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NICARAGUA: Biggest Mobilizations Since Somoza's Overthrow



Iran Masses Stand Up to U.S. War Threats

**Cuba in the Twentieth
Year of the Revolution**

**Trotsky Centennial Conference
Held in Mexico City**

NEWS ANALYSIS

Carter Steps Up Threats Against Iran

By David Frankel

"Now that we claim our rights they threaten us with their warships and planes," Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini declared November 22 in response to Washington's latest military moves against Iran.

President Carter, who provoked the current crisis by bringing the shah into the United States, tried at first to give the impression that he was resisting calls for the use of force. Lyndon Johnson took the same stance prior to his escalation of the war in Vietnam.

But on November 20 this pretense went out the window. Carter ordered the aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* and five other U.S. warships to join the fleet of thirteen American ships already standing off the Iranian coast. And the State Department warned that Washington had "other remedies available" besides negotiations.

A statement threatening Iran with "extremely grave" consequences was released by Carter November 23, and Pentagon officials let it be known the same day that they were considering possible "retaliatory strikes" against Iran, including ones that "might be adopted if and when the hostages are released."

New York Times correspondent Richard Burt reported in this regard: "While acknowledging that an attack against Kharg Island [Iran's main oil port] was under discussion, officials said that other facilities associated with Iran's oil industry appeared more attractive as potential targets. On Capitol Hill, members of Congress who asked not to be identified said it was their impression that an economic blockade of Iran, backed up by American naval forces, was the most likely military option open to the Administration."

Such threats, however, have not had the effect Carter hoped for.

Within Iran they have united the masses, deepened their anti-imperialist sentiment, and given a new impetus to the revolution.

Within the Middle East and the semicolonial countries as a whole Carter's threats have encouraged the already massive sympathy for the Iranian revolution and the widespread admiration for the way the Iranian people are standing up to Washington. More and more people are asking why can't their leaders stand up for their rights the way Khomeini is standing up for Iran.

And finally, within the United States itself the real stakes in this crisis are becoming clearer to working people.

Rather than the blind chauvinism he hoped for, Carter is encountering increasing suspicion about what the government is up to, more and more opposition to U.S. war moves, and more and more sympathy for the demands of the Iranian people—for the extradition of the shah in particular.

With each passing day the aroused people of Iran are showing the world that it is possible to stand up against injustice and to win—even against the might of U.S. imperialism.

No matter what Carter does now, both he and the ruling class whose interests he defends will pay a heavy price.

Fourth International Holds World Congress

The Fifth World Congress since reunification of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution, was held in Belgium the week of November 17-25. Delegates represented sections and sympathizing organizations in forty-eight countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and North and South America.

The discussions at the world congress were held in the context of the deepening of the international class struggle exemplified by the revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua. Of special note was the presence of delegates from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party. It was an expression of the geographical extension of the forces of the Fourth International since its last world congress in 1974, as well as its deepening roots in the worldwide revolutionary struggle.

The congress hailed the overthrow of the imperialist-backed regime of the butcher Somoza by the Nicaraguan people led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, and pledged to help build the worldwide solidarity movement for aid to Nicaragua and defense of the revolution against imperialist aggression.

The world congress is the highest body of the Fourth International. Delegates were elected to the congress from each national section after extensive democratic debate and discussion, including an international written discussion, representing the various points of view in the international on the matters under consideration. The congress

Answering Carter's threats of military force, throngs of Iranians took to the streets November 21. *New York Times* correspondent John Kifner reported that "the streets of Tehran were jammed with marchers. . . ." He added that "they filled the streets as far as the eye could see," and that "the crowd appeared to approach the size of the throngs of a year ago" when millions took to the streets against the shah's dictatorship.

"Today," Kifner noted, "the theme that ran through the demonstration was defiance of America."

Two days later, at another mass demonstration, Foreign Minister Abu al-Hassan Bani-Sadr announced that Iran's foreign debt, which he put at \$15 billion, would be repudiated.

"We will not pay back these debts," he said. "How can we undertake to pay back debts that were taken by criminals from their accomplices and put back in the accomplices' banks?"

This is the kind of threat that sends

adopted by majority vote resolutions on the following points:

1. The world political situation and the main overall tasks of the Fourth International.
2. Building the Fourth International in capitalist Europe.
3. Latin America.
4. The international women's liberation movement.
5. The revolution in Nicaragua.

To prepare for the major class battles to come, the congress also decided to make a radical turn, to place in industry a majority of the cadres won to the sections of the international in the previous period.

The adoption of the resolution "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation" marked the first time the Marxist movement has developed such a comprehensive programmatic document on this question.

Indicative votes were taken on resolutions on the conflicts in Indochina and on the relation between socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Discussion on these points will continue and a definitive decision will be taken on them at a later time.

The congress elected an International Executive Committee (IEC), which is the leadership of the international between world congresses. The IEC will meet once a year. Immediately following the congress, the IEC elected the United Secretariat, a smaller body that acts for the IEC between IEC meetings.

chills down the spines of American business executives and their defenders in the State Department and Pentagon. Although U.S. banks say they hold more than enough Iranian assets to offset any debts repudiated by the Iranian government, the political price they would pay due to such a move is another matter altogether.

Semicolonial countries all over the world are bowed down under the weight of debt payments to the big imperialist banks. Any country repudiating such debts sends tremors through the whole international banking system.

Fear among U.S. policymakers that the revolution in Iran will spread to other countries in the region—especially to oil-rich Saudi Arabia—is already a major factor in Washington's moves. Reporting on Carter's November 23 statement threatening Iran with "extremely grave" consequences, *New York Times* correspondent Bernard Gwertzman noted that "there seems to be more concern here about the possibility of the Ayatollah stirring up anti-American actions through his broadcasts to other Near Eastern countries than over the possibility of sudden harm befalling the hostages."

And Terence Smith reported in the November 22 *Times*: "The decision to reinforce the United States naval task force in the Indian Ocean . . . was more a response to instability in the Moslem world than to the hostage situation. Regardless of the outcome in Teheran, the Administration is bracing for what it expects to be sustained turmoil that could well spread to such nations as Egypt and Turkey."

But the hope that a military move against the Iranian revolution would shore up proimperialist forces in the region received a substantial blow November 21 when demonstrators in Pakistan burned the U.S. embassy in response to reports that Washington was behind the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

Demonstrations denouncing U.S. threats and backing Iran took place in Calcutta and Hyderabad, India; Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi, Pakistan; and in Bangladesh and Turkey.

Reporting from Beirut in the November 24 *Times*, Henry Tanner quoted one Western diplomat who said the whole Middle East could "go up like a tinderbox" if Washington moved against Iran.

According to Tanner: "Several diplomats said today they were convinced that United States embassies and other institutions throughout the Islamic world would be assaulted by uncontrollable mobs within minutes of an announcement, true or false, that the United States was resorting to military action against Iran. Arab officials agreed."

Moreover, Washington's chief allies have shown little enthusiasm for any U.S. military moves that would interrupt the supply of Iranian oil and possibly result in further turmoil in the Middle East—and

perhaps among European and Japanese workers as well.

Faced with this situation, Carter has evidently decided to seek additional international support for an attack on Iran. On November 25, at Washington's behest, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim called for an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the crisis.

Previously Carter had rejected any UN meeting, although one was requested by the Iranian government. Washington feared that such a meeting would air the crimes of the shah and U.S. responsibility for his dictatorship.

But now, Carter has assured himself of support from the Stalinist regimes in Moscow and Peking. The *New York Times* reported November 26 that a Security

Council "resolution, which apparently has been agreed upon in advance, would not take note of these charges [by Iran]."

Such an outcome, the *Times* noted, "will be seen as reflecting world opinion against Iran," and "would in a sense prepare the legal groundwork for any follow-up effort at the United Nations to invoke other provisions calling for economic or military action against Iran."

Although Carter has been forced to maneuver and to draw the United Nations into his offensive against the Iranian revolution, his purpose remains unchanged. More than ever, it is necessary to demand:

U.S. hands off Iran!
Extradite the shah!

□

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Iranian Masses Mobilize to Counter U.S. Military Threat

By Will Reissner

As the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Iran entered its fourth week, the anti-imperialist mobilization generated around the demand for extradition of the shah from the U.S. continued in full force.

Delegations of workers, students, and soldiers joined daily demonstrations in front of the embassy to show their support for the campaign to force the U.S. to return the hated, exiled shah to Iran to stand trial for his crimes.

Even the People's Fedayeen, a group that had carried out armed actions against the shah but had initially held back from supporting the mobilizations at the embassy, sponsored a rally of more than 100,000 in front of the embassy on November 25.

Their support was welcomed by the students occupying the embassy. These students, who call themselves Followers of the Imam's Line, issued a statement that anyone attacking the Fedayeen-sponsored rally would be acting in the interests of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. And in contrast to previous Fedayeen demonstrations, there was no attempt by organized right-wing forces to break-up the November 25 rally.

Another indication that the political situation is opening up is the reappearance of leftist newspapers. *Kargar*, the organ of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), is again legal, as are the papers of the CP and a Maoist group. The paper of the Fedayeen, while still not legal, is circulating without interference.

HKS Prisoner Released

On November 22, Mohammed Poorkahvaz, one of fourteen members of the HKS imprisoned in Iran since May, was released from jail. His release raises hopes for freeing the other HKS members. The thirteen are now all in Karoun prison, where they are able to receive visitors.

Attempts by the Carter administration to intimidate the masses in Iran with threats of U.S. military intervention have not succeeded. Rather they have deepened the mobilization against imperialism. Following Washington's announcement on November 20 that a naval task force was steaming toward Iran, "millions of Iranians took to the streets," in the words of *New York Times* correspondent John Kifner, to show their "defiance of America." Tehran's streets were jammed with demonstrators from before 7 am until after midnight.

On November 26, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini called on every young Iranian to

take up arms to form "an army of 20 million" to defend the country against U.S. military attack.

According to reports received from Tehran by telephone, there is widespread sentiment among workers for arming the population. Even before Khomeini's call, there had already been a few cases of police and army units arming people in their area.

A call by the HKS in mid-November to arm the entire population under the control of the *shoras* (councils) of workers, peasants, and students was reprinted in several Iranian dailies.

The government of Ayatollah Khomeini has also shifted its approach toward the Kurdish struggle for national autonomy. In fact, negotiations between members of the Kurdish Democratic Party and representatives of Khomeini began on November 21 in the Kurdish city of Mahabad, and military clashes have come to a halt.

The Kurds are a non-Persian people who live in northwestern Iran, as well as in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and the Soviet Union. They were the target of national oppression under the shah's rule, as were all the non-Persian peoples in Iran.

Kurds Join in Mobilizations

Demonstrations in several Kurdish cities have been held in support of the embassy occupation and the mobilization against U.S. imperialism. Kurdish groups in Tehran have also taken part in the demonstration in front of the embassy.

Khomeini's new conciliatory attitude toward the Kurds was signalled in a November 17 speech broadcast on television. In that address he acknowledged that the Kurds have been oppressed and said that their rights will be respected. He also called for the drafting of a plan for economic and political autonomy for Kurdistan and for economic aid to the region.

Khomeini's speech was markedly different in tone from previous pronouncements on the Kurdish struggle, and its conciliatory tone was then reflected in a change in Iranian press coverage of Kurdistan.

On November 23, however, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, addressing a Tehran prayer meeting that was broadcast live on television, attacked Kurdish leaders as "agents of SAVAK [the shah's secret police], Zionists, and corrupt sources."

This provoked an outcry in Kurdistan. A Kurdish demonstration in Mahabad issued an eight-point statement in response to Montazeri's attack. The statement pointed out that the Kurdish struggle

was for the rights of an oppressed people and fell fully within the framework of anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism. It condemned Montazeri's speech and demanded a public apology.

The Kurdish statement also said that the Kurdish struggle would continue until they win their demands.

The day after Montazeri's speech, and after the Kurdistan demonstrations, an announcement was made on television that the speech had reflected Ayatollah Montazeri's personal point of view and did not reflect the views of the Islamic Revolutionary Council or the state. In addition, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, the head of the state TV authority, ruled that in the future there would no longer be live coverage of speeches and rallies.

Deepening Anti-imperialist Sentiment

Iranian workers are being deeply politicized by the confrontation with U.S. imperialism. An example of this process was provided in a November 23 *New York Times* dispatch. The *Times* reporter described a conversation with a young truck driver from Kashan, a town about 200 miles south of Tehran. The trucker had come to the capital to attend the huge Friday prayer meetings, at which there are political speeches as well as prayers.

At this particular prayer meeting the crowd was addressed by Abu al-Hassan Bani-Sadr, Iran's foreign minister. The truck driver explained how he was getting a real political education from the speeches.

"I had heard the word imperialism so many times," he told the reporter, "but had never understood it. Now [following Bani-Sadr's speech] I know what imperialism means. It means the kind of economic and political domination that the Americans want to impose all over the world."

The continuing politicalization of Iranian working people is graphically seen in the banners carried by demonstrators at the U.S. embassy. Persian Gulf shipyard workers carried the slogan, "The permanent struggle against imperialism is the key to the unity of Iranian nationalities." Auto workers from the Khaver plant demanded an end to all military treaties with the U.S.

Tehran steelworkers called for the nationalization of all U.S.-controlled property. Workers from a helicopter repair facility chanted "U.S. imperialism is empty and Vietnam is the proof."

On November 18 the first delegation of peasants came to the embassy to show their support for the struggle. Their

banners called for extradition of the shah and nationalization of all land belonging to U.S. imperialists, the Pahlavi dynasty, and its collaborators. They chanted the slogan, "Long live the unity of the workers, peasants, and oppressed of Iran."

The same workers who demonstrate at the embassy sometimes also demonstrate around their own specific demands for jobs and social benefits. Unemployed construction workers in Tehran and other cities have demanded unemployment compensation and coverage under medical and other benefit plans.

On November 17, 500 Tehran bus drivers, some carrying Khomeini posters, demonstrated at the mayor's office for more hours of work and social benefits. The following day more than 4,000 oil drilling workers in Ahwaz held sit-ins at the offices of U.S.-owned companies in support of the demand for the creation of a national drilling company.

Despite attempts by the U.S. media to portray the current upsurge in Iran as stemming from Muslim religious fanaticism, having little to do with the real world of the twentieth century, and especially with the real world of twentieth-century imperialism, Iranian workers and peasants are motivated by a deeply felt sense of solidarity with anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles throughout the world, not just in Muslim countries.

The November 22 *New York Times* contained a description by its Tehran correspondent of a conversation with the family of a middle-aged printer in a working-class neighborhood in south Tehran that illustrates this worldwide outlook. Speaking of the U.S. protection of the shah, the printer asked "Why must the Americans support someone like that? They do it all the time—Vietnam, Nicaragua, Greece. The Americans call themselves a democracy, yet they support dictators." □

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Socialist Prisoners Appeal to Join Fight

The following letter was sent November 15 to Dr. Abu al-Hassan Bani-Sadr, in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iran, by the fourteen members of the Hezb-e Kargaran-e Socialist (HKS—Socialist Workers Party) imprisoned in Khuzestan Province, in southern Iran.

* * *

Although it is hard to follow national and world events from prison, nevertheless we have learned of the major events taking place in our country within the past few weeks. For us, hearing this news is heartening and inspiring on one hand, and saddening on the other hand.

Hearing thousands of people with clenched fists in front of the base of the espionage operation of the CIA in Iran shout, "Down with U.S. imperialism, down with the shah" brings to life for us the memory of the historic struggles of our people against the torturous hand of the Pahlavi monarchy.

It enlivens the memory of the successful February insurrection when we hear this and these memories are rekindled. We are heartened that the revolution is deepening and moving forward.

Our sadness comes from the reality of our situation—that with the experience of our past struggles and combativity against U.S. imperialism and the dictatorial regime of the shah, with our fighting spirit, we are surrounded by prison walls. We are not among our co-fighters.

Mr. Bani-Sadr, in front of millions of people you have discussed and debated with socialists. With this action you have shown clearly your respect for freedom of speech. You have explained

and propagated your ideas. And now, in support of the students following the Imam's line, in the post of director of foreign affairs, you have declared mass mobilizations against U.S. imperialism.

We too explain and propagate our ideas. But we are not able to participate in this mass mobilization. After all, we are imprisoned for our ideas. Worse yet, authorities in Ahwaz demand that we denounce our ideas and the HKS. Because we refuse to do that, they still keep us in prison.

Mr. Bani-Sadr, we want to be alongside our militant brothers and sisters to help strengthen the struggle against reaction and U.S. imperialism.

Through this letter, we, the fourteen imprisoned members of the HKS, declare our support to the occupation of the U.S. espionage center of the CIA and Pentagon by the students following the Imam's line.

We resolutely condemn the moves of the U.S. government, its intimidation and harassment of the militant Iranian students residing in that country, and its support and protection of the butcher of the Iranian people.

Fighting U.S. imperialism requires a broad united front in which all strata of our population, all political parties and groups, can and should participate.

Freeing us fourteen socialists from jail, who are imprisoned only for our ideas, will be a step in strengthening and broadening this fighting front against imperialism.

Signed: Hadi Adib, Hormoz Fallahi, Firooz Farzinpour, Morteza Gorgzadeh, Mustafa Gorgzadeh, Ali Hashemi, Mahmoud Kafaie, Kambiz Lajevardi, Kia Mahdevi, Mohammed Poorkahvaz, Mustafa Seifabadi, Hamid Shahrabi, Mahsa Hashemi, and Fatima Fallahi.

Khomeini Appeals to Americans: 'We Want Peace'

[Below are excerpts from an interview with Ayatollah Khomeini conducted in Qum, Iran, by Mike Wallace of CBS's television news program "Sixty Minutes." It was aired November 18 in the United States.]

* * *

Wallace: Why do you still say that if the ex-shah is not returned that those American hostages will not be freed?

Khomeini: There are two main reasons

for the people's insistence for the shah's return. One—that this is a nation with a poor economy. That the wealth of these people has been plundered by the shah and his relatives; taken out of the country; been deposited in various U.S. and European banks. And, these are the monies which indeed belong to the people, these poor people.

Wallace: Right.

Khomeini: And therefore, he has to

come, and he has to return and tell us where are these monies, and why they are there.

The second, which is even more important than the first reason, is that we want him back to show the extent of the crimes committed by this person during thirty-seven years of his rule.

Wallace: They—the hostages—will remain there, in the American Embassy compound—what?—for life? Forever?

Khomeini: They will remain until the shah is returned. It is in the hands of Carter. Carter can free them by returning the shah.

Wallace: Imam, President Carter accuses your government of practicing terrorism and says that your regime will be held accountable if those U.S. hostages are harmed.

Khomeini: The thirty-five million people of Iran are terrorists? . . . You interpret politics like this? . . . I have heard what Carter says of them, and it doesn't make sense.

He says they are not students; they are bums—mobs—they are terrorists. . . . This is an insult to students and people across the nation. . . .

Your understanding of politics is that we are a nation of terrorists? We are Moslems. This is an insult.

Wallace: Imam, President Sadat of Egypt, a devoutly religious man, a Moslem, says that what you are doing now is "a disgrace to Islam," and he calls you—Imam, forgive me, his words not mine—"a lunatic." I know that you have heard that comment. . . .

Khomeini: . . . Sadat has united with our enemies. Sadat knows well what is occurring south of Lebanon, and with the Palestinians. He knows the crimes of Israel, yet he still considers Begin a friend and himself a Moslem. You must try to evaluate what he is doing then through Islam. The Egyptian people do not back Sadat. I demand that the Egyptian people try to overthrow him, just as we did the shah.

Wallace: I ask you as an American and a human being, is there no room for compromise? Or is Iran now in effect at war with the United States?

Khomeini: . . . We desire peace for all. Carter should put aside his so-called humanism and return the criminal shah so that we can conclude this matter. The shah is a criminal. We all know this. The spy nest you call the U.S. Embassy then can be returned to a place of humanism and diplomacy. Carter must return the shah. We have nothing against the people of the United States. □

1,200 Black Ministers Urge Extradition of Shah

U.S. Protests Say 'No War Against Iran!'

While demonstrations against the Iranian revolution sponsored by a small layer of right-wing organizations are given lavish coverage by the U.S. news media, there has been a virtual black-out of forces that have spoken out against the Carter administration's refusal to extradite the deposed shah.

On November 16 more than 1,200 Black religious figures demanded the shah's deportation "as quickly as possible" on the final day of the National Black Pastors' Conference held in Detroit. The conference, which represents 15 million Black Christians in the U.S., said "we understand the hostility of the Iranian masses toward the former shah and toward the United States, which set him up as a puppet, armed him and trained his vicious SAVAK secret police force."

Muhammad Ali, former heavyweight boxing champion, said on November 19 that the shah should be deported. Comparing the shah to Hitler and Nixon, Ali told an ABC reporter that "this guy is a criminal. Send this guy back."

More than 2,000 students rallied on the University of California's Berkeley campus for the "extradition of the shah" and "support to the Iranian people" on November 15.

In San Diego, California, more than 400 students assembled for a speak-out against attacks on Iranian students at the San Diego State University campus on November 16. The previous day there had

been a smaller anti-Iran demonstration there. A Black senior described the atmosphere at the earlier demonstration in these words: "As a Black person, I could feel this underlying racism." He added that he had been "terrified."

According to San Diego State student association President Rob DeKoven, the anti-shah demonstration "is more indicative of students' feelings than the one held [November 15]."

Stanford University was the site of a November 19 rally of some 400 students. The theme was opposition to racist attacks on Iranian students and for a return of the shah to stand trial.

In Washington, D.C., where the government has banned demonstrations in front of the White House, there was a picket line at the headquarters of the Immigration and Naturalization Service on November 20. The main banner of the picketers read: "Extradite the shah, not Iranians; Stop the deportation of Iranian students."

Reza Ghoraihi, of the Iranian consulate in Chicago, spoke to nearly 125 people at a Militant Labor Forum on November 17 in that city. Also speaking were Lee Artz of the Socialist Workers Party and a representative of the Progressive Black Students for Change from the University of Illinois.

Anti-shah forums have also taken place in New York, Minneapolis, Seattle, and other cities around the country. □

Government Sued on Iranian Student Roundup

On November 21 attorneys for the Socialist Workers Party and the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee filed a class-action suit on behalf of all Iranian students in the U.S. The suit challenges the constitutionality of the Carter administration's order requiring Iranian students to report for a review of their immigration status. It was filed in Federal District Court in Washington, D.C.

The lawyers have also asked the court for a preliminary injunction immediately halting the roundup of Iranian students.

"The illegal roundups" of Iranians, the attorneys charged, "can only be compared to the inhuman treatment accorded Japanese-Americans during the Second World War when they were

rounded up and placed in concentration camps."

The lawyers for the SWP and NECLC noted that "today the government harasses Iranian students; tomorrow it could be trade unionists, civil rights workers, or anti-nuke demonstrators." They urged all supporters of civil liberties and human rights to support this effort to defend Iranian students.

The suit charges that the government's actions against Iranian students are in violation of the First, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. These amendments protect freedom of speech, press, and assembly; freedom from unreasonable search and seizure; and freedom from deprivation of liberty without due process of law. □

Carter's New Oil Ripoff Plan

By Dick Roberts and Andy Rose

[The two following articles appeared in the November 30 issue of the *Militant*, a revolutionary-socialist newsweekly published in New York.]

* * *

Washington's war threats against Iran are also a direct attack on the living standards of American workers.

If there was any doubt about that, it should have been dispelled by Carter's November 15 speech to the AFL-CIO convention in Washington, D.C. There he vehemently repeated before the U.S. trade-union federation the demands that working people sacrifice "in the battle for an energy-secure America."

Just as he did last winter and spring, Carter is trying to make the Iranian revolution the scapegoat for the price-gouging plans of Big Oil. The anti-Iranian hysteria his administration has sought to whip up is meant to justify both military aggression abroad and patriotic belt-tightening at home.

Thus Carter warned the AFL-CIO: "The developments in Iran have made it starkly clear to all of us that our excessive dependence on foreign oil is a direct physical threat to our freedom and security as Americans. . . ."

"That's why I've ordered phased decontrol of oil prices, to make conservation pay and to stimulate domestic energy sources."

\$25 Billion Ripoff

Carter didn't mention, of course, that his own Energy Department estimates decontrol of oil prices will cost consumers \$24.8 billion between now and September 1981.

And that's *before* the new round of price hikes that is being prepared under cover of the Iranian crisis. As the *Wall Street Journal* cheerfully noted November 19, "some analysts have already raised their 1980 oil earnings [profits] estimates to reflect the cutoff of supplies from Iran."

In his speech, Carter took a meat-axe to those who criticize his energy plan: "We cannot close down all nuclear power plants, burn less coal, refuse to build oil refineries, refuse to explore for new oil sources, oppose the production of synthetic fuels and at the same time encourage the waste of energy by artificially holding down its price . . . this is a ridiculous combination of proposals. . . ."

So it's damn the environment, full speed ahead with nuclear plants and high-pollution refineries, off-shore drilling, and generating plants. While we pay more, drive less, and turn our thermostats down

for the coming winter.

The November 16 *Wall Street Journal* listed further "contingency actions" the White House is considering since it ordered a boycott of Iranian oil. These include:

- "Slapping a new tax on gasoline";
- "Decontrolling gasoline prices to spur conservation";
- "Speeding the reopening of nuclear plants currently closed"—such as Three Mile Island?!
- "Extending the current mandatory building temperature controls"; and
- "Raising taxes on petroleum products other than gasoline."

No Shortage

Just like last spring, prices are rising not because of any real physical shortage of oil. On November 16—that is, *after* the U.S. boycott of Iranian oil was announced by Carter—the *New York Times* reported that "companies' [oil] storage tanks are starting to overflow. . . ."

Nevertheless, "spot" prices have been climbing sharply on the international oil market. Spot prices are the day-to-day market prices of oil, distinct from the long-term contract prices.

Spot prices are soaring because the biggest world oil dealers—mainly the big U.S. oil companies—are rushing to buy all the available oil on the open market. Again, it's just like last spring. The oil companies will hoard the oil in anticipation of future price leaps—a self-fulfilling prophecy if there ever was one.

If the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries then raises its prices to try to capture a share of the higher profits the oil companies are raking in, you can be sure OPEC will be blamed for the spiraling prices.

Carter's boycott of Iranian oil in no way signifies that Washington plans to shut off the valve of Iranian oil, much less of all OPEC oil. Rather, as part of Washington's political and military offensive against the Iranian revolution, the boycott is a move to *regain more control* over Mideast oil supplies for the U.S. oil giants.

U.S. monopolies such as Exxon, Mobil, and Texaco market this oil internationally. It is a source of vast profits to them. Because of their monopoly on "downstream" operations—shipping, refining, and distributing petroleum products—the oil trusts can easily live with OPEC price increases. In fact, they favor such price rises.

In essence, the strategy of the oil trusts since 1973 has been threefold:

- to get oil out of the OPEC countries as fast as possible;
- to decontrol oil and gas prices in the United States; and
- to develop new energy sources that can ultimately give the oil companies a further club to use against OPEC itself.

To say that the oil companies can live with OPEC price increases is not to say that they favor any control whatsoever by semicolonial countries over their own natural resources. Yet the tide of colonial revolution has been irreversible in the postwar epoch.

The imperialists consequently favor removing oil from the semicolonial countries now, when it is cheaper and when the governments they are dealing with are more pliable.

It is one thing to do business with regimes like that of the shah—a reliable puppet of world capitalism. It is something else when the workers and peasants threaten to utilize oil resources in the interests of the oppressed—as, for example, when the Iranian oil workers refused to ship oil to Israel and South Africa last spring.

So despite the surface appearance of the energy trusts screaming for alternative sources and energy self-sufficiency, they are actually lifting more crude from OPEC than ever before.

Domestic Oil

This is a strategic profit consideration. It is not a question of physical energy needs. In addition to natural gas and coal—which exist in abundance in the United States and have barely been tapped—there is good reason to believe that there is plenty of oil right here.

A 1970 White House study showed that U.S. and Canadian oil reserves could supply in 1980, *next year*, 92 percent of the needs of these two nations without rationing, or 100 percent, if rationing were used.

These resources are not being developed because the oil trusts are waiting for higher prices. *At some point, once world oil prices rise high enough, these untapped domestic oil reserves will provide one of the biggest profit bonanzas in history.*

Until then the companies are keeping this oil in reserve for practically nothing, that is, they are leaving it in the ground.

Despite all of its obvious costs to humanity, this profit-gouging scheme of the oil trusts was making headway as 1979 unfolded.

With the cover that the Iranian revolution had caused a worldwide oil shortage,

the companies faked a gasoline shortage in the United States and drove through sharp increases in crude oil, gasoline, and home heating oil prices. Congress approved decontrol of oil and natural gas in stages over the next few years.

Just in the past weeks Congress also passed a \$19 billion synthetic fuel bill that will give government subsidies to private industry to develop alternate energy sources.

In a second move beneficial to the energy companies, the House voted to approve creation of an "Energy Mobilization Board," which could recommend waiving health and environmental laws for specific energy projects.

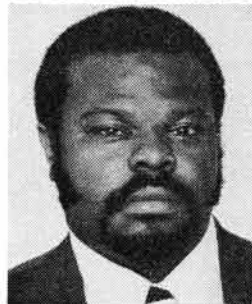
American Workers Have Stake in Iranian Revolution

[The following statement by Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States, is based on remarks he made at a campaign meeting in Detroit November 18. We have taken the text from the November 30 issue of the *Militant*.]

* * *

Today the U.S. government is at the brink of war with the people of Iran.

Washington's pretext is that it wants to save the lives of those sixty-two Americans



now being held hostage in the embassy in Iran. That number will be less in a few days as the Blacks and the women are released.

Carter is not concerned about the lives of sixty Americans. If there's a war, certainly more than sixty Americans will die. And more than sixty Iranians will die.

American working people have no interest—no interest whatever—in a war against the Iranian people.

Only the oil companies and the rest of the billionaires that run this country—and, of course, their loyal servant the shah—have an interest in fighting the Iranian masses.

Every one of the measures taken against Iran by Carter and the rulers of this country is at one and the same time a measure against American working people.

Who will gain from Carter's decision to boycott Iranian oil? Already the oil companies are telling us we'll be paying even more for gasoline. It's clear that very soon they'll have the price of gas dangerously close to their goal of two dollars a gallon.

Who gains from these policies against Iran—American working people, or the ruling rich?

Carter hopes to use the new Iran crisis—deliberately engineered by his administration—to rally popular support for his giveaway to Big Oil.

He boasted at the AFL-CIO convention: "No act has so galvanized the American public toward unity in the last decade as has the holding of our people as hostages in Tehran. We stand today as one people."

This is whistling past the graveyard.

A recent *New York Times*-CBS poll found that 23 percent of those questioned favored *nationalizing* the oil companies. This broke down to 42 percent of the Blacks polled and 19 percent of whites.

The mood of anger against the oil companies is deepening just when the Iranian

Why doesn't Carter extradite the Iranian Hitler? He murdered tens of thousands of Iranians who dared march, unarmed, for their freedom. The Iranian workers wanted the right to have unions, and a reduction of the work week. I think Detroit auto workers can relate to that.

They demanded among other things that the sale of oil to South Africa be stopped. I think Black Americans can relate to that.

They demanded the right not to be dominated by a foreign power. We fought for that 200 years ago.

Carter says he can't send a sick man back, especially one who has cancer. Your heart is supposed to bleed.

But if they were really concerned about cancer they would shut down those nuclear power plants.

For a quarter of a century, Carter and previous presidents held five Puerto Rican nationalists in jail. One of them had cancer. They knew about it all along. But they let the brother out only two months before he died!

But, they say, they must abide by the principal of political asylum. What about before the revolution, when the Iranian students in this country had to wear masks when they demonstrated against the shah and his policies? They were afraid the CIA would send them back. They didn't have the right of asylum.

The reason they won't extradite the shah is because they know that if he is convicted of the grave crimes he committed, they also stand convicted before the world and before the American people. That's because the government of this country represents the Rockefellers and other imperialist rulers who benefited from the policies of the shah. The shah was their puppet!

They see that the Iranian revolution today is deepening. They fear the aspirations of the Iranian masses because they know that those aspirations will be satisfied only with the victory of socialism.

The politicians and the media are trying

revolution is also deepening. It is serving to reinforce the antiwar sentiment of the American people and stands as no small obstacle to the Pentagon invading Iran.

More and more people recognize that the purpose of such an intervention would be precisely the reimposition of control over Iranian oil by these same companies!

Very likely Carter's actions around Iran will convince a whole new layer that there is an energy crisis all right—it is the crisis created by private ownership of the energy companies and their global profit drive.

And the next time the pollsters come around there will be even more votes for taking these companies out of private hands. □

to make the American workers believe that it's to our interest to go to war with Iran. It's all of us Americans—one big happy family—against "them," they tell us.

But there is no such thing as a *common* American interest. There are the interests of the Rockefellers and his class, the superrich, on the one side. And there are the interests of us, the masses of the American workers, on the other.

A war with Iran would only benefit the Rockefellers, the tycoons. The interests of the American working people are the same as the interests of the working people of Iran.

Just think about some of the things the Iranian people are fighting for. To nationalize the big industries. To win workers control over these industries, to curb inflation, provide jobs for the unemployed, give land to the peasants. Insure the rights of oppressed national minorities.

Aren't these the kind of things we need too?

The rulers of this country want us to believe that "we" are being "kicked around" by the Iranian people.

Well, *I'm* not being "kicked around" by the Iranians. Nor by the Cubans, nor the Vietnamese.

I own nothing in Iran. I didn't lose any sugar mills in Cuba and I have nothing to lose if the people of Indochina establish their independence and deepen their revolution.

And I'm sure the overwhelming majority of the American people are like me. No, it's not us that are being "kicked around" by the Iranians, the Cubans, the Vietnamese, by the Black African masses, by the Nicaraguans.

It's Rockefeller and the DuPonts. And we should welcome their getting—as they see it—"kicked around" by people who are simply trying to get them off their backs.

We should join with the Iranians, the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Vietnamese, the Black Africans and help them "kick around" some more. The world will be a better place for it. □

100,000 Rally to Honor FSLN Founder

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—More than 100,000 people poured into the streets here November 7 in a massive show of support for the gains of their revolution and to honor Carlos Fonseca Amador, founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (see box). The demonstration and rally were the largest since the mobilization July 20 that greeted the FSLN fighters as they marched into Managua.

The outpouring occurred against the background of border violations and harassment of Nicaraguan diplomatic officials by the rightist military dictatorship in Honduras. The Honduran government openly collaborates with officers of Somoza's National Guard who retreated into Honduras with their troops following the July insurrection.

In addition to the border incursions, the Nicaraguan government has reported two overflights of its territory by the Honduran air force. Honduran officials have also arrested Nicaraguan diplomatic officials in the capital city of Tegucigalpa.

At the Managua rally, Minister of Interior and FSLN Comandante Tomás Borge denounced these hostile acts by the Honduran dictatorship. Borge—who presented the main tribute to Fonseca Amador—said that the Nicaraguan government has not fallen for these provocations, responding in a mature and measured fashion. But he stressed the iron will of the Nicaraguan masses to defend their revolution against all its enemies.

"Is it possible that [Honduran officials] have confused our maturity with a lack of courage?" Borge asked the crowd. He also reported that the Sandinista army had decisively crushed sixty National Guardsmen who had staged a raid across the Honduran border.

Pointing to the ominous character of these actions, Borge, added: "Could it be that this provocation by elements linked to the Honduran police and army is part of a plan whose scope and content we are not yet fully aware?" It is widely known in Nicaragua that the CIA collaborates closely with government officials and Somozaist officers in Honduras.

Borge called for friendship between the Honduran and Nicaraguan people. Referring to the importance of international solidarity with Nicaragua, Borge pointed in particular to the efforts by Cuba. "The people who have aided us most generously, without conditions and beyond all their own possibilities, are the people of Cuba," he said.

The crowd responded with chants of "Cuba! Cuba! Cuba!" and "Viva Fidel!"

Borge also reviewed the government's plans for major education, literacy, and health campaigns. He hailed the nationalization the previous week of foreign-owned mines, calling this a victory against imperialist exploitation.

The other speakers were FSLN Comandante Humberto Ortega and Sergio Ramírez, one of the five members of the Junta of National Reconstruction. Ramírez stressed the democratic rights and institutions that have been won by the Nicaraguan masses.

The neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), Ramírez said, "are the basis of our Sandinista people's revolution." The main task in strengthening the revolution, he said, is to strengthen "our democracy, a democracy that is in the streets, in the trade unions, in the peasant communities, the democracy that is living under the ideas of Sandino and Carlos Fonseca Amador."

The November 7 rally was the culmination of three days of tributes to Fonseca Amador throughout Nicaragua. On No-

vember 5 his remains were brought to Matagalpa, the northern city where he was born, from the rural village of Waslala, where he had been buried at the time of his murder by the National Guard in 1976.

Between 30,000-50,000 people rallied in Matagalpa that day and heard speeches by Borge and Comandante Bayardo Arce. The birthplace of Fonseca Amador was dedicated as a national museum. At a ceremony that continued throughout the night, messages were heard from representatives of the mass organizations.

A contingent of Cuban doctors participated in the celebration, carrying the Cuban flag. They formed part of the honor guard around the bier.

The following day, a caravan of FSLN leaders brought the coffin to Managua, stopping for ceremonies in several small villages along the way.

The determination and spirit of commitment to the revolution that permeated these mobilizations was summed up by the quotation from Fonseca Amador repeated over and over again throughout these three days and displayed on the front page of the Sandinista daily *Barricada* November 8:

"It is not simply a question of changing the men in power, but rather of changing the system, of overthrowing the exploiting classes and bringing the exploited classes to victory." □

Who Was Carlos Fonseca Amador?

Carlos Fonseca Amador became active in the struggle against Somozaism as a student in the 1950s. In 1958 he joined the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), a pro-Moscow party, and visited the Soviet Union as a representative of the PSN youth.

Fonseca Amador soon became disillusioned with the PSN's failure to project the need for a revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship. In 1959 he joined efforts by veterans of the anti-imperialist army of Augusto César Sandino to relaunch a struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. In 1960 he left the PSN.

In 1962, under the impact of the Cuban revolution, Fonseca Amador formed the Sandinista National Liberation Front along with Tomás Borge and Silvio Mayorga. Of these three founding leaders, Borge alone is still alive.

Fonseca Amador described this period in an article entitled "Nicaragua at Zero Hour," which was published in 1969 in the Cuban journal, *Tricontinental*. That article has been issued as a pamphlet by the FSLN's National Secretariat of Propaganda and Political Education and is widely circulated in

Nicaragua today.

In that article, Fonseca Amador described his disillusionment with the PSN and growing attraction to the revolutionary Castro current in Cuba:

"From 1959 to 1962 the components of the FSLN maintained the illusion that it was possible to succeed in changing the line of appeasement of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party," he wrote. "It was in 1962, when the Sandinista Front was constituted as an independent group, that this illusion was practically dissipated, although the idea remained for somewhat longer that it was possible to arrive at a firm unity with the leadership of the Socialist Party—something that reality has refuted."

After that, he said, "all that was needed was the passage of a certain amount of time for the youth and people of Nicaragua to begin to distinguish between the false Marxists and the true Marxists."

On November 7, 1976, Fonseca Amador was killed by Somoza's National Guard in the mountainous areas of northern Nicaragua known as Zinica.

—F.M.

Protest in China Over Sentencing of Leading Dissident

By Dan Dickeson

When Wei Jingsheng, one of the best-known dissident activists in China, was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment in a show trial in Peking October 16, it drew an immediate, angry reaction.

Wall posters denouncing the "iniquitous trial" began appearing on "Democracy Wall" October 18, as Wei's supporters went on a campaign to protest the sentence, and even defied the authorities by publishing the transcript of Wei's courtroom defense. As a result at least five persons have been arrested, including dissident editor Liu Qing.

Wei, the editor of the unofficial magazine *Explorations*, was convicted on charges of "counterrevolutionary agitation" and "supplying a foreigner with Chinese military intelligence" during the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. His appeal to a higher court was rejected November 6.

Authorities had packed the courtroom for the supposedly public trial, forcing Wei's family and activists who supported him to wait outside during the six-hour hearing. Wei rejected the services of a state-appointed lawyer, and chose to speak in his own defense. (See excerpts on next page.)

First the Verdict, Then the Trial

If Wei's trial was intended to demonstrate that things have changed since the days of Mao, it was a dismal flop. Journalists at the official Xinhua news agency had reportedly begun writing the reports of his conviction before the trial was over.

A sign of official concern over the unpopularity of the verdict was a massive media campaign launched to justify Wei's conviction and sentence. For at least two weeks after the trial the press and broadcast media ran story after story slandering Wei. Particular emphasis was placed on the accusation of "passing secrets" to foreigners in return for cash.

Despite the media witch-hunt against Wei—and by extension against other fighters for democratic rights—a number of courageous activists sought to publicize the truth about the case. Within a week of the trial, the editors of the dissident journal *April 5 Forum* began pasting up the transcript of the trial in installments on Democracy Wall in Peking. The text was apparently based on a tape recording smuggled out of the courtroom by a spectator.

On November 11, the trial transcripts in pamphlet form went on sale at Democracy Wall. But this time police moved in, and after an angry shoving match with



WEI JINGSHENG

hundreds of transcript buyers and bystanders, seized most of the pamphlets and arrested four persons.

Activists later went to the police station to demand to know what those arrested were being charged with, given that the contents of the pamphlets were material from a supposedly public trial. Police officials could give no answer, but when a second delegation went to the station, *April 5 Forum* editor Liu Qing was arrested.

The 'Democracy Movement'

Wei was arrested in late March, in one of a series of government attacks against the new dissident movement that has grown up since November 1978. An estimated twenty other activists were also arrested, new restrictions on the pasting up of wall posters were imposed, and the official press went on a campaign to discredit the "democracy movement," thundering in particular against activists who had contacts with foreigners.

The witch-hunt whipped up over "suspicious" dealings between dissidents and foreigners represented an attempt by the regime to cut the dissidents off from any international solidarity, and also to prevent them from reaching a broader audience within China.

Dissident activists cultivate relationships with foreign journalists so that they can find out about news the official Chinese media does not report. In addition, reports on the dissidents that appear in the foreign press are reproduced in the foreign

press summary distributed to ten million government and party officials throughout China, and are often picked up by the Chinese-language broadcasts of the BBC and the Voice of America.

But although the crackdown earlier this year was harsh, it did not crush the fledgling movement for democratic rights. For a few months after the arrests, other authors of wall posters steered clear of the most controversial topics, and some dissident magazines suspended publication, at least for a time. But the "democracy movement" did not die out; on the contrary, dissident publications spread to other major cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou (Canton), and Tianjin (Tientsin).

These publications, from which articles are often reproduced as wall posters, have become the forum for a lively discussion among dissidents. Some magazines devote much of their space to reprinting letters from their readers, or important articles from the dissident press in other cities.

Of course the publishers of the dissident magazines, and their readers and subscribers, are just a tiny minority of the Chinese people. But they represent the most visible and articulate component of the broader movement of working people pressing for increased freedom and a better life. Mass protests against repression have forced China's rulers to make concessions, including in their handling of the organized dissidents.

Peasant Protests Spread

The flow of peasants bringing their grievances to Peking and other major cities, which started as a trickle, grew to a flood by midyear. The September 26 *People's Daily* put their number in the hundreds of thousands. In Peking, many peasants demonstrated in Tiananmen Square in the center of the city, or in front of government offices, or staged sit-ins at the entrance to Zhongnanhai, the walled compound in central Peking where top officials live.

It is impossible to gauge the extent of mass struggles in the countryside, given the lack of news reports in the official press and the absence of foreign journalists outside the largest cities. But the masses of peasants who travelled all the way to Peking are likely just the tip of the iceberg.

On August 21, the Hong Kong newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* reported that major antigovernment protests had broken out on the island of Hainan, in the far south of China. A local radio station was reportedly

occupied, and the offices and homes of top Communist Party officials ransacked. The dissident journal *Explorations* later reported that as many as 10,000 people had participated in armed clashes with the police in the Hainan incident, and that troops had to be sent in to restore order.

New Legal Code Passed

One of the key measures taken at the June meeting of the National People's Congress, China's formal legislative body, was the adoption of a new legal code. The code spells out new rules and procedures for conducting trials, including a prohibition on forced confessions and the right of the accused to a legal defense. It was heralded in the official press as a cure for the arbitrary bureaucratic repression so many peasant protesters were complaining of.

Among the first to press for the extension of such guarantees in practice were the organized dissidents. Some of the publications that had shut down after the March-April crackdown began to reappear. Hailing the fact that under the new legal code the mere expression of opinions was not considered a crime, dissidents demanded that Wei Jingsheng and the others arrested be either released or given public trials as specified in the new code.

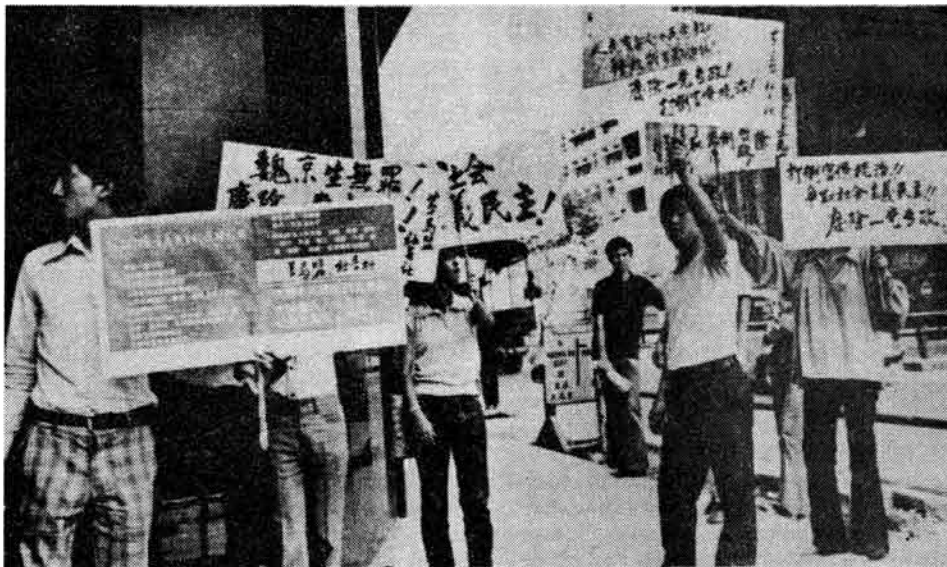
Dissidents gained experience in the course of an ongoing political struggle to establish and defend their right to function openly. They began to publicize and protest every incident of police interference with the production or sale of their publications.

To establish the legality of their activity, some dissident authors submitted their articles for publication in official scholarly magazines. In August, the editors of *April 5 Forum* and *Peking Spring* both published statements of their operating expenses and incomes, and offered to pay tax on their modest profits, in an attempt to gain de facto recognition as legal enterprises.

A Movement Based on Working Class

One notable feature of the dissident groups in China is their composition. *April 5 Forum* editor Xu Wenli told one interviewer: "Many foreign journalists have got us wrong in comparing us to the Soviet dissidents. The Soviet human rights movement is supported by high-grade intellectuals, while we in China are ordinary workers from the lowest social level" (September 7 *Far Eastern Economic Review*).

A large number of dissident activists are former Red Guards, who radicalized through the bitter experience of the Cultural Revolution. Wei Jingsheng recalled in one of his articles: "I joined the first group of Red Guards (April-May 1966). I know exactly that they rebelled not because Mao encouraged them, but because they were indignant at seeing all the inequalities and irregularities in society and in school. . . .



South China Morning Post

Protest at offices of Xinhua news agency in Hong Kong October 29 demands release of Wei Jingsheng. Action was sponsored by Revolutionary Marxist League.

Mao used them later by giving them full support so as to achieve his personal aims. . . ."

Also in contrast to most Soviet oppositionists today, the majority of dissident activists in China identify themselves as socialists. Commenting on letters from readers of the *April 5 Forum*, Xu Wenli noted that "there are many people who do not understand the West, and think everything is OK there. Despite that, the majority of our young people don't want either private redistribution of capital or the return of the big landlords, but no more do they want a new bureaucratic class at the head of our state."

For International Solidarity

There have been reports of some actions

outside China in solidarity with the embattled dissidents. On the day after Wei's conviction, Soviet oppositionist Andrei Sakharov sent a statement to Chinese Premier Hua Guofeng protesting the verdict and demanding that it be reviewed.

On October 29 in Hong Kong, the Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Marxist League organized a picket line outside the offices of the Xinhua news agency to denounce the frame-up of Wei.

The Chinese dissidents deserve the broadest possible international solidarity. An ongoing campaign in their behalf by supporters of the Chinese revolution around the world can help assure these antibureaucratic fighters that they are not alone, while making it politically more costly for the bureaucracy to attack them.

Wei Jingsheng's Testimony in Court

[The following has been excerpted from the transcript of Wei Jingsheng's testimony in court. We have taken the translation from the November 15 *New York Times*.]

* * *

I believe the charges enumerated in the prosecutor's indictment are untenable. I published articles and wrote big-character posters on the basis of Article 45 of the Constitution, which says that citizens have the freedom of speech, correspondence, assembly, publication, association, parade, demonstration and strike as well as freedom to write big-character posters and hold big debates.

On the first charge, the indictment states that a counterrevolutionary crime is committed when our country's military intelligence is given to a foreigner. The word military intelligence is a very broad concept. Citizens have the duty to keep secrets, but the premise is that citizens must know what secrets are to be kept.

I was never told of the secrets I must keep. After the outbreak of the Chinese-Vietnamese war, I had no access to anything classified as secret.

I am an ordinary man in the street and my source of information was hearsay and not any official government documents. The news I talked about could not cause any harm to the situation on the front line.

I took this into account beforehand. For instance, I mentioned the name of the commander in chief at the front. Who has ever heard that one side ever lost a battle because the other side knows the name of the commander?

Second, the indictment states that I carried out counterrevolutionary propaganda and agitation. If this is so, we should first clarify what is revolution and what is counterrevolution. Because of the policy of hoodwinking the people adopted by the Gang of Four, some people have the following view: It is revolutionary to act in accordance with the will of the leaders in power and counterrevolutionary to oppose the will of the people in power.

I cannot agree with this debasing of the concept of revolution. Revolution is the struggle between the old and the new.

Third, the indictment says I "slandered Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong thought as a prescription only slightly better than the medicine peddled by charlatans." I did not. No things exist in the world that never change from beginning to end. Marxism is no exception. After 100 years of develop-

ment, Marxism has been successively changed into many different branches, for example, Kautskyism, Leninism, Trotskyism, Stalinism, Mao Zedong thought and Eurocommunism.

The fate of Marxism is like that of many schools of thought in history. Its revolutionary essence was emasculated after its second and third generations. Some of the ideals of its teachings have been used by rulers as the pretext for enslaving people. Is this not a prescription that is only slightly better than the medicine peddled by charlatans?

Fourth, the indictment states that I "put forth the banner of so-called freedom of speech and the demand for democracy and human rights to agitate for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat." I must point out that freedom of speech is not a wild allegation, but is guaranteed in black and white in the Constitution. The tone in which the prosecutor talks about that right shows not only that he is prejudiced in his thinking, but that he has forgotten his responsibility to protect the democratic rights of citizens.

The prosecutor accuses me of trying to overthrow the socialist system. In the course of my editing, our publication *Explorations* has never engaged in conspiracy or violence. *Explorations* is a journal of theoretical investigation on public sale. It has never taken the overthrow of the government as its aim.

The prosecutors perhaps do not agree with my theories. In my several conversations with them we have talked about this. I would just like to add a point. The Constitution gives the people the right to criticize leaders because they are human beings and not deities. Only through criticism and supervision by the people can they reduce their errors.

Criticism cannot possibly be nice and appealing to the ear or all correct. To require criticism to be entirely correct and to inflict punishment if it is not is the same as prohibiting criticism and reforms and elevating the leaders to the position of deities. Is it really true that we must again take the path of superstition of the Gang of Four?

The above is my defense. □

Participants From Around World Attend Three-Day Conference

100th Anniversary of Trotsky's Birth Commemorated in Mexico

By George Saunders

MEXICO CITY—A three-day conference was held here November 5-7 to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Leon Trotsky.

Organized by a committee headed by Vsevolod Volkof, grandson of Trotsky, the conference featured speakers from Europe, the United States, and Mexico, including individuals who had worked with Trotsky, authorities on his life and writings, and present-day Trotskyist activists.

It was fitting that such a centennial was held in Mexico, the only country that would grant refuge to the exiled Bolshevik leader and the country where he lived from January 1937 until his death in August 1940.

The conference consisted of a series of talks at the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM), one of the largest universities in the world and a central cultural influence in the country. A concluding rally was held in a theatre in the city.

Media coverage was extensive. The leading liberal daily, *Uno más uno*, carried articles and interviews daily, and several television channels also covered the events. A crew from the British Broadcasting Company was present and interviewed leading participants. (BBC is preparing a

documentary on Trotsky to be shown later this year.)

Many young radicals attended the talks to find out more about Trotsky, whom they had heard of as a significant figure in Mexico's political history of the 1930s. I was told that a number of student members of the Mexican Communist Party were present and found the talks highly informative on subjects their leaders do not discuss.

The Stalinist attacks on Trotsky in the 1930s and the struggles against those attacks were detailed by George Novack, a leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and former secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. Novack reviewed the obstacles and difficulties encountered in the effort to form the Dewey Commission—the commission of inquiry into the charges against Trotsky in the Moscow Trials—and the ultimate success of that commission's efforts.

The conference also heard talks by Pierre Broué, research director of the Leon Trotsky Institute in France, reviewing Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism and his views on the revolutionary party and international; and by this reporter discussing Trotsky and revolutionary internation-

alism and the interest shown in Trotskyism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in recent years.*

Among the other speakers and commentators were Tamara Deutscher, collaborator with her late husband Isaac Deutscher on the three-volume biography of Trotsky; Michel Pablo, a former secretary of the Fourth International; Raymond Molinier, a leader of the French Trotskyists in the 1930s; Jean Van Heijenoort, a former secretary to Trotsky; and Luis Villoro, Antonio Delhumeau, and Adolfo Gilly.

A leading "Eurocommunist" intellectual of the French CP, Jean Elleinstein, who had been scheduled to participate, did not in fact arrive.

A roundtable on Trotsky and literature November 6 treated a special aspect of Trotsky's contribution to Marxism—his

*Despite the Kremlin bureaucracy's use of the resources of the Soviet state to maintain Stalin's lies about Trotsky, Soviet citizens are inquiring more and more into the facts about the Bolshevik leader. Evidence of such interest, especially in this centennial year, is that a group of Soviet tourists recently visited the Leon Trotsky Museum in Mexico City, something that has not happened before. The leaders of the tourist group remained in their vehicles, while the rank and file trooped into the museum.



Aníbal Yáñez/IP-1

Platform of November 7 rally of 500 concluding three-day Trotsky centenary in Mexico City. From left to right: Francisco Zendejas, Cristina Rivas, Pelai Pages-

Blanch, Michel Pablo, Pierre Broué, Vsevolod Volkof, Marguerite Bonnet, Tamara Deutscher, George Novack, Raymond Molinier.

rich understanding of cultural questions.

Mexican literary scholar Luís Mario Schneider spoke on Trotsky's relations with the surrealist André Breton. The poet Eduardo Lizalde explained that, as a young supporter of the Communist Party, he himself had believed the slanders against Trotsky and felt it was vital now to set the record straight. Veronica Volkof, a young poet and critic whose work has won acclaim, and the artist and muralist Vlado gave tributes to Trotsky.

Marguerite Bonnet, president of the Leon Trotsky Institute, summarized Trotsky's views on the role of the artist. And José Luis Gonzalez, a Puerto Rican novelist, discussed the writer's place in the coming socialist revolution in Latin America, in light of the negative experience in the USSR.

The conference concluded with a spirited rally November 7 attended by about 500 persons, including many old militants and sympathizers of the Trotskyist movement from a number of countries.

In part the rally embodied a dialogue between the generation that had experienced decades of political and ideological struggle against capitalism and Stalinism, and the generation of younger revolutionaries who constitute the indispensable force for carrying that struggle forward. A large banner on one wall expressed the spirit of the occasion: "Trotsky Continues to Be With Us in the Battles of the World Revolution."

The gathering was made colorful and lively by the red banners carried by many young members of the audience. They were held aloft and waved before and after each of the speakers. Songs of the Russian revolution and civil war were played at the opening of the commemoration and at intervals during the evening.

Mexican journalist Francisco Zendejas, one of the sponsors of the conference, chaired the meeting. He noted that by an accident of history Trotsky's birth falls on the same date as the Bolshevik

revolution—November 7. Part of the purpose of the centennial, he pointed out, was to recall the truth, still denied by Stalinist falsification, of Trotsky's role as organizer of the insurrection that established Soviet power and as head of the Red Army from 1918 to 1925.

The meeting was opened by the reading of messages from two of Trotsky's collaborators in the 1930s—Pierre Naville, now a noted French sociologist, and Pierre Frank, now a leader of the Fourth International.

Pierre Broué was the first speaker. All over the world, he pointed out, meetings large and small would be commemorating Trotsky's centenary, but there would be few meetings for Stalin (also born in 1879). That in itself constitutes a judgment of history.

Pelai Pages-Blanch of the University of Barcelona spoke about the relations between Trotsky and Andrés Nin, leader of the Spanish centrist organization POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) in the 1930s. He noted that both men had fallen victim to Moscow's murder machine, the one in Spain, the other in Mexico.

Also speaking were Michel Pablo and Raymond Molinier. Pablo described Trotsky's disdain for any hint of making a cult around himself. Molinier recounted from his own experience Trotsky's attitude toward revolutionary youth.

Cristina Rivas of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT, the Mexican section of the Fourth International) stressed that no commemoration of Trotsky should go by without reference to what Trotsky considered the most important task—the building of mass revolutionary workers parties and their unification in the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution. Trotsky devoted the final years of his life to promoting this objective.

From Iran to Nicaragua, from South Korea to Bolivia, the upsurge of the revolutionary masses shows the urgent need for

such parties to provide the necessary leadership, Rivas said. This mass upsurge also justifies Trotsky's optimism about the prospects for abolishing capitalism everywhere in the world.

At this point, and at several others, young members of the audience broke into chants expressing revolutionary sentiments.

Carlos Martínez de la Torre, speaking for the Political Committee of the PRT, explained that when Trotsky began his fight against Stalinism many thought it was hopeless, but the correctness of that struggle has been confirmed by history. He stressed that it is the duty of all revolutionaries to support the Nicaraguan revolution. The best homage we can pay to Trotsky, he reminded his listeners, is to fight actively within the world revolutionary process while explaining Trotsky's ideas, which are more vital and pertinent than ever.

The final speaker was Vsevolod Volkof, president of the organizing committee for the centenary. He as well as other speakers paid tribute to Mexico for having given asylum to Trotsky when no other country in the world would do so. President Lázaro Cárdenas, in 1936, had saved the life of the great revolutionary at a time when all the Old Bolsheviks were being exterminated and Stalin was doing everything in his power to lay hands on Trotsky as well.

Describing Trotsky, Volkof made clear that while on political matters he had to be sharp and firm, within the family he was very warm, and he treated all the comrades and guards living at his house as members of the family. The role of Trotsky's companion, Natalia Sedova, should not be overlooked, Volkof emphasized. She was a person of unparalleled honor and loyalty, Trotsky's firmest supporter in the darkest days.

The meeting ended with the whole audience rising to its feet and, with raised fists, singing the battlesong of the world working class, the *Internationale*. □

At Trotsky Centenary Rally

Remarks by Vsevolod Volkof

[The following speech was given by Vsevolod Volkof at the close of the Trotsky Centenary Commemoration, November 7, 1979 in Mexico City.]

* * *

Before saying a few words in memory of Lev Davidovich Bronstein, one of the greatest revolutionists humanity ever produced, I feel obliged once again to recall the role played by this young nation in the final period of Leon Trotsky's life.

At the point in history when Stalin was carrying out the most implacable persecution and extermination of all the true Bolsheviks who had participated in the October revolution, the tyrant of the Kremlin had Leon Trotsky trapped on a planet without a visa. President Lázaro Cárdenas, in a gesture of great generosity, rejecting all kinds of pressures, managed to save the life of the great revolutionist, granting asylum to the untiring Marxist fighter, and inscribing in the pages of

history an extraordinary example of human solidarity in the name of Mexico.

I feel deep emotion and great satisfaction to be at this celebration of the first centenary of the birth of Leon Davidovich, some forty years after his death on the field of battle in the struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors. We are honoring one of the most significant and courageous men the human race ever produced, an intransigent revolutionist whose name is indissolubly linked to the present and future history of humanity.

I must also honor the memory of Natalia, a woman of exceptional sensibility and extraordinary courage, who was Leon Trotsky's inseparable companion.

On a planet where obsolete and totally unjust socioeconomic systems are turning our world into a real death trap for human life, thrusting civilization and modern humankind into a gigantic nuclear-armed camp, the tremendous significance and relevance of Leon Trotsky's work, and of

his constant struggle to bring humanity to a new horizon where exploitation and violence will be banished and true equality among men will exist in all spheres, stand out more clearly than ever.

The road of history is long and hard, but day by day man has more weapons and means to achieve his goal. Knowledge and science are moving forward relentlessly, and the archives of history are at hand to help overcome his weaknesses and his errors.

In closing I would just like to read this one passage from Lev Davidovich's testament, which he wrote in February 1940 shortly before his death, to recall for us his unmovable faith in the socialist future of the human race:

"My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.

"Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may enter more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression, and violence and enjoy it to the full."

George Novack Interviewed by Mexican Daily 'Uno más uno'

[The following interview with Socialist Workers Party leader George Novack was conducted by Inés Villasana. It appeared in the November 6 issue of the Mexico City daily *Uno más uno*. The translation is by Joanne Murphy.]

* * *

In 1937 the Commission that investigated the Trotsky case in New York declared that the Moscow trials had been totally based on fabricated charges and that Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were completely innocent. This was the first big political and moral blow dealt to the trials. Today, practically no one maintains that the trials were valid, not even the present leadership of the Soviet Union since the Khrushchev revelations.

But the Mexican Communist Party of that era defended the trials and demanded that Trotsky be expelled [from Mexico] for being a fascist agent. [Mexican CP leader] Valentín Campa said then, as he says now (*Uno más uno* interview, October 22), that Trotsky served the interests of American imperialism. There is no truth to that accusation whatsoever, says George Novack, who is in Mexico for the centennial of Leon Trotsky's birth.

George Novack has been an active member of the Trotskyist movement in the

United States since 1933. He has been a party leader for decades, especially in the field of revolutionary journalism and literary work, as well as in defense cases in the workers movement. He is one of the few Marxist philosophers in the United States. He has written books on philosophy and on political history. Some of the titles that have been translated into Spanish are *Introduction to the Logic of Marxism*, *Democracy and Revolution*, and *Understanding History*.

This is his fourth visit to Mexico. The first was in 1937, to meet Natalia and Leon Trotsky.

Novack was the national secretary of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, organized in 1936. Novack explained that the commission had two purposes: first, to secure political asylum for Trotsky, who was then under house arrest in Norway where it was impossible to respond to the accusations being made against him in Moscow. And second, to promote the formation of a commission of inquiry to investigate the charges against Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov. These two aims, Novack asserted, became interwoven with the history of Mexico in the late 1930s.

In regard to Campa's accusation, Novack said that Trotsky was such a bitter

opponent of U.S. imperialism that despite a series of legal steps taken to have him admitted to the U.S., that proved to be impossible. They wouldn't even let his ashes be brought into the country.

It is not true that Trotsky collaborated with the Dies Committee, Novack emphasized. Trotsky had some discussions with representatives of that committee. Trotsky even considered the possibility of testifying before the committee under certain conditions. The first was that he be allowed into the United States to present his testimony. The second was that he be permitted to speak freely. He intended to defend the Soviet Union against U.S. imperialism, to use his testimony as a platform from which to defend the nationalizations of the oil in Mexico, a step taken by Mexico to defend its sovereignty against U.S. imperialism; to defend the victims of the persecution unleashed by the Dies Committee, in the U.S.; and to present his revolutionary-Marxist ideas.

There isn't anything wrong with a revolutionary testifying before a bourgeois commission, Novack said: "This is true in every country. I imagine that the Mexican CP has presented its point of view before commissions of the Mexican government, which is a bourgeois government. It is simply a forum, like a parliament or a

Congress. And from these kinds of platforms, the ideas one presents can reach a broader audience, can receive more attention. The question is what is said, not where one says it.

"Trotsky never reached any agreement whatsoever with the Dies Committee. When they realized what he wanted to say in his testimony, they decided to abandon the project and not let him testify."

Thus Campa's statement that Trotsky testified before the Dies committee is false, said Novack.

"Campa says that one could not criticize Stalin or his politics, because Stalin was completely identified with the Soviet Union. That's like saying that you can't criticize trade-union bureaucrats because it would hurt the union—when in reality criticism of those bureaucrats from a progressive standpoint strengthens the unions.

"Campa's cowardice in not wanting to criticize Stalin's methods simply indicates that he is a semi-Stalinist and not a revolutionary Marxist as Trotsky was. Trotsky never hesitated to criticize any leader anywhere if he thought that person was acting against the interests of the working class."

On the main points that separated Trotsky from Stalin in the 1920s, George Novack said that the first was revolutionary internationalism as opposed to socialism in one country. He explained that until 1924, the objectives of the Russian Communists under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky had two aspects: in the first place to extend the socialist revolution beyond the borders of the Soviet Union—the Third International was founded for this purpose—and secondly to strengthen the Soviet Union in every possible way, as a bulwark of support to the international workers movement, until such time as revolutions in other countries could break the isolation of the Soviet Union and thus contribute to its economic development, including raising the living standards of the masses.

Stalin broke the unity of these two aspects of Bolshevik policy, counterposing one to the other. First, he said that the Soviet Union had enough resources to build socialism within its own borders; and thus the interests of the world revolution had to be subordinated to the construction of socialism in one country. This turned the Third International into a mere docile, third-rate instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy, and led to many defeats for the working class all over the world.

Trotsky, Novack continued, upheld the original Bolshevik program, which maintained that these two tasks—the world revolution and the building of socialism in the Soviet Union—had to be interrelated. It was for this reason that Trotsky and the Left Opposition favored rapid industrialization in the 1920s.

Stalin adopted this program of indus-

Mexican CP Still Trying to Slander Trotsky

The bourgeois media in Mexico did not openly attack the Trotsky centennial, but they did give publicity to some Stalinist attacks on Trotsky. For example, one periodical, *Proceso*, edited by a former Mexican CP member, reprinted a letter by muralist David Siqueiros justifying the machine-gun assault on Trotsky's home, led by Siqueiros in May 1940.

Likewise a leader of the Mexican CP, Valentín Campa, made a crude and clumsy attempt to discredit Trotsky in an interview with *Uno más uno* a few weeks before the centennial conference.

Campa could think of nothing better than to charge Trotsky with being—an agent of United States imperialism! As "proof" he revived old and long-ago-refuted charges that Trotsky had collaborated with the witch-hunting Dies

Committee of the U.S. Congress.

Campa also claimed (as he had a year earlier in his autobiography) that in 1939-40 he himself had opposed Stalin's plans to assassinate Trotsky—and had been expelled from the Mexican CP leadership for that reason. He had not publicly denounced Stalin's plan at that time, Campa said, because "Stalin was so closely identified with the Soviet Union" that to denounce him would hurt the interests of the Soviet state.

The accompanying interview with George Novack that also appeared in *Uno más uno* refutes Campa's falsifications. (Interested readers should see also the review of Campa's autobiography by Joseph Hansen in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, December 18, 1978, p. 1395.)

trialization in 1929, but he implemented it at an excessively rapid pace. As a prerequisite for implementing his program, Stalin crushed internal democracy within the Soviet Communist Party and in the country as a whole. "And this," Novack noted, "brings me to the second basic issue that divided the two principal factions: the question of workers democracy, which the Left Opposition always defended."

The defeat of the Trotskyist tendency in the Soviet Union, said Novack, "led to the total elimination of proletarian democracy in that country and to the personal dictatorship of Stalin.

"In his own way, Valentín Campa testifies to the truth of this when he tells how he was expelled from the Mexican CP. A leader of a Communist Party, in a country as distant from Moscow as Mexico is, and still he didn't dare to say one word of criticism for fear of reprisals."

Later on, Novack continued, other differences arose—for example, over how the working class should fight against fascism. But the original differences were those two.

As for the aims of the Trotskyist current in founding the Fourth International, Novack explained that during its first ten years the Left Opposition tried to work within the Communist International, to reform it. But in 1933 Hitler came to power, inflicting a terrible defeat on the German proletariat—which was divided to a large extent because of the policies followed by the German Communist Party under the leadership of the Stalinist faction.

At that point Trotsky declared that the Communist International was finished as a revolutionary force, and that it was therefore necessary to build a healthy new organization of the world working class. At the same time, he warned that as a tool

of Moscow, the Communist International wouldn't last long. And in fact, Stalin declared the International dissolved in 1943, as a favor to the imperialists of Great Britain and the United States during the Second World War. Thus the real collaborator with imperialism was not Trotsky, but Stalin.

The purpose of the Fourth International, Novack continued, has been to bring together revolutionary Marxists of all countries on the basis of a common program, and this has been its task over the forty years of its existence. This month, the Fourth International will hold a world congress, where it will assess the world political situation and discuss how to advance the struggles of the oppressed.

"It is clear," Novack said, "that we no longer have someone with the leadership capacities of a Trotsky to guide us, but we try to develop a team leadership to advance the struggle in the spirit of Trotsky."

As to what the Trotskyist movement stands for today, Novack said that "one of the central campaigns of all the sections of the Fourth International today is the defense of the revolution in Nicaragua.

"We are doing all we can in every country to build solidarity committees to aid and help strengthen the revolution in Nicaragua. We are also demanding that the countries which caused the tremendous destruction in Nicaragua now give unconditional aid. For revolutionary Marxists in the United States, that means demanding that Washington send food and medicine, not marines, to Nicaragua.

"I don't suppose Campa will accuse us of being imperialist agents for demanding this of the U.S. government."

"And we hope," Novack concluded, "that for his part Campa will demand that the Soviet Union send aid to Nicaragua." □

How the Gairy Regime Was Overthrown

By Ernest Harsch

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada—When the urban masses of this city and other towns across the country rose up on March 13 to overthrow the regime of Sir Eric Gairy, they were not just toppling another petty dictator. They were also striking a sharp blow against the system of imperialist domination that keeps the peoples of Grenada and most other Caribbean islands in an enforced state of impoverishment and degradation.

The revolutionary New Jewel Movement (NJM), which seized power through the March 13 insurrection, has pledged to free Grenada from imperialist control. The leaders of the NJM recognize that as one of the most vital—and difficult—tasks facing the Grenadian revolution.

The imprint of Grenada's colonial legacy has marked almost all aspects of life here. With virtually no industry, the economy is almost entirely dependent on the export of cocoa, nutmegs, and bananas. Unemployment is very high, and the per capita income is under US\$300 a year.

Grenada's poverty and the lopsided development of its economy are a direct result of the centuries of exploitation that the island has been subjected to. The only economic "development" Grenada's colonial and neocolonial overlords were interested in was that which facilitated the profitable exploitation of the island's agricultural resources. Nothing else mattered.

The first serious attempt to subjugate Grenada began in the seventeenth century, when French colonialists established outposts on the island and killed off most of the indigenous Carib Indians. They set the pattern for Grenada's subsequent economic course by introducing the plantation system, worked by thousands of slaves shipped over from Africa (the descendants of those slaves today constitute the vast bulk of Grenada's population).

In 1783, the British colonialists acquired Grenada from the French. But they were not able to secure firm control until the end of the following decade, after the defeat of a massive rebellion of slaves and creole (mixed-race) farmers in 1795-96, led by Julien Fedon and inspired by the ideas of the French revolution.

With the rebellion crushed, the British imported more slaves and introduced new plantation crops. Despite the formal abolition of slavery in 1838, the plantations remained, now worked by "free" wage laborers. The profits continued to flow to London.

British rule inevitably stirred opposition

among the Grenadian masses. Strikes and protest marches were organized after World War I to press for reforms in the colonial administration, heralding the beginnings of the modern anticolonial struggle.

Demands for social change peaked again in the early 1950s. At the head of this movement emerged Eric Gairy, a former oil worker who founded the Grenada Mental and Manual Workers Union (GMMWU) in 1950, based largely among the semi-proletarian agricultural workers (some of whom also owned small plots of land). Mass demonstrations in St. George's and rural unrest in much of the island prompted the authorities to call in the British navy for help.

Gairy's fiery speeches against the planter class and his success in winning wage increases and better working conditions for the agricultural workers transformed him overnight into a popular figure, and won widespread support for his Grenada United Labour Party (GULP), established in 1951.

New Chains for Old

This upsurge convinced the British to begin introducing new forms of indirect rule, so as to divert the anti-imperialist struggle into manageable channels. A new constitution for the first time provided for a majority of elected members in the Legislative Council, and in the elections of 1951 Gairy's GULP won a sweeping victory.

Gradually, the British rulers laid the basis for a neocolonial regime, ceding more and more political authority and responsibility to local figures, while retaining their most important economic interests and trade ties. Gairy himself occupied a key place in this scheme, once it became clear to the British that his seemingly radical stance had its limits and did not threaten their fundamental interests. Gairy's popular base, moreover, made him a valuable asset to the British, who were able to use his influence to keep the Grenadian workers and peasants in check.

Once in a position of authority, Gairy soon became as corrupt as any colonial satrap. Siphoning off public funds, he bought several businesses and eventually became a member of the Chamber of Commerce. His party supporters were favored with government contracts or well-paying government jobs.

Although Gairy was twice voted out of office, he was resilient enough each time to

drum up enough support for a comeback, relying on populist demagoguery and taking advantage of the dismal record while in office of the rival Grenada Nationalist Party (GNP).

Gairy's firm control over the GMMWU (of which he proclaimed himself "president-for-life") allowed him to wield direct political influence over the biggest sector of the working class. Despite his pretensions as a trade-unionist, his policy was to side with the employers.

"There was a lot of victimization under Gairy," a sixty-four-year-old former clerk told me in Grenville, Grenada's second largest town. "If the boss wanted to get rid of you, or you did something Gairy's boys didn't like, you were out of a job. And there was nothing you could do about it."

As Gairy's popularity waned, he tried to revive it with a "land to the landless" campaign, in which some of the large estates were bought up by the government and resold as small plots to landless or land-hungry peasants. In the absence of any thoroughgoing land reform and needed state aid, this further parcelization of land into small, uneconomic farms failed to better the conditions of the peasants or the agricultural laborers.

Gairy's real policy toward the peasants was best expressed in the government take-over of the cocoa, nutmeg, and banana associations, cooperative bodies that had previously been run by elected boards of the farmers themselves, the overwhelming majority of whom were small farmers.

Faced with deepening disillusionment and discontent, Gairy turned increasingly toward rigged elections and outright repression to maintain his rule. The British colonialists, under the official fiction of "noninterference" in Grenada's internal affairs, gave Gairy their blessing. In appreciation for services rendered, Queen Elizabeth knighted him.

A Wind of Change

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, popular discontent and social ferment surfaced throughout much of the Caribbean, particularly in the English-speaking islands. Under the influence of the Black rights struggle in the United States and Britain, new political and cultural groups, often led by young professionals returning from study abroad, were established. Many identified themselves as "Black Power" currents opposed to the continued economic stranglehold on the islands maintained by white capitalists, both for-

eign and local.

Extensive student protests erupted in Jamaica in 1968. Two years later Trinidad exploded in massive street demonstrations, strikes, and an army mutiny that threatened to topple the Eric Williams regime.

Young activists in Grenada were inspired by this upsurge. They staged a demonstration in support of the soldiers in Trinidad who were being victimized for their mutiny. They formed various Black Power groups. They stepped up their opposition to the Gairy regime.

In December 1970, striking nurses and thousands of their supporters marched through St. George's and occupied the Ministry of Health building. The following March saw a mass demonstration of farmers to protest Gairy's take-over of the banana and nutmeg associations.

Gairy responded with threats and force. He condemned the young Black Power advocates and announced a doubling in size of the police force. He openly boasted that criminals—"the toughest and roughest roughnecks"—were being recruited to help uphold "law and order."

From that time until his overthrow, Gairy maintained a squad of hired goons who beat up dissidents, looted shops and homes, and terrorized the country. Popularly known by the island's residents as the Mongoose Gang, it was officially called, at various times, the Night Ambush Squad, the Volunteer Secret Intelligence Squad, and even the Volunteers for the Protection of Fundamental Human Rights.

During the 1972 elections, the bourgeois opposition Grenada National Party again fielded candidates against Gairy's GULP. Although the party had failed to speak out firmly against the growing repression, several young radicals nevertheless decided to run against Gairy under the GNP banner. After the GNP's defeat (which the party blamed on electoral fraud), two of the young candidates, Selwyn Strachan and Unison Whiteman, broke away.

The New Jewel Movement

In March 1972, Strachan, Whiteman, and several other activists established the Joint Endeavour for Welfare, Education, and Liberation (JEWEL), which engaged in local community activities, initiated political discussions, and published a newsheet, the *Jewel*. The *Jewel* was openly sympathetic to Marxist ideas and became increasingly critical not only of Gairy, but also of the GNP. The movement began to make inroads among the agricultural workers and small peasantry, Gairy's traditional base of support.

Later that same year, in November, a group of young professionals in St. George's came together under the leadership of two lawyers, Maurice Bishop and Kendrick Radix, to form the Movement for Assemblies of the People. (MAP). Bishop had just returned from Britain, where he had been involved in political work among

London's Black community.

In March 1973, the MAP and the JEWEL held a joint convention, at which they decided to merge into a new organization, the New Jewel Movement.

The NJM did not initially present itself as a socialist party, although it did so increasingly over time. Its leaders were influenced to a great extent by the Black rights struggles in the United States and Britain, by the anticolonial upsurges around the world, and by the living example of the Cuban revolution. Che Guevara was one of their heroes.

The political manifesto of the NJM, issued in 1973, outlined the group's proposals for improving the living conditions of Grenada's population and ending the island's abject dependence on the imperialist powers.

The NJM called for Grenada's independence from British colonial rule. But unlike Gairy, who was also pressing for formal political independence, the NJM insisted that "independence must mean better housing for our people, better clothing, better food, better health, better education, better roads and bus services, more jobs, higher wages, more recreation—in short, a higher standard of living for workers and their children" (emphasis in original).

Criticizing the policies of both the GULP and GNP, the NJM offered concrete proposals for improving agricultural production, developing industry, providing jobs, expanding health care, and lowering prices. It called for land reform, state control of foreign trade, and eventual nationalization of the banks, insurance companies, and tourist industry.

The future government, the NJM stressed, would have to be based on "people's assemblies," including village assemblies of all adult citizens and workers assemblies of all those who worked for a living. The village and workers assemblies would elect a national assembly, which would serve as the government. "Power,"

the NJM proclaimed, "will be rooted in the villages and at our places of work."

The NJM maintained that the struggle "must aim at destroying the whole class relationship in our society." It affirmed that when a government is unjust, "the people are entitled to dissolve it and replace it by another by any means necessary."

Upheaval and Repression

The formation of the NJM was but one reflection of a general rise in mass opposition to Gairy's corrupt and repressive regime. In April 1973, water, electricity, and telephone workers walked off their jobs. Following the police killing of a youth in Grenville that same month, hundreds of angry demonstrators marched through the town and shut down the nearby airport.

On May 6, the NJM called a rally at Seamount, a former race track just north of Grenville, drawing a crowd of 10,000 persons—nearly one-tenth of the island's entire population. The NJM urged participation in an antigovernment general strike.

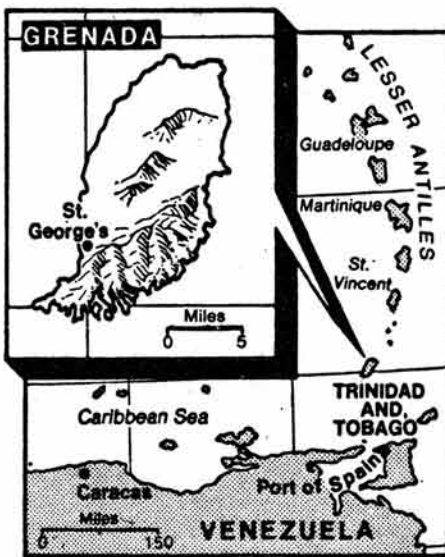
The strike began a little more than a week later, as 300 dockworkers walked off their jobs March 14, even before receiving the go-ahead from their union leadership. From May 16 to 20, 1973, the island was brought to a standstill as government employees, bank workers, students, and others joined in. The Chamber of Commerce, which had close ties to the GNP, supported the general strike.

The NJM's role in the actual organization of the strike was limited, since its direct ties to the labor movement were still quite weak (many leaders of the major anti-Gairy unions were politically tied to the GNP). But the NJM nevertheless demonstrated that it could win a wide following, especially among the youth.

On November 4, 1973, the NJM held a "people's congress" at Seamount, again attracting more than 10,000 persons. A counter rally organized by Gairy on the same day two miles away drew an audience of less than 2,000. The NJM demanded that Gairy resign or face another general strike.

Two weeks later, on the day the strike was scheduled to begin, six top NJM leaders, including Bishop, were brutally beaten, arrested, and jailed for twenty-four hours in Grenville by the police and Gairy's thugs. In reaction to the beatings, the Committee of 22—a coalition of anti-Gairy unions, business associations, and civic bodies that organized the week-long general strike—demanded an end to the repression and the disbanding of Gairy's goon squad.

Gairy promised to dissolve his gang, but when it became clear that he actually had no intention of doing so, the Committee of 22 called another strike. Despite the NJM's obvious popularity and its support for the strike effort, the committee (many of



whose leaders belonged to the GNP) excluded the NJM from membership or direct involvement in the strike's organization.

The strike began on January 1, 1974, soon paralyzing the entire island. Dockworkers shut down the harbor, most commercial workers walked off their jobs, public utilities employees crippled communications and electricity, and shopowners pulled down their shutters.

Thousands of protesters marched through the streets of St. George's, demanding Gairy's resignation. The country's imminent independence from Britain—scheduled for February 7—lent added urgency to the demonstrators' demand. They wanted independence—but without Gairy.

On January 21, 1974, Gairy's Mongoose Gang, supported by police units, swooped down on a crowd of 6,000 demonstrators in St. George's. Scores of protesters were severely beaten. When the armed gang members fired into the crowd, one demonstrator, Maurice Bishop's father, was killed. For a week after, the Mongoose Gang looted stores and shops in the town, as the police stood by and watched.

The general strike, however, continued to hold firm. Dockers unions in Trinidad, Barbados, and Curaçao held solidarity strikes, effectively blocking shipping to Grenada.

On February 6, on the eve of Grenada's independence, Maurice Bishop was seized by sixty policemen who burst into his home. As he sat in jail that night, Britain's flag came down for the last time, and a new Grenadian flag was hoisted up in its place. But little else changed. The ceremonial gunfire of British and Canadian warships in the harbor reminded the island's inhabitants that imperialism was still the master.

After six weeks of determined struggle, Grenada's workers were finally forced to end their general strike. The repression had become too fierce, and they had run out of money.

Now in the saddle of an "independent" Grenada, Gairy was determined to silence the opposition. The NJM leaders were frequently harassed and detained and their homes were searched. The party's newspaper was forced to revert to clandestine publication as a result of the imposition of a \$20,000 deposit fee on all legally published newspapers. Police permission was required before anyone could address a public meeting.

Gairy established close ties with the brutal Pinochet regime in Chile. After a state visit to Chile in July 1976, he started receiving Chilean military supplies and Chilean ships appeared at the harbor here. Some of Gairy's secret police were trained in Chile; after they returned, the first "disappearances" of government opponents began.

To give his regime an appearance of legitimacy, Gairy called elections in 1976.

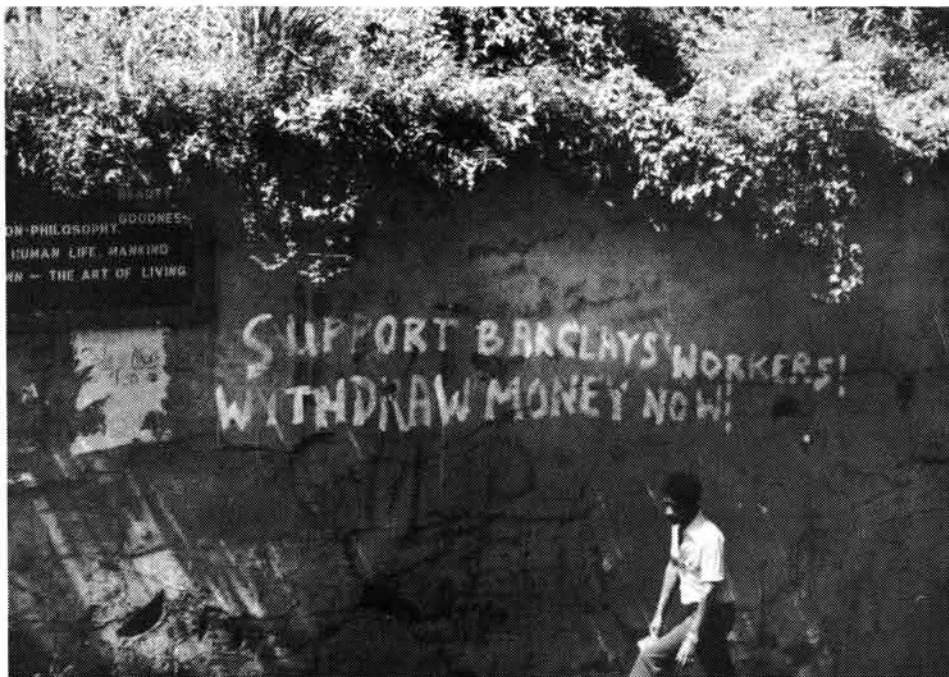
Despite the likelihood of massive vote fraud, the NJM decided to contest the elections. Temporarily playing down its political differences with the bourgeois opposition parties, the NJM teamed up with the GNP and the United People's Party (UPP), a right-wing group headed by Winston Whyte, a former Gairyite.

Although the election was rigged (the names of many dead people miraculously appeared on the voter registration rolls), the opposition People's Alliance missed winning by only 340 votes. It picked up six seats out of the fifteen-seat National As-

sembly and the two bourgeois parties deteriorated. Selwyn Strachan told me that after the 1976 elections the GNP and UPP "were not useful at all. They were more a political liability than anything else."

Against a background of continued anti-government ferment (including a demonstration of 1,000 in St. George's in June 1977), the New Jewel Movement strengthened its ties with the working class. Party activists made further gains among the agricultural workers, undermining to an extent Gairy's GMMWU.

On December 15, 1978, employees at



Ernest Harsch—IP/1

Slogan in St. George's. Unionization struggle was supported by NJM.

sembly: three going to the NJM, two to the GNP, and one to the UPP. Maurice Bishop became the official leader of the parliamentary opposition.

The NJM Matures

The election results clearly reflected wide popular opposition to the Gairy regime, and marked the emergence of the militant NJM as the strongest antigovernment force.

According to Bishop, the rigging of the 1976 elections and the stepped-up repression increasingly convinced NJM members and supporters that "the only reasonable response was that we should begin to think more seriously in terms of organizing around revolutionary lines for the purpose of seizing power out of the hands of the dictatorship."

As the NJM made further headway among the island's youth and working people, and as the GNP and UPP continued to vacillate in their opposition to the Gairy regime, the collaboration between

Barclay's Bank in St. George's went on strike to press their demand for recognition of the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU), which had the support of 70 percent of the bank workers. The president of the BGWU was Vincent Noel, a top NJM leader, who was also at that time vice-president of the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union.

The management of Barclay's refused to recognize the BGWU. This antiunion stand was openly supported by Gairy himself, who accused the BGWU of being led by a "handful of Communists who want to take control of our banking institutions."

Although the bank workers lost the first round and had to return to work on January 10, 1979, the determined efforts of the BGWU and its militant leadership did not pass unnoticed by the workers of Grenada. The NJM's support for this struggle won it greater recognition as a party willing to fight for the interests of working people.

In the wake of the Barclay's strike, Gairy's police stepped up their harassment

of NJM supporters. In mid-February, about 100 police converged on the home of Unison Whiteman's mother, ostensibly in search of arms. Cars of NJM leaders were also searched.

Despite the repression, workers in Grenada were learning that dictators could be toppled. According to Bernard Coard, a top NJM leader, the revolutionary upheavals in Iran were closely followed in Grenada, and NJM speakers constantly referred to the events in Iran in their public addresses.

'Victory Tuesday'

Gairy's crackdown unexpectedly precipitated the decisive confrontation between the NJM and the regime. When the showdown came, it came suddenly.

On Saturday, March 10, the NJM received word that six of its top leaders would soon be detained: Maurice Bishop, Unison Whiteman, Bernard Coard, Kendrick Radix, Hudson Austin, and Vicent Noel.

By the time the police raided their homes, however, the NJM leaders had already gone underground.

Two days later, on the morning of Monday, March 12, the NJM received further information that Gairy was flying to New York that day and had left behind orders that the NJM leadership be assassinated while he was out of the country.

"We had to take a decision," Bishop later explained, "whether we should sit back and wait for Gairy's plans to succeed or whether we ourselves should move on the offensive and take political power for and on behalf of the people of our country. We decided to move."

By that afternoon, the NJM leaders had worked out their plan of attack. Two of them traveled around the island to make contact with key party members. At around 10:00 p.m., just forty-six NJM cadres gathered on a hill overlooking the True Blue army barracks south of St. George's. They made their final preparations for the insurrection and examined the few arms that they had collected.

At 4:15 a.m. on Tuesday, March 13, this handful of revolutionaries attacked the army barracks. As the first few shots were fired, the troops flew into a panic. Still half asleep, they quickly surrendered, many of them without even bothering to put on their clothes. The only fatality was the army commander, who was shot while resisting after the insurgents surprised him in bed. The rebels broke into the armory, seized more weapons, and set fire to the barracks.

They then moved on to the nearby radio station, which was taken without a fight. At 6:30 a.m., the first broadcast went out over the air calling on the population to rise up against the Gairy regime.

As insurgents fanned out to arrest Gairy's top ministers and henchmen, Radio Free Grenada, as it was now called,

issued periodic bulletins on the course of the insurrection, constantly urging the population to come out in active support.

At 10:30 a.m., Bishop went on the air to make the first full statement of the aims of the revolution. "People of Grenada," he said, "this revolution is for work, for food, for decent housing and health services, and for a bright future for our children and grandchildren."

These radio broadcasts were a crucial factor in the success of the insurrection. The insurgents realized that without the active participation of the masses themselves, especially of the workers, their armed uprising against the Gairy regime would have gone down in defeat. The NJM's roots in the mass movement, going back over six years of struggle, ensured that the insurrection had the necessary popular support.

The working class of St. George's—the dockers, commercial workers, telephone employees, civil servants, bank workers, electricity workers, and others—responded to the insurrection call. They went out into the streets and closed down their places of work. Bishop estimates the number of workers who actively participated in the uprising at around 1,000.

In towns around the country, and even in the tiny island dependency of Car-

riacou, crowds gathered in front of the police stations. Women banged cooking pots in support of the revolution. One by one, white flags went up at all the police outposts. Just before 4:00 p.m., the main police headquarters in St. George's surrendered. The insurgents had won.

For years the imperialists had been backing up Gairy, grooming him as a reliable neocolonial ruler who would run the country in their interests. But in less than twelve hours, he had been overthrown. His regime simply crumbled in the face of a popular insurrection, spearheaded by an organized and audacious leadership.

On March 20, just a week after "Victory Tuesday," some 20,000 persons rallied at Queen's Park in St. George's to pledge full support to the revolution and to hail the new leaders of the country.

Five days later, a similar number gathered on the other side of the island, at Seamount. Maurice Bishop presented for adoption the "Declaration of the Grenada Revolution," proposing the formal abolition of the Gairy regime and the establishment of a new People's Revolutionary Government. When it came to the vote, some 20,000 arms and clenched fists shot up into the air in approval.

The Grenadian revolution had begun. □

Ford Fires 700 Black Workers in South Africa

The Ford Motor Company—one of the largest American investors in South Africa—claims that it is an "equal opportunity" employer. But on November 21 it showed its true face, firing all 700 Black workers at one of its plants in Port Elizabeth, the center of the country's auto industry. The workers had been on strike to protest Ford's racist policies.

Within a day, the General Tire and Rubber Company, another American firm with operations in Port Elizabeth, fired 625 Black workers who were fighting for trade-union recognition.

The response of these two American companies to the demands of Black workers is little different from that of any other foreign or domestic firm operating in South Africa.

The Ford Motor Company, however, has tried to maintain that its economic involvement in South Africa plays a "progressive role" by supposedly helping to undermine apartheid. When company Chairman Henry Ford II visited South Africa in January 1978, he rejected demands by numerous Black liberation groups that Ford withdraw from South Africa, claiming that "we do more for the people of South Africa by staying here and providing equal opportunities."

Under pressure from Black workers in South Africa, who make up more than

three-quarters of the industrial work force, and from antiapartheid organizations in the United States, Ford did institute some minor reforms, such as integrating the factory cafeteria. But the limits of how far it was willing to go soon became clear.

On October 30, Ford fired Thozamile Botha, a Black foreman at its Struandale plant, for his political activities as a leader of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization. The next day the 700 other Black workers at the plant walked out in protest, forcing the company to rehire Botha.

Encouraged by this victory, the workers then demanded the dismissal of a racist white foreman and protested against racist treatment by white managers and supervisors. They boycotted the cafeteria and organized several more brief strikes to back up their demands.

Then on November 21, after the fourth work stoppage, the company called in riot police, who took up positions at the plant gates. All the Black workers were fired.

Emboldened by this move, the General Tire and Rubber Company also took a hard stance against its own Black workers, who had been striking and rallying for several days to demand recognition of their union.

Some officials in South Africa have expressed fears that protests at the two plants could spread, crippling the auto industry. □

Cuba in the Twentieth Year of the Revolution

By José G. Pérez

In July and August 1979, I and nearly 200 other young Cubans living abroad conducted a month-long visit to our homeland, as part of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. Our contingent was named in memory of Carlos Muñiz Varela, a brigade leader assassinated in Puerto Rico last April by counterrevolutionary exiles.

This was the second such visit by young Cubans living abroad. The first, at the end of 1977 and beginning of 1978, played a major role in advancing the rapprochement between the Cuban government and the Cuban community abroad that has come to be known as the "Dialogue." As part of promoting a new relationship with Cubans abroad, the Cuban government is releasing all persons still imprisoned for crimes against the revolution. In addition, tens of thousands of Cubans abroad are being permitted to visit their homeland. (In September the U.S. government abruptly revoked the charter of the Panama-based airliner that was coordinating most of these return visits.)

The Dialogue represents a sharp reversal of the Cuban government's attitude toward the exiles. (For a more detailed analysis of the Dialogue and its significance, see "Meaning of the Dialogue—Cubans in the United States and the Cuban Revolution" by José G. Pérez, in *IP/I* Sept. 24, 1979, p. 907.)

While many in the Antonio Maceo Brigade are supporters of the revolution, this was not a requirement for participation in the contingent. To participate, *brigadistas* had to oppose the U.S. economic blockade, have left Cuba before the age of eighteen due to parental decision, and not have a hostile attitude toward the revolution.

During the months leading up to the trip, those who had been involved in the first contingent and were organizing the second made a conscious effort to involve a broad spectrum of young Cubans, including many who had little previous political experience or knowledge about the revolution.

Makeup of the Brigade

The biggest part of the contingent came from the United States, since most Cubans abroad live there. Others came from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Venezuela, and Spain, where the brigade has groups. Individuals came from Peru and Canada.

Most brigadistas were not affiliated with left political organizations. The small percentage who were included members of the

Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, the Social Democratic Partido Socialista Obrero Español, and pro-Moscow Communist parties.

In addition, some brigadistas had been activists in various social protest movements, such as the environmental, antinuclear, women's liberation, and gay rights movements. Some didn't consider themselves socialists, although most did.

The contingent's political diversity made it anything but a group predisposed to accept without question the positions and presentations of the Cuban government and leaders. On the contrary, many were not sure about, or disagreed with, various official positions. On a couple of occasions this led to lively exchanges. While most of us were inspired by what we saw in Cuba, some were unmoved and a few were downright disenchanted.

What We Did

We heard talks on a variety of topics, ranging from economic development, culture, and education to the role of such organizations as the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC—Federation of Cuban Women), Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (ANAP—National Association of Small Farmers), and the Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas (UJC—Union of Young Communists).

The schedule organized by the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP—Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples), which organized the trip, was a heavy one. Nevertheless, there were several free days when we could take off on our own, go wherever we wanted, and talk to whomever we wished. There was no suggestion that we should limit our contacts to functionaries or officials. On the contrary, we were encouraged to meet the widest possible cross-section of the Cuban people.

Most brigade members still have relatives in Cuba and were able to spend several days visiting them. There were brigadistas who hadn't seen close relatives for nearly twenty years—and this also afforded many of us close contact with a wide sample of the Cuban population.

ICAP and the fifty-odd young people from Cuba who accompanied us throughout the entire four-week tour made no attempt to dissuade us from asking questions or expressing opinions. On the contrary, we were encouraged to raise our

ideas and discuss all aspects of the Cuban revolution.

We worked for a week and a half building apartments with the workers of the Ariguanabo textile plant, located almost an hour by bus outside the city of Havana. In addition to Havana, the Brigade also visited the provinces of Holguín, Santiago de Cuba, Cienfuegos, and Pinar del Río as well as the Isle of Youth (formerly the Isle of Pines).

How Cubans View Brigade

Given its composition and the unique role it has played in the Dialogue, the Antonio Maceo Brigade is held in high esteem throughout Cuba, both by government officials and most of the people. A feature-length documentary, *Fifty-five Brothers and Sisters*, was made about the brigade's first contingent. The Cuban news media prominently covered the visit of our Carlos Muñiz contingent. We were received everywhere like brothers and sisters in the struggle against the U.S. government's hostile policy toward Cuba.

The attitude toward us was captured in a phrase of Fidel, summarizing his meeting with the Brigade's first contingent a year and a half ago: "La patria ha crecido" (the homeland has grown).

I felt there was a special openness to discuss with us many problems and challenges still facing the revolution—a greater openness than there might have been with other visitors, especially from the United States. In addition, it was easy to simply take off on our own during free time and melt into the general population.

Much could be written about Cuba on the basis of such a trip. The accomplishments of the revolution show what can be done by the working people of other countries if they follow the Cuban road. This article, however, has a particular goal: to provide information that might help clarify the discussion on the character of the Cuban leadership and its policies.

Within the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist organization, this discussion centers around whether the Cuban leadership is revolutionary—as the Fourth International has maintained—or whether a hardened bureaucratic caste, like the one that exists in the Soviet Union, has emerged in Cuba with institutionalized material privileges. Is the Castro leadership following a course that is in the interests of the Cuban workers and peasants? Or does it defend its own material

privileges at the expense of the Cuban workers and peasants?

This discussion is not limited to the Trotskyist movement. Many of the same questions were raised in classes held by the Antonio Maceo Brigade in New York in preparation for the trip, as well as by brigadistas while we were in Cuba. Many books and articles published in the United States and other countries have also focused on this question. In Cuba, I met people who are aware of and follow both the broader discussion and the debate within the Trotskyist movement.

Before I visited Cuba I had a definite opinion on the basic questions. Despite the differences of opinion I have with the Cuban leaders on a number of points, I was convinced that the Castro team is a revolutionary leadership that bases itself on the conscious, organized power of the Cuban working class in alliance with the peasantry.

While in Cuba, I made a special effort to look into a number of questions that are cited as key tests of the character of the government—the policy toward women, the peasantry, and Blacks; the use of material and moral incentives; policy toward homosexuals; cultural policy; the degree to which high government officials and other functionaries have institutionalized material privileges; whether privileges have tended to increase; and many others. What I saw confirmed my assessment—sometimes in unexpected ways. This article is a report on what I found.

'We Are Internationalists'

Internationalism isn't just official policy in Cuba. It is something felt and lived by the entire nation, as much as part of Cuba as the Sierra Maestra or the royal palms. No matter where you go or who you talk to, the profound internationalist spirit of the Cuban revolution is in evidence.

Everywhere billboards proclaim: "For Vietnam, even our own blood"; "We are internationalists"; and "Long live the Sandinista National Liberation Front."

Theatres show documentaries about Angola's struggle for independence and Cuba's aid to Ethiopia in beating back the imperialist-inspired Somali invasion. Top hit songs on the radio, such as the "Song of the Twentieth Anniversary," proclaim "the honor of being internationalists."

Despite Cuba's own pressing needs, more than 1,000 (out of 14,000) Cuban doctors are abroad helping countries such as Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Mozambique. A thousand teachers are helping Angola carry out a literacy campaign. In addition, thousands of African students, from junior high school age up, are studying in Cuban schools.

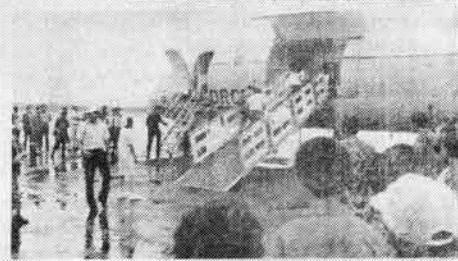
We arrived in Cuba July 14, as the final offensive against the Somoza dictatorship

Ministro Godoy: en Cuba hay devoción por ayudarnos

El ministro de Trabajo, Ugo Valdés Arce, dijo ayer que los miembros de la FAS que regresan de Nicaragua son bien recibidos en Cuba. Valdés Arce dijo que los miembros de la FAS que regresan de Nicaragua son bien recibidos en Cuba. Valdés Arce dijo que los miembros de la FAS que regresan de Nicaragua son bien recibidos en Cuba.



El Ministro de Trabajo, Ugo Valdés Arce.



Miembros de la FAS que regresan de Nicaragua en un momento de su estancia en el Hotel Ambar de la Fuerza Armada Revolucionaria en la ciudad de La Habana.

FAS conmovida por accidente

El accidente que sufrió el barco de la FAS, el "Comandante Arce y Tirad a La Habana", ha conmovido a los miembros de la FAS que regresan de Nicaragua. El accidente ocurrió en el mar Caribe y causó la muerte de varios miembros de la FAS.

Comandante Arce y Tirad a La Habana

El barco "Comandante Arce y Tirad" de la FAS, que regresaba de Nicaragua, sufrió un accidente en el mar Caribe. El barco se hundió y se salvaron algunos miembros de la FAS.

Responden a maniobras de la transnacional Booth

Los miembros de la FAS respondieron a las maniobras de la transnacional Booth en Cuba.

FSLN's daily *Barricada* reports on the Cuban desire to aid Nicaragua.

in Nicaragua was nearing victory. People everywhere were talking about Nicaragua, passing on the latest news, breaking into Anti-Somoza chants and slogans. *Granma* and *Juventud Rebelde*, the two main newspapers, devoted most of their front pages every day to Nicaragua. As the Sandinista offensive advanced, the headlines got bigger and the tone of the coverage more enthusiastic: Somoza Flees! The last pockets of the Somozaist resistance have been crushed!

Celebrations erupted all over the island. As the days passed, and reports from Nicaragua indicated the FSLN was initiating far-reaching social programs in the interest of the working masses, the rejoicing spread. A former commander of the July 26 Movement's Rebel Army, who is now head of a government institute, explained the rejoicing to me: "We have been waiting for this for twenty years. Now we aren't alone."

The climax of the celebration was the July 26 rally in Holguín, a city in eastern Cuba. Surrounded by twenty-six commanders of the FSLN, Fidel gave a speech pledging that Cuba would do everything within its power to aid the Sandinista revolution.

This promise was enthusiastically greeted by the Cuban people. Every day *Granma*, *Juventud Rebelde*, and other news media would report how the staff of such and such a hospital had met and voted to support Fidel's call for aid to Nicaragua. During our month-long tour, the brigade visited several hospitals and I talked to many doctors. I asked them whether they were willing to go to Nicaragua. Everywhere I received the same response: Cuba should do anything and everything for any nation fighting for its liberation.

One answered my question with an anecdote about several young professionals who had wanted to go fight against the South African invasion of Angola. They volunteered to go but were turned down, given the surplus of volunteers and Cuba's needs for trained personnel. So they went to another town, trying to pass themselves off as unskilled workers, hoping they would get to go.

Aiding the African Revolution

I met quite a few people who were veterans of the Angola and Ethiopia campaigns.

I had read the account by Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez explaining how Cuba received an urgent request for aid from the Angolan government when that country was invaded by South Africa. (See *Intercontinental Press*, January 31, 1977, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 74). The Cuban leadership had less than twenty-four hours to decide, and did so at a November 5, 1975, meeting. By November 7 the first contingent of 650 troops was on its way to Angola by plane.

Justo Hernández, one of the people working with us in construction, was in one of the first contingents to go to Angola. He explained how the mobilization was carried out.

In the middle of the night a telegram was delivered to his apartment telling him to report to the local military committee. "When?" he asked the people who delivered the telegram. "Right now," they said. There was a jeep waiting for him downstairs.

When he got to the offices of the military committee, other members of the reserves of the Revolutionary Armed Forces were already there.

An officer explained the situation: Angola had been invaded by South Africa and had turned to Cuba for help. Nobody knew how much South Africa was willing to commit to the invasion, nor whether the United States would intervene openly with its own troops. No one knew how the United States would respond to Cuba's bold decision to aid the Angolans with military forces. But that didn't stop them.

Volunteers would leave directly from the military committee. For security reasons, they couldn't even notify their families. Relatives would be informed of the situation later by the military committee.

Justo reported that although most volunteered to go, there were some who felt they couldn't or simply didn't want to go. There was no attempt made to pressure anyone into volunteering—if you weren't sure, it was better that you stayed behind. As it was, there were many more volunteers than were needed.

Similar stories were told to me by people all over Cuba.

'Let Them Be Like Che'

Che Guevara is the symbol of the internationalist spirit of the Cuban revolution. At any factory, farm, warehouse, school, or hospital, you can see portraits of Guevara. October 8, the day he fell in battle in Bolivia twelve years ago, is commemorated as the "Day of the Heroic Guerrilla."

This is not the kind of lifeless cult that is sometimes built up around a historical figure, the better to bury what that person really stood for. Guevara's books, speeches, and articles are widely read and used as texts in Cuban schools and in political education classes run by the Communist Party and Union of Young Communists.

A nine-volume collection of his works, published on the tenth anniversary of his death, is available for the equivalent of five dollars. Some of his major writings, such as *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, *Guerrilla Warfare*, *Socialism and Man*, and *Message to the Tricontinental*, are also available as separate books or pamphlets.

In his eulogy of Guevara, Fidel Castro said: "If we wish to express what we expect our revolutionary combatants, our militants, our men to be, we must say, without hesitation: 'Let them be like Che!' . . . If we wish to say how we want our children to be educated, we must say without hesitation: 'We want them to be educated in Che's spirit!' . . . If we wish to express what we want our children to be, we must say from our very hearts as vehement revolutionaries: 'We want them to be like Che!'"

That pledge is being carried out in Cuba today.

Virtually all of Cuba's six to fourteen year-olds belong to the Pioneers, a government-sponsored youth organization.

Among the books the Pioneers read is

one called *Che—Commander of the Dawn*. In her introduction, author Renée Méndez Capote states:

"The author hopes to give to the youth . . . an idea of the great humanity of this Argentine who made of Cuba his second homeland; who went to die in Bolivia because for him, true communist, the homeland had no borders. The homeland is there where other brothers fight and sacrifice themselves, convinced that the struggle will always take them to victory, because if they fall there will be other hands to pick up their rifles and carry onward the uncontainable battle for freedom. . . ."

"The author wants the youth who read this book to keep always in their heart the reason for the oath of our Pioneers: 'Pioneers for Communism! We will be like Che!'"

If you talk to the Pioneers, you will see that they are indeed being educated in Che's spirit. The second day we were in Cuba we were taken to the inauguration of the Main Pioneer Palace, which is located in Lenin Park in Havana. The overwhelming majority of the several thousand people present were Pioneers. We spent several hours talking with them, waiting for the ceremonies to begin.

I asked one boy what kinds of games Cuban children play.

"We play Sandinistas versus the National Guard."

"And how does it go?"

"Sometimes it's hard, nobody wants to be a National Guard. We all want to be Sandinistas."

I got into a conversation with a girl, perhaps ten years old, about life in the United States and what it was like. She knew quite a bit about it—the unemployment, having to pay for medicine or to go to school. But she still wanted firsthand testimony.

Then she asked me if I wanted to move to Cuba. I told her I wanted to stay in the United States and make a revolution there like the Cuban revolution.

She asked me if there were many revolutionaries in the United States, and I told her not enough, not so many as in Cuba. To which she responded that we should go ahead and start the revolution; Cuba would send us more revolutionaries to finish the job.

Cuban children identify completely with the revolution. When they speak of things the revolutionary government has done, they always speak of what *we* did, even if it happened before they were born.

During a visit to a Pioneer Palace in a rural area in Santiago de Cuba, a *pionero* gave us a guided tour. He showed us the different workshops where the Pioneers learn about everything from communications to agriculture. One of these was the workshop of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, which has a display case with several rifles, some of them obviously old

and used, some of them brand new. The *pionero* explained:

"These," he said, pointing to the old rifles, "are some of the weapons we used to liberate our homeland."

"And these," he added, pointing to the new rifles, "are some of the weapons we use today to help liberate other homelands."

Moscow's Foreign Policy

The revolutionary internationalist foreign policy of the Cuban government contrasts sharply with Moscow's, which is based on reaching class-collaborationist diplomatic deals with imperialism to preserve the world status quo.

Nowhere has this difference been more obvious recently than in the responses by Havana and Moscow to the revolutionary process unleashed by the overthrow of Somoza. Far from the enthusiastic solidarity and calls for material aid I witnessed in Cuba, Moscow has so far come through with practically no assistance to help reconstruct Nicaragua. And Moscow-oriented Stalinist parties around the world have given only routine coverage to events in Nicaragua and have not thrown their often substantial influence and resources into a massive solidarity effort. The Stalinists know that U.S. imperialism is dead-set against the Nicaraguan revolution, and they don't want to endanger détente by stepping on Washington's toes.

In his July 26 speech, Fidel included an explicit reference to the Soviet Union in his call for an "emulation campaign to see who can do the most for Nicaragua."

"We invite the United States, we invite all the countries of Latin America, we invite all the countries of Europe, countries of the Third World, our sister socialist nations," Fidel said.

"This is our position, in order to make a really human, really constructive effort based on a spirit of emulation."

This contrast between the foreign policy of Havana and Moscow has been shown time and again throughout the two decades of the Cuban revolution, especially around Cuba's unbending solidarity with Vietnam. On several occasions, the Cubans openly took Moscow to task for its inadequate aid to Vietnam. Usually, however, the Cuban leaders choose—as in the case of Nicaragua—to exert the power of their own example as a way to pressure Moscow into providing at least token aid and support.

People in Cuba feel tremendous gratitude toward the Soviet Union for the substantial aid without which Cuba would long ago have been crushed by U.S. imperialism. It is not unusual for Fidel and other Cuban leaders to express appreciation for aid from the "homeland of Lenin."

"Others may bite the hand that has given them generous aid," Fidel said during his speech on the revolution's twentieth anniversary last January. "Cuba and

her sons and daughters of today and tomorrow will acknowledge and be eternally grateful for what the Soviet Union has meant to our people!"

The Castro leadership obviously feels that Cuba's relationship with the USSR limits its freedom to differentiate Cuba's own foreign policy from that of Moscow. So explicit criticisms are few and far between, and differences are muted.

Of course, it is generally accepted in Cuba that the two countries follow their own independent foreign policies, and this is freely acknowledged by the Cuban government. Castro repeatedly stressed this point, for example, in interviews with U.S. reporters in late September. "At times we coincide. We don't always coincide," Castro told CBS News correspondent Dan Rather. Castro cited the October 1962 missile crisis as an example where the Cuban and Soviet foreign policy views did not coincide. (See *IP/I*, Nov. 5, 1979, Vol. 17, No. 40, p. 1071.)

While the existence of these differences is generally recognized in Cuba, however, the way they are handled often leads to confusion and a lack of understanding among the Cuban people about the source and significance of these differences. This does not contribute to their education about Stalinism and its class-collaborationist role in undermining progressive struggles around the world.

During our tour, for example, we were given a presentation on Cuba's foreign policy. During the question and answer period, somebody asked what the Cuban leadership thought of the foreign policy of the USSR. The answer was that obviously the policies of the two countries were different if for no other reason than that the Soviet Union is one of the two greatest powers in the world. That was the entire explanation.

Later, in an informal discussion with a person who turned out to be an official of the Cuban Foreign Ministry (although I didn't know it at the time), I returned to the question, expressing my dissatisfaction with the earlier answer. His reply was:

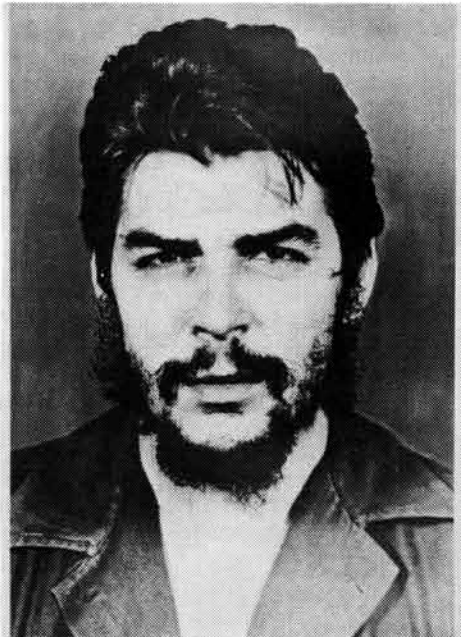
"The world revolutionary movement is very complex. The socialist camp is very complex, and undoubtedly there have been mistakes, there have been problems, weaknesses. To the degree these situations persist—and if you look at China this is undoubtedly true, for example—to the degree problems exist, this is due to the fact that imperialism, that capitalism, still retains a certain strength. Our method is not to seek divisions within the revolutionary movement, to fight only the imperialists, and to the degree the imperialists are weakened, these problems will be overcome."

Privilege in Cuban Society

Cuba's internationalist foreign policy is an extension of the proletarian policies

followed by the Castro leadership on domestic questions.

Marxists who hold that the Cuban leadership is not revolutionary must demonstrate that a new, privileged ruling layer is consolidating or has consolidated itself, and that the Castroist leadership is based on and fights for policies that protect the interests of this privileged social stratum, rather than the interests of the workers and peasants.



"Che Guevara is the symbol of the internationalist spirit of the Cuban revolution."

Because this question of material privilege is central, I tried to find out as much as I could about the real standard of living of the working masses compared to that of government functionaries and administrators, and to determine whether differences that exist have tended to increase over the past decade.

From all accounts, the economic situation of Cuba has improved substantially since the late 1960s. The fruits of this growing productivity have not been distributed disproportionately to a thin, privileged stratum of the population, but have benefited society as a whole.

Many of the extreme shortages of consumer goods that existed in the late 1960s have eased. For example, unlike a decade ago, there is now quite a bit of clothing in the stores. Some of it is still rationed, and everyone gets the same bare minimum of rationed clothing at low prices, whether you are a peasant or the president of a government institute. But, in addition, much clothing is now sold without the need for ration coupons, although at higher prices.

Cuban wage scales nominally run from about 90 to 700 pesos a month. (Officially 1 peso equals US\$1.40.) However, in prac-

tice, it is rare for anyone to earn less than 120 pesos, and the only people I heard of who earn more than 400 pesos are a few doctors who occupy special posts.

For example, at one warehouse I visited in the city of Havana, formerly owned by my father, wages range between 120 and 152 pesos a month. The salary of the top administrator is 163 pesos a month.

At the factory that produces sugarcane harvesting combines, production workers earn up to 154 pesos and the highest paid administrator receives 250 pesos.

This doesn't tell the whole story, however, because workers engaged in productive labor—but not administrators—are entitled to incentive pay for surpassing the production norms for their job. The rate of incentive pay is 100 percent—if you produce twice as much, you get paid twice as much. In addition, all the employees, in this case including administrators, are entitled to an additional bonus of 10 percent of all their earnings during a three-month period if their factory, warehouse, or farm meets all its goals for quantity produced, efficient use of raw materials, etc.

At the warehouse I visited in Havana, for example, the effect of these incentive pay plans was that many workers consistently had much higher take-home pay than the administrators. This has created a problem, in that many workers are unwilling to accept promotions to administrative posts because it would mean a cut in real income.

Disparities in the standard of living are further reduced because everyone in Cuba receives many essential goods and services either free or at subsidized prices. Health care and education are totally free. About two-thirds of the cost of child-care is subsidized, and fees are adjusted according to income, ranging from two pesos to forty pesos a month. Rent is no more than 10 percent of income, and usually is 6 percent, which represents a substantial subsidy. All workers get at least one meal, sometimes two meals, every day at their workplaces for fifty Cuban cents each, which also represents a subsidy.

The 'Historic Wage'

Since the early 1970s, there has been a big effort to eliminate one source of sizable wage disparities, the so-called historic, or carry over, wage.

In Cuba, a historic wage is what a person holding that position earned under capitalism. If before the revolution you had a position that paid extraordinarily well, you continued to receive that wage even though the wage that other workers would normally receive today might be substantially lower. The rationale for this policy was that these wages were often the result of struggles by the workers of a particular plant, and what the workers were able to win under capitalism through their struggles shouldn't be taken away by

the socialist revolution. The revolution set the goal of reducing inequalities in the workforce by raising the standard of living of the worst-paid workers, rather than lowering the wages of the best-paid.

Those who benefited most from this policy were the skilled aristocracy of Cuban workers, as well as many professionals. Over time historic wages tended to get transferred as an individual moved from one job to another and new "historic wages" tended to be created for positions where they had not existed before. I was told by one administrator that historic wages showed a particular tendency to become attached to administrative posts. Often this was done legally; sometimes not.

The policy adopted in 1973 prohibits the creation of any new historic wages, either for individuals or for posts. The historic wages that exist are now strictly nontransferable—if you leave a job, you leave the wage, and if a new person takes a job that previously had a historic wage, the new person gets only the regular wage.

This has sharply reduced one big source of large (for Cuba) disparities that fostered bureaucratic abuses and influence peddling.

Other measures have been adopted to prevent the growth of special privileges for functionaries. For example, there is a big shortage of housing in Cuba, as well as an insufficient supply of TVs, refrigerators, and other consumer durables. After various experiments, the Castro leadership implemented a plan of distribution primarily through workplace assemblies. The workers vote on who, among those who don't have a particular item, are most deserving because of their work performance. They are entitled to buy the scarce items.

As Fidel explained in his speech to the 1973 Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions:

"The distribution of household electrical appliances is another problem we've discussed. We understand that the solutions you've come up with are good ones. Some contradictions have arisen in the process. A worker said it was usually the 'good guy,' the worker liked by everyone, who got the electrical appliance.

"Now, if a 'good guy' can fool the masses, what about the public official? If a public official, instead of the masses, is in charge of distribution, he makes a hundred mistakes for every one the masses made."

Castro added that, of course, it was preferable not to have shortages. But if there isn't enough to go around, the system of workplace distribution has an additional advantage:

"... we think that, as long as these electrical appliances are scarce, the workers should be the first ones to get them. It's a matter of having the workers come first in a nation of workers. Before, electrical appliances were sold to anybody

who was willing to stand in a long waiting line in front of a store, and this method caused a lot of irritation."

Earlier in his speech Castro had referred to the problem that developed in the late 1960s, with many people, especially women, leaving the labor force. In Cuba, people told me one reason for this was that it took hours and hours of standing in line to obtain many items. Even worse, some people began to pay others to stand in line for them, meaning that those with higher incomes got preferential access to items in short supply.

I found that overall the official policies are followed in real life. Of course, there are more than a few individuals who use their positions to secure privileges for themselves and who are guilty of other abuses. In Cuba, these comfortable careerists are popularly referred to as the 'acomodados.'

But the policy of the Cuban leadership seeks to counter this process and is a real check on it. Being an administrator doesn't automatically bring preferential treatment. For example, the administrator of the warehouse in Havana that I visited had been without an apartment of his own since divorcing his wife two years before. He said that was because couples with children get priority for housing. (Workplace distribution applies only to newly built apartments.)

Relations on the Job

Relations on the job also reflect the absence of a privileged ruling group alien to the Cuban workers and hostile to their

interests. Cuba does not have a system of democratic workers and peasants councils and there is no democratic control by the workers over the national economic plan.

But assemblies of workers at each workplace vote on the economic plan proposed for that workplace. Worker representatives, elected by an assembly of the entire work force, participate in the management councils of all enterprises. Five-member commissions of workers elected by secret ballot handle all cases of discipline within a workplace. A worker cannot be fired by management; only the workers themselves have that right.

In capitalist countries such as the United States, labor discipline and productivity are maintained primarily through the punitive pressures of economic coercion supplemented by favoritism. Workers who don't behave to the bosses' satisfaction get tossed onto the unemployment lines.

In Cuba, everybody has a job. Virtually every workplace I visited reported that they had fewer workers than they should have. Even if a worker is fired from a job, the government still has the responsibility of finding that person another one.

Nevertheless, the revolution's leaders have said that they jumped ahead of themselves in the late 1960s, when the policy was to move away from economic rewards for high productivity, and goods and services were increasingly distributed free to the population.

It rapidly became apparent that, given Cuba's stage of development, free distribution created a tendency to waste things that do not exist in limitless supplies. An



Great strides have been taken in developing the countryside. Special efforts have been made to mechanize sugarcane cutting.

experiment at a large housing development, for example, demonstrated that those who received an unlimited quantity of water for free used four to five times as much as those who had to pay something for it. The policy that was finally adopted was to provide free of charge the amount considered adequate for an average family, and to charge for any amount over that.

Moreover, the shortages of consumer items, coupled with the very low prices and increasing free distribution meant that a large amount of money accumulated in the hands of individuals. This resulted in a growing problem of people leaving the workforce, especially women.

The revolution dealt with this problem by raising the prices of non-essential items such as liquor.

More important, the so-called "parallel market" was created. Many items that still are in short supply are available in modest quantities at very low prices through the rationing system. If there is a surplus, it is sold first-come, first-served, but at higher prices. An extreme example is cigarettes, which are still rationed. Each adult is entitled to eight packs a month at the equivalent of US\$0.28 each. Additional packs cost more than US\$2.

Through these techniques surplus money has been reabsorbed, and it has become possible to meaningfully reinstitute economic incentives. Norms (quotas) exist for every job, and pay is determined by fulfillment of these norms. The guiding principle is: From each according to their ability; to each according to their work.

Contrary to what some have claimed, this has not meant the abandonment of moral—that is, political—incentives, which continue to be viewed as fundamental elements in building socialism.

"We should never think we are going to solve with money the problems that only consciousness can solve," Castro said in his 1973 speech to the congress of the Cuban labor federation. "We must use material incentives intelligently and combine them with moral incentives, but we must not be deluded into thinking we are going to motivate the man of today, the socialist man, only through material incentives, because material incentives no longer have the validity they have under capitalism, in which everything—even life and death—requires money.

"That is why the contribution made by the consciousness of the workers, by the political culture of the workers and by their attitude becomes an irreplaceable element in socialism, since the workers' motivations are of a different character."

The goal of both the material and the moral incentive is to deepen social consciousness, to make each individual aware that his or her relationship to society is different from what exists under capitalism.

"Above all we want to create the consciousness that the material welfare of the

individual is dependent on the economic development of the society as a whole," an official of JUCEPLAN, the central planning agency explained in a talk to members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. "The harder we work, the more we produce, the more there will be for everyone."

Cuban Communist Party

The Cuban Communist Party (PCC) and Union of Young Communists (UJC) are not organizations composed primarily of careerists and privilege-seekers. I met scores of members of the two organizations in Cuba. They were distinguished above all by being what they claim to be—conscious and dedicated revolutionists. This was indicative, though hardly a scientific poll.

To become a member of the party, you must be nominated by your co-workers and ratified by the party nucleus that you are to join. The PCC leadership has stressed the need to maintain and strengthen the working-class composition of the party. The number of administrators and functionaries that are permitted to enter each year is deliberately limited.

A distinguishing mark of the PCC and UJC members I met was their enthusiastic support for Cuba's anti-imperialist foreign policy and their eagerness to take international assignments. They reminded me of the IWW rebels described by James P. Cannon, founder of the Socialist Workers Party, as the backbone of any revolutionary movement: "The shock troops of the movement were the foot-loose militants who moved around the country as the scene of the action shifted." Except that the Cuban revolutionaries have expanded the scope of their activities far beyond the boundaries of one country.

Women in Cuba

Among the most widely discussed social questions in Cuba today is the liberation of women. I found more ferment and motion around this than any other domestic political issue.

The Castro leadership has promoted the battle for women's equality since the first days of the revolution. For example, in a speech on February 6, 1959,—less than a month after the Rebel Army's triumphant entry into Havana—Fidel was already beginning the job of educating the Cuban people on this question:

"The evils that have been accumulating are many. . . .

"There is talk, for example, of racial discrimination and it is true. But there is no talk about sex discrimination, of the number of women that they try to exploit, of the way women are viewed more as objects of pleasure than as figures in society who are and can be at the same height as men.

"On one occasion when we decided to organize the battalions of women fighters

[as part of the Rebel Army], I explained the social reasons for doing this. I found a great difficulty in the prejudices of many men, and I had to explain to them that women are one of the sectors most discriminated against. . . .

"Women form part of the accumulation of prejudices that the social life, the economic circumstances and conditions of our country, have created. . . ."

Since 1959, tremendous strides have been made towards achieving full equality for women. Among the greatest beneficiaries of the literacy campaign carried out in the first years of the revolution were the women, since they suffered from a significantly higher rate of illiteracy than men. For twenty years women have benefited from real equality in education, both among the youth and in the educational campaigns carried out among the adult population.

These educational advances in turn have facilitated the growing integration of women into the labor force. Before the revolution there were less than 200,000 women employed, 70 percent of them as domestics. One of the first tasks undertaken by the revolution was to provide training for those women so that they could take productive jobs. Today, some 800,000 women are employed, nearly 30 percent of the work force. Both the absolute number of working women and the percentage of the labor force that is female is increasing every year.

Discrimination against women is a crime punishable by law. Women's right to control their own bodies has become a reality through abortion and contraception, which are free and available to women of all ages. Women have broken into many previously all-male preserves, such as the medical profession and many industrial jobs.

One of the priorities of the revolutionary government from the very first years has been to utilize even scarce resources to develop and constantly expand low-cost, high-quality child-care centers. Currently there are facilities for more than 90,000 children, and they are being expanded at a rate of more than 10,000 places a year.

The centers accept children from the age of forty-five days up to when they enter school. They are not just baby-sitting services, but provide education, health care, balanced diets, and even clothing for the infants. Some centers are open twenty-four hours a day for women who work at night or have rotating shifts.

In addition, the government has set up boarding schools for hundreds of thousands of junior high school and high school students, who return home only on weekends. These schools have proved immensely popular both with parents and young people.

For students who live at home, the government is now providing free lunches at most schools. In prerevolutionary Cuba,

the virtually universal practice was that children went home for lunch, making it very difficult for mothers to hold an outside job.

Challenges Ahead

Nevertheless—as the leaders of the revolution are the first to admit—full equality for women remains a goal yet to be achieved in Cuba.

The First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, held at the end of 1975, adopted a thesis and a resolution on women's liberation.

These documents emphasize that the oppression of women has its roots in the rise of class society:

"Discrimination against women started many centuries ago, since when the primitive communities disintegrated and private property and the division of society into classes was established, men obtained economic supremacy and with it social predominance.

"Through the different regimes based on the exploitation of man by man, women were relegated to the reduced framework of the home, her possibilities for participating in social production were limited or she was ruthlessly exploited.

"These concepts, which prevailed in our country until the overthrow of capitalism, can have no place in the stage of the building of the new society."

The thesis then shows, with facts, figures, and numerous examples, both what was achieved in the first fifteen years of the revolution and the considerable ground still to be conquered. It singles out, for example, the relatively low percentage of women who occupied leading posts in organizations such as the trade unions and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, in the party, and in the administration of the economy.

The thesis cites several reasons for this situation. The first is simply the short time the revolution has been in power: fifteen or twenty years are but a minute when measured on the timepiece of the evolution of human societies. Another reason is Cuba's continuing economic backwardness. This makes it impossible, for example, for the government to simply build, overnight, all the child-care facilities, cafeterias, and laundries needed for women to participate equally in society.

The third factor cited by the document is prejudices against women. "*A fundamental battle has to be carried out in the field of consciousness, because there still exist many backward attitudes that we are dragging with us from the past*" (emphasis in original).

In a talk to members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, two leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) explained what further progress had been achieved in the past few years.

The number of places for children in child-care centers has jumped from 55,000

to 92,000 in the last three years. Many new boarding schools have been built. Progress has been made in eliminating entertainment and cultural presentations that depict women as sexual objects. For example, the selection of carnival queens, which the FMC leaders said were often no more than beauty contests with a socialist veneer, has been halted.

Protective legislation that forbade women from holding certain physically

Continuing, steady progress towards full equality for women has been accompanied by increasing formal and informal discussion on the role of women in society.

For example, a recent film released by the Cuban film industry, *Retrato de Teresa* (Portrait of Teresa), deals with this question.

The film is about a woman textile worker with three children who finds herself torn between her desire to escape the stultifying



Harry Ring/Militant

"For twenty years women have benefited from real equality in education, both among the youth and among the adult population."

strenuous or dangerous jobs has been replaced with recommendations to women that they not seek such jobs. But the final decision is now up to the woman, and a woman who applies for any job opening she is qualified to hold cannot be denied that job because of her sex.

The percentage of party members who are women has increased from 13 to 19 percent since 1975. The percentage of leading posts occupied by women in organizations, the economy, and the government has also increased.

This continuing progress has not been without friction. For example, the representatives of the FMC said it took quite a "fight" with the Ministry of Labor to convince them to drop regulations that made it illegal for women to hold certain jobs.

The FMC sees its basic task as "the full integration of Cuban women into Cuban society on the basis of full equality, not only in the laws and in theory, but also in practice." For that reason, "we will have to exist until discrimination and all its vestiges have been totally eliminated."

limits of domestic life and the demands placed on her by her husband.

She is involved in a cultural group sponsored by her union. The union wants her to keep participating in it, which she also wants to do. At the same time she has to do all the housework and her husband is constantly accusing her of neglecting the home. Needless to say, he does absolutely nothing to help with household chores, much less share them equally with his wife.

As a result of all the pressure, Teresa takes a leave of absence from her job. But immediately upon returning to work, the conflict breaks out again. Her husband moves out after a violent fight and has an affair. Teresa, relieved of the pressure from her husband, continues in the cultural group, which wins national recognition.

The movie ends with Teresa's husband trying to patch things up with her. He asks her to forgive him, and she answers with a question: "What if I had walked out and had the affair?"

His response is automatic—"No es lo

mismo,"—it's not the same. With that, Teresa turns her back on him and walks away.

The film, which premièred the week of July 26, has been the focus of intense discussions, because it portrays something very common in Cuban society. As increasing numbers of women have been able to move into the work force and achieve economic independence, the divorce rate has risen sharply.

A special screening of the film was arranged for the brigade in Santiago de Cuba, and the following day we had a long bus trip to Cienfuegos. We spent the whole morning on the bus in a discussion, at times quite sharp, over the issues raised in the film.

The discussion started when one of the male college students from Cuba accompanying us on the trip remarked, "Of course, it isn't the same." This immediately met with a rash of objections, primarily from the women, and a heated discussion got under way, lasting several hours. Later, the discussion was rekindled when someone dragged out a copy of the Cuban CP thesis on women's liberation, quoting a part that says: "*There cannot exist one morality for women and another for men; this is contrary to Marxist-Leninist ideology and the principles of this Revolution.*"

"It is wrong to judge women in a different way than men; what is socially acceptable for men should be equally socially acceptable for women. . . ."

"Men and women should be equally free and responsible to determine their relations in the arena of sexual life" (emphasis in original).

I was curious to see whether the discussion on the bus had been atypical of Cuban society. I therefore went to see *Retrato de Teresa* again during a free day in Havana, and afterward stood outside the theater talking to people.

The same discussions were repeated—about the double standard in morality, about the responsibility of men for the housework, caring for the children, and related matters. The discussions would break down into smaller groups, with clumps of people breaking off to go to Coppelias, a big ice-cream establishment across the street. I went with two women in their twenties who had been particularly insistent on defending equality for women, and who, it turned out, were both members of the Union of Young Communists.

We continued on the same theme, waiting in line to buy ice cream and then eating it.

Cuban Family Code

They said that the discussion on the role of women in Cuban society had really gotten off the ground on a massive scale only a few years before, with the government's introduction of the Family Code,

which was formally proclaimed law at the beginning of 1975.

I told them that some radicals in the United States have attacked the Family Code, claiming it reinforced the family as an institution of the oppression of women. Their reaction was utter disbelief.

"You have to understand where we are coming from. Twenty years ago, if a girl in my family went out with a boy without a chaperone, she would have been considered a whore. A woman's place was to have babies and do the housework and to keep quiet unless spoken to. Often your parents told you who to marry, and if the man cheated on you, you couldn't leave him, for how were you to survive. Contraception was considered an attack on a man's virility; abortion a crime punishable by law. Women were denied education, access to jobs—everything."

They explained that the revolution had changed all that, and that a good number of the changes were ratified by the Family Code.

"It says women are equal in marriage, that's the main thing." They described the various provisions—equal control of joint property; equal rights and responsibilities for raising the children; equal right to have a profession or a job and to participate in broad social activity; elimination of any distinction between "legitimate" and "natural" children; enumeration of the duties of the parents toward their children and of the rights of children, etc.

It even says that men should share the housework equally. They described the mass meetings that were organized in every neighborhood to discuss the Family Code.

"When it was done well, it was tremendous," explained one of the young women. "Everything would go along fine, everyone agreeing, until they got to the part about equal responsibility for the home and for raising the children, and when this was explained, things got hot. It provoked much discussion, at the meeting, and afterwards.

"Then came the film," she added, referring to a documentary about the discussions held on the code. "The *machistas* were made to look very bad in the film, and this provoked more discussion, and it's been going on. But it is a very long process, because it's not just changing someone's opinion on something, but changing the way people live."

Freedom of Opinion

Contrary to the image presented in the capitalist news media, Cuba is not a police state where people can't express antigovernment opinions for fear of ending up in a forced labor camp. Quite the contrary. Although most people I met were supporters of the revolution, some disagreed with one or another measure, and a few frankly couldn't have cared less about the revolution. They weren't afraid to say so.

One young man explained to me that the revolution was terrible because of the censorship of music. I was surprised by his statement, since I had spoken to many people, including artists, and had been told that the cultural policy of the government remained what it had been from the beginning—anything goes as long as it's not advocacy of counterrevolution. So I asked him to explain.

He claimed that several musical groups that are very popular in the United States had been banned from Cuban radio because they had given concerts in Pinochet's Chile. He rattled off a half-dozen names. I had never heard of any of them.

In fact, American disco and rock music is quite popular in Cuba, and on certain Cuban radio stations you're as likely to end up listening to the Bee Gees as to a native Cuban artist.

So I asked him what records these groups had put out and what their hit songs were. He didn't know. To me, it sounded like a frame-up, and I told him so. He assured me it wasn't so—he'd heard this reported on Voice of America.

Later I got a chance to ask a member of the writers' and artists' union about songs being banned from the radio. He said he'd never heard of such a thing. (He also added that he didn't think a boycott of Pinochet's collaborators was such a bad idea, or a violation of artistic freedom.)

If there is one term that describes the prevailing attitude in Cuba on many social and cultural questions, it is tolerance. The operative word is "respect"—you respect someone's right to say something, do something, be a certain way, even if you, or the party, or the government, do not agree with it.

For example, there is complete freedom of religion in Cuba. If you want to go to church, you go. If you want to pray, you pray. In reality, most people, especially young people, don't have anything to do with churches. I passed by one Havana church while Sunday noon mass was in progress. A small congregation of maybe fifteen or twenty people were in the front pews, dwarfed by the huge building. They were mostly older women.

"We don't worry about religion," a member of the Communist Party told me. "In the old society it was a source of hope for those without any, and was kept up by the rich so that people would pray instead of fighting the exploiters. Now the people know where hope lies—in the revolution—because they have seen the promises kept. Some people still pray to god to go to heaven, but they know if they want to solve a problem down here, they should talk to their delegate in the People's Power."

If the pope visited Cuba today, he would certainly not find himself received as in Poland!

The same kind of tolerance and respect characterizes other social relations.

Cuba was a Latin American country strongly influenced by the Catholic Church, and many traces of that influence still remain. Pre-marital sex, for example, was to people of my parents' generation the gravest of sins.

There is no "party line" on whether young people should have sexual relations. But in schools sex education is provided, and contraception and abortion are freely available. If a young, unmarried woman has an abortion, her parents are informed only if she wants them to be. The government respects the privacy of the individuals.

The government has been moving toward a similar policy on homosexuality. Laws inherited from the capitalist past punishing homosexuality as a crime have been quietly eliminated in the last few years. In this case, government policy considers the heterosexual couple to be the norm—but what people do in their own homes is their affair. According to government officials we spoke with, the anti-homosexuality propaganda campaigns carried out in earlier years have been abandoned.

While in Cuba, I happened to meet some homosexuals, including members of the UJC, and they confirmed that this is the case. At the same time, they pointed out that anti-homosexual attitudes are deeply held by many Cubans, and that this can be a big problem, especially in the absence of any efforts by the government to combat these prejudices.

The situation of unmarried mothers is in some ways similar. Again, the government holds the heterosexual couple to be the norm, but a woman's decision to become a single mother is her own. In this case, equal rights for her and the child are specifically guaranteed by the Family Code.

Institutionalization

Among American radicals, one of the least understood changes in Cuban society in recent years has been the process known as "institutionalization," and in particular, the setting up of government bodies known as Assemblies of People's Power.

These assemblies function on three levels: local, provincial, and national. The members of the assemblies generally do not devote most of their time to its work. Often they are workers who continue with their regular jobs. If they devote full time to assembly tasks, they take a leave from their regular job and, while working for the assembly, get paid whatever they were previously earning.

Local assemblies are elected periodically by direct secret ballot. By law, there must be at least two candidates for every delegate's seat, and all candidates must live in the neighborhood or area from which they are elected. Nominations are made at neighborhood assemblies.

Cuban law forbids any organization, including the Communist Party, from presenting official candidates, slates, or endorsements. U.S.-style campaign hoopla is also outlawed, being considered—not without reason—as more appropriate for a carnival than for an election.

At the same time, however, this way of organizing elections deemphasizes discussion of issues and policies and make no provision for the election of candidates based on the political positions they hold on the issues facing the Cuban working people and their government.

The local Assemblies of People's Power run the schools and many other local services. They elect from their members an executive committee and full-time functionaries. The delegates from the neighborhoods play the role of ombudsman, and one of the major roles of the assemblies is to serve as a link between the locality and the various administrative branches of the central government and economy. The assemblies also play a role in formulating economic development plans for their area.

Every three or four months, the deputy from a neighborhood has to present before a neighborhood mass meeting an accounting of what he or she has been doing. If at any time the people of the neighborhood are dissatisfied, the delegate can be recalled either through petition or through vote at a neighborhood meeting. The final decision on whether a delegate stays or goes is by secret ballot. If the delegate is removed, a new election is then held. Although recalls aren't common, it's happened often enough in the few years the system has been in operation (about 100 times) that everyone knows it is not merely a formal provision, but one that can be readily exercised.

From my discussions with people in various parts of Cuba, I found that the role of the assemblies is pretty much as officially described, although there is unevenness from area to area and even within a given locality in how well and responsibly the system functions. Often this depends on who the particular delegate happens to be.

In general, people I talked with thought that this system is far preferable to the previous practices, where lines of authority over local services were often unclear and where many decisions had to be referred to government ministries headquartered in Havana, at which point they often got lost in administrative red tape.

The provincial assemblies are elected by the local assemblies. Delegates to provincial assemblies can be members of the local assemblies, but most often are not. The National Assembly is elected by the provincial assemblies.

According to the Cuban Constitution, the National Assembly is the highest decision-making body. Since it meets only a few days each year, however, most of its responsibilities are delegated to the

smaller committees it elects—the Council of Ministers and the Council of State. Given the degree of popular support for the policies of the revolution and for the central team of leaders around Fidel Castro—which is identified with the development and implementation of the revolution's line of march—the fact that the top government officials are now elected hasn't brought about many changes.

The establishment of the organs of People's Power is the centerpiece of institutionalization, but not its only aspect. It has been a broader process of establishing vehicles through which Cubans can express opinions on and, within limits, participate in running society.

As part of institutionalization, the unions have been virtually rebuilt and their role clarified. Among the tasks of the unions is to defend the interests of the workers, ensure good working conditions, and guarantee that workers receive the pay they are entitled to. Union assemblies also discuss and vote on the economic plan for a given workplace. If the workers differ with the planning authorities on the goals, part of the job of the union leadership is to discuss with the planners and come up with a revised proposal.

Local union officials are elected by secret direct ballot and can be removed from their posts by the members at any time. (This is generally true of the local officials of all the mass organizations sponsored by the government, such as the Federation of Cuban Women and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.)

Prospects and Problems

The stated purpose of institutionalization was to overcome a number of problems that became evident in Cuba in 1970, with the revolution's failure to achieve the ten-million-ton sugar harvest that had been set as the central economic goal.

At that time, Fidel said that the problem hadn't been the workers, but the leadership of the revolution, which had been out of touch with the masses. Many workers knew the plans in their sugar refinery were unrealistic or that the mobilizations for the harvest were disrupting production. Yet there was no vehicle for them to express these opinions and collectively affect policy decisions.

In essence, the task the Cuban government set for itself was to come up with institutionalized ways of being better in touch with what the workers and peasants are thinking, what their problems are, and what to do about them.

In doing this, the Cubans felt there were no ready models available for consultation. The example of the first years of the Soviet Republic, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, has been obscured by decades of purges, the Gulag Archipelago, monstrous glorification of supposedly infallible leaders, and other undemocratic

measures needed by the Stalinist bureaucracy to preserve its privileges.

The new Cuban institutions are not of the same type as the councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers in the early years of the Russian revolution. Historically, they did not arise in the same way. The soviets were the mass struggle organs that brought down the tsar. The Bolsheviks

there, and that it has opened the door to greater elements of workers democracy, not less. It is neither a conscious, direct step toward democratic councils of workers and peasants modeled on those that existed in the early Soviet Union, nor an attempt to prevent such a development.

Instead, institutionalization has meant an increase in the ability of the Cuban

varying currents of opinion around political issues or alternative platforms within the framework of the revolution. The Cuban leadership views the formation of such organized currents of opinion as an obstacle to the unity necessary for a small, isolated, underdeveloped nation to survive against the permanent siege imposed by the imperialist colossus to its north.

This position of the Cuban leadership is reflected in many ways in Cuban society. One that most struck me was the fact that the rich political discussions that go on all the time in Cuba find very little reflection in the printed media, especially mass-circulation publications such as the daily *Granma* and the weekly *Bohemia*. I was told that articles expressing differing views on such questions continue to appear in specialized journals from time to time. However, these don't reach most Cubans, even those in the Communist Party.

The concern for safeguarding the revolution and achieving the greatest possible unity in the revolutionary movement is a legitimate one. Under the ferocious attack of the counterrevolution, the Bolsheviks had to take away political rights from those who conspired with the counterrevolution and to violate other democratic norms. Such measures were necessary to ensure that the revolution survived.

Nevertheless, at the moments of greatest danger—even when the Bolshevik Party temporarily banned organized factions in 1921—it continued to have a rich internal life marked by debate and organized discussion. At the very party congress where the ban was passed, Lenin stressed the need to continue a “more comprehensive exchange of opinion between Party members” and the election of delegates to party congresses on the basis of political platform when that was necessitated by “fundamental disagreements.”

This is in fact what happened. Various currents in the Bolshevik Party continued to have lively debates and at times sharp polemics. The issues were the fundamental questions facing the revolution. And the exchange of views strengthened the revolution rather than weakening it.

Lenin, Trotsky, and the other central leaders of the Bolshevik Party encouraged such an internal regime because they believed that it led to the best decisions. Moreover, the political clarity and education gained from such discussions, and the generalized understanding of decisions arrived at democratically, helped ensure that they were carried out with maximum effectiveness and unity.

Like the Cuban leaders, the Bolsheviks understood the fundamental importance of consciousness in motivating people to carry out the tasks of the revolution. They relied heavily on the freest possible discussion as a tool to develop consciousness. The idea of a monolithic party was not



The failure to reach the ten-million-ton goal in the 1970 sugar harvest showed the leadership that workers needed more input in decision-making and spurred the process of institutionalization.

fought to win the leadership of the soviets away from the reformists who wanted to preserve capitalism, and they strengthened these mass organizations in the fight to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish the institutions for a new government.

As I've already described, this is not the origin of the assemblies in Cuba. And that fact, along with the gutting of soviet democracy in the Soviet Union, has had an impact on the character of the institutionalization measures in Cuba.

Based on what I learned during the brigade trip, I think that institutionalization in Cuba has helped slow down and in some cases reduced tendencies toward the growth of bureaucracy and bureaucratism

masses to participate in running the country, especially on the local level, and to discuss and influence decisions on overall policies of the revolution.

Nonetheless, there remain serious limitations. Questions concerning the fundamental policy and economic alternatives of the revolution aren't discussed through and acted on by the population as a whole in an organized way.

The reason for this weakness is not so much that the present institutions are totally unsuitable. They could readily be adapted to begin such discussions, and they could be modified or revamped over time as the need arose. The fundamental reason hampering the full discussion of such national decisions is that the Castro leadership opposes the organization of

Lenin's; it was Stalin's—the flip side of the cult of the infallible leader.

The tremendous educational value of the Bolsheviks' methods can be gauged from the writings of Lenin that continue to be basic educational material in the revolutionary movement today. And these don't date simply from the period before the October revolution.

In fact, in the last year before his death, Lenin formed a political bloc with Trotsky to fight the bureaucratization, encroachments against the rights of oppressed nationalities, and threats against the monopoly of foreign trade—all of which were policies fostered by Stalin as he exploited Lenin's serious illness to extend his control over the party and government apparatus.

So, while in my opinion the institutionalization process represents an advance both from the standpoint of increasing elements of workers democracy and combating bureaucratization in Cuba, I think that a further qualitative improvement remains to be achieved: finding forms through which organized discussion on competing viewpoints can be held, both in the vanguard party and in society as a whole.

Changes in the Countryside

Nowhere has the impact of the Cuban revolution been as deep as in the countryside. The bare-bone facts of this transformation are fairly well known. The giant *latifundios* owned by the American monopolies or native landholders have been nationalized. Individual small farmers have been given title to the land they work. Schooling and medical care have been made available to the rural population. Illiteracy, which was most prevalent in the countryside, has been wiped out. There are no children with the swollen bellies of malnutrition that abound in the rural areas of other Latin American countries. Mechanization of agriculture is proceeding steadily, especially the mechanization of the back-breaking sugarcane harvest.

The magnitude of the advances registered by the Cuban rural population is not always fully appreciated by people who are unfamiliar with the conditions of the peasants in countries exploited by imperialism. We had the opportunity to visit rural areas that before the revolution had been sunk in almost feudal backwardness and to hear *campesinos* tell us their own story.

We visited one of the new towns being built by the government in the Escambray mountains, in the center of the island. Instead of dirt-floor straw huts, these people now have modern apartments, with electricity and running water. Every apartment has a TV set, a window on the world. This town of about 1,000 has a grammar school, a clinic, recreational center, store, and library.

One woman explained to me what moving to this town had meant to her. She said

that before the revolution, she and her entire family had been illiterate. She had never even heard of electricity, much less had an opportunity to use it. The first time she saw an electric light bulb, she thought it was magic. She had never been to a town or city, visited a doctor, or seen a movie or play.

I said that it must be like a new life. She answered, "The revolution didn't give us a new life, it gave us our first life. Before the revolution, we didn't live. We were like animals. I come from a very large family of fourteen children. Only four lived long enough to have children of their own."

She said that when the revolution came, at first they were suspicious. "We had never needed to read before, we didn't know what reading was for. We just wanted to be left alone to grow our food and raise our children."

Even after she and her husband had learned to read, had access to medical care, and her children had gone off to school, she still lived in a hut—although one with a concrete floor, thanks to the revolution. Then officials of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) came and told them about the new community that would be built in their zone.

"We didn't want to move. You have to understand what we were like. The only thing we had ever had, the only security, was that piece of land and our hut."

It took several years to convince them. No coercion was used, just the positive argument of example.

"At first, it was just a couple of the older people, whose children had all moved away, who were having difficulty supporting themselves, who moved. Then there were a few others.

"They would come back and tell us, 'This is the real life. No more walking to the stream with heavy buckets of water for cooking. No more working from sunrise to sunset until you drop from exhaustion.'"

So finally they moved. Her husband now works at a state farm rather than on his own private plot. They are both studying in what is known as "the battle for the sixth grade"—the governmental program to assure that every adult Cuban has completed a grammar school education. When they conquer that, they plan to continue in "the battle for the ninth grade." She has one son who is a doctor; another an agricultural expert currently stationed in Ethiopia; a daughter who is studying to be a teacher.

A Visit to Sandino

Many of the original residents of the Escambray mountains no longer live in that area. During the early years of the revolution, CIA-sponsored counterrevolutionary bands were active in those mountains and succeeded, for a time, in convincing some of the *campesinos* that the revolution meant their small plots would be taken away. The government was

forced to uproot many families in the area, and later they were resettled in the westernmost tip of Cuba, in a municipality (an area roughly comparable to an American county) known as Sandino.

If you've ever read the things put out by counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles in the United States, you've heard about Sandino, the "slave city" and "forced labor camp," allegedly comparable only to Hitler's concentration camps.

We visited Sandino. Again, in addition to hearing officials describe the accomplishments of the revolution in the area, we were able—in fact, encouraged—to talk to the people who live there. I happened to find one of those who had been resettled from the Escambray mountains.

"Nobody wants to talk about it anymore. It was a thousand years ago. But I know what they say in the United States, I listen to the shortwave, about how we are all slaves here. I laugh when I hear that."

He explained that when the revolution first came to power, "I didn't understand, I was confused. I saw them take the land from the big landowners, from the powerful important people. I thought that if even the rich couldn't save themselves from the communists, then for sure they would take my land. They just hadn't gotten around to me yet."

He told me how he was arrested by the revolutionary government for cooperating with the CIA-sponsored bandits. "I'm not so ashamed of it anymore. I know now it could have happened to anyone, because of our ignorance, because we believed anything the priests and the 'good people,' the exploiters, told us.

"The Revolution understood that too. We weren't treated as criminals, but as a brother who had gone astray. We were given a chance to start a new life here. It was hard work, we had to earn our right to be part of this revolution, but so has everybody else in this country for twenty years."

He is now a member of the Communist Party and a leader of his community. I asked him if there were others in the party like him, who had been deceived by the bandits. "Oh yes, there must be quite a few. But we don't think about that, we don't worry about that now. Cuba then was like a different country. We have a new homeland now, and what we think about is the Cuba of today, the socialist homeland we are building."

The transformation of the Cuban countryside is something to behold. There are paved roads everywhere. New agricultural communities like those we visited in the Escambray mountains are springing up on all sides.

Collectivization

Of all the countries that have abolished capitalism, Cuban officials report, Cuba has the biggest state sector in agriculture. Fully 70 percent of the arable land became

state property in the early 1960's, including the large sugar plantations that simply couldn't have functioned if they had been broken down into individual family plots. They were transformed into state farms.

Nevertheless, the family farm is still an important part of the Cuban economy. At the very beginning of the revolution, efforts were made to convince the peasants to amalgamate into cooperatives, but they were soon abandoned as premature.

Now, a new large-scale campaign is under way to persuade the family farmers that they'd be better off as part of larger and more productive units, such as state farms and cooperatives.

In a talk to members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, Juan José León, vice-president of the National Association of Small Farmers, explained the evolution of the government's policies.

He said that, at first, the resources to develop the technology for more productive large-scale agriculture did not exist. Tractors and other machinery can make large-scale farming more economical. But Cuba lacked the tractors. They didn't have the irrigation works or the planes to spray large areas with pesticides, or the fertilizers. Over the years, Cuba has modernized her agricultural technology, making it available to the individual small farms as well as to the state sector. Now a big advance in productivity is possible through collectivizing the small farms.

A second reason for the previous policy of not aggressively encouraging collectivization, León explained, was political. The motor force of Cuba's revolution is the conscious alliance of the workers with other productive classes, most importantly, the peasantry. What the peasants wanted most from the revolutionary government was their own land, the security of fair, stable prices and of knowing, through their own experience, that no one could take these away from them. In the early years of the revolution, he said, suggestions that the peasants should now give up their land and become part of a cooperative provoked consternation among the small farmers.

But today, after two decades, the government is aggressively trying to convince peasants to abandon the small family farm methods, either by selling their land to the state and becoming agricultural workers, or by pooling their land with other small farmers to form a cooperative.

Unlike the Soviet Union under Stalin, where collectivization was carried out by force and the country reaped agricultural catastrophe as a result, the revolution has made an inviolable promise to the small producers that they will never be pressured or forced to abandon their farms. The decision to collectivize is up to the small farmers.

Instead of forcing them to give up their land, they are shown the advantages of



The "schools in the countryside" program combines academic study with productive labor. These students also tend citrus fields.

shifting to modern large-scale agriculture. In addition, the government provides still other incentives to peasants to collectivize.

For example, given Cuba's limited resources, it is impossible to provide and maintain services such as running water and electricity for an isolated farm family far away from any population concentration. But when several dozen small farmers get together and form a cooperative, the government helps them build a small community. And because the population is now concentrated, it becomes possible to provide many services that aren't available to an isolated family.

León told us that the government would like to advance toward collectivization of the small farms as quickly as possible, but not at the cost of breaking its pledge to the small farmers. He said their policy was based on the program of the *Communist Manifesto*:

"The goal of the revolution is to eliminate the difference between the countryside and the city. The basic tool we are using right now is promotion of cooperatives, convincing the small farmer.

"We can't take any other measures except convincing the peasants. If we are incapable of convincing the Cuban farmer that collective production is better than individual production, that means we have failed politically. Forced measures would mean the political failure of our revolution."

'Schools in the Countryside'

One element in the transformation of the rural areas is the tremendously successful program of "schools in the countryside."

A basic principle of Cuban education is the combination of study with productive labor. The revolutionary government be-

lieves that work is a fundamental part of education, giving young people an appreciation of the effort involved in keeping society going as well as a sense of self-esteem as productive members of society, full partners in the revolution. They point out this idea isn't original, but again is taken from Marx, Engels, and Martí.

"Schools in the countryside" involve young people from junior high school age and up. They are boarding schools, with the students spending the week at the school and returning home over the weekend. The typical school has 600 students, with half working in the morning and studying in the afternoon, and the other half following the reverse schedule. Each school has large orchards of citrus fruit and sometimes other crops surrounding it. The students tend to and harvest the fruit with the help of agricultural experts.

This program got under way in the early 1970s, as the large number of children from the baby boom that immediately followed the revolution approached junior high school age. By all accounts, it has been tremendously successful. The students like it because it gives them a chance to broaden their experiences—many view it as an adventure. The parents like it because it helps relieve them of some of the burdens of raising children and because they know the children will have everything they need—good food, plenty of exercise, medical care, clothing and recreation, as well as an education. And—of course—all this is provided absolutely free.

The "schools in the countryside" have had their biggest impact on an island off Cuba's southern coast that used to be known as the Isle of Pines, but today is called the Isle of Youth.

Before the revolution, the main feature of the Isle of Pines was a chamber of

horrors known as the Model Prison, notorious for its terrible conditions, and the torture and murder of inmates. It was there that Fidel and other survivors were imprisoned after the July 26, 1953, raid on the Moncada barracks. Many members of the July 26 Movement were also incarcerated there during the revolutionary war. Today the prison is a museum, a grim reminder of the barbarism of the capitalist past.

The countryside of the Isle of Youth has been transformed by dozens of ESBECS, as the junior high schools in the countryside are called. Land that before was unused now has large, scientifically cultivated citrus groves, which are tended by the students.

We stayed at one of the schools for several days during our visit. Everywhere you drive on the Isle of Youth, you can see two, three, or four of these schools surrounded by their citrus groves.

In addition to students from the Isle of Youth and from Cuba's western provinces, there are thousands of Africans studying on the Isle of Youth. Their schools are fully bilingual, run by joint teams of educators from Cuba and their native countries. Every effort is made to instill in the young Africans a sense of pride in the culture and the history of struggles for liberation of their own people.

We spent an afternoon with African students from various countries at one of the African ESBECS. We met seventeen-year-old veterans of Angola's war for independence against the Portuguese; Namibian youth who in some cases were the only members of their families who had survived massacres carried out by the troops of the South African regime; young Ethiopians who until a few years ago had nothing to look forward to but a life of serfdom under the boot of feudal landowners.

One Namibian girl, barely into her teens, told me, "Cuba is more than another country, more than a place to study. We study hard, then we go back to make a revolution in Namibia as beautiful as the one here. Cuba is the symbol of what we are fighting for."

U.S. Imperialist Pressure

One point that was constantly driven home to me by being in Cuba is the tremendous pressure the revolution is under from U.S. imperialism. Cuba is still an island under siege. Imperialism even has the Guantánamo Naval Base, a military post within Cuba's national territory.

At every factory the workers organize guard duty. Although for the moment antisocial actions (yes, there is still some crime in Cuba) are more of a problem than saboteurs, everybody knows that the United States government might organize a resurgence of terrorist attacks at any time.

Less than a year ago, Cuba was forced to carry out major military mobilizations

when dozens of American warships showed up unannounced just a few miles off the coast. Spy flights in violation of Cuba's air space were resumed at the same time. A few days later came the official explanation from the U.S. Department of Defense: just practicing.

U.S. imperialism's aggression against Cuba is not a thing of the past. Three years ago, CIA-sponsored counterrevolutionary terrorists blew up a Cubana de Aviacion plane in mid-air near Barbados, killing all seventy-three aboard. Just last April, these same outfits took credit for the cold-blooded assassination of Antonio Maceo Brigade leader Carlos Muñiz Varela. Although the assassination took place in broad daylight, in front of witnesses, the cops have failed to arrest those responsible.

While the brigade was in Cuba, we received the news of a new attack on the travel agency that Carlos Muñiz had headed, which dedicates itself exclusively to organizing visits to Cuba by Cubans living abroad. A bomb was placed at its offices. Fortunately, it was found before it exploded. As usual, no arrests. On October 27, a powerful bomb ripped apart the gate outside the Cuban mission to the UN in New York City. Once again, there have been no arrests.

Bombings, assassination attempts, and countless other crimes in New York, Miami, and other American cities, have been carried out with complete impunity. The U.S. government cynically claims that it cannot catch the terrorists—as if it had not recruited, trained, armed, and organized them in the first place.

More damaging than the terrorist attacks, however, has been a policy which the U.S. government openly admits to carrying out—the economic blockade of Cuba. Fidel calls it "a knife at Cuba's throat"—and justly so.

In Cuba, we saw firsthand the impact of the blockade. Virtually all of the industrial plant inherited from the capitalist past was built with U.S. technology. Because of the U.S. blockade, Cuba has to buy spare parts from third-party chiselers, when it can get them, or do without.

In the streets of Havana, you can still see the 1950s Detroit models pattering along. Cuban car mechanics are said to be the best in the world, probably because they have gotten the most practice, fixing cars without spare parts from the manufacturers. But think of the tremendous expenditure of time and effort on problems that could be solved in five minutes with the right parts.

Cuba is a small country heavily dependent on trade. The economic blockade closes off huge markets for Cuban products. I was told that Cuba could produce a lot more rum—the best in the world—and earn desperately needed foreign exchange. But the markets aren't available.

Cuba also has to import many things.

Right now, most imports come thousands of miles from Western Europe, the other workers states, or Japan. Many items could be bought as cheaply, or more cheaply, from U.S. manufacturers—and shipping would be considerably less expensive.

Whether it's a technician at an old electrical generating plant, a warehouse administrator with a broom closet full of broken typewriters, or a housewife who has somehow managed to keep a Hoover vacuum cleaner going, virtually everyone in Cuba can tell you stories of what the blockade has meant for them in time, effort, sacrifice.

End the Blockade!

Why does the United States maintain the blockade? Carter spelled it out in a report to Congress at the end of 1978: Cuban troops in Africa, Cuba's support to Puerto Rican independence, Cuba's solidarity with the revolutionary struggle against Somoza in Nicaragua. In a word, Cuba's anti-imperialist foreign policy. Change that, Carter told Cuba, and we'll be the best of friends.

Carter didn't have to wait long for a reply—the same reply U.S. presidents have heard for two decades. "Cuba can't be pressured or intimidated or bribed or bought," Fidel Castro countered in his twentieth anniversary speech.

One of the first days I was in Cuba, a member of the Union of Young Communists who was traveling with us asked me what was my party's position on Cuba. I started to explain that while we might not agree with all the positions of the Castro leadership, we considered it to be a revolutionary current in the international workers movement.

"Yes, yes, of course," she interrupted, "but what is your position on the blockade?" I told her we were against it, and why; that we had been stepping up our activities and education against it, and that we would like to see a broad, united-front movement develop to force the U.S. government to abandon the blockade. We discussed various ideas I had on this: how to involve the unions, and the role young Cubans in the U.S. who support the revolution can play. Then we talked about the international debate among radicals about Cuba.

Later I asked her why she had brought up the blockade right away, as if she thought maybe our position could have been different.

"No," she answered. "I knew you were against it, otherwise you wouldn't be here. It's just that sometimes, in these discussions concerning us, you can forget about the main enemy. You can get so wrapped up debating the best way to fight that not much fighting takes place.

"You're lucky. You're right in the home of the enemy. You should take advantage of that." □