misery indicate that huge landed estates, lands left idle, and marginalization of the peasantry are principal factors holding back the economic and social development of peoples.

IX

The confiscation of the lands usurped by Somozaism and other agrarian measures adopted by the revolutionary government constitute an initial step in the agrarian reform, which must be broadened and deepened.

X

The participation of the peasants and rural workers is necessary in applying this Agrarian Reform Law, in the administration of the state farms and cooperatives, and in the organizations and bodies that determine agricultural policies.

THEREFORE, by the powers vested in him, the president of the republic

DECREES: REFORM OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW

Title I

Pertaining to the guarantees of property ownership and grounds for application of the law:

Article 1. This law guarantees land owner-

1. *Mediería*: A form of sharecropping in which the peasant gives half his crop to the landowner in exchange for use of a plot of land. In some cases, the peasant also has to perform unpaid labor on the landowner's estate.

Aparcería and *colonato*: Similar forms of peasant exploitation in which the peasant receives living quarters and a small plot of land for subsistence farming in exchange for working for wages on the landowner's estate. Such a peasant also has unpaid duties, including standing guard and caring for fences, streams, and so forth, near his plot.

ship to all those who work it productively and efficiently.

Article 2. The following may be declared affected by the agrarian reform:

- a. Abandoned properties;
- b. Idle properties;
- c. Underutilized properties;
- d. Land that is rented out or assigned in any other form;

e. Land that is not being worked directly by its owner but by peasants under forms of sharecropping and tenancy such as *mediería*, *aparcería*, *colonato*, and *precarismo*² or other forms of peasant exploitation; as well as by cooperatives or peasants organized in any other forms of association. The only exceptions shall be those cases where the landowner holds less than 50 manzanas in Regions II, III, and IV [on the Pacific Coast] or less than 100 manzanas in the rest of the country.

Article 3. Any rural properties that have been transferred under any title between spouses, or between spouses and their presently dependent children or siblings, shall be considered as belonging to a single person.

Article 4. For the purposes of Article 2, the following considerations shall apply:

- a. Abandoned properties:
 - (1) Properties planted with perennial crops, on which the work necessary to cultivate and maintain those crops is not being carried out;
 - (2) agricultural properties planted with annual crops on which for two successive crop cycles the soil has not been prepared for planting at the appropriate date, or where the cultivation and care of the crops has been interrupted;
 - (3) grazing lands that have been deteriorating due to lack of maintenance of fences and pastures, or to the blatant reduction in herds;
 - (4) properties in which equipment and machinery are unable to carry out their agricultural functions due to lack of replacement and maintenance.

Exceptions shall be made in those cases where the conditions described in the clauses above occur for reasons beyond the owners' control.

b. Idle properties: Those lands which, although capable of agricultural or grazing use, have remained uncultivated for the previous two consecutive years.

- c. Underutilized properties:
 - (1) Those in which the area used for cultivation of perennial crops, natural or artificial pastures, or seasonal crops totals less than 75 percent of the land surface suitable for agriculture or grazing. Areas reserved expressly for timber production or forest reserves shall not be included in the determination of total land surface;

(2) grazing lands that have less than one head of cattle for each two manzanas of land in

2. *Preclarismo*: The situation of peasants who work communal or state lands without legal title. Before the revolution they were often expelled by big landowners allied with the Somoza dictatorship. Today, the Nicaraguan government is formalizing their titles to the land.

Regions II, III, IV, and VI, or less than one head of cattle for each three manzanas in the remaining regions and zones of the country;

(3) those lands where the soil, water, and other natural resources are inadequately utilized.

Article 5. The application of the law includes all assets associated with the property, whether moveable, stationary, or of any other type.

The law may be applied to parts of a property when, in the opinion of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform, there are sufficient reasons to do so. However, the dismemberment of productive units shall be avoided.

Title II

Pertaining to the Zones of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform and other exceptions:

Article 6. A Zone of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform is defined as a specific geographic area of the country for which a plan or special project for resettlement, production, or territorial reorganization is developed.

Article 7. The minister in charge of agricultural development and agrarian reform shall establish Zones of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform in those areas of the country considered necessary to carry out the plans and projects referred to in the previous article.

Article 8. Within a Zone of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform, the responsible minister may issue special regulations regarding the transformation of land ownership and the use and exploitation of the soil and other natural resources connected with agricultural production.

Article 9. The Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform is empowered to order the expropriation of rural property for reasons of public necessity or the interests of society.

Article 10. The procedures relating to expropriation in Zones of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform or expropriations for public necessity or the interests of society to further the aims of agrarian reform shall be established in the regulations attendant to this law.

Title III

Pertaining to the method of application:

Article 11. The Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall issue orders of application of this law based on the technical determinations of that ministry.

Article 12. The property owner shall be notified in writing when an order of application is issued. The notification shall include:

- a. The reasons that led to applying the law;
- b. The date on which possession will be taken of the affected farm.

Article 13. When the owner is not present, the notification referred to in the previous article may be made by writ delivered to any responsible person found on the affected prop-

erty or by fixing the writ to the door or other visible location if no one is found to receive it or if they refuse to accept it.

Article 14. In the cases that fall under clauses c, d, and e of Article 2 of this law, the owner shall be given a period of 30 days from the date of notification of the application of the law to appear before the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform to give sworn testimony concerning the area and the assets connected with the property. If the owner makes false statements or does not appear within the period established, he shall lose the right to the compensation to which he would be entitled.

Article 15. Once the proprietor has been notified, the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall proceed to carry out an inventory of the affected assets. The Inventory Certificate shall be signed by the proprietor or administrator of the farm and by the regional director of the ministry. The owner shall be guilty of fraud if he removes assets from the affected farm without proper authorization.

Article 16. Once the required resolution has been signed, the Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall issue an order which will be certified upon its inscription in the appropriate Public Register.

Title IV

Pertaining to the Agrarian Court:

Article 17. The Agrarian Court is established as the Administrative Jurisdictional Body empowered to hear and make final determination of appeals filed by those falling under the provisions of this law against orders issued by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform under the present act.

Article 18. The Agrarian Court shall be composed of three members named by the president of the republic. The organization, functioning, and jurisdiction of the court shall be provided for in regulations that the president of the republic shall issue for this purpose.

Article 19. The owner of affected property may, within three days, present a writ of appeal in person to the Rural Court against resolutions issued by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform. The decisions issued by said court shall not be subject to any appeal, not even a writ of relief.

Title V

Pertaining to compensation and manner of payment:

Article 20. Compensation for lands and other assets expropriated shall be made through Agrarian Reform Bonds, whose denomination, form, interest rates, and conditions shall be set by the regulations attendant to the current law.

No compensation is contemplated in cases of abandoned or idle lands.

Article 21. The provisions of the previous article notwithstanding, the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform may agree to other forms of compensation for persons whose assets have been totally or par-

tially expropriated through the application of this law.

In the cases of affected individuals who have no other source of income, they shall be granted a monthly pension that shall be not less than the established minimum wage.

Article 22. The amount of compensation shall be determined by an appraisal done by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform, based on the average value declared for tax purposes during the previous three years.

Article 23. If the assets affected by the agrarian reform have been put up as security to ensure payment of a debt, and this has been duly certified, the state shall assume the repayments, provided that said assets constitute the only security for the debts.

The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall determine what portion of the debt it will assume in cases where only part of the assets have been affected.

In both cases, the debt assumed by the state shall be deducted from the amount of compensation.

Article 24. For purposes of the previous article, the mortgage and other liens shall be considered divisible, and certification of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform's resolution, when entered in the Public Register, shall suffice as documentation to record the dismemberment or division of the financial encumbrances.

Title VI

Pertaining to the administration and assignment of the lands and other assets earmarked for the agrarian reform:

Article 25. The lands and other assets earmarked for the agrarian reform shall be administered by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform while their eventual assignment is being determined.

In addition to the lands affected by the application of this law, lands that have become or may become state property by any other means, as well as national lands and common lands, may be assigned.

Article 26. In accord with the plans and priorities established for the zone where the lands and other assets referred to in the previous article are located, lands shall be assigned:

a. To sharecropping and tenant peasants (*medieros, aparceros, colonos, and precaristas*) or to cooperatives and peasants organized in other production associations who are working those lands at the time when the lands are taken over. In those cases, the assignments may involve those same lands or lands of better quality.

b. To other landless peasants, or peasants with insufficient land or land of poor quality, who live primarily from agricultural labor or who organize themselves into rural cooperatives in order to receive allocations of land, as well as to already established cooperatives that have insufficient land or land of poor quality.

c. To individual producers or family units that guarantee its efficient use. In such cases,

as well as in the cases referred to in the above clause, priority will be given to the families of heroes and martyrs as well as to the fighters in our war of liberation and in the defense of the homeland.

d. To agrarian reform enterprises that are already constituted or are in the process of being organized.

Article 27. The lands allocated under clauses a, b, and c of the previous article shall be of sufficient area and quality to provide the recipients with a level of income equal to at least the then-current agricultural minimum wage.

The amount of land shall vary according to the quality of the soil, the geographic location, the type of cultivation, and other factors and shall be established by provisions that shall be issued to implement this law.

Article 28. In the cases included in clauses a, b, and c of Article 26 of this law, the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall issue, in due form and without charge, Agrarian Reform Deeds, which may be transferred or mortgaged only for the following reasons:

a. Through inheritance, without dividing the property;

b. As a share in a rural cooperative;

c. As security for obtaining agricultural financing from financial institutions.

In the cases of peasants included in special agrarian reform projects, prior authorization by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall be granted to the recipient to transfer ownership.

Title VII

Pertaining to the National Agrarian Reform Council:

Article 29. The National Agrarian Reform Council is established as an advisory body to the Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform in developing agrarian policy.

Article 30. The organization and functioning of the National Agrarian Reform Council shall be determined in the regulations attendant to this law.

Title VIII

Special provision:

Article 31. The state shall provide the necessary land for the Miskitos, Sumos, Ramas, and other ethnic communities of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, in order to raise their standard of living and to contribute to the nation's social and economic development.

Title IX

Final provisions:

Article 32. Deeds or contracts transferring ownership of rural estates shall be issued only with the express authorization of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform. Notaries shall be required to physically inspect such authorization. Public Registrars of Real Estate shall not register contracts that fail to meet this requirement. Violation of the provisions of this article shall make the trans-

action null and void.

Article 33. There shall be no divisions of rural property that result in the establishment of parcels with a surface area less than the lower limit that will be established in the regulations attendant to the present law, taking into account the area necessary to provide a peasant family with a level of income at least equivalent to the then-current agricultural minimum wage.

Article 34. The Minister of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform is empowered to appear before state notaries, who shall be named for such purpose by the Ministry of Justice, to formalize deeds or contracts through which the state shall acquire rural estates for land reorganization in the rural sector.

The foregoing in no way impairs the jurisdiction of the Office of the Attorney General of Justice, established in Article 8, clause b of its Charter.

Article 35. Public Registrars of Real Estate shall record the Agrarian Reform Deeds and other certificates issued by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform on the basis of this law, requiring only the presentation of said documents.

Article 36. The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform is the body competent to hear and resolve conflicts that arise in agriculture, with respect to land ownership, when they affect the plans for agrarian reform. The procedure shall be established in the regulations attendant to this law. Resolutions thus issued shall allow for appeals before the Agrarian Court.

Article 37. In all suits brought before the Common Courts in which the proceedings and outcome affect rural properties, a certificate must be obtained from the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform to the effect that the subject of litigation does not fall within the sphere of application of the Agrarian Reform Law.

Article 38. To achieve the best use of rural resources, the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall have a preferential option to administer and allocate rural assets acquired by the state and its institutions, providing it assumes the outstanding obligations of those respective properties.

Article 39. The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall establish special regulations for national and communal lands.

Article 40. Tenants now renting lands that are not affected by the current law shall have the right to extend their contracts for the next growing season. If the lessor fails to fulfill the contract, the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform shall resolve the matter, as well as cases of lands that are rented at the time they are taken over.

Article 41. Lands that remain uncultivated during a particular growing season may be taken over by the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform.

If the owner demonstrates, through positive actions, his intention to cultivate the lands,

they shall be given to him at the end of the growing season in question. In the contrary case, and after the subsequent growing season has concluded, the lands may be taken over for the agrarian reform.

Article 42. Writs of relief shall not apply against resolutions issued on agricultural matters.

Article 43. The issuance of documents relating to this law shall enjoy exemption from

stamp taxes and document-registration charges.

Article 44. The Ministry of Agricultural Development and Agrarian Reform is empowered to issue the regulations attendant to this law.

Article 45. This law is a Law of Public Order and invalidates all provisions that contradict it. It shall take effect upon its publication in the *Official Gazette*.

Delivered in the city of Managua, on the eleventh day of January of nineteen hundred and eighty-six.

1986: "On the 25th anniversary, all arms against the aggression."³

Daniel Ortega Saavedra
President

3. A reference to the founding of the FSLN in 1961.

DOCUMENTS

Inaugural editorial of 'Against the Current'

Three U.S. socialist groups publish new journal

[The following editorial appeared in the first issue of the new series of *Against the Current*, dated January–February 1986. The magazine is published in Detroit, Michigan.]

* * *

With this issue *Against the Current* inaugurates a new magazine of socialist theory and strategy. Three American socialist journals have fused to contribute their resources to creating a publication which is broader and livelier than any of them alone could have hoped to be. The new *Against the Current* editorial board includes Johanna Brenner and Robert Brenner from *Against the Current*, Leslie Evans and Dianne Feeley from *Socialist Unity*, and David Finkel and Linda Manning Myatt from *Changes*. With future issues, new editors will be joining the editorial board, from a variety of movement and political perspectives.

The new magazine is also establishing an activist editorial advisory board. Editorial advisors will meet to develop the magazine's perspectives, be asked to contribute at least one article annually to the journal, and be requested to help identify potential contributors. The initial members of the advisory board are listed on the masthead.*

* * *

The left today faces a paradoxical situation. Over the past 15 years or so, our predictions of economic crisis and the decay of capitalist society have come to pass. And yet, the left in the 1980s may be no more deeply rooted in American life than it was in the 1960s.

Since 1970, as many on the left expected, each succeeding business cycle has brought lower growth rates and higher unemployment.

*The advisory editors listed in the first issue are: Perry Anderson, Josh Cohen, Stephanie Coontz, Mike Davis, Adolfo Gilly, James Kavanagh, Cathy McAfee, Ralph Miliband, James Petras, Hector Ramos, Joanne Rappaport, Anwar Shaikh, Jane Slaughter, Tony Smith, and Susan Weissman. Alan Wald is listed as the cultural editor. — IP

Profit rates worldwide declined sharply during the later 1960s and the 1970s. By 1982 unemployment had reached the highest levels since the 1930s. And today at the height of the recovery, unemployment at 7 percent is higher than at the depth of any previous downturn, except the last one.

The system exacts ever-greater human costs. An intensified employers' offensive reduces living and working standards. Poverty in the U.S. has increased dramatically for the first time since the 1950s, and hunger and homelessness, thought to be things of the past, are once again common in American cities. Programs for environmental protection and safety at work have been explicitly sacrificed to the needs of profitability.

The U.S. government has launched a campaign of armed counterrevolution, from Angola to Central America, unseen since the height of the war in Vietnam. Central to this campaign is the dirty war against the Nicaraguan revolution. Finally, a new arms race designed to secure U.S. power throughout the world threatens the future of humanity.

Nevertheless, the left's predictions have proven only half right. There has not been a rising workers' movement to accompany the deepening crisis. The once-promising Black liberation and women's liberation movements have seriously declined. True, the capitalists' increasingly vicious attacks generate sporadic protests — the long succession of strikes against concessions, the struggle for rent control, the farmers' assaults on the banks, and similar defensive battles. Still, there is a huge chasm between the well-planned and systematic offensive by the employers and the ill-prepared, episodic, and largely nonpolitical response by workers and the oppressed. Any serious attempt to understand the recent evolution of the American left and to rebuild it must recognize this disparity and face it head on.

Failing to do so, and disoriented by the absence of the expected mass upsurge, many leftists have sought substitutes for the mass movement. They have looked especially to trade union officials, middle-class Black leaders, and left Democratic Party politicians — the

traditional core of official reformism in the United States. By the end of the 1970s, large sections of the left had embraced the electoral road; by 1984, most of the left had moved sufficiently rightward to be actively working for one or another Democratic candidate in the presidential elections.

The consequences of this move into the Democratic Party have created a reaction against the reliance on a declining politics of liberalism. Unable to exert any influence of their own in the absence of mass movements, leftists who entered the Democratic Party have found they have no choice but to follow their trade-union, Black leadership, and left-Democratic Party allies in chasing the party even further to the right. Repelled by this, many left activists — without rejecting electoral campaigns altogether — have begun returning to the view that only mass struggle can make possible a new period of political gains. They also see that, given the coordinated and politically conscious character of the attacks by capital and the state, the left needs to build a more unified and political counteroffensive.

While the left certainly faces crisis and difficulty, we also have real opportunities. A generation of activists, influenced in part by the renaissance of Marxism and in part by their own experience in monolithic political sects, has broken with dogmatism and is seeking new directions. Oppositional movements, albeit local and fragmented, continue to radicalize new people and activate the '60s generation. Voices of radical dissent and alternative media challenge the status quo.

The new *Against the Current* aims to be part of this opposition. We will respond to activists' concerns about how to build a struggle that is both militant and political. We seek to provide a forum for discussion and debate around the strategies and tactics for best strengthening existing movements — against concessions, cuts in social spending, attacks on women's rights and minorities, and U.S. intervention abroad — and to stimulate exchange of ideas for bringing movements together in unified action. This goal requires a commitment to original analysis of the present

situation, especially in the United States, with both a respectful and a critical attitude toward our predecessors on the left in the U.S. and around the world. We are for greater attention to the cultural aspects of the movement for socialism; however, we oppose the evaluation of literary and artistic achievements by political criteria.

The resources we need to develop new theory and fresh interpretations already exist among the movement activists, the organizers, and the serious scholars of the left. *Against the Current* hopes to realize this potential by creating the conditions for increased collaboration and exchange.

We believe, however, that more is needed. This journal is dedicated to critical analysis and the development of revolutionary-democratic socialist politics. We bring to the movements for social and political change a vision of a new society, controlled from below by mass collective institutions of working people. Briefly stated, the basic principles of our editorial policy are these:

- We are for a *socialist transformation* based on working-class democracy and for the self-emancipation of all the oppressed.

- We are in uncompromising solidarity with all democratic and working-class movements against bureaucratic regimes in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China. Within this framework we will openly debate alternative theoretical and strategic perspectives on these societies.

- We are for rebuilding a militant and democratic U.S. labor movement, a crucial task to which the trade union bureaucracy is a great obstacle.

- We are for Black liberation and for all struggles against racial and national oppression.

- We are feminist, for women's liberation and for all struggles for the right of sexual preference, reproductive rights, and equality.

- We are anti-imperialist, against all forms of U.S. colonialism (as in Puerto Rico) and intervention. We are internationalists, in solidarity with the revolutionary movements of Central America, with the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, with the anti-apartheid revolution in South Africa, and with the Polish workers' movement, Solidarnosc.

- We are for independent politics. Trapped inside the Democratic Party, social movements die, as we have seen in the case of the once massive women's movement and the more recent Rainbow Coalition; the weak and poorly-organized left will die there even more quickly.

* * *

We give special attention to the growth of consciously socialist forces — not because they are presently large in this country, but because they try to imagine and bring about fundamental reorganization of society to break capital's stranglehold on American life. Perhaps what is needed resembles a cross between the broad working-class democracy of

Polish Solidarity and the militant resistance to injustice of the Sandinista revolutionaries of Nicaragua.

The new *Against the Current* is made possible by a small step forward in creating a socialist pole in this country. Three small socialist organizations have also succeeded in breaking down the walls that separate them. At the end of March in Chicago a conference will be held to unite the three: the International Socialists; the Workers Power group, which played an important role in initiating *Against the Current* in 1980; and Socialist Unity, a group of former members of the Socialist Workers Party. In addition, several local radical and socialist groups are considering joining the new organization.

Far from seeing themselves as the nucleus of The Party, all three groups are committed to the view that viable socialist organization will emerge only as a result of a long-term regroupment process of protracted discussion and debate, the experience of common work in the mass movements, and many realignments and mergers. All three groups are well aware that many of the left's most cherished theories, strategies, and political organizations have proved, in recent years, inadequate to the test of practice.

But the rethinking, the theorizing, research, and discussion we need cannot be carried out successfully within the bounds set by sectarian divisions. Therefore, as one of their common projects, these three groups will sponsor *Against the Current*, not in any sense as a party organ, but to provide a forum for the broadest possible debate and discussion within the left.

One reader of the old *Against the Current* called it "the thinking person's alternative to social democracy." That captures the aspiration of the new *Against the Current*. We aim to promote discussion within the left while serving as a vehicle for the regroupment of leftists seeking to build a revolutionary and democratic socialism, whatever their organizational attachments. All three of the publications merging into this new one did their best to create a wide-ranging dialogue. But it was *Against the Current* which had the most success. To an important extent this achievement is owed to the dedication of the late Steve Zeluck, whose contributions will be greatly missed by us all. In taking the name, *Against the Current*, we express our continuity with this project and our determination to carry it forward. □

Lowest wage gain since 1968

Pay increases in the United States were very low in 1985. The average first-year wage gain negotiated in union contracts last year was 2.3 percent, the lowest for any year since the statistics were first compiled in 1968. Non-wage compensation for union workers rose by only 2.6 percent.

Wages and benefits for all private industry employees and state and local government workers rose by only 4.3 percent, down from 5.2 percent in 1984 and 6.6 percent in 1982.

10 AND 20 YEARS AGO

Intercontinental Press
Africa Asia Europe Oceania Americas

March 8, 1976

Is something new happening in the West European Communist parties?

This is the impression of many, especially after the Twenty-Second Congress of the French CP, held in a Paris suburb early in February. Declaring a policy of "Communism under the French colors," the congress voted to recommend dropping any mention of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the party program.

It is certainly true that the aim of the congress was to give the impression of a new course. French CP chief Georges Marchais told the delegates that there were "noticeable divergences" between the French and Soviet parties and that "we do not intend to give lessons to anyone, nor will we accept any from anyone."

But for nearly five decades the only response of the French CP has been to follow unflinchingly the twists of the Kremlin's line. Is it realistic to think that a party of 500,000 could repudiate its distinguishing political character almost overnight, and without any major internal division?

WORLD OUTLOOK

PERSPECTIVE MONDIALE

(Predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*)

February 25, 1966

The show trial being staged by Indonesia's generals in an attempt to pin the blame for the attempted September 30 coup d'etat on the Indonesian Communist party got off to a spectacular but bad-smelling start February 14 when Njono, the first defendant, repudiated a "confession" forced from him by the authorities during the preparation of the case. The confession, said Njono, was "false."

If D.N. Aidit, the head of the Indonesian Communist party, was murdered by the army in November, as is widely rumored, Njono may be the most important defendant now in the hands of the generals. He is a member of the central committee of the Indonesian Communist party and president of the SOBSI (All-Indonesian Central Organization of Trade Unions) which has some 20,000,000 members.

It was not clear from a report appearing in the Paris press whether the "confession" was forced from Njono by torture. He was quoted as saying only that "The atmosphere during the preparation of the case was poisoned by hate against the Communists. The Communist party was considered to be the organizer of the September 30, 1965, coup d'etat, and now an anti-Communist campaign is developing."

Rally protests Reagan visit

'Bishop liberated us, Reagan oppresses us!'

By Ernest Harsch

As U.S. President Ronald Reagan touched down in Grenada for a few hours on February 20, some 200 Grenadians rallied to protest his visit. They came out to Market Square, in the heart of St. George's, the capital, to express their opposition to the person who ordered the massive October 1983 U.S. invasion of that Eastern Caribbean island of only 110,000 people.

"No to U.S. colony!" and "Resist Reagan, resist slavery!" were among the slogans of the demonstration.

"Maurice Bishop liberated us, Reagan oppresses us!" the protesters also declared, recalling the late Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, who headed the workers' and peasants' government that was in power from March 1979 to October 1983. Bishop was murdered by opponents within his own party on Oct. 19, 1983, just a week before the U.S. invasion, and remains a popular hero to the masses of Grenadians.

This demonstration culminated a week of actions in different villages and towns throughout the island, drawing from 300 to 600 participants each. They were all organized by the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM), which is led by several of Bishop's surviving comrades and bases itself on the legacy of the Grenada revolution.

A 'national hero'?

Most of the U.S. news media that accompanied Reagan to Grenada made no mention of these protests. Instead, they sought to portray Reagan's visit as that of a "conquering hero," as a *New York Times* editorial put it.

A large crowd did turn out to see Reagan. Schools and workplaces were officially closed for the occasion. In addition, illusions among the Grenadian people about Washington's role remain widespread, since the government in power at the time of the U.S. invasion was the brutal regime headed by Bernard Coard that had destroyed the Grenada revolution and murdered Bishop.

Seeking to perpetuate the myth that the U.S. invasion "liberated" Grenada, Prime Minister Herbert Blaize introduced Reagan in the most subservient terms, calling him "our own national hero, our own rescuer."

In an interview with *Intercontinental Press*, George Louison, a leader of the MBPM, said that Blaize's comments were "an affront to the history and the dignity of the Grenadian people." Grenada's real national hero is Maurice Bishop, he said.

During his visit, Reagan laid a wreath at a monument to the 19 U.S. soldiers who died during the Grenada invasion.

No such monuments have been erected in Grenada to the scores of Grenadians and Cuban construction workers who were killed by the U.S. invasion forces. "What about the Grenadian people who died during the invasion?" asked Angela Bishop, the late prime minister's widow, who now lives in Canada. "Are they not fit to be honored on their own soil? Don't forget: They were fighting for their own country."

Targeting Nicaragua

A major theme of Reagan's speech in Grenada was Washington's opposition to the popular revolution in Nicaragua. He also blasted revolutionary Cuba.

Reagan explicitly compared the situation in Nicaragua today to the one that led to the U.S. invasion of Grenada, employing some of the same anticommunist slanders his administration had earlier leveled against the Bishop government.

"Today, in Nicaragua," Reagan maintained, "we see a chain of events similar to what happened here. We hear the same excuses made for the Communists, while the people of Nicaragua see their freedom, slowly but surely, eaten away."

Reagan's comments were part of the ongoing White House campaign to drum up support for greater U.S. military aid for the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionary terrorists operating out of Honduras.

Reagan's threats against Nicaragua are "a very dangerous development," Louison told *IP*. "We in our party continue to give the firmest solidarity to Nicaragua. We continue to

Toronto protest hits U.S. policies in Grenada

To coincide with Reagan's visit to Grenada, some 60 protesters rallied outside the U.S. consulate in Toronto, Canada, February 20. The action was sponsored by a number of organizations, including the Grenada Nationals, Canadian Action for Nicaragua, the Toronto Anti-intervention Coalition, and the Center for Caribbean Dialogue.

The demonstration demanded an end to the U.S.-backed occupation of Grenada and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from that country, the restoration of the self-determination and sovereignty of the Grenadian people, and an end to U.S. intervention in the Caribbean and Central America.

protest against Reagan's attempt to destabilize Nicaragua. And we say that if he invades Nicaragua he will get a lesson that the American people will never forget."

Fruits of U.S. occupation

In his speech Reagan also claimed that the U.S. intervention in Grenada brought the island "liberty and justice."

Responding, Louison stated, "The opposite is the truth. The invasion has brought unemployment. It has brought a destruction of the productive forces in this country. It has brought crime, prostitution, and drug trafficking — cocaine is now a major problem in the country, and that came as a direct result of the Yankee invasion. It has destroyed the social sector, education, health. All of these are on the decline."

In 1983, unemployment in Grenada was 12 percent and falling. Soon after the invasion it jumped to around 40 percent, as the U.S. occupation authorities and their Grenadian collaborators shut down many of the state-run enterprises set up under the Bishop government.

Social services have been allowed to deteriorate. For example, there is now only one practicing dentist in the entire country, while the new government refuses to employ young Grenadians who returned from Cuba after finishing their dental studies there.

Workers' rights have been seriously eroded, and efforts are under way to weaken the unions. Assistance to farmers has been slashed.

At the same time, repression has mounted. With U.S. and British funds and training, a 600-man police force has been built up, as well as a heavily armed paramilitary force. Since April 1984 they have shot and killed at least five young Grenadians.

Louison himself was recently arrested and interrogated for several hours on trumped-up charges of involvement in military training for opposition forces on the island. On the night before Reagan's arrival, 15 Grenadians were arrested for being "rowdy" during a rehearsal of the presidential motorcade.

Yet despite the repression, resistance to the policies of the U.S.-backed regime is continuing. Some of the trade unions are putting up a stiff fight against the attacks on working people. In November construction workers at the Grenada Beach Hotel won a pay increase after a brief strike.

Support for the MBPM continues to be publicly expressed, including in some sizable demonstrations. On Oct. 19, 1985, some 1,500 people turned out for an MBPM-organized commemoration on the second anniversary of Bishop's murder.

Just a month before Reagan's visit, labor activists and supporters of democratic rights in Grenada won an important victory when a court freed imprisoned unionist Chester Humphrey and denied a U.S. request that he be extradited to the United States to face gun-running charges. Humphrey's release followed a hunger strike he launched in prison and a public defense campaign led by the MBPM. □