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REGIME'S TROOPS TRY TO DISARM ARAB OIL WORKERS IN IRAN



KAMPUCHEA: IMPERIALIST PRESSURE MOUNTS

Pol Pot Forces Call for Counterrevolutionary 'United Front'

Text of 'New York Times' Interview with Ieng Sary

NEWS ANALYSIS

The First Fruits of Carter's Mideast Deal

By David Frankel

The provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty signed in March are being carried out on schedule. El Arish, the Sinai Peninsula's main town, was returned to Egyptian rule May 25 after twelve years of Israeli occupation.

On the same day, negotiations over the future of the Israeli-occupied West Bank opened in Beersheba.

These events made page-one headlines in the big-business press. But other moves, which are just as much a part of the Mideast deal worked out under President Carter's prodding, have not been played up in the same way. These include:

- Approval by the U.S. Senate of \$4.8 billion in additional armaments for the Israeli and Egyptian regimes;
- Stepped-up attacks on the people of Lebanon by Israeli military forces;
- A tightening of the Zionist grip on the occupied territories;
- And finally, broad hints that U.S. military forces might be stationed in the Sinai.

Since April 10, well over 100 persons—the vast majority civilians—have been killed in Israeli air, naval, and artillery raids on Lebanese villages. Hundreds more have been wounded. The victims included six persons attending a wedding reception in the village of Mohamarah, an infant boy in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp, and eight children in the village of Babilye.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin boasted in a May 7 speech that "we struck at the Palestinian murderers," and called for the expulsion of the 400,000 Palestinians in Lebanon. Begin declared that "there should be no difficulty" in resettling the Palestinians in other Arab countries.

Although there is nothing new about the Israeli regime perpetrating mass murder in Lebanon, the new treaty with Egypt has given the Zionists a freer hand.

Begin is well aware that his aggressive course could lead to a confrontation with the more than 20,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, and possibly to a new war. But he also knows that the Syrian army is no match for the Israeli military machine, and that Syria is doubly vulnerable without Egyptian support.

Thus Begin is pushing the Syrians hard. With Israeli encouragement, right-wing Lebanese Christian militia forces led by Maj. Saad Haddad declared the section of southern Lebanon they control "independent" April 18. Begin vowed continued support to these rightists in his May 7 speech, and demanded the Syrians get out

of Lebanon. The Syrians are "the source of all trouble" there, he declared.

Begin has also spelled out his proposal for Palestinian "autonomy," as promised in the treaty with Egypt. Under his plan:

- Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would continue, as would Zionist colonization.
- Israel would retain control of more than a million acres of "state land" in the West Bank, and would be able to confiscate privately owned Arab land for "security needs," including the establishment of new Zionist settlements.
- Israeli control over water resources would be maintained.
- Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza would be subject only to Israeli law.
- The 1.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would be allowed to elect a local council—after the candidates were OK'd by Israeli authorities—but the council would not be allowed to pass legislation. Its authority would be restricted to such areas as education, health, and municipal services.

Israeli Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon outlined the government's view of Palestinian "self-rule" in an interview in the May 9 *Christian Science Monitor*.

"Our troops will have the right to go into the casbah of Nablus [the largest West Bank town outside of Jerusalem], go in there and arrest people, search for weapons, and so on," Sharon declared.

He added, "Take it for granted—about our military presence and settlements there—that will be forever."

Even the editors of the *Washington Post* had to admit May 7 that "plainly, from the viewpoint of Palestinian self-determination, this plan is a fraud."

An editorial in the May 11 *Christian Science Monitor* commented that "it suggests Israel does not really seek a genuine settlement."

These comments reflect the diplomatic stance of American imperialism. Just as it did in the years leading up to the deal between Begin and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat, Washington is striving to play soft cop to the Zionist regime's hard cop.

For example, in the *New York Times* article on the opening of negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza, Bernard Gwertzman reported that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance "sought the middle ground befitting a mediator, but his tone was chilly to Israel."

Through such cheap gestures Washington hopes to draw other Arab regimes into

the negotiations and ease Sadat's isolation.

Carter has had little success with this tactic so far, owing to the impact of the Iranian revolution. With the example of the shah's overthrow still fresh, regimes such as the Saudi monarchy—which in other circumstances would have been willing to back the treaty—are afraid of arousing mass opposition at home.

Carter hopes that if the negotiations are drawn out long enough, and if Sadat manages to hang on to power in Egypt, there will be new opportunities to undermine Arab opposition to the treaty.

As Sadat put it when asked about the possibility of Palestinian participation in the negotiations, "Let us not raise this question now. Let us see after three years."

But such a waiting game has its risks. What if Sadat's position is challenged by the Egyptian masses, or revolution threatens to triumph elsewhere in the Arab world?

"I would not rule out the use of force to defend our own vital interests in the area," Secretary of Defense Harold Brown told the House Foreign Affairs Committee May 8.

The *Washington Post* reported May 18 that "officials in the Carter administration are studying sending a force of several thousand U.S. soldiers to police the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty if the Soviet Union carries out its threat to veto United Nations forces for that task. . . ."

Such leaks by lower-level officials are used as trial balloons by the government, to try to accustom the American people to the idea of stationing U.S. military forces in the area.

Inside Israel, meanwhile, Begin's intransigent policies are putting wind in the sails of the most fanatical Zionist forces. Although the Zionist regime has already confiscated 27.3 percent of the West Bank's total land area, Zionist groups are demanding that this be stepped up.

When the Zionist colony of Kiryat Arba was denied permission to expand onto adjacent Arab-owned land in April, the settlers there took matters into their own hands. Using a power saw, they cut 550 grapevines in the Arab vineyard they wanted to take over.

At the same time, Kiryat Arba settlers occupied a building in the center of Hebron, demanding that a new colony be started there. Asked where the Arab residents of the area should go, Kiryat Arba leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger said, "They can live here or another place, I don't care."

The racist scum led by Levinger murdered two Palestinian high-school students in nearby Halhul in April. On May 2 another Kiryat Arba resident, "Prof. Ezra Zohar, shot a student, Riyad Nakhleh Daoud, who at the time was sitting on a bench in front of a dormitory" (*Christian Science Monitor*, May 11).

In its May 14 issue, *Newsweek* said of the same incident that "the peaceful rally at Bir Zeit [against Zionist settlement] so incensed nearby Israeli settlers that one of them shot and wounded a 20-year-old Arab student in the chest. . . ."

Of course, Professor Zohar has nothing to fear from the Israeli courts. They were set up in the first place as part of the racist Zionist apparatus that carried out the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland and the expropriation of their land. Killing off those who resist—whether in Lebanon, the West Bank, or Israel itself—is just one more part of the job. □

The Shah and Mrs. Javits

By Will Reissner

The U.S. Senate voted May 17 to approve a resolution condemning the continuing executions of the shah's hangmen and torturers by the new Iranian government. The resolution, which charged that the "human rights" of those criminals were being violated, was greeted with outrage by the Iranian people, who poured into the streets of Tehran by the tens of thousands to protest at the U.S. embassy.

The response of the Iranian government to the resolution was to release a file of top-secret documents that effectively exposed the hypocrisy of the resolution's author, Senator Jacob Javits of New York.

The documents show that Marion Javits, the senator's wife, was a paid propagandist for the shah's regime. In a December 20, 1974, letter to the shah's prime minister, Amir Abbas Hoveida, Mrs. Javits proposed "an educational program directed to the opinion makers of this country, to community leaders, political figures, the national media and the broad general public" to counteract bad publicity about Iran.

One of the themes of this campaign would be to convince the American people, in Mrs. Javits's words, that "the Shah, even though he is in a sense an absolute ruler, has highly constructive social goals and that under the conditions that exist in Iran, the only way to accomplish these goals is by tight control, firm leadership, detailed national planning—and that he does this with benevolence and without repression."

Mrs. Javits's proposal was readily accepted by the shah's government, which paid Ruder & Finn, the New York public-relations agency she was associated with, \$507,000 to carry it out. Of this sum \$67,500 was to go directly to her.

To conceal the real purpose of the contract the Iranian signatory was Iran Air. In a confidential June 1975 memo to Hoveida, an aide, Parviz Raji, wrote: "In

order to avoid any rumor or entanglements which may result in the possible exposure of this contract, I would propose you permit Iran Air to be the Iranian party in this contract. Of course, the signature of the Ruder & Finn contract with Iran Air is only a pretense. . . ."

The aide explained in another "confidential" memo to Hoveida that "I think the performance of this plan is advisable even if its only result will be to pour money in the pocket of Mrs. Javits."

Once bought, the Javitses apparently stay bought—even though Marion Javits

went off the shah's payroll in March 1976. Just prior to the disclosures about his wife's lucrative relationship with the monarchy, Senator Javits sanctimoniously urged the new U.S. ambassador to Iran to "not pussyfoot around and walk on tiptoe in the face of outrageous violations of human decency, not to mention human rights."

It is to be hoped that further details of the shah's dealings with U.S. public figures will be revealed, thus helping to expose the real violators of human rights in Iran. □

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Regime Tries to Disarm Arab Oil Workers in Iran

By Fred Murphy

The Khomeini-Bazargan government has launched a crackdown on rising working-class and nationalist struggles in the predominantly Arab province of Khuzestan in southern Iran—the hub of the country's oil industry. The aim is to disarm revolutionary-minded workers there and crush their protests for national and trade-union rights.

Customs workers in the main port city of Khorramshahr—the majority of whom are Arabs—began a strike in mid-May for higher wages and recognition of their union. On May 29 a right-wing gang fired on the striking workers, wounding two.

At around the same time some twenty steelworkers leaders were arrested in Ahwaz, and a central Arab leader of the oil workers council there was seized and taken to Tehran.

On May 30, elite units of the Iranian navy launched predawn assaults on two Arab cultural centers in Khorramshahr, where Arab activists had been conducting sit-ins in support of their demands for national autonomy and cultural rights.

An Arab cultural center in Ahwaz was also attacked and occupied by military forces of the central government on May 30, and a wave of arrests was launched against Trotskyist supporters of the Arab struggle there (see accompanying article).

The naval commando attacks in Khorramshahr came only two hours after the conclusion of lengthy negotiations between Arab leader Ayatollah Mohammed Taher al-Shobeir Khaqani and Khuzestan Province Governor-General Adm. Ahmad Madani (who is also commander of the Iranian navy).

Admiral Madani told al-Shobeir that Arab activists would have twenty-four hours to disarm and withdraw from the former U.S. consulate building and the headquarters of the shah's National Women's Organization, which they had occupied and turned into cultural centers. But instead Madani immediately sent his troops into action.

The Arabs resisted, and fighting spread to other parts of Khorramshahr and to the neighboring oil-refining center of Abadan. Large numbers of Arabs went into the streets, responding angrily to Madani's repressive moves. The central police station in Khorramshahr, the post office, a government tobacco factory, and various stores and shops were set afire.

Madani ordered a curfew and state of emergency—the first such decrees in Iran since the overthrow of the shah's regime in February.

Trotskyists Condemn Government Attack

[The following has been excerpted from a statement issued May 31 by the Executive Committee of the Ahwaz branch of the Hezb-e Kargarane Sosialist (Socialist Workers Party), the Iranian section of the Fourth International. The statement was issued in response to the attacks by government troops against the Arab population in the city of Khorramshahr (whose Arab name is Mohammareh).

* * *

For fifty years the Arab people have suffered national oppression. Today, after the masses of workers and toilers, Arab and non-Arab alike, have brought down the tyrannical regime and are pressing forward to gain their rights, this government, instead of respecting their demands, has answered them with machine guns, artillery, and tanks.

People of Iran, heroic oil workers, steelworkers, Muslims and Christians, the struggle of the Arab people is your struggle. Their victory will be your victory; their defeat will be yours.

If the Arab people are defeated, the road will be opened for attacks by the government on all the gains of the Iranian revolution. The same tanks that the governor is using against the

Arabs today will roll over your bodies tomorrow.

Today the Arab people have raised the banner of freedom in Khuzestan. Don't let the executioners' sword cut the throats of the Arab people. Don't let the sword of tyranny in the hands of the governor be tempered in the blood of the Arab people. Don't let martial law, the instrument of the Pahlavi dictatorship, be established in Mohammareh.

The toiling people can gain nothing from the martial law! The tradition of the workers is the aspiration for freedom and democracy. The tradition of the generals is sending tanks to intimidate and massacre innocent people.

The language of the toilers is the language of freedom. The language of the generals and the capitalists is martial law. Down with the martial law!

A counterrevolutionary war has been unleashed in the streets of Mohammareh and Ahwaz. The Arab people are holding aloft the banner of the revolution; the admiral-governor, the banner of counterrevolution.

All the toilers of Iran must rally behind the banner of the revolution. It is in their interest to support the struggle of the Arab people and condemn the government's attack on the Iranian revolution.

The central government sent in some 700 army paratroopers and pro-Khomeini militiamen to help put down the Arab resistance. Tanks and armored personnel carriers moved into the streets. From the adjacent Karoun River, naval torpedo boats poured machine-gun fire into Arab neighborhoods.

Reports in the Western press indicated that by May 31 the centers of the two cities were under the control of the central government. But large sections of the Arab communities remained in the hands of Arab freedom fighters.

An aide to Arab leader al-Shobeir said that 200 persons were killed and 600 wounded in the two days of fighting.

On June 1, thousands of Arabs marched in Khorramshahr and Abadan to protest the attacks on their organizations and communities and to demand that the au-

thorities hand over the bodies of victims of the massacre to their families.

The Arab marchers also demanded the removal of Admiral Madani as governor-general, identification and prosecution of all those responsible for the massacre, and the rectification of one-sided and hostile news broadcasts about the events in Khuzestan.

After the demonstrations, thousands of Arabs gathered at a Khorramshahr mosque and began a sit-in to back up their demands. □

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Demand Release of Nine Imprisoned Iranian Trotskyists!

By Gerry Foley

Immediately after launching an attack against the Arab community in Khorramshahr, the Iranian authorities started a crackdown against the Socialist Workers Party (HKS) in Ahwaz, arresting at least nine members.

On June 2, the national leadership of the Iranian Trotskyist organization demanded their release. "The lives of all these revolutionary fighters are in danger," the HKS said. "We have no information of their whereabouts or fate."

The first arrests came on May 30. Omid Mirbaha and Mohammed Poorkahvaz were taken from their car by officials of the local Imam's Committee, whose leadership generally follows the directions of the Shi'ite clergy. The two Trotskyists were taken to the committee headquarters and beaten.

On May 31, HKS member Hamid Shahrabi went to the committee headquarters, along with the brother of Poorkahvaz. They were told that the arrested Trotskyists had been taken to Karoun Prison. But officials there denied any knowledge of the case.

Shahrabi and Poorkahvaz's brother went back to the committee headquarters. The committee guards detained them, shouting, "We're going to arrest you all."

Poorkahvaz's brother was released after it was determined that he was not an HKS member. Shahrabi was held longer and interrogated but finally released. As he was leaving the building, he was jumped by a rightist gang that had apparently been waiting for him. He was beaten and badly injured.

On June 1, twenty armed Imam's Committee members attacked the homes of HKS activists in various neighborhoods of Ahwaz, arresting them all and confiscating their books, magazines, and newspapers.

The following HKS members are known to have been arrested in these raids: Mustafa Seifabadi, Fatima Fallahi, Hormoz Fallahi, Maha Hashemi, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, and Morteza Gorgzadeh. An hour after the raids, Shahrabi was identified by committee guards and rearrested.

Even the home of a neighbor of an HKS member was raided. The neighbor was a doctor and had a telephone sometimes used by the HKS member. The raiders came at 2:00 a.m. and took all the doctor's books.

Since it was founded in early March, the Ahwaz branch of the HKS has faced particularly severe harassment and intimi-

HKS in Center of Political Ferment

The Iranian Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS) continue to be in the center of the countrywide debate on the future of the revolution.

At a demonstration of 100,000 persons on May 19 protesting attacks on press freedom, HKS activists sold 10,000 copies of a special issue of the party's newspaper, *Kargar* (Worker).

Seventy thousand persons gathered at Teachers Institute in Tehran on May 30 to hear HKS leader Babak Zahraie debate top "Islamic Republic" ideologist Abu al-Hassan Bani Sadr on the topic "Property, National Independence, and the State." The three main daily newspapers in Tehran plan to print the transcript of this meeting.

The debate was the second between Zahraie and Bani Sadr. The first one, on April 10, was broadcast on all-

Iranian television and viewed by an estimated 22 million persons (see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, May 28, p. 524).

On June 1, Zahraie was scheduled to speak at the University of Tabriz in Azerbaijan Province. Seven thousand persons gathered for the meeting, but the organizers decided to postpone it when a gang of about 100 hoodlums showed up, armed with knives, swords, and revolvers.

Iranian Trotskyists report that the disruption became the chief topic of discussion in the streets of Tabriz; residents expressed their outrage at the attack on freedom of speech. When one of the thugs returned to his house, a crowd of neighbors surrounded him and demanded that he get out because he had "besmirched the good name of Tabriz."

dation from rightists in the local Imam's Committee.

Nonetheless, the Trotskyists have stood up to the pressure, refusing to be intimidated or driven underground. In this way, they have won respect and sympathy among a broad layer of workers who are interested in socialism and concerned about maintaining and extending the democratic rights millions of Iranians fought for in the streets, paying a heavy price in blood.

The HKS is becoming the visible expression of the layer of workers most anxious to carry the revolution forward. As a result, the rightists see it not as a relatively small group of activists but as a current of many thousands.

The Trotskyists are the only group able to combat effectively the rightists' attempt to divide the workers along religious lines. While not compromising with religious prejudices, they seek ways to reach the working people under such influence. They persistently talk to Muslim workers about the concrete problems they face.

When HKS members have been arrested by committee guards on previous occasions, they have argued in defense of their rights and their ideas. They have often been able to make an impact on the committee activists, sometimes winning them over.

In smaller localities, the HKS has even succeeded in influencing the majority of committee leaders. Before the recent crackdown began, the party was starting to establish branches in other centers of the oil-producing province of Khuzestan.

When I was in Ahwaz in late April, the HKS was just starting to develop contacts with the Arab-nationalist organizations that had begun to spring up and grow there. In a few weeks' time it has become recognized as the only all-Iranian organization that actively and consistently defends the rights of the Arab people.

The HKS newspaper *Kargar* is posted up around the headquarters of the Arab organizations. HKS members are virtually the only Persians welcome in these offices.

The recent events in Khuzestan make it clear why the Ahwaz branch of the HKS faces especially severe intimidation by the authorities. The forces trying to restabilize the bourgeois state in Iran fear the potential power of the masses in this area in particular, because of its economic importance and because of the combination of an oppressed nationality and key concentrations of industrial workers.

The broadest possible protests are necessary to win the release of the arrested Iranian Trotskyists. The victimization of these courageous defenders of the aspirations thousands of Iranians died for must be halted. □

The Rising Struggle of the Oppressed Arab Population in Iran

[The following article has been excerpted from the May 18 issue of *Kargar*, newspaper of the Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist (Socialist Workers Party), Iranian section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

The Arab people constitute one of the most oppressed sections of our society. Although they live in a region that produces more wealth than any other in the country, they are subjected to the most inhuman conditions—poverty, backwardness, hunger. They have been deprived of all national and human rights.

For these very reasons, the rising of this disinherited people to their feet represents one of the most explosive and revolutionary forces in the struggle of the working people of Iran for liberation from their previous hopeless existence.

With the overthrow of the monarchy, the Arab people are beginning to raise their voices against their previous slavery. In the shah's time, they were forced to adopt Persian names. Now they are going back to using Arab ones. In doing this, the Arab youth are saying "We are Arabs. In the past we were robbed of our human and national rights. But now we have risen up and we are fighting in the name of the Arab people for our rights."

National Oppression and Class Oppression

The Arabs constitute a majority in wide areas of Khuzestan. In Ahwaz and Abadan, more than half the population is Arab. In the cities of Dashtmishan, Khorramshahr, and Shadegan, 80% to 100% of the population is Arab.

The majority of the working people, industrial workers, and poor peasants in the south are Arabs. In Abadan, 50% to 60% of the workers are Arab. In Bandar-e Shahpur, a majority of the workers who operate the petrochemical factory, the other industrial installations, and the trading enterprises are Arabs. And these are the same Arab workers who fill the shantytowns in Shahpur and Bandar-e Ma'shur.

In fact the program of "de-Arabizing" the south begun under Reza Khan [the deposed shah's father] has meant driving the Arab people down into the lowest levels of the economy through bringing large numbers of non-Arabs into the region.

The discrimination against the Arab people is documented in a brochure recently published by the Arab Cultural Center, *The Class Status of the Arab People of Iran* by Usuf Bani Taraf. In its statistics about the results of this oppres-



sion are made available for the first time. It points out:

The Arabs were pressed down into the lowest strata of the working class, and denied any opportunity to raise themselves up. In Ahwaz Arabs form the largest percentage of the workers in the rolling mills, the steel-tubing industry, the oil industry, in Tavanir [the Iranian Light and Power Company], the railroads, and the municipal labor force. The workers in the schools, the government offices and the hospitals, the taxi drivers and machinists, and other such strata are Arab. On the other hand, the majority of dealers in the big commercial operations and the middle and big capitalists are non-Arabs. Arabs are also underrepresented among the professional staffs of government departments and private concerns in Ahwaz.

Because of this class status the Arabs live in the poorest and dirtiest areas of the city, crowded into barracks. . . . But the better-off professionals and capitalists that come from other cities generally own their own homes and live in the middle-class or upper-class parts of town. They are Persians. . . .

More than 70% of the population of Khuzestan is Arab. But only 5% of all the university students, and 1% of the university teachers in Abadan are Arabs. . . .

This situation will undoubtedly put the Arab workers in the vanguard of the struggle of the working people of Iran.

In response to this deep oppression, the Arab people have begun to put out publications, hold meetings and demonstrations, and form organizations of their own. They have raised a voice of protest against all aspects of their half-century-old oppression and put forward their demands for a decent life, free from discrimination and

national oppression, free from poverty and backwardness.

Undoubtedly in this past period, the struggles of the Kurdish and Turkmeni peoples for their own national demands did not fail to play a role in the deepening and broadening of the national movement of the Arab people of Iran.

In a rally in Khorramshahr in the month of Esfand [February 20 to March 21], the Arab people raised the following demands:

Official recognition of Arabic as the first language of the Arab people and education through Arabic at all levels of education. Freedom to publish statements, books, and newspapers in Arabic, Arab representatives in the constituent assembly, the calling of an Arab assembly in Khuzestan to review local ordinances, establishment of Arab administrative bodies for solving problems on the basis of Islamic law, independently run Arab programs on radio and TV, preferential hiring of Arabs in both the state and private sectors, freedom to disseminate Arab culture, scholarships and a fair share of the oil revenues for the people of Khuzestan, selection of Arab representatives to the National Consultative Assembly and appointment of Arabs as ministers, a role for Arabs in the national army and the training of Arab officers in the military academies, restoring the former Arab names of cities and villages in Khuzestan, and the incorporation of all the foregoing measures into the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

'Separatism'—Charge Used to Justify Oppression of Arabs

Not only has the Bazargan government failed so far to respond positively to the demand of the Arab people for justice but it has resorted to harassment and even repression of the various Arab organizations and personalities. It has also attacked the meetings of the Arab people.

The call to "fight separatism"—used in the time of the former shah to shout down the appeals for justice of the oppressed peoples of Iran—is being used once again to justify denying the just national and human rights of the Arab people. The masses of the oppressed nationalities of Iran are thoroughly familiar with this. The same pretext was used in staging the massacres of Kurds in Sanandaj and Turkmenis in Gonbad-e Kavus.

But because of the geographical location and class composition of the Arab people the government has responded even more quickly and violently to their demands for justice. A week ago, in a speech to the municipal employees in Ahwaz, Admiral Madani, the governor of Khuzestan and chief of the navy, said:

Today we raised the national fist of Iran. We will not permit the separation of one centimeter

of the land of Iran. Our fist will smash the heads of all those who try to separate any part of Iran.

None of the demands raised so far by the Arab people have proposed separating "one centimeter of the land of Iran." So, against whom was Admiral Madani raising this fist? The answer can be seen from the way the government has responded to the struggle of the Arab people.

The Imam's Committees, which are made up of non-Arabs and are not subject to any control or even influence from the Arab population, have conducted a campaign of daily attacks on the Arab organizations. They constantly arrest, torture, and harass Arab youth. The publications of the Arab organizations are banned. Arab rallies and demonstrations are attacked.

It was in response to such undemocratic activities that Sheikh Mohammad Taher al-Shobeir Khaqani, one of the national and religious leaders of the Arab people, warned that if such behavior continued he would have to leave Iran. . . . The reason for his decision, he said, was "the illegal interference of the committees . . . the attacks of some bully boys on people's homes, which have terrorized families; the arrests and slandering of people without any justification."

These attacks on the Arab people are becoming increasingly violent. The mass media help to create a favorable atmosphere for them by giving distorted reports about the struggles of the Arab peoples. Even the existence of the Arab people is denied by these media, which refer to them as "the Arabic speaking people in the south." Until now it has been impossible to hear the real voice of the Arab people. The

Fist of Abadan [Admiral Madani] ordered that the media black out reports from the region.

What Do the Arab People Want?

Thirty representatives of the Arab people went to Tehran at the end of April to inform the government of the demands of the Arab people. In an interview published in the press, one of them said:

We want official recognition of the right of self-determination of those people living in areas where there is an Arab majority. . . .

Another representative said in the same interview:

Everyone knows what self-determination means and almost everyone interprets it in the same way. It means having power in the region. At the present time, the Arab people of Khuzestan have no power over the government of the region, and so they want self-determination—that is, power over the political, economic, and cultural affairs of the region.

So far the Bazargan government has chosen to remain silent about this demand for self-determination. It has rested content with saying that every human being in Iran is equal and enjoys the same rights.

That sort of recognition of "equality" will not solve any of the questions facing the oppressed nations of Iran, including the Arab people. After fifty years of unrelied discrimination and oppression, of being reduced to the status of second-class citizens in their own native lands, the Arabs now want their rights. To free the Arab people from their past oppression it is necessary not just to grant them linguistic and cultural freedom. Vast affirmative action programs are needed to eradicate

the results of the past oppression.

This means giving preference to Arab youth in the universities of the region. It means establishing major educational facilities under the control of the Arab people themselves. It means preferential hiring of Arabs in all state and private concerns. It means extensive public works to build housing and upgrade the cities, to build roads, parks, and hospitals.

Since there is not a single Imam's Committee under the control of the Arab people, Arab committees should be formed to deal with all questions of public order in the Arab areas.

In the Arab districts, non-Arab municipal and Imam's Committee officials act like an occupying army. All these forces must be withdrawn.

All Toilers of Iran Must Support the Arab People

The Iranian revolution has opened up the way for ending more than half a century of oppression. It was a two-fold cause for hope to the non-Persian nationalities—the Arabs, Kurds, Baluchis, Azerbaijanis, and Turkmenis.

Now that these nations have risen to their feet and are demanding their rights, the toilers of Iran must defend them. Only through building and reinforcing solidarity of all the peoples of Iran, based on supporting the oppressed nations' demands for justice, can the Iranian revolution move forward to root out all the manifestations and aspects of tyranny and exploitation.

The ranks of the enemies and of the friends of such unity of the peoples of Iran are now clearly defined. On one side stand those who responded to the demands of the people of Kurdistan by unleashing the massacres of Sanandaj and Naqadeh, who responded to the protests of the Turkmeni people by unleashing the pogrom in Gonbad-e Kavus, and who are now planning to slaughter and suppress the Arab people. On the other stand all the toilers of Iran who are rising up in defense of the demands of their oppressed Arab brothers and sisters.

Only by such action can the Persian working people eliminate the fears of their Arab, Kurd, Azerbaijani, Turkmeni, and Baluchi brothers and sisters who were oppressed by the central government in their name. Only in this way can they eliminate the division fostered by the Pahlavi monarchy and establish the indestructible unity of the Iranian working people of all nations.

Teach-ins must be organized in the universities, other institutions of learning, in the factories and workplaces. Rallies and demonstrations must be built to bring the truth about the Arab people's struggle to all the working people of Iran. This is the way to prevent a repetition of calamities such as those that occurred in Sanandaj, Gonbad-e Kavus, and Naqadeh.

Eyewitness Coverage of the Iranian Revolution

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Pol Pot Forces Call for Counterrevolutionary 'United Front'

By Fred Feldman

The former deputy prime minister in Pol Pot's regime in Kampuchea has made a public bid for expanded imperialist backing and a "united front" with forces of the CIA-installed Lon Nol government, which fell in 1975. In a May 31 interview with *New York Times* correspondent Henry Kamm, Ieng Sary—now second in command of the remnants of Pol Pot's rightist Khmer Rouge army—stated the following:

- "Mutual comprehension is growing" between the Khmer Rouge and the forces of the former Lon Nol regime, both of which are fighting to topple the new Kampuchean government and drive out Vietnamese troops.

- The Kampuchean regime that might emerge if the alliance succeeds could be "capitalistic or even monastic."

- "Forces from outside" are fighting alongside Pol Pot today.

- The Thai military dictatorship has a "very good attitude" and is giving vitally needed assistance to the Pol Pot forces.

- More outside help is needed to defeat the Heng Samrin government and its Vietnamese allies.

- Atrocities and excesses occurred during Pol Pot's reign.

- The Khmer Rouge opposes any international effort to prevent a famine in Kampuchea.

The interview, one of several given by Ieng Sary to major capitalist dailies, signals a further escalation of the drive by imperialism, U.S. imperialism above all, to contain the Indochinese revolution.

Kamm obtained at least part of the interview while accompanying Ieng Sary on a flight from Bangkok, Thailand, to Colombo, Ceylon. Quotations and summaries of Ieng Sary's remarks were reported extensively in the June 1 *New York Times*. (See p. 570 for full text of the *Times* article.)

Ieng Sary told Kamm that he had just left Kampuchea. A recent photograph of Pol Pot accompanied the *Times* article.

A Rightist 'United Front'

This open announcement of a counterrevolutionary "united front" follows the massive defeat dealt the Khmer Rouge in recent months by Kampuchean and Vietnamese forces. The alliance is designed to provide acceptable cover for Washington and its Southeast Asian allies to intervene more openly and with greater military force. Ever since the fall of Pol Pot in January 1979, Washington's aim has been to topple the new Kampuchean govern-

ment and install a reliable capitalist regime as a buffer between the Vietnamese workers state and the shaky capitalist regime in Thailand.

The interview coincided with stepped-up pressures and threats against Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam from the Thai regime, Beijing Stalinists, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The "implication" throughout the interview, according to Kamm, was that Heng Samrin's government now "controlled all of Cambodia except for one or two pockets."

"Former Prime Minister Pol Pot," Kamm stated, "is ready to enter a coalition with his right wing enemies, his top aide said today."

Ieng Sary told Kamm that "mutual comprehension is growing" with key figures in the former Lon Nol regime. Lon Nol's government, installed with imperialist backing in 1970, was driven out in a five-year civil war led by the Khmer Rouge. What is today called the Khmer Rouge is only a reactionary remnant of this army—the product of splits, purges, and bloody clashes that began in 1973, two years before rebel units captured Phnompenh.

Ieng Sary expressed interest in having Kampuchean Prince Norodom Sihanouk act as head of the proposed counterrevolutionary front. Sihanouk, who is now living in Beijing, was selected to represent the Pol Pot government at the United Nations just before the Khmer Rouge government fled Phnompenh in January 1979. When Sihanouk discovered that the regime's repressive record had discredited it around the world, he formally dissociated himself from Pol Pot.

The June 2 *Washington Post* quotes Ieng Sary as saying, "If [Sihanouk] believes that the people are the principal force in the fight against the invader, we believe that our people will trust him and perhaps even grant him the honor of leading them. We are ready to forget everything on condition that Sihanouk is ready to fight."

'Capitalist or Monastic'

Pol Pot's deputy made it clear that the imperialists would benefit greatly from a government backed by Khmer Rouge military forces. "The Communist Party is ready to step aside. We are ready for anything on behalf of the effectiveness of the national struggle."

Kamm stated that Ieng Sary said that the regime that might emerge "could be

capitalist or even monastic, and would be chosen in free and secret elections that could be supervised by the Secretary General of the United Nations."

Ieng Sary's bid to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim followed that imperialist diplomat's recent whirlwind tour of Southeast Asia. Waldheim tried to pressure the Vietnamese regime to accept UN "mediation" in the Kampuchean civil war. The UN continues to recognize Pol Pot's forces as the legitimate government of Kampuchea.

In contrast to previous Khmer Rouge policy, Ieng Sary did not deny that massacres had taken place while the Pol Pot government ruled Kampuchea. Instead, he "charged that Vietnamese agents had infiltrated Cambodia and committed atrocities to blacken Cambodia's reputation."

Perhaps hoping to gain a bit of credibility, Ieng Sary also "said that local authorities had committed occasional excesses," according to Kamm. The Khmer Rouge leader said that "perhaps some thousands" died in this way.

'Outside Help' Obtained

Ieng Sary told Kamm that "forces from outside are fighting against Vietnam with us on the battlefields." Kamm added, "These are believed to be Cambodians recruited by the Free Cambodia [Khmer Serei] movement, linked with former Prime Minister [under Lon Nol] In Tam, a refugee in the United States."

The Khmer Serei was formed in the early 1960s under the direction of the American CIA. Its core is composed of Kampuchean trained by the U.S. Special Forces.

But "forces from outside" also include the increasingly active role of the Thai army in the fighting.

"Today, sinking into a first-class seat on a Thai airliner . . . Mr. Ieng Sary spoke warmly of Thailand's assistance," Kamm said.

"It is a very good attitude," Ieng Sary said of the Kriangsak dictatorship's policy. "It is also in the interest of Thailand. If Cambodia became a Vietnamese satellite it would have direct repercussions on Thailand. On that basis, we are convinced that relations with Thailand will continue to improve."

"Vietnamese satellite" is a code word for the fear shared by the imperialists and their neocolonial Asian allies that the Heng Samrin government may be compelled, under the pressure of the Kampuchean workers and peasants, to establish a

workers state. Such a move would certainly have revolutionary "repercussions" on the workers and peasants in Thailand.

In an obvious bid for increased U.S. help, Ieng Sary told Kamm that the Pol Pot forces would need outside help for a campaign to force the Vietnamese out of Kampuchea. "He refused to name Thailand as a channel for such help," Kamm said, but "well-placed Cambodian sources said Thai assistance would be required."

Thai Army in Action

According to correspondent Richard Nations of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, large concentrations of Khmer Rouge soldiers who fled into Thailand were given medical treatment by the Thai government and trucked to a safer base in Kampuchea. The Vietnamese have since driven the Khmer Rouge soldiers back across the Thai border, Nations reported. He continued:

"Thai military analysts say that the Vietnamese have mined the border to seal the Khmer Rouge inside Thailand throughout the monsoon. 'We try to find a hole in Vietnamese defenses where the Khmer Rouge can slip back on to their own soil,' a source said, '... It will go on like this with huge Kampuchean forces flushed back and forth across the border until someone loses patience.'" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 1.)

Kamm noted that the Khmer Rouge forces "often brought with them long columns of civilians, against their will, in full view of Thai troops and other observers."

Refugees who flee from the Khmer Rouge are also forcibly returned by Thai troops to rightist control, even though Thai authorities "concede that it is likely that those forced across the border face death as 'traitors' to the Pol Pot movement."

The Thai army's probes into Kampuchea increase the likelihood that at some point Kampuchean and Vietnamese forces may have to strike back in self-defense. "The Thai military anticipates some sort of Vietnamese cross-border action," Nations reported.

Thai "military sources" charged June 2 that "Vietnamese-led Cambodian forces have crossed into Thailand several times in recent days in pursuit of guerrillas loyal to Pol Pot," according to the June 3 *New York Times*.

Bigger Military Moves Weighed

U.S. imperialism is the engineer of this Thai-Khmer Rouge operation. Although Washington has preferred to maintain a discreet silence on the fighting there, the Thai government makes no moves without the closest consultation with the U.S. government. It is no accident that six years after the withdrawal of American ground troops from Indochina, the largest U.S. diplomatic mission in the world is

located in Bangkok.

The U.S. imperialists have no illusions that the Thai army can stand up to the Vietnamese and Kampuchean government



Kampuchean cross border into Thailand.

forces. Their game plan foresees the possibility of using a Thai-Vietnamese conflict as a pretext for more extensive imperialist military operations against the Indochinese revolutions.

"Most military specialists feel," said John McBeth of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "that with a well-sited, in-depth anti-tank defence on its eastern border, Thailand could buy enough time to allow for outside intervention. That, in the opinion of diplomats, could involve ground and air forces from Malaysia and other Asean states. They don't rule out direct American reaction, either a massive airlift of some arms or even battlefield intervention by carrier-based fighter-bombers of the Seventh Fleet. China has also promised unspecified support for Thailand if attacked by Vietnam." (*FEER*, June 1.)

Beijing's Moves

As tensions rise on the Thai-Kampuchea border, the Beijing Stalinists are again stepping up military pressure on Vietnam.

According to a Reuters dispatch reported in the June 2 *New York Times*, the Vietnamese army newspaper *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* charged June 1 that Beijing was massing hundreds of thousands of troops along China's border with Vietnam and Laos. It accused Beijing of participating in "a desperate effort to resist the Kampuchean revolutionary administration and to revive the genocidal regime of Pol Pot and Ieng Sary."

Beijing has also paralyzed negotiations for settlement of its "border dispute" with Vietnam by centering talks on the counter-

revolutionary demand for withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and Laos.

The Beijing regime is seeking large-scale trade and credits from the imperialists as its reward for these counterrevolutionary services.

The ominous moves by the Thai government and by Beijing were accompanied by the first open declaration from an imperialist power that it will aid the remnants of the Pol Pot government.

Japanese Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda announced May 31 that he would "not only consider the requests for aid" from Pol Pot's representatives but would "meet with the appropriate officials to have it acted on immediately."

The Japanese government still extends diplomatic recognition to Pol Pot. No imperialist power has yet granted recognition to the new government of Heng Samrin.

Famine: Imperialist Weapon

The U.S. imperialists are counting on another famine to help block the Kampuchean struggle for national and social liberation. In the interview with Kamm, Ieng Sary encouraged this effort to starve the Kampuchean masses into submission.

Agricultural production was already devastated by the years of civil war and U.S. saturation bombing. Today, under the impact of a new civil war and the collapse of the Khmer Rouge's hated system of forced agricultural labor camps, food is dangerously scarce.

In an interview with Wilfred Burchett published in the May 30 *In These Times*, Kampuchean President Heng Samrin stated the following as the priorities of the government: "Settle the people, help reunite them with their families and return to their native villages, provide them with food and clothing, renormalize life, open schools and hospitals and the pagodas, get rice production started, especially before the start of this year's rainy season."

Samrin told Burchett that the food situation was "very difficult." Burchett added, "It is clear from what he said, and from the general situation in the countryside, that Kampuchea is heading for near-famine conditions in the next few months."

Prince Sihanouk is one of the reactionaries who hopes to ride back to power over the starved bodies of Kampuchean workers and peasants. He told *Far Eastern Economic Review* correspondent Nayan Chanda, "The Soviets can give weapons to them but not rice. . . . With Kampuchea in ruins, with Laos without an economy, having to feed the Kampuchean, to feed the Laotians, to feed the Vietnamese themselves, Mr. Pham Van Dong, Mr. Le Duan cannot go further. In a few years under the pressure from the whole world they will have to let Sihanouk go back to Kampuchea to solve the problems." (*FEER*, April 27.)

The Khmer Rouge also sees famine as its most powerful weapon. According to Kamm, Ieng Sary dismissed as Vietnamese propaganda the "suggestion that an international food aid program was required. He said the Pol Pot Government was conducting not only a military campaign but also an agricultural production drive."

Pol Pot's "agricultural production drive" was described in more detail by James Pringle, writing from the Thai-Kampuchean border in the June 4 *Newsweek*: "As the Khmer Rouge retreat, they are evidently leaving behind one last bitter legacy. Civilians say that Pol Pot's men are burning Cambodia's rice barns and sowing paddies with mines to prevent them from being planted. 'It is farming

season, but no one can get into the fields to do anything,' said Cheam Ly Hour, 31. A few months from now, Cambodia may reap the final harvest of the Khmer Rouge—a nationwide famine."

Despite the victories won by the Vietnamese troops and Kampuchean government forces, Washington is determined to prevent the consolidation of an anti-imperialist regime in Kampuchea.

A year ago, the military operations aimed at quarantining the Vietnamese revolution were taking place along the Kampuchea-Vietnam border—supplemented by military pressure from Beijing. Today the U.S.-Thai-Khmer Rouge alliance has been pushed back to the Thai-Kampuchea border. As John McBeth in the June 1 *Far Eastern Economic Review*

put it, Thailand, deprived of its "traditional buffer," in Kampuchea, has become a "frontline state" in imperialism's struggle against revolution in Southeast Asia.

In the face of the counterrevolutionary alliance the imperialists have forged against the Indochinese revolutions, working people around the world must demand:

End the imperialist drive against Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos! Recognize the governments in Hanoi and Phnompenh! Stop aid to the Khmer Rouge and Thai forces!

U.S. bases and arms programs out of Southeast Asia! Dissolve the ASEAN alliance! Withdraw the Seventh Fleet from Southeast Asian waters!

For massive international food aid to the Kampuchean workers and peasants!

Text of 'New York Times' Interview With Ieng Sary

[The following interview with Ieng Sary, deputy prime minister in the deposed Pol Pot government of Kampuchea, was conducted by *New York Times* correspondent Henry Kamm. We have taken the text, including subheadings, from the June 1 issue of the *New York Times*.]

* * *

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, May 31—Former Prime Minister Pol Pot of Cambodia, now leading a resistance movement against Vietnamese invaders from a mountain redoubt, is ready to enter into a coalition with his former right-wing enemies, his top aide said today.

In an interview, Ieng Sary, Deputy Prime Minister in the Cambodian Government that was overthrown in January, did not rule out the possibility that Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the former head of state, might assume leadership of such an anti-Vietnamese front.

This was a possibility to be considered, he said, despite the Prince's statement, made in Peking, that he considered Mr. Pol Pot his principal enemy for having killed vast numbers of Cambodians. "Frankly, we consider Sihanouk a patriotic personality," Mr. Ieng Sary said.

Attending Talks of Nonaligned

The Deputy Prime Minister, who said he left the jungle headquarters of the Pol Pot forces on Saturday to participate in a meeting of third world nations here, said that his Government was not against negotiations with Vietnam, but that they must be based on the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. He said, however, the withdrawal was not a precondition for talks. He also expressed doubt that Vietnam was ready to negotiate.

The implication in the two-hour interview was that Vietnam controlled all of Cambodia except for one or two pockets, although Mr. Ieng Sary contended that

guerrilla forces were striking at the Vietnamese throughout the country.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who is the second most important official in the Pol Pot regime and conducts its foreign affairs, paid high tribute to Thailand's attitude in the continuing war.

"It is a very good attitude," he said. "It is also in the interest of Thailand. If Cambodia became a Vietnamese satellite it would have direct repercussions on Thailand. On that basis, we are convinced that relations with Thailand will continue to improve."

Mindful of Thailand's officially neutral position, Mr. Ieng Sary declined to be specific about its actions in support of the anti-Vietnamese struggle. But authoritative Cambodians confirmed reports from Thai military sources that the Thai Army on the border was allowing the Pol Pot forces to buy Thai rice.

Moreover, Pol Pot forces in considerable strength have frequently escaped Vietnamese pursuit recently by crossing into Thailand, marching on roads parallel to the frontier and re-entering Cambodia in safer areas. They have often brought with them long columns of civilians, against their will, in full view of Thai troops and other observers.

Mr. Ieng Sary acknowledged the problem but said that orders had been given to the resistance forces not to force people to return to Cambodia against their will. Thai military sources have made it clear that if the Cambodian troops do not make the civilians return, Thai troops will. Thousands of Cambodians have been pushed back by Thai authorities, who concede that it is likely that those forced across the border face death as "traitors" against the Pol Pot movement.

The Deputy Prime Minister, who flew here from Bangkok yesterday, said the Pol Pot forces would need outside help for a campaign to force the Vietnamese out of Cambodia. He refused to name Thailand

as a channel for such help but implied that the resistance forces had no hold on the coastline, which is the only other route of access.

Well-placed Cambodian sources said Thai assistance would be required.

Mr. Ieng Sary is the first person representing the fallen regime to emerge from Cambodia since he himself came out immediately after the fall of Phnom Penh, the capital, on Jan. 7. At that time he went to Peking by way of Thailand.

Praises Thai Assistance

Today, sinking into a first-class seat on a Thai airliner, looking exhausted and leaner than in January, Mr. Ieng Sary spoke warmly of Thailand's assistance. Tears came to his eyes when he was told of the starving and forlorn condition of Cambodian refugees reaching Thailand in recent weeks. The regime in which he played a leading role while it was in power was responsible for thousands of such refugees crossing the Thai border since 1975 in similar misery and for thousands more who died on the way.

Going for the first time beyond the Pol Pot regime's standard denial of charges of having killed countless thousands of Cambodians during its nearly four years of rule, Mr. Ieng Sary charged that Vietnamese agents had infiltrated Cambodia and committed atrocities to blacken Cambodia's reputation. He also said that local authorities had committed occasional excesses. Asked how many people might have been killed under the Pol Pot regime, the Deputy Prime Minister said, "Not many, in all of Cambodia perhaps some thousands."

Mr. Ieng Sary accused Vietnam of practicing "a genocide of our race and nation." He said that the massacres still being committed by the Vietnamese Army exceeded anything in earlier Cambodian history. "The colonialists massacred our

people in lesser number," he said, speaking of France, "and American imperialism with its bombs did not commit such large-scale massacres."

"Where the Vietnamese do not want to stay," they kill, burn and devastate everything," the Deputy Prime Minister said. He said they spared only those who agreed to abandon their Cambodian customs and dress, killing those who wanted to maintain their identity.

Widespread Famine Feared

Mr. Ieng Sary acknowledged that there was a basis for the fear expressed by refugees and observers of Cambodian affairs that the country faced widespread famine. But he rejected as Vietnamese propaganda, intended to divert attention from Hanoi's aggression, the suggestion that an international food aid program was required. He said the Pol Pot Government was conducting not only a military campaign but also an agricultural production drive.

At the same time, the Cambodian official conceded that even at their constantly shifting headquarters, Mr. Pol Pot, President Khieu Samphan and he did not always have enough to eat.

The entire interview, during which he spoke sometimes in Cambodian and sometimes directly in French, was marked by implications that the Pol Pot regime controlled only a small part of the population in its Cardamom Mountain fastness. "A good number," Mr. Ieng Sary said when asked to specify the number of people, but he conceded that the mountain region was sparsely inhabited.

Authoritative Cambodian sources said that conversations were under way with right-wing forces with a view to a political alliance, but Mr. Ieng Sary declined to discuss this. He said that "forces from outside are fighting against Vietnam with us on the battlefields." These are believed to be Cambodians recruited by the Free Cambodian movement and linked with former Prime Minister In Tam, a refugee in the United States.

United Front Possible

Speaking about a possible united front with such former enemies, Mr. Ieng Sary said, "Mutual comprehension is growing greater."

"Before, there was a certain hatred against us and a spirit of vengeance," he continued. "But now it is a matter of national survival."

The Deputy Prime Minister said that the regime that might emerge from such a coalition depended on the will of the Cambodian people. He said it could be capitalistic or even monastic, and would be chosen in free and secret elections that could be supervised by the Secretary General of the United Nations. A return of Prince Sihanouk, he added, would also depend on the popular will. □

Vance Claims 'New Reality' in Zimbabwe

Muzorewa Takes Office With Imperialist Backing

By Ernest Harsch

With Ian Smith and other white officials looking on, the new Rhodesian government of Prime Minister Abel Muzorewa was formally installed in Salisbury June 1.

"The occasion spurred little celebration among blacks," *New York Times* correspondent John F. Burns reported that day.

The reason for their silence was the obvious fact that the change in governments did not signify a hand-over of white political power to the Black majority, as both Smith and Muzorewa have claimed. Whites continue to retain most of that power in their own hands.

Despite the establishment of a parliament and cabinet with a majority of Black figures in them, whites still dominate the armed forces, police, civil service, judiciary, and economy. Their privileged position is explicitly written into the new constitution.

Whites also retain a strong direct influence in the government administration itself. White members of parliament have the power to block any changes in the constitution. There are five white cabinet ministers, including Smith, who is minister without portfolio.

Smith virtually spelled out his intention to ensure that no real measures are taken against the white minority's interests at a news conference after the installation of the cabinet. Smith "implied that the white bloc in the new Cabinet and Parliament would police the administration carefully to see that 'we don't develop into a banana republic,' a description he applied to surrounding African states," Burns reported.

Born out of carefully controlled "elections" held under the guns of tens of thousands of Rhodesian troops, the regime of Bishop Muzorewa cannot speak to the needs and aspirations of the more than six million Zimbabwean workers and peasants.

The new administration of Muzorewa and Smith is designed, however, to serve as a proimperialist bulwark against the Zimbabwean revolution. Muzorewa himself has taken political responsibility for the Rhodesian army's war against the Black freedom fighters by assuming the joint ministries of combined operations and defense.

Faced with an escalating struggle by some 13,000 guerrillas of the Patriotic Front and hundreds of thousands of their supporters, the new regime cannot hope to survive without greater imperialist backing. That is just what the American,

British, and South African governments are moving to provide.

The new Tory government in Britain, which has made no secret of its support for the Salisbury regime, has already announced that it will send a permanent envoy to Salisbury to maintain contact with the regime. Another "high-level emissary" will be sent to win support for the move from African regimes.

Lord Carrington, the British foreign secretary, sought to give some political cover to these moves May 22 by claiming, "There is now an African majority in Parliament and there is soon to be an African majority in Government also." He praised the fraudulent elections that were held in April and said it would be "morally wrong" to ignore them.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, speaking in the House of Commons May 24, called the freedom fighters of the Patriotic Front "terrorists."

The White House, which has been working closely with London on policy toward southern Africa, has likewise been edging in the direction of more open support for the Salisbury regime. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, following talks with Carrington, stated May 23 that there was a "new reality" that Washington "must recognize."

Because of the political difficulties of openly supporting the Muzorewa-Smith regime, however, both Washington and London have been moving gradually on formal diplomatic recognition and the lifting of economic sanctions, while at the same time pressing ahead with more indirect backing.

Increased covert military and financial assistance has been reaching Salisbury, much of it channeled through South Africa or provided directly by the South African imperialists themselves. Pretoria has given Muzorewa and Smith new Mirage jet fighters, and Robert Mugabe of the Patriotic Front has charged that South African officers were directly involved in the Rhodesian army's offensive just before the April elections. □

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2. A People Divided, A People Ruled

By Ernest Harsch

[*Second of a series*]

KwaMashu is less than a half-hour's drive from central Durban.

With its small houses of brick or wood or dried earth; with its occasional shacks of corrugated iron or scrap material; with its unpaved roads winding in almost haphazard patterns among the trees and along the hilly slopes; with its littered lots, its churches and beer halls, its near-naked children, KwaMashu is very much like other African townships in South Africa.

As in Soweto or Mamelodi or Clermont, thousands of KwaMashu's residents stream out of the township early each morning, headed for their jobs in the nearby "white" city, Durban. They return

each night, in crowded trains to their crowded homes.

The residents of KwaMashu had very few social or political rights to begin with. They now have even fewer.

In 1977, the apartheid planners arbitrarily redraw the borders of the KwaZulu Bantustan to include KwaMashu. With a few marks of a pencil on a map, the township's more than 150,000 inhabitants automatically become "citizens" of an African "homeland." Their daily lives barely change, but now they are deprived of all rights in South Africa as a whole.

They are foreigners in the country of their birth . . .

The various "reforms" now being heralded by Prime Minister Botha and his lieutenants—the reduction in petty-apartheid, the education bill, the institution of community councils, the plans to establish Coloured and Indian "parliaments"—are nothing more than new moves to advance an old strategy: the classical colonial policy of divide and rule.

As it has been for years, the firm bedrock upon which that strategy rests is the Bantustan system.

The ten Bantustans are isolated slivers of countryside covering only 13.7 percent of South Africa's entire land area. About half of all Africans are packed into them. Since the Bantustans lack any significant industries, unemployment is endemic. Since the soil in most of them is poor or severely eroded, the inhabitants of the Bantustans cannot grow enough food to live on.

The average per capita income in the reserves during the early 1970s was a bare \$7.20 a month. Tuberculosis, pellagra, diphtheria, and kwashiorkor (a protein deficiency disease) run rampant. In the Transkei, Pretoria's "showcase" Bantustan, about 40 percent of African children die before the age of ten as a direct or indirect result of malnutrition.

These are the places Pretoria maintains are the "homelands" of the various African peoples. These are the places where Africans will supposedly exercise their "right to self-determination" as Zulus, Xhosas, Tswanas, Pedis, etc., but not as South Africans. These are the places that are to become fragmented, "independent"

ministates under the tutelage of the white "masters" in Pretoria.

The Bantustans serve a dual function. Because of the lack of job opportunities within them, they operate as reservoirs of cheap Black labor, to be employed by the white capitalists on a migratory basis as needed. At the same time, the fiction of the Bantustans as "homelands" provides a justification for the white appropriation of the vast bulk of the land and for the denial of African political and social rights in the country as a whole. It likewise aims to fuel ethnic divisions among Africans, weakening their common struggle for Black majority rule over all of South Africa.

The racist authorities have no intention of retreating from this policy. They are preparing to push ahead with it even further, to make every single African a "citizen" of one or another of the Bantustans, whether they have ever lived in them or not.

Former Minister of Plural Relations Connie P. Mulder stated in January 1978, while he still held that post, that "if our policy is taken to its full logical conclusion as far as the black people are concerned, there will not be one black man with South African citizenship."

That has already happened to more than six million Xhosas and Tswanas, who have lost their right to South African citizenship as a result of the proclaimed "independence" of the Transkei and Bophutha-Tswana. And with it they have lost even those few tenuous rights to urban residency that remain to Africans.

When Venda is proclaimed "independent"

this year, another half million Vendas will suffer the same fate.

The Bantu Laws Amendment Act, passed in 1978, strips urban children born after the "independence" of their parents' Bantustans of any right to permanently reside in the "white" urban areas.

Another amendment gives the authorities greater powers to deport to the reserves "idle or undesirable" Africans, if they are out of work for more than 122 days.

At a time of rising Black unemployment, the regime is anxious over the presence of tens of thousands of "idle" Black youths in the townships. P.T. du Plessis, the chairman of the Bantu Affairs Commission, warned that unemployed Blacks in the townships were the "shocktroops of the uprising of black youth."

Overall, the number of prosecutions under the "influx control" laws, which regulate African movement into the townships, has been rising sharply over the past few years. The list of "crimes" for which township residents can be banished to the Bantustans has grown steadily longer.

In early February 1979, Minister of Plural Relations Piet Koornhof promised to get rid of passes, the central mechanism by which the influx control laws for Africans are enforced. But this was a mere ruse. The passes are to be replaced with "simplified" identification documents, ones no doubt designed to make it even easier for the regime to keep tabs on Africans.

Since the 1976 rebellions, the authorities have moved against many squatters' camps around the country, demolishing homes in Modderdam, Unibel, Clermont, Germiston, Seapoint, Crossroads, Werkge-not, Duncan, and other places. Those residents found to be in "white" South Africa illegally are shipped off to the Bantustans.

Where sections of the Bantustans are close to the major industrial centers, some entire Black townships have been physically moved into them, the workers then forced to commute on a daily or weekly basis to their jobs. Other townships, like KwaMashu, have been made part of a Bantustan by simply changing the Bantustan boundaries. Through such methods, the authorities are steadily realizing their ultimate aim of stripping all Africans of their South African citizenship.

The Bantustans, too, appear to be subject to some alteration. Prime Minister

Botha declared in January 1979 that the 1936 Natives Land and Trust Act, which set the land area of the Bantustans at the present figure of 13.7 percent of the country, should be reviewed. The implication is that the reserves may be enlarged. Even if that is eventually done, it would not change their basic function. It would just make them even bigger prison compounds.

Chiefs on a String

Botha's statement was hailed by a number of Bantustan tribal officials, including Chief Lennox Sebe of the Ciskei and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of KwaZulu. Sebe said that it introduced "some fresh air" into the Bantustan policy and Buthelezi greeted it as a "radical move away from the position as it was under Mr Vorster."

The Bantustan figureheads have long advocated the allocation of more land to the reserves, in part to make it a little easier for them to try to sell the policy to Africans, who overwhelmingly reject it.

Officials like Buthelezi, Sebe, Kaiser Matanzima, and Lucas Mangope play a vital role in the entire Bantustan scheme. Without their cooperation, Pretoria would never have been able to get it off the ground in the first place. They act, in effect, as policemen and administrators on behalf of white supremacy. Most Blacks regard them as stooges.

... In a campaign to "curb immorality," Chief Vulindaba Ngcobo of the Mafunze Tribal Location in KwaZulu is imposing compulsory virginity tests in his district.

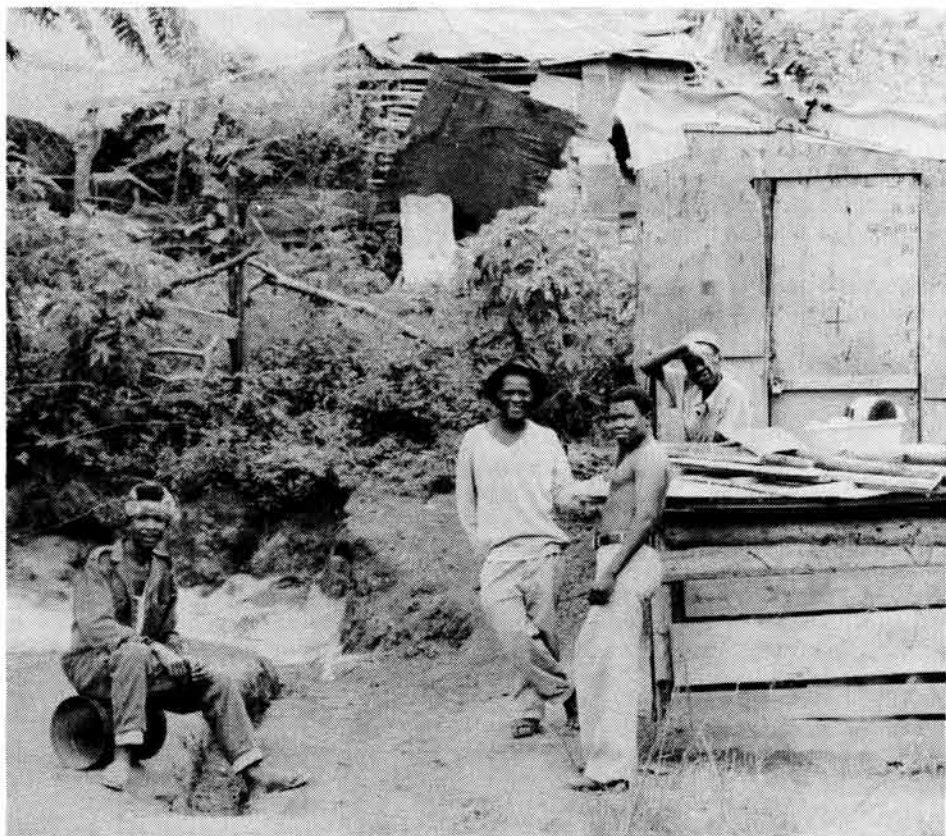
Parents are being fined R40 if the young woman does not show up for the test. If she fails the test she is fined R10, unless she names the "seducer," who in turn is fined R10 and must donate two animals to the woman's parents. The chief is offering prizes to the areas that can produce the highest number of virgins.

Ngcobo says he has the support of the KwaZulu administration. He also claims backing from most parents, except for a few who are opposed to "good things" . . .

With Pretoria's blessing, the Bantustan chiefs have carried out many repressive and reactionary policies.

In the Transkei, it is now a "treasonable" offense, punishable by death, to even criticize or ridicule the Bantustan's alleged "independence." In Venda, several dozen teachers, students, and political figures critical of Chief Patrick Mphahlele were recently detained without trial.

In BophuthaTswana, Lucas Mangope has launched a campaign of terror and intimidation against 360,000 non-Tswana residents of that Bantustan over their refusal to accept BophuthaTswana "citizenship." Some 250,000 of the non-Tswanas, who live in squatter settlements, are being threatened with destruction of



Workers in KwaMashu: Deprived of South African citizenship. Ernest Harsch/IP-1

their homes and forcible eviction from the area. On December 21, BophuthaTswana police attacked a squatters' camp at Kromdraai, arresting eighty-eight persons.

As intended by Pretoria, such actions can lead to a serious heightening of ethnic frictions among Africans.

The Verligte 'Solution'

Originally, Pretoria had tried, in a mechanical manner, to extend the authority of the Bantustan representatives to cover Africans in the urban areas as well. The regime hoped thereby to sow ethnic divisions among urban Blacks and channel their political energies down the dead-end path of Bantustan "self-determination."

This effort failed miserably. Instead, a new generation of Black activists emerged in the townships, committed to struggling for majority rule over the entire country. The massive upheavals in Soweto, Cape Town, and other cities displayed a degree of Black unity that took the authorities by surprise.

Clearly, if white supremacy was to buy time, new tactics were called for.

Since the 1976 uprisings especially, numerous voices within the ruling class and the government have been clamoring for "change"—change, as they see it, to better safeguard the essence of white supremacy.

Some of these forces are represented within the ruling National Party through

its *verligte* wing.² While they still face stiff opposition from the more traditionalist, rural-based sectors of the National Party, the *verligte* elements have achieved a greater prominence and influence within the government apparatus since Pieter W. Botha became prime minister in September 1978.

Although himself not identified as a *verligte*, Botha named two leading exponents of that wing to key cabinet posts: Piet Koornhof as minister of plural relations and development, to implement government policy toward Africans; and Punt Jansen as minister of education and training, to oversee the shifts in the system of African education. Roelof "Pik" Botha and Fanie Botha, two other *verligtes*, were already foreign minister and minister of labor and mines, respectively.

In concert with other "reform-minded"

2. The *verligte* ("enlightened") wing of the party considers itself more "liberal" than the bulk of the party officialdom. Most of the *verligtes* are from the better educated layers of the Afrikaner community, and some have close ties to the newly rich Afrikaner bourgeoisie (a majority of the big capitalists are still English-speaking). The *verligtes* refer to the more rigid, arch-conservative leaders of the National Party as *verkrampes* (the dogmatists, or more literally the "narrow minded"). Andries Treurnicht, the leader of the party in the Transvaal, is the most prominent leader of the *verkrampete* wing.

party leaders, and with the cautious backing of the prime minister, these figures have been in the forefront of the efforts to streamline apartheid and bring it more into tune with the regime's need to maintain control over a growing and increasingly urbanized Black population.

According to Gerrit Viljoen, a leading verligte and the chairman of the influential Broederbond,³ "Clearly apartheid's original formula cannot cope with this situation. We must learn from our past mistakes and build on the present system to cancel them out."

The token relaxation of some aspects of urban segregation, the alteration in education policy, and the contemplated modifications of the Bantustans and the Black labor system are all products of this realization.

Another innovation, which is at the core of verligte thinking, is an attempt to foster the emergence of an urban Black petty-bourgeois layer that sees its interests tied to the preservation of the status quo and that can serve as a buffer between the Black masses and the white regime.

Prime Minister Botha also openly favors such an approach. In 1976, shortly after the initial Soweto rebellions and while he was defense minister, he declared that the regime would be able to protect itself only if "we can succeed in establishing a strong middle class—not only among Whites, but the Black and Brown people as well."

At the end of 1977, a number of restrictions on the setting up of African businesses and professions in the townships were lifted. The authorities dropped a requirement that applicants for new trading sites, shareholders, and members of partnerships produce Bantustan "citizenship" papers. All restrictions were scrapped on the types of trading and professional work allowed, except that African-owned manufacturing enterprises were still barred outside the Bantustans. The maximum size of businesses was more than doubled.

Sam Motsuenyane, the chairman of the African Bank and of the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce, hailed the moves and declared that the "scope for black commerce has widened considerably." And widened it has, especially for Motsuenyane himself. In October 1978 he was appointed to the board of Hill Samuel, a British-owned merchant bank, becoming the first African ever to be named to such a position in South Africa.

... Behind the wheel of an invariable late-model Mercedes Benz, they cruise the

3. The "Brotherhood," a semi-secret society of top Afrikaner politicians, administrators, businessmen, farmers, and professionals. The Broederbond often formulates policies before they are openly discussed within the National Party itself. Every prime minister since the National Party came to power in 1948 has been a member of the Broederbond.

streets of Durban. In their stylish suits, tinted glasses, and colorful, expensive saris, they stand out from most Indians, a class apart.

Like other Indians, they must go home at night to their segregated Indian townships, but these "millionaire" merchants and employers of labor manage quite well in apartheid South Africa. Openly contemptuous of Africans and working-class Indians, they opt for the status quo.

Africans refer to them as the abaBenzi—the "Mercedes Benz people" . . .

The authorities have also introduced concessions that appear to have applicability to a somewhat broader range of Blacks. In 1978, the regime granted those Africans who could afford to buy or build their own homes in the urban townships limited leasehold rights, allowing them to own, sell, or bequeath their homes over a period of ninety-nine years.

Like many of the regime's other recent "reforms," however, this one too has a great deal of fine print. Pretoria wants to be able to limit *who* can take advantage of their partial concession.

Not only does the measure fall short of granting freehold title to the houses and land (a key demand of Black leaders), but it greatly restricts the transfer of ownership of the lease. For instance, Africans who are "citizens" of "independent" Bantustans cannot bequeath their homes to their children. Persons who do not have valid residency qualifications (a rapidly growing category) may be able to inherit a home, but they may not be able to *occupy* it. And the fact that the land will still be owned by the administration boards gives local white officials the power to evict any "undesirable" homeowners at will.

The Botha regime clearly hopes that these moves, limited as they are in terms of the needs of the Black community as a whole, will at least be successful in retaining the acquiescence of some Black figures, preventing them from going over to the liberation struggle, and enticing them into more active collaboration with the white authorities.

While urban residency rights for the slightly better-off layers of Blacks are being eased to an extent, they are becoming even more restrictive for the masses of Blacks.

More 'Useless Boys Clubs'

To provide a mechanism for Black collaboration, and to introduce an element of indirect rule into the townships, the regime has begun to impose new Black-staffed "community councils" in a number of areas.

The old Urban Bantu Councils, which had only advisory powers, were widely ridiculed among township residents as "Useless Boys' Clubs," lacking in any political authority. As a result, they were unable to fulfill the regime's plans to rally

the township populations behind them.

The imposition of the community councils is another bid to do the same thing. But the new councils have been assigned limited administrative tasks, to give the appearance of having more power. These include allocating sites for churches, schools, and trading establishments; controlling stray animals; developing sports facilities; promoting "sound community development" and the "moral and material welfare" of township residents; and other routine functions the white officials would just as soon not have to be bothered with.

The councils are also to take on certain policing functions, including responsibility for demolishing unauthorized shanties and for setting up "community guards" to maintain "law and order." This last point is a particularly contentious issue in townships like Soweto, where residents are painfully aware that the guards are nothing more than extensions of the police apparatus, designed to further repress the Black community.

Real power, of course, remains in white hands. The councils simply make it possible for the administration boards to delegate some of the day-to-day footwork to Black collaborators like David Thebehali, who chairs the Soweto Community Council.

The councils are extremely unpopular among Blacks, and the "elections" to them have been widely boycotted. In Soweto, only about 6 percent of the eligible electorate turned out, and Thebehali himself won his seat with only ninety-seven votes. Nevertheless, about 130 councils had been set up in Black townships around the country by the end of 1978.

A somewhat similar ploy, on an even bigger scale, is being envisioned for the Coloured and Indian sections of the Black population.

In September 1977, the government unveiled a new constitutional scheme that it plans to implement within the next few years. Basically, it calls for the establishment of token "parliaments" for Coloureds and Indians, to discuss and legislate on issues pertaining only to those communities. Again, real power would continue to rest with the white parliament and the white state president, who will also chair a cabinet council composed of a majority of white members. Before he became prime minister, Botha headed the commission that drew up this proposal.

As with the Bantustans and the community councils for Africans, Botha is aiming to use these new institutions to win the collaboration of prominent Coloured and Indian figures, as the regime has already done through the existing Coloured People's Representative Council and the South African Indian Council (two advisory bodies.)

In addition, by offering a few token voting rights to Coloureds and Indians, but not to Africans, Botha hopes to

heighten frictions among the three sectors of the Black population and slow down the growing identification among young Coloureds and Indians with their African brothers and sisters.

So far, a few Coloured and Indian collaborators have shown some interest in the new constitutional plan, but the regime has not yet been able to rally much notable support for it, largely because of the pressures on prominent Coloureds and Indians coming from the masses of those communities.

Recently, Botha indicated that a new structure might be devised to provide a place for African collaborators in the constitutional plan, although this would not be on the same "level" as the Coloured and Indian bodies.

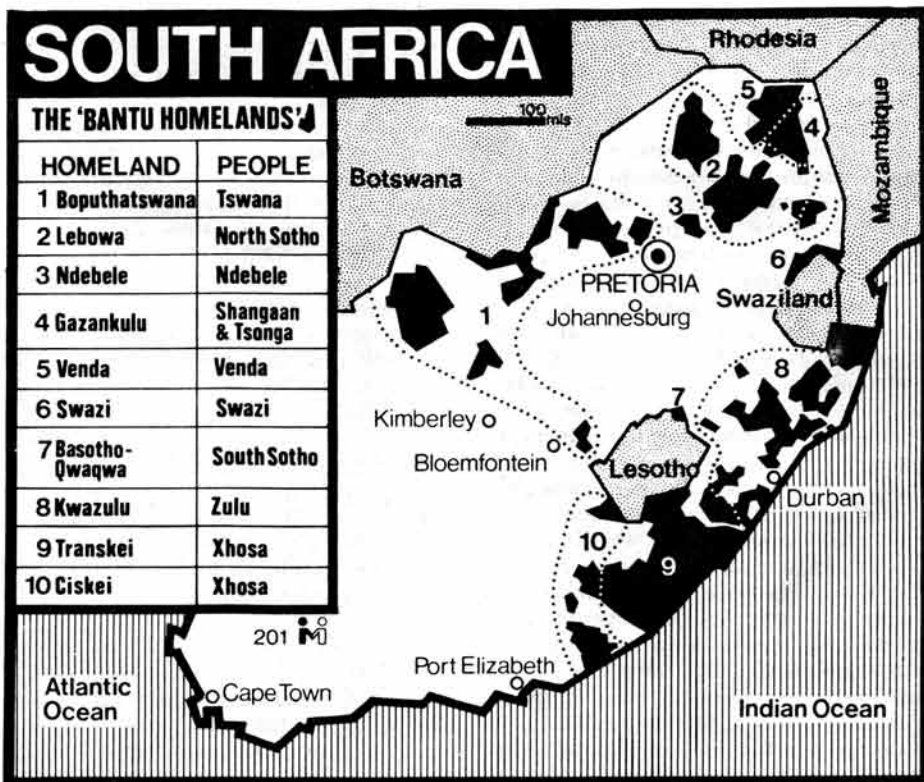
None of the changes now being introduced depart in any fundamental way from the basic policy of apartheid as it has developed over the past several decades. Botha and his verligte partners are simply trying to implement that policy in a more flexible manner to meet changing circumstances.

How much they will be able to do that remains to be seen. They face opposition, not only from Blacks, but also from some sectors of the ruling class, who fear that any major alterations in the apartheid system could set off uncontrollable social forces. The differences within the government and ruling class over what course to follow have at times been quite sharp, and reflect the extreme pressures bearing down on the apartheid authorities.

Those pressures have been most evident in the "information scandal," also known as "Muldergate" after former Minister of Information and of Plural Relations C.P. Mulder. It began in mid-1978 with revelations of corruption in the Department of Information and spread to include exposures of secret government influence-peddling operations abroad, such as attempts to buy foreign newspapers and to bribe foreign officials to get them to foster a pro-South African image.

Heads rolled. The chief scapegoat was Mulder, who was forced to resign from the cabinet in early November, and later from parliament and the party itself. His protégé, Information Secretary Eschel Rhoodie, fled abroad (from where he has threatened to expose other government officials). Gen. Hendrik van den Bergh, the powerful head of the Bureau of State Security (the secret police) was forced into retirement. Vorster himself was compelled to resign as prime minister and to retreat to the largely ceremonial post of president.

Although the scandal is not directly tied to the political differences within the National Party, it has been exacerbated by the factional strains. Each wing has tried to take advantage of it to advance its own policies. So far, the verligtes have come out ahead.



Everyone who served in Vorster's cabinet, however, was undoubtedly implicated in Mulder's "special operations," and Botha and his cohorts fear that if the scandal is not contained in time, their own positions could be undercut and the verkramppte wing could regain ground. That has already happened to an extent. Presenting himself as a "Mr. Clean," the archconservative Andries Treurnicht has rallied considerable support within the National Party, winning election as provincial party leader in the Transvaal, one of the most powerful party positions and one from which he could later make a bid for the prime ministership.

All the factions in the government are concerned, however, that if the scandal drags on or escapes control it could further expose the weaknesses of white minority rule, encouraging Blacks to hit even harder at the apartheid system. Despite their policy differences, no one in the government wants that. They are unanimous that any manifestations of Black opposition be repressed.

A number of statements by leading verligtes, despite the seemingly "moderate" image they have sought to foster, reveal a determination as ruthless as that of the most arch-reactionary racists to maintain white political and economic domination at all costs.

Pik Botha, the verligte minister of foreign affairs, has affirmed that the government would "never in a hundred years" agree to share political power with Africans. He also maintained that whites

should "fight to the last man" rather than abandon the policy of imposing "independence" on the Bantustans.

Willem de Klerk, the editor of *Die Transvaler* and also an outspoken verligte, issued a warning to Blacks in June 1978 to be satisfied with the new "reforms"—or else. "If black spokesmen continue to spit on the ground when whites make proposal after proposal," he wrote; "if every white attempt to make progress simply elicits another black protest and demand; . . . if black leaders simply laugh at us and amuse themselves with our fear and tell us that the day of liberation and of reckoning is at hand . . . if it goes on building up . . . then the cord will snap. . . ."

What would follow, de Klerk explained, would be a "great counter-revolution."

Rule by Sjambok

To many Blacks, it would appear that de Klerk's "great counter-revolution" was already under way, and had been under way for a good many years.

Despite all the talk about "change," there has been no lessening of the massive violence against Blacks that is a central feature of daily life in South Africa. Continued repression is, in fact, a vital part of the regime's efforts to force through its most recent schemes.

With an average daily prison population of around 100,000, South Africa still has the highest ratio of prisoners to total population of any country in the world. The overwhelming majority of them are Black.

About one million Blacks are arrested

each year under specifically racial laws. Patrols by police wagons on the lookout for Black pass law violators are a common sight at night in the white suburbs of Johannesburg and other cities. During the day, police with dogs frequently wade through crowds of Blacks, in the most intimidating manner.

Political activists run particularly high risks of becoming victims of police repression. Between July 1, 1976, and June 30, 1977, more than 13,500 persons were prosecuted for committing "malicious damage to property," "sabotage," "inciting and promoting racial unrest," and other similar charges, many of which stemmed from the massive anti-government rebellions of that period.

Another 2,430 persons were detained between June 1976 and September 1977 under the Terrorism Act, the Internal Security Act, and other "security" legislation. Nearly 1,000 of them were subsequently tried and convicted. According to a report by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 308 political prisoners were still being detained without charge or trial as of late July 1978.

One common form of restriction against political activists is the banning order. It prohibits the banned person from preparing anything for publication, restricts movement to certain areas, and limits whom he or she can meet. Bannings generally obstruct open political activity and even make it difficult to obtain a job or continue schooling. The SAIRR has reported that there are now 167 persons under banning orders, most of which run for five years.

In a similar manner, the regime has sought to stifle critical thought by outlawing many publications, books, films, and other political and cultural media. Since the early 1950's tens of thousands of publications have been banned.

... Each week the Publications Directorate releases a list of newly banned items. The November 16, 1978, list includes: *Donderdag of Woensdag*, a novel by the Afrikaans writer John Miles; *In Defence of the October Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky; *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred*, by Robert J. Stoller; *Imperialism and World Economy*, by Nikolai Bukharin; "Thomson's Give You Complete Exposure," a calendar; an issue of *Christianity Today*; *October 19: An Anniversary of Repression*, a student publication from Johannesburg ...

Brutality against prisoners, both political and "nonpolitical," is routine. Although many cases go unreported, instances of beatings, torture, and murder in jail are so common that they frequently come out in trial testimony. On the day of my arrival in Johannesburg, for instance, a Black youth testifying before the Supreme Court in Bloemfontein revealed that he

had been handcuffed by the police from a rafter, beaten, whipped with a *sjambok* (ox-hide whip), and shocked with an electrical device.

During and after the Soweto rebellions, several dozen political prisoners died in custody, most of them apparently at the hands of the police. Minister of Justice, Police, and Prisons James T. Kruger admitted that a total of 117 detainees had died in police custody during 1976 alone, although he tried to explain the deaths, as the results of "suicide," "natural causes," and other factors not relating to their treatment by the police.

Pretoria's judicially sanctioned murders are just as high. In 1978, the courts sent 132 persons—all but one of them Black—to the gallows, an all-time high of more than one execution every three days. The 1978 execution rate was 46.6 percent higher than the 1977 figure of 90, which in turn was 47.5 percent higher than the 1976 total of 61.

... Sixteen police vehicles swoop on a home in the Diepkloof section of Soweto on December 4, 1978. The security police surround the house and storm inside, shooting twenty-two-year-old Kenneth Mkhwanazi three times in the head and chest.

Mkhwanazi's cousin later says she found him lying in a pool of blood with two white policemen standing over him. "One of the security policemen told me to play a long-playing jazz record of Sonny Stitt on our record player for them while my cousin was dying on the floor," she recalls.

After the police are sure Mkhwanazi is dead, they take him away ...

Blacks are also frequently gunned down by the police in the streets. Besides the more than 600 who were killed during the crackdown against the mass demonstrations of 1976 and 1977, scores of others are murdered each year in the course of "routine" police activities. These killings are intended to terrorize the Black population as a whole.

Another development, of relatively recent origin, is the emergence of unofficial terrorist acts directed at white political dissidents.

In January 1978, Richard Turner, a banned lecturer of socialist persuasion, was assassinated in Durban by an unknown sniper.

Within a little more than a week in August, Harold Strachan, a critic who had earlier exposed conditions of political prisoners, narrowly escaped death when a bullet whizzed past his head; firebombs were thrown at the car of Beyers Naudé, the banned former head of the now-outlawed Christian Institute; and shotgun blasts were fired through the window of Helen Joseph, a seventy-three-year-old critic of the regime, who is also banned.

Around the same time, Colin Gardiner, a

former chairman of the Christian Institute, received death threats from a group identifying itself as "Anti-Com." The telephoned message was: "You remembered what happened to Rick Turner. You are next on the list."

The apartheid regime is busy preparing for even bigger upsurges in the future, both within South Africa and beyond its borders. Military expenditures for 1977-78 reached R1.7 billion, or more than 18 percent of the entire government budget. Expenditures for the police, courts, and prisons were slated at another R360 million.

Despite the United Nations sponsored arms embargo against South Africa, which is supposed to be "mandatory" on all UN members, Pretoria continues to receive arms from abroad. Analyzing recently released trade statistics, *Rand Daily Mail* financial editor Howard Preece reported December 18, "South Africa is still spending more than R300-million a year on arms imports in spite of the widespread restrictions on sales of military equipment to this country."

This massive armed might continues to be a threat to Black peoples in other countries as well. Lieut. Gen. R.R.D. Rogers, the air force chief, declared November 29 that South African society faced "a period of total onslaught." He continued, "Under these conditions a strong and prepared Defence Force is more than ever necessary. Necessary, not only to defend the fatherland but to establish stability in Southern Africa and to establish ourselves as guardians of peace and freedom in this subcontinent."

What Rogers meant by "guardians of peace and freedom" had already been illustrated by the South African invasion of Angola in 1975-76 and Pretoria's massacre of hundreds of Namibian refugees in southern Angola in May 1978.

As they have done before, the white supremacists of South Africa are employing a combination of outright repression and structural adjustment to try to contain the Black freedom struggle and thereby perpetuate their rule.

Pretoria's big problem, however, is that Blacks are already preparing to meet the challenge.

[Next: *Black Revolt vs. White Reaction*]

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Japanese Trotskyists Assess Municipal Elections

[The April 8 municipal elections in Japan resulted in a stunning defeat for the workers parties. Bourgeois candidates won all fifteen of the prefectural (provincial) governorships contested, including in the key urban centers of Tokyo and Osaka, traditional strongholds of the Socialist and Communist parties.

[In Tokyo, trade-union leader Kaoru Ota ran for governor with the support of the SP and CP. He received only 35 percent of the vote, as opposed to 44 percent for Shun'ichi Suzuki, the leading bourgeois candidate. Ota's defeat marked the end of twelve years of reformist administration in Japan's largest city.

[In Osaka, CP incumbent governor Ryoichi Kuroda was narrowly defeated, receiving 48 percent of the vote.

[The following analysis of the election results has been excerpted from an article by Shinji Maki in the April 23 issue of the Japanese Trotskyist weekly *Sekai Kakumei*. The translation and footnotes are by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

Prime Minister Ohira and other leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) have declared that the results of the prefectural elections "mark the end of the turbulent politics of the seventies." To back up this assessment they point out the near absence of ideological debates during the election campaign, the gradual blurring of distinctions among political parties and the formation of various blocs among them, and especially to the end of "the myth of reformist municipalities."¹

The LDP's basic strategy in the elections involved drawing the moderate Komei and Democratic Socialist² parties into a bloc. Ohira knew better than anyone that his

party was not strong enough to go into the elections alone. He also knew that a defeat in the prefectural elections could have led directly to the downfall of his government.

That is why the LDP went to great lengths to make this an "election without issues." Yet the crises now afflicting municipal administrations could hardly fail to become an issue.

Now that the curtain has fallen on the era of rapid economic expansion, and Japanese capitalism has been plunged into a crisis, state finances play a decisive role in keeping the system afloat. And as everyone knows, the fiscal problems of the municipalities, along with those of the public corporations, are among the biggest drains on state finances.

The restructuring of municipal administrations along bourgeois lines is a pressing task for the state. At the same time, these municipalities are clearly becoming a crucial battleground in the struggle between the ruling class and the workers. The capitalist government cannot afford to postpone a drastic restructuring of municipal administrations; it is a policy question they must act on immediately.

Yet in the prefectural elections, they could not openly campaign for the policies they hope to impose. For Ohira and the LDP, victory could only be won by obscuring class conflicts. This reflects the stop-gap character, the underlying weakness of the Ohira regime.

"Collaboration," not "confrontation," was the LDP's theme in the elections. That, plus their alliance with the Komei and Democratic Socialist parties, is what enabled them to win.

In the past, the Komei and Democratic Socialist parties sought to collaborate with the Socialist Party in elections. Now they have abandoned that strategy in favor of an alliance with the LDP.

Needless to say, LDP leaders worked hard to persuade both these parties to form such an alliance for the elections. But the main thing that drove them into the arms of the LDP was the debilitating crisis of the Socialist Party.

Crisis-Ridden SP Caves In

Within the Socialist Party under Chairman Ichio Asukata, the watchwords have been "bolster our independence" and "build a million-member party." These slogans are a reflection of the fact that the debate in the SP over united-front policy has been set aside, a confession of the fact that the party has given up trying to take the initiative in the fast-moving political situation.³

The incompetence of the Socialist and

Communist parties—in particular the pathetic spectacle presented by the SP—prevented the working class from taking the offensive, given the lack of any alternative leadership. This is what allowed the Komei and Democratic Socialist parties to move toward an open bloc with the bourgeoisie.

Until recently, the leaderships of the Socialist Party and Sohyo liked to talk about the coming "era of coalitions." As it became apparent that the collapse of the LDP's one-party rule was not far off, they saw the formation of a coalition of opposition parties to replace the LDP regime as the task of the day. But the basis for their hopes and plans has crumbled now that the Komei and Democratic Socialist parties have abandoned for good their policy of blocking with the SP, and have openly lined up with the bourgeoisie. In this sense, the prefectural elections marked the onset of a new political situation.

The election results clearly show that the SP has fallen from its leading position in the "progressive camp." The main cause of the overwhelming victory of the conservative-moderate bloc must be sought in the incompetence of the SP and CP, particularly the moribund state of the Social Democrats. Even during the election campaign itself, the SP's inability to hang together as a party was laid bare for all working people to see.

The SP was publicly split in its policies toward the Tokyo and Osaka gubernatorial races, the focal point of the elections. In Tokyo, the SP joined with the CP in a common campaign against the conservative-moderate bloc, while in Osaka they actively joined in with the conservatives and moderates to call for ousting the "progressive" municipal administration. This blatant contradiction only served to demoralize and confuse working people.

SP leaders point to the "election without issues" as the main cause of their defeat. It is certainly true that the LDP tried to stay vague on the issues while drawing in the moderate forces and launching an all-out

1. In local elections in Japan, candidates usually run as "independents," receiving the endorsement of one or more parties. Candidates endorsed by the Socialist and Communist parties are commonly referred to as "progressives" or "reformists," while those endorsed by the LDP are labeled "conservatives." Beginning in the late 1960s, reformist slates won control of a series of local administrations, until by 1974 seven of Japan's ten largest cities had reformist mayors. SP and CP leaders predicted that the trend toward reformist municipal administrations would eventually lead to reformist victories over the ruling LDP at the national level.—*IP/I*

2. The Komei (Clean Government) Party is based on the Soka Gakkai Buddhist sect. The Democratic Socialist Party emerged in 1960 as a right-wing split from the SP. It is no longer organizationally linked to the trade-union movement, although it is supported by the anti-communist leadership of the Domei unions.—*IP/I*

3. The SP is the largest opposition party in the Diet (national parliament), but it lacks the organizational and propaganda apparatus of the CP or the Buddhist Soka Gakkai. During elections SP candidates rely on mobilizing the Sohyo trade unions to campaign for them, and on forming electoral alliances with the CP or the Komei Party. The SP has long been divided into two wings, one of which favors an electoral "united front" with the CP, while the other looks toward a bloc with the Komei and Democratic Socialist parties. Asukata has promised to build up the SP's own party apparatus, thus making it more independent of the trade unions.—*IP/I*

drive to topple reformist municipalities any way they could. But that is only half the explanation.

The other half has to be sought in the fact that the SP discreetly avoided confronting the conservatives and moderates with clear policy alternatives. This was even confessed by SP Secretary General Tagaya in a candid statement:

"On policy questions our party tried to counter their blurring of the issues by stressing the difference in priorities. We said that even though our menu might be the same as theirs, the order of the entrées was different. People didn't seem to get it, though." (*Mainichi Shimbun*, April 10.)

The situation in Tokyo was typical. All three candidates, "progressive" Ota as well as his conservative opponents, made municipal reform their top campaign promise. All three insisted that there are too many municipal employees, and all agreed on the need for "more efficient administration."

So where was the distinction between conservatives and progressives on this point? The crisis of municipal finances was objectively the single most important issue in the gubernatorial campaign. The SP simply failed to put up a fight around the issue. Or more precisely, it lacked the program and policies for waging such a fight.

The End of 'Progressive' Administrations

During the era of rapid economic expansion, particularly since the late 1960s, reformist municipal administrations began to spring up in cities and prefectures around the country.

"Elect an administration that will serve the people, not big business, and make this a better town!"

"For democratic administration through neighborhood participation!"

"Priority for social services!"

These were the watchwords of the "progressive" municipalities. Their fundamental role, during that period of economic boom and rising tax revenues, was to rake off for municipal social services a portion of the financial resources the national government was using to enrich and strengthen private capital by building up the industrial infrastructure.

But with the end of the boom, the foundation under these reformist municipalities collapsed. In this new situation they have had to choose between two alternatives: maintain social services at the expense of bourgeois property, or else cut back services and lay off large numbers of municipal workers.

For the central government and the bourgeoisie, a key axis of their policy for bailing out Japanese capitalism is to reconstruct municipalities along bourgeois lines, and strengthen direct state control over them.

In response, the SP and CP have never even tried to go beyond the bounds of a

conservative defense of the old-style "progressive municipalities." Under conditions of financial crises, the mayors of those municipalities have sought to cut person-



S. Yamafuji/Asahi Evening News
MASAYOSHI OHIRA

nel expenses, lay off municipal workers, and squeeze the budgets for social services. Throughout this process, the SP and CP have played a role of holding back angry workers and other residents. Both parties have fallen into the position of uncritically defending the "progressive" municipal administrations.

In Tokyo, where over two thousand municipal workers have lost their jobs in the past year, the SP and CP, as well as the leadership of the Municipal Workers Union, have done nothing to fight the layoffs. And now they are preparing to accept a new attack proposed by the municipal authorities—suspension of wage raises for workers over the age of sixty.

How do the SP and CP propose to administer these crisis-ridden municipalities on the verge of collapse? They have tried to avoid presenting any policies at all in this regard.

Clearly, the key to reconstructing these municipalities must be to base them squarely on the righteous demands and struggles of local workers and residents, and drive toward a confrontation with the state and the bourgeoisie. But the Socialist and Communist parties have both stopped short of doing that. And as long as this goes on, there will be no getting over the "collapse of the myth of reformist municipalities" that Ohira and the LDP are crowing about. On this point the SP and CP have shown their total incompetence.

The shakeups and splits in the bloc between the Socialist Party and the Sohyo leadership have been pointed out for some time now. But the results of the prefectural elections have clearly pushed this whole process to a new stage, plunging the alliance between Social Democratic politicians and union bureaucrats into an even

deeper crisis. The SP-Sohyo bloc is so weakened it can never be revived. It lacks even the energy for a split.

The Task of Militant Leftists

The SP-Sohyo bloc is clearly doomed to fall apart. The Communist Party, which increased its representation in prefectural legislatures by a total of thirty seats in the elections, is thought to have put up a good fight. But it can hardly be spared the crisis that has struck the SP-CP alliance.

The CP's shift to a strategy of running fewer candidates to ensure the maximum chance of getting each one elected undoubtedly paid off. Furthermore, it is clear that many former SP supporters registered their dissatisfaction by voting for CP candidates this time. But the Communist Party, whose growth has been based on the rise of reformist municipalities, will be hit hardest of all by their collapse.

Although it may succeed for a time in taking votes away from the SP, the CP has no more effective program for fighting the government's project of rationalizing municipal administrations along bourgeois lines. In no way will it be able to monopolize "the just progressive cause." Working people dissatisfied with the Socialist Party who voted for the CP this time will undoubtedly be equally critical of the CP tomorrow.

But what will happen to the more than ten million working people who cast votes for the SP and CP in this election? That is the real problem. Working people feel a deep sense of despair over the election results. There is a growing tendency not to look for leadership to the Socialist or Communist parties any more.

The LDP has shown clearly that for the time being it cannot take a hard line. Ohira cannot openly confront and try to break the resistance of working people. But in the face of the weakness of the ruling party, the traditional Social Democratic and Stalinist leaderships have also abandoned the task of leading working people in a head-on confrontation with the LDP government. The workers and the capitalists, despite their deep conflict of class interests, remain at a standoff. This is what the prefectural elections showed.

The working class needs to go on the offensive. But to do that they need a leadership alternative to the SP and CP. In view of this, the question that must be posed is how the revolutionary left can supersede the crisis of the crumbling SP-Sohyo bloc.

The response of militant activists to the prefectural elections was clearly different this time. In the past, most left groups or currents independent of the Socialist and Communist parties showed a definite anti-electoralist tendency. They viewed elections as occasions for sarcastic commentary rather than as opportunities for struggle.

During this year's prefectural elections,

however, only a small minority of groups lapsed into that sort of attitude. Most of them ran election campaigns in which they put forward their own positions.

Witnessing the crumbling of the Socialist Party, they saw that the working class was losing its former leadership, and had nowhere to go. And so they tried to respond to the rapidly changing situation. These militant groups and currents simply

could not stand aside as the recognized leadership of the working class collapsed.

Nonetheless, these militant currents, including the JRCL, were unable to intervene in the elections as a single, unified left current. They failed to advance a common struggle around clearly defined objectives.

This is not a problem limited to election

campaigns. But the prefectural elections underscored the urgency of the various forces independent of the SP and CP emerging as a single current, which can serve as a tool to force the Social Democrats and Stalinists into a working-class united front. Such a militant current could reorganize into its ranks many of the working people who are becoming alienated from the SP and CP today. □

After the September Defeat

Where Is Nicaragua Going?

By Fausto Amador and Sara Santiago

[The following background article, covering events in the conflict in Nicaragua since late last year, was written in early May.]

* * *

I. Why Estelí?

The international press has reported the reunification of the three tendencies of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).¹ The unified leadership has announced that the final offensive against Somoza is drawing near, and that the three currents have therefore regrouped under a single command.

So once again there is talk of the imminence of a second offensive—the decisive one.

For the Nicaraguan masses, however, everyday life since September 1978 has been and remains quite different from such an optimistic outlook. The consequences of the defeat of the first offensive still weigh heavily. Unemployment and poverty grow worse daily. The prices of basic products shoot upwards, owing to the devaluation of the córdoba.

The September events left thousands dead; among them were the most combative leaders of the mass movement, formed in the heat of struggle during the preceding months. Thousands more escaped to other countries or to safer locations to avoid the repression. The workers and popular organizations were dealt big blows. Entire families fled the cities to seek better-protected places. Somoza's terror was imposed on

Nicaragua once again, with more violence than ever. Thus the situation now is quite remote from what it was on the eve of the September battles.

On the night of March 26, some 100 Sandinistas attacked the El Jícaro National Guard post. Six of the nine guardsmen who were there fell and the other three fled. The Sandinista forces left the town the next morning.

At dawn on April 8 (a Sunday), 100 Sandinistas took over a school in Carreteras Province, near Estelí on the Pan-American Highway. They attacked the Condega command post at the same time and killed three of the twelve National Guardsmen stationed there.

During the morning of April 8, bombers from the Nicaraguan Air Force (FAN) began to arrive in the area. The Sandinistas retreated to higher ground only three kilometers from Estelí. The intense aerial bombardment was answered by the Sandinistas, who managed to shoot down a bomber and a light plane. Early in the afternoon the Sandinistas retreated further, after an engagement with a Guard unit that had arrived from Estelí with reinforcements.

Later the same day, some 200 heavily armed Sandinistas took the city of Estelí, where they clashed with National Guard troops who were raiding houses. After heavy street fighting, the Guard withdrew to the barracks. The entrances to the city came under the control of FSLN reserves, the Sandinistas established headquarters in several neighborhoods, and barricades went up in the streets. Estelí was in the hands of the FSLN.

On April 10 a military convoy of thirty vehicles was ambushed while on the way to reinforce the Estelí garrison. Eight guardsmen fell. After the battle, the convoy continued toward Estelí and the Sandinistas retreated.

Also on April 10, the Yalí garrison was attacked. Eighteen guardsmen died and the rest fled. After two hours of fighting,

the forty Sandinistas involved withdrew.

Meanwhile, Estelí remained under FSLN control while the National Guard stayed in its barracks.

During this period there were various battles throughout the northern zone around Estelí, the Sandinistas carrying out ambushes and the FAN bombing the territory frequently.

The Sandinistas suffered few losses. The National Guard units had small forces and scant possibility for resistance.

The FSLN forces were better armed and better prepared than in September. They engaged in more actions in the area than they had previously.

An April 9 communiqué from the Tercerista [Third Force] tendency of the FSLN termed the actions in El Sauce, Achuapa, Condega, El Jícaro, Jalapa, and Estelí "a tactical offensive that is now in the final preinsurrectionary phase."

Undoubtedly the now-unified leadership of the FSLN wanted to transform these actions into the preparations for a second, and supposedly final, offensive. In the FSLN's conception, it was a matter of creating the conditions for an insurrection. They were also probably hoping to find a response among the population of Estelí similar to that of September. This would then "detonate" a national uprising against Somoza like the one that occurred last year.

A big Sandinista force was decisively mobilized to launch the second—final—offensive.

The Sandinista fighters who in recent months have been preparing for head-on combat with the National Guard and who have seen more and better weapons come into the FSLN's hands are pushing the organization to launch offensives. If the means are at hand to confront the National Guard, why not do it? Why wait any longer? Why go on shedding the blood of isolated Sandinista cadres in small-scale skirmishes? Why not repeat September now? If the detonation of a

1. This article does not take up the history or political positions of the Sandinista National Liberation Front or its three main tendencies. The reader is urged to consult Fausto Amador's article "Deepening Crisis of the Somoza Regime," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, October 16, 1978, p. 1128.—IP/1

nationwide insurrection does not result, the Sandinista forces can always retreat and then renew and multiply such offensives; so if the final one did not come about, there could be a series of preparatory offensives.

The Outcome

The recent Estelí offensive could not have brought about a new September. The consequences of the September defeat themselves made that impossible.

Last year, when the FSLN launched its first nationwide offensive, the Nicaraguan masses were going through a process of deepening struggle and organization. Their will to fight was growing day by day. The mass movement was not yet prepared for a successful insurrection against Somoza, however. The class organizations, stronger and more militant than ever before, had not yet posed the problem of snatching away Somoza's power, much less taken up the task of solving it in practice. Nonetheless, the mood was very combative.

Separate and apart from the unfolding struggles and the experience acquired in them, and outside the mass organizations of the working class and the oppressed sectors, the FSLN launched a military offensive. At that moment thousands of the most combative Nicaraguans believed the final moment of the dictatorship had arrived—the culmination of the period of big struggles and mass mobilizations.

The voluntaristic and precipitate action of the FSLN in September could not have succeeded. No insurrection prepared and carried out apart from the day-to-day struggles of the masses and their organizations can succeed.

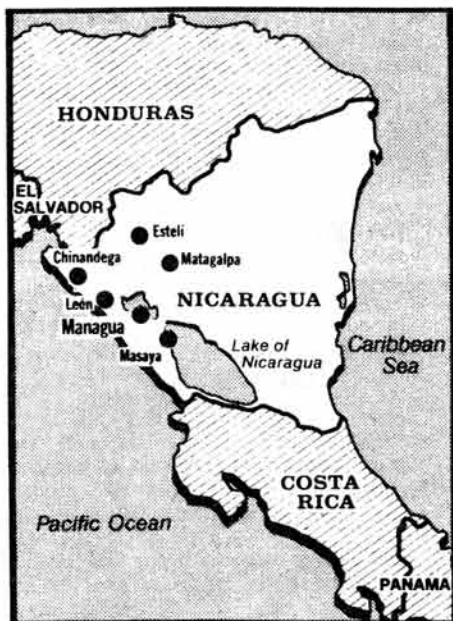
But at that moment, in the midst of a rising wave of struggle, the FSLN's initiative did have big repercussions.

In Estelí, the FSLN's April offensive not only could not put an end to Somoza but could not even achieve the dimensions of the one in September. Throughout the country, the spirit of combat has been cut off and the masses need to regain it. Estelí, the city that suffered the most in the September defeat—the most repression, the greatest flight of inhabitants, more devoid of youth than any other city—could least of all offer a fresh levy of volunteer fighters to join the FSLN's action.

Estelí did not involve the imaginary possibility of overthrowing Somoza or the illusory attempt to set off an insurrection. No, Estelí was a new defeat—not so severe, perhaps, for the FSLN's military capacity, but quite severe indeed for the Nicaraguan masses. After the April offensive, Estelí was for a second time at the mercy of the National Guard's violent repression, which thus gained momentum against the working class and its allies.

This seems not to have any political importance for the FSLN. In a communiqué issued by the Political Commission

of the "Carlos Fonseca Amador" Northern Front (which carried out the offensive in Estelí and the surrounding towns), the actions are characterized as an "all-round success" because there were few casualties in the Sandinista ranks but 120 among the National Guard. A large quantity of war matériel was recovered, and the FSLN



forces were able to withdraw from Estelí to the mountains in "a military operation worthy of any of the best revolutionary armies in the world."

That communiqué bore the date of April 14. Just then Estelí was coming under fierce repression at the hands of the National Guard. Even on April 11, the population of the city had been totally cut off and was suffering from hunger, thirst, and terror. Thousands fled their homes but could not leave the city. They took refuge in schools, in the hospital, and in places they considered safe.

After taking cover in their barracks, the National Guard had begun to counterattack against the Sandinistas. On April 12 the Guard retook the area around the San Juan de Dios Hospital. Forty persons were taken out of the hospital into the street and machine-gunned on the spot. Every sector retaken by the National Guard came under the most barbarous repression. Houses were systematically raided by guardsmen who entered firing their machine guns. Corpses were piled in the streets and burned.

On April 13 the Sandinistas lifted the siege of the 1,000 guardsmen at the barracks and abandoned Estelí. The terror in the city went on for several more days, during which time persons were absolutely prohibited from leaving or entering Estelí while the Guard completed its thorough scourging. The towns and villages near Estelí also fell victim to this repression.

Estelí—a Defeat

Will Estelí be repeated? What city will be the next to suffer such hell? Will the desperate actions of the FSLN be repeated in further attempts to substitute for the actions of the masses themselves?

In September the voluntarist line of the FSLN brought about a defeat from which the masses have not yet recovered. Now that incorrect line has been demonstrated even more tragically in Estelí. The most brutalized city in Nicaragua, the one that had recovered least of all from the September defeat, was once again forced to go through a confrontation with the National Guard.

Thousands did not applaud the FSLN's presence with sympathy and hope and join the battle this time. Instead, they were terrified at being present against their will at a confrontation whose consequences they were to suffer.

Such a course is fatal for the mass movement in Nicaragua. It would be absolutely irresponsible for us to join those who simplistically hail the FSLN's actions. With our criticisms, we want to support the serious FSLN militants who are beginning to question a policy that weighs the success or failure of operations by counting the Sandinista losses against those of the National Guard but fails to take into account the impact such actions have on the Nicaraguan masses' will to struggle.

The FSLN's course runs directly counter to the mass movement's possibilities for recovery. In the short term and even on the purely military plane, this can only lead to social and political conditions in which great disasters will be imminent for the FSLN itself.

Somoza emerges stronger from such actions; the masses emerge terrorized. All the FSLN proves—aside from its inability to defend the masses from repression—is its disregard for the consequences of its own actions. The FSLN's prestige can hardly be heightened by following such a policy. In the interest of the defense of the FSLN itself, this course must be halted.

II. The Course of the Revolution

When the armed confrontations began in September, the Nicaraguan masses had been struggling for months and repression had failed to stop them. The murders committed by the National Guard only provided fresh impetus to the fight. The measures the army took to try to halt demonstrations only led the masses to seek new forms of organization for their protests.

In this climate of agitation, Somoza found it impossible to launch a reign of terror. Nothing could stop the masses. The decades-old fear Somoza had imposed on Nicaraguans was disintegrating.

When the September offensive began,

many believed it spelled the end for Somoza. The Nicaraguans fought for days with great courage, confronting Somoza's military might. The very best of the natural mass leaders who had arisen in the heat of earlier battles joined in the fight.

The dictator did not hesitate to destroy whole cities with incendiary bombs in order to break the resistance. Estelí, the last city to surrender, was chosen by Somoza as the place for exemplary reprisals, to remain engraved in the memory of the Nicaraguan masses. Only a torrential rain kept Estelí from burning to the ground completely after systematic phosphorus bombardment.

Thousands of Nicaraguans lost their lives in September. Thousands more had to flee to the mountains or leave the country to save themselves. Young people fled the cities en masse, while the National Guard exterminated all those who failed to escape. The organizations of the workers movement disintegrated in the cities where there was fighting.

Somoza's reign of terror was imposed once again. *La Prensa* reported daily new murders, disappearances, and cases of torture. Paramilitary gangs acted with total impunity. At night the National Guard killed indiscriminately.

The destruction of homes, factories, and businesses deepened Nicaragua's social crisis. The working classes saw their living conditions deteriorate brutally. Unemployment grew by leaps and bounds. Prices shot upwards.

The confidence Nicaraguan workers had gained in their own strength was suddenly replaced with fear. The September events choked off the wave of struggle. More than three months were to pass before there would be another demonstration in Nicaragua. Living conditions became worse than ever, and hatred of the dictatorship deepened still more; but the masses' will to struggle had been temporarily broken.

Agony of Somozaism Continues

But we must not draw light-minded conclusions. The September defeat by no means indicates that the crisis of power has been overcome in Nicaragua.

A government is the product of relations between social classes. Somoza cannot escape this iron law. His regime is based on the most profound instability. Put together after the war against Sandino with the direct support of U.S. imperialism, Somozaism forms the very basis of the Nicaraguan bourgeois state. It has developed into a gigantic, parasitic octopus that organizes crime and corruption at all levels of the society.

Somozaism survived in the past because it was the only form of power that could guarantee capitalist social organization and imperialist domination of the country. But the Somozas' exercise of power became

a costly and intolerable burden even for the exploiters whose class interests it defends. An angry but impotent bourgeois coalition took shape against Somoza. The popular sectors, with their own aspirations for a different society, aimed their blows in a more and more aggressive way against the regime. Little by little the Somoza regime found itself socially isolated. Repudiated by all, its social base shrank until its only means of survival was its own desperately expanding parasitism.

That did not change with the defeat of the September uprisings. The Somoza regime must still be destroyed before one can really speak of the crisis of power in Nicaragua being overcome.

But the class interests of those who seek the destruction of Somozaism are totally antagonistic. The workers, peasants, and impoverished middle classes want Somoza's regime destroyed in order to overcome their social problems. The opposition landlords and capitalists, on the other hand, seek to reinforce their own privileges at the expense of the oppressed. They want to replace a regime that robs them, that competes against them with an unfair advantage, and that above all dangerously exacerbates the discontent among the exploited.

If the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie possessed the means to change the regime without provoking a gigantic upsurge of the masses, they would have done so long ago. But the ones on top have nothing to put in Somoza's place.

September only provided some breathing space for Somozaism. The regime was reinforced militarily and was able to reimpose its terror. That is a great deal, but it is not everything.

The Powerlessness of the Broad Opposition Front

When the masses went into struggle after the [January 1978] murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, the whole ruling class understood that the last days of the regime had arrived and that it had to put itself forward to the oppressed as the only valid alternative. The exploiters tried to find an opening through compromises with the imperialists and negotiations with Somoza's own apparatus.

To a large extent the bourgeois oppositionists succeeded in establishing themselves as the only political alternative to the Somoza regime, owing to the absence of a sector or party of the oppressed that was struggling openly for its own power. In one way or another, all the parties and organizations that were in a position to influence events pressed for the replacement of Somoza with some other bourgeois force.

Of course, the bourgeoisie itself is always absent at the moment of confrontation between the oppressed and the regime. But after each struggle, taking advantage of the relatively weakened state

in which the masses had left Somoza, the vultures of the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) would invariably try to benefit politically from the outcome.

This pattern of behavior was repeated after the September events. Silent in the heat of the battle, the FAO ran to the imperialists when the massacre had scarcely ended. It called for foreign intervention, hoping that the imperialists might solve its problems directly.

In October "mediators" arrived in Nicaragua—a commission named by the Organization of American States (OAS) to facilitate negotiations between the bourgeois opposition and the Somozaists.

On October 14 the FAO put forward its negotiating stance: exit of Somoza and his family from the country, formation of a national government, and implementation of a sixteen-point program that included vague promises of agrarian reform, release of political prisoners, educational improvements, and so on. The apparatus of the dictatorship was to remain intact.

Not even Somoza's own Liberal Party was to be excluded. As the FAO's organ, the daily *La Prensa*, said in its October 25 editorial:

... all sectors are invited to join in the great historic task of building democracy. This includes the Liberal Party, but it must disengage itself from the interests of Somozaism.

But the Liberal Party is the Somozas' own political apparatus. It is the dictatorship in the form of a party. The FAO is not unaware of this, but placed only one condition on a pact with the Liberal Party—Somoza's retirement.

After a few days, the FAO "clarified" its proposal regarding the National Guard, the main bulwark of the dictatorship. This "clarification" was necessary because, as the Political Commission of the FAO said in *La Prensa* October 28:

... certain political circles have maintained that the editors of the FAO document [the sixteen points] seemed to leave intact, without thoroughgoing changes, the apparatus of repressive power that up to now has been utilized by the Somoza dictatorship for its *unilateral benefit*.

What radical changes was the FAO proposing? The FAO's statement continued:

... the Governing Junta would proceed to radically reorganize the structure of the National Guard, by means of a Technical Council named and chosen from among top officers with recognized good conduct and discipline—whom the Somoza regime for that reason has kept abroad—and from among those officers inside Nicaragua who have behaved in a like manner.

Have no fear, you who have massacred the Nicaraguan people! Don't worry, National Guard! The FAO is going to allow you to restructure yourselves.

Again on October 30, Ramiro Sacasa of the FAO insisted in *La Prensa*:

The existence and operation of the National Guard would be fully guaranteed as a necessary aspect although, as is normal, supreme command of the armed forces would remain in the hands of the Governing Junta and would be exercised through a Technical Council made up of officers from the National Guard itself.

With this plan the FAO intended to exclude Somoza in the least damaging way possible. Understanding that Somozaism is the basis of the structure of power in Nicaragua, they openly confessed that they did not want to touch this power structure to the least degree. They were calling openly for a pact with Somoza's military and political apparatus, so as to replace the person of Somoza but leave the power structure intact. They asked only that the opposition be permitted to integrate itself into the apparatus at all levels.

All the FAO needed to achieve this program was the agreement . . . of the Somozaists! But that was precisely the problem. Why should the Somozaists accept such an agreement? The weak, vacillating and indecisive FAO, which feared the mobilization of the masses more than it feared Somozaism itself, ran begging to the imperialists to get them to force the Somozaists to come to terms. But this was just another side of the same problem: Why should the imperialists want to do so?

Somoza himself, his family, and his partners are the center of gravity of the whole apparatus. They are not absolutely indispensable, but their "services" will be cast aside only in a really desperate situation. With Somoza strengthened militarily after the September events, neither the imperialists nor the apparatus was going to risk the instability that would result from replacing Somoza, just because the inept, opportunist, and feeble FAO was begging for this.

The next chapter of the "mediation" farce was the plebiscite affair. The first act was a televised speech in which Somoza said that for him to leave the country it would take a "democratic" decision by everyone in a plebiscite. The idea remained suspended in air. The mediators proposed a plebiscite to both sides; Somoza and the FAO rejected it. The mediators proposed it again.

At this point in the talks, the FAO's desire to join the apparatus was concretized with figures—they wanted a third of the members of a new government. Another third would be from the Liberal Party, and the remaining third would be "independents." At other levels, the FAO and the Liberals would have an equal number of posts.

The FAO, hoping to accept the mediators' proposal, knew that its prospective pact with the Somozaists had to be disguised. So it demanded "gestures of good faith" from the regime. The government decreed a general amnesty for

all political prisoners and fugitives and allowed all the exiles to return. Of course, no one with any sense risked accepting such "guarantees" for good coin.

Upon receiving these "gestures" the FAO finally put forward its condition for accepting the plebiscite: Somoza must leave the country. But Somoza said no and the whole episode came to an end.

For months on end, day in and day out, as the central element of national politics, the Nicaraguan masses had watched the capitulatory, vacillating character of the FAO until they were sick and tired of it. Everyone could see how the FAO was totally incapable of confronting the dictatorship. The FAO had played all its political cards and left itself totally and absolutely discredited.

It was logical that faced with the bourgeoisie's failure and discreditment, the masses would seek their own alternative more anxiously than ever. Through this process the Movimiento Pueblo Unido (MPU—United People's Movement) became the political center of gravity among the oppressed. As never before, the MPU seemed to answer the masses' aspirations for unity. At the same time, it was seen as the only sector that had rejected all pacts with the bourgeoisie.

The more the FAO's prestige declined, the more the MPU's was enhanced. Unfortunately, all that glitters is not gold.

From the MPU to the Patriotic Front

The forces that came together to form the MPU in July 1978 were basically the Partido Comunista de Nicaragua (PCN—Nicaraguan Communist Party), the Briceño faction of the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense (PSN—Nicaraguan Socialist Party), and the organized sectors influenced by these two parties. Also, although none of the FSLN tendencies signed the founding declaration in their own name, the organizations in the popular movement that were linked to the Prolonged People's War (GPP) and Proletarian tendencies did add their signatures.

The MPU's founding manifesto set forth its goals:

1. To mobilize the people for the popular overthrow of the dictatorship.
2. To foster the organization and unification of broad sectors of the people.
3. To encourage the development of unity among the revolutionary forces.

The MPU presented itself to the toiling masses as "the great front of popular struggle that represents the highest interests of the cause and thus constitutes a full guarantee of the class and party independence of the masses and their fighting organizations."

In this brief manifesto, the MPU emphasized the two key aspirations of the oppressed masses in Nicaragua—unity

and class political independence:

. . . the MPU comes to the fore to embody the most acute unitary tasks facing the working class, the peasants, the students, and the other social sectors of our people, and to guarantee as well the political independence of the popular masses in their struggle against the dynastic dictatorship.

At the outset the MPU did not represent the great majority of the oppressed sectors. Although significant, its forces were still quite weak.

Nonetheless, the popular movement began to pay attention to it and to see in it the pole around which the oppressed sectors could unite and grow stronger. The MPU became more attractive insofar as the popular movement became the protagonist of political life in Nicaragua and the bourgeoisie showed its incapacity to fight the dictatorship.

But if the MPU was presenting itself to the masses as a class pole, at bottom this was no more than demagoguery. One of the MPU's key components, the PSN, was participating in the bourgeois FAO at the same time it was in the MPU. At no time was a break with the bourgeoisie made a condition for participating in the MPU.

This makes clear how lightly the MPU took the matter of class independence. Moreover, its political components upheld from the very beginning their future plan of using the MPU as a basis for negotiations with the bourgeoisie to form a class-collaborationist front.

This is clearly shown in the July 1978 issue of the newspaper *Unión*, published by the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MORE), an MPU component controlled by the PCN. In a long article on "the policy of unity in action," we read:

Collaboration among workers parties would itself facilitate the unification of all other peace-loving and democratic forces in the world. Workers unity would serve as the basis for the unity of all democratic forces.

Having explained this in theory at the world level, the article winds up by explaining that such a process has been advancing in Nicaragua through the formation of the MPU.

But the Proletarian Tendency of the FSLN explains in the most precise and eloquent way the class-collaborationist goals of those who organized the MPU. Its "Circular Letter No. 10" devotes long paragraphs to the need for uniting the people around the MPU. After emphasizing that it is necessary to encourage without sectarianism this "organized channel in which workers, peasants, students, and all the sectors of the people come together to wage their common struggle jointly," the Proletarian Tendency cautions: "But it is not enough to form a bloc among the people."

"It is in the interests of the revolutionary proletariat and the people as a whole to form a big National Front of Struggle

against the dictatorship, in which all the forces that oppose the tyrannical regime in one way or another would participate."

Of course, "We are clear about the fact that the national bourgeoisie is only interested in national unity so long as it can preside over that unity." But the Proletarian Tendency has the solution; in the next line we read: "The possibility of forming a National Front under the hegemony of the people can only be realized to the extent that the MPU is strengthened and develops at the same time that the bourgeoisie's front is falling apart."

So it was necessary to wait for an opportune moment in which the MPU was strong and the FAO weak. Meanwhile, the MPU had to preserve its appearance as a class pole attractive to the masses, so as to increase its power and influence. It never wanted to present itself as an independent alternative.

The MPU kept silent about the question of power in September and all during the talks with the "mediators." Just when the bourgeoisie was discrediting itself totally in the eyes of the masses, the MPU was more quiet than ever.

With the total breakdown of the negotiations, the FAO's bankruptcy was obvious. The masses knew that no more could be expected from that useless bourgeois opposition, and turned to the MPU.

The moment had come. The MPU broke its silence at a news conference at the beginning of December:

... the MPU considers it necessary to form its own government to carry out a program of deepgoing democratic and patriotic transformations in order to bring the country out of the acute crisis it has been plunged into, and in order to allow the workers and all the people the best development of their struggles for further social progress. . . .

The MPU proposes to form a government of Democratic Unity in which all the political and social forces that have struggled consistently for the overthrow of Somoza's dictatorship would participate. . . .

The MPU called on all the parties that made up the FAO to join it in forming a National Patriotic Front to fight against Somoza, and to participate in a government of democratic unity after the fall of the dictator.

La Prensa and the other organs of the bourgeois opposition that until then had totally ignored the MPU began to set aside their most prominent columns for hailing the "unitary" initiative taken by its leaders.

The constitution of the National Patriotic Front (FPN) was signed on February 1. The Independent Liberal Party, which had withdrawn from the FAO a few days before the total collapse of the negotiations, joined with the MPU and the "Group of Twelve"² to form this front.

2. A group of bourgeois opposition figures with close ties to the Sandinista Front.—IP/I

Also participating was the Social Christian Party, a political corpse revised through the lifesaving efforts of the MPU leaders. The Maoist Frente Obrero (Workers Front) and the Confederation of



SOMOZA

Nicaraguan Workers (CTN) were also included in the membership of the FPN.

The rest of the bourgeois opposition in the FAO did not respond to the call, but agreed to "unity in action" with the FPN.

After the FPN was formed, the MPU went into eclipse. It became just one more component of the interclass bloc. The workers and popular movement in Nicaragua, which has proven its courage and combativity, has thus been prevented from breaking with the bourgeoisie.

The FPN is a barrier set up by the MPU between the masses and their struggle for their own power. The MPU appeared to the masses for a time as the class front in which the oppressed could unite independently of any bourgeois sector. But now it has been transformed into the fraud of the FPN.

Undoubtedly, it is quite correct to organize together with bourgeois forces in specific struggles for democratic demands. Urgent battles for freedom of association and expression, for the right to hold meetings and demonstrate publicly, for the release of political prisoners, and so on, can involve bourgeois sectors. There is nothing to prevent broad campaigns

around such demands by working-class and bourgeois forces working together.

But the FPN does not involve unity in action around specific, concrete, partial demands. It is a permanent body that is presented to the masses as the governmental alternative to the Somoza regime. It is the very opposite of a workers and peasants government that defends the interests of the oppressed.

When it comes to deciding who shall govern, there can be no sharing of power with the bourgeoisie. Either the system of capitalist domination is destroyed or else it remains in place. In face of this problem, no sector of the bourgeoisie can be an ally, because no bourgeois is willing to give up his power to suppress and exploit the workers.

It is this stark reality that the FPN serves to cover up. The Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is well aware that what is at stake is not only the dictatorship. Its entire system of class domination is in danger. It senses the socialist revolution, and seeks to prevent it through the FPN. That is just what the MPU leadership offers to do.

Throughout this process, the real political leadership of the MPU has been in the hands of the Nicaraguan Communist Party. The Stalinist movement in Nicaragua is split into three different organizations: the PSN (Briceño), the PSN (Sánchez), and the PCN. Together they provide a rich lesson in counterrevolutionary politics. All three support class collaboration and a bourgeois governmental alternative to Somoza. In this, they span the spectrum of possibilities: The PSN (Sánchez) was an integral part of the FAO, providing direct working-class backing for the bourgeoisie's own policy. The PCN bided its time in the MPU, waiting for the right moment to hand over to the bourgeoisie the movement that the masses were building independently. And the PSN (Briceño) served as a bridge, belonging both to the FAO and to the MPU.

* * *

To go before the masses in a permanent bloc with the bourgeoisie is to spread confusion about what class camps confront each other in Nicaragua.

The fight against the dictatorship and the imperialist yoke does not eliminate the class differences inside Nicaragua. To the contrary—it exacerbates them. Two fundamental alternatives present themselves to the toiling masses of Nicaragua: either a civilian bosses' government to replace Somoza, or else the proletarian course involving the complete solution of the problem through the socialist revolution. There is no intermediate way.

Through these respective options the two fundamental and antagonistic classes contest for hegemony over the nation.

The proletarian option is the only viable

one. A civilian bourgeois government replacing Somoza would be incapable of satisfying the most basic social, democratic, and national aspirations of all the oppressed sectors of Nicaragua.

The proletariat takes up all such demands. But it does so on its own ground, that of the class struggle. The fight for democratic liberties in Nicaragua is no more than one component, an integral part of the battle to fulfill all the aspirations of the working people.

It is not possible to struggle first for democratic liberties and only later for all the demands of the oppressed sectors. Such distinctions do not exist in the consciousness of the toiling masses. They fight for all their aspirations without putting democratic demands under a separate heading.

The only way out for the oppressed in Nicaragua is to succeed in imposing their own power, the only power capable of confronting the problems of the broad masses. That power will then have to carry out, in a combined way, democratic, social, and national tasks.

Between the Insurrection and a Coup d'Etat?

From a military point of view, the FSLN finds itself better prepared than ever. It can count on more and better weapons and better-trained military cadres with fighting experience. The three tendencies have unified so as to carry out the final offensive. These are objective facts.

But the FSLN's military preparations cannot furnish the political and social conditions necessary for an insurrection. Insurrections are actions of the masses, and they cannot be carried out apart from the masses' own willingness to fight. The change in the social situation in Nicaragua makes it enormously more difficult to achieve a second, victorious offensive against Somoza. The September offensive had as a consequence a temporary but acute downturn in the struggles of the masses.

Before launching themselves into a second offensive against Somoza, the masses need to again test their strength with the regime. The mass movement will recuperate and measure forces with Somoza while not playing all its cards. An insurrection involving hundreds of thousands of persons cannot be based on small, scattered groups arming themselves clandestinely.

Actions such as strikes and demonstrations—going on to broader mobilizations with massive actions or general strikes—can provide a way for the masses to again test their strength against the dictatorship. The January 1978 funeral of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro was an example of this.

If despite everything the FSLN launches a new offensive against Somoza, the risks

of catastrophe are enormous. It would not be the FSLN alone that would have to suffer the consequences of a new defeat, but also the whole of the organized workers and popular movement.

What is one to make of the FSLN's warning about the imminent threat of a coup d'état against Somoza by a sector of the National Guard aiming to unleash an even more repressive drive against the popular movement?

In situations of grave crisis brought on by acute class struggles, or if deepgoing contradictions should arise in the governing team, a coup in Nicaragua cannot be ruled out. This could even involve the assassination of Somoza himself on the orders of the imperialists.

But no such conditions exist at present. The class struggle is going through an acute downturn, however temporary. Repression and terror have been imposed. Nor are there pronounced divergences inside the government. The contradictions apparent between Somoza and the imperialists are false ones; they amount to no more than a public relations campaign through which Carter wants to wash his hands of the blood that has been shed in Nicaragua.

Any group arising inside the National Guard that might want to replace Somoza would face difficulty in assuring greater stability than Somoza himself enjoys. We should recall the central role of the dictator and his family in the equilibrium of state power in Nicaragua.

The U.S. imperialists recognize the explosiveness of the situation and will make no unnecessary sudden moves. It is absurd to envision a coup succeeding in Nicaragua without imperialist support.

The FSLN declares that in the event of such a coup it would immediately launch an insurrection. We fail to see how a coup could change the relationship of forces to the FSLN's advantage. If it does not launch itself frontally against Somoza right now, what guarantee is there that it could do so successfully against a wing of the National Guard with a harder line than Somoza himself?

A coup d'état could be an instrument for provocation in the hands of the National Guard. Undoubtedly Somoza's army would like a head-on clash with the FSLN under conditions unfavorable to the latter. It is necessary to be highly cautious toward provocations organized by the National Guard and the imperialists.

A Volatile Political Situation

Nicaragua is living through dramatic and difficult times. The Estelí events inaugurated a new style of large-scale actions on the part of the Sandinista Front. A few days after Estelí was taken, the city of León was occupied for twenty-four hours, with a toll of hundreds of deaths. More such actions followed in Matagalpa.

Somoza has seized the opportunity to launch the severest repression against the organized popular movement since 1967. Hundreds of union leaders have been imprisoned. More than forty leaders of the United People's Movement have been jailed or "disappeared" in Managua. PCN leader Eli Altamirano and almost the entire PCN Central Committee have been detained. The repression has also hit the bourgeois opposition: Alfonso Robelo, leader of the bourgeois Movimiento Democrático Nacional (National Democratic Movement), and Córdoba Rivas of the Partido Conservador Democrático (Democratic Conservative Party) are in jail.

The great offensive that the Sandinista Front announced with such fanfare has become an intolerable war of attrition, involving the taking of cities that then suffer the implacable punishment of Somoza's weaponry. Such actions fall most heavily and without warning on an unprepared population that every day risks being suddenly caught in the crossfire.

Somoza's massive repression will not bring him political stability. He is seated atop an explosive volcano of corpses. The imperialists understand this perfectly well, but they nonetheless do not find a viable alternative that could enjoy more stability than Somoza himself.

For all these reasons, the political situation in Nicaragua is subject to abrupt changes, from the strictly government level to the relationship of class forces.

The FSLN enjoys enormous prestige in Nicaragua. Thus its erroneous conceptions have disastrous results for the political education of the masses. The hundreds of heroic youths murdered by Somoza carry immense moral weight for all the oppressed, and this reinforces the errors. A strong dose of emotionalism obscures political clarity. But this makes it no less necessary to resist such disastrous and suicidal conceptions.

As against military activities separated from the living struggle of the oppressed, the central task in Nicaragua is to encourage and develop the activity and organization of every oppressed sector, to give an impetus to their own forms of struggle, and to expand and centralize their demands and battles.

To find an audience ready to listen and discuss revolutionary policy in Nicaragua, it is necessary to speak clearly. It is in the FSLN itself that the best audience can be found. It could not be otherwise; it is not possible to live through so many years of tragedies, failures, and errors without the most honest and intelligent cadres being open to criticism and anxious to find a political alternative that can prevent the martyrs' bodies from becoming the class enemy's staircase to power.

May 10, 1979