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**SANDINISTAS PREPARING FOR  
SHOWDOWN IN NICARAGUA**

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Sandinistas Prepare for Showdown in Nicaragua

By Steve Clark

The FSLN and Sandinista-led government and mass organizations in Nicaragua are preparing for a decisive showdown.

The showdown is with the exploiting classes, above all in the United States and in Nicaragua itself, who profit from a social system that has trapped the workers and peasants in political and economic subjugation to U.S. imperialism. A Sandinista victory over these forces of capitalist counterrevolution would mark the birth of the second workers state in the Americas.

And it would create the conditions for a victory over illiteracy, rampant disease, malnutrition, and unemployment, as did the Cuban socialist revolution twenty years ago.

### Revolution Deepens in 1980

The social revolution in Nicaragua has deepened during the first months of 1980.

Right now, the ambitious literacy crusade is getting under way, with the aim of teaching more than half the adult population how to read and write. The fulfillment of this campaign will educate the population in class-struggle politics as well as in basic literacy. The revolution is also making important strides on other fronts:

- On March 2 the government expropriated all private agricultural holdings previously intervened by the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). These are the first expropriations of landowners not directly tied to the old Somoza regime.

- Workers at six privately owned factories have taken over production and demanded government intervention against employers who are sabotaging production and draining the country of vital capital. The FSLN has pointed to these as exemplary initiatives in workers control of production.

- Having constructed a professional Sandinista People's Army (EPS), indispensable for defense of the revolution from its enemies at home and abroad, the FSLN has now launched volunteer militias in the workplaces and countryside. The Sandinistas call these militias "the highest expression of the people in arms."

- In response to Washington's stalling on aid and growing interference in Nicaragua's affairs, the FSLN-led unions have mounted demonstrations to demand "Hands off Nicaragua!" and "Death to the CIA!" While seeking assistance from any government willing to help, FSLN Commander Daniel Ortega declared March 11,

"the future of Nicaragua does not depend on the \$75 million" in loans bottled up in the U.S. Congress. Cuba has already pledged \$50 million in direct aid, and a top leadership delegation of the FSLN signed trade and aid agreements with the USSR during a visit to Moscow in mid-March.

### Bourgeois Opposition

These new advances by the Nicaraguan masses have brought squeals of protest from the big landlords and industrial capitalists in Nicaragua. Organizations such as the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) have denounced the "anarchy and social disorder," the "takeovers of enterprises" and "invasions of haciendas," and warned about the "grave consequences" of the government's new measures against the property and prerogatives of the capitalists.

As they have ever since the end of 1979, the employers complain that the FSLN has not lived up to agreements with bourgeois opposition forces made prior to the July 19 insurrection. The Sandinistas—basing themselves on the organization of the workers and peasants and taking full advantage of the powerful urban uprising that brought them to power—blocked the establishment of a capitalist-dominated government envisioned by Somoza's liberal opponents.

During the final months of the struggle against Somoza, the masses had a chance to contrast the FSLN's uncompromising leadership of the revolution to the vacillations of the bourgeois opposition, which hoped to reach an accommodation with elements of the Somoza regime and National Guard.

During the last half of 1979, the new Sandinista-led government implemented sweeping measures to weaken capitalist control over the economy, begin the enormous task of reconstruction, and raise the living standards of the population. In addition, the FSLN spurred the development of independent unions and other organizations of the workers and peasants.

The Sandinistas have encouraged the growing participation of the workers, peasants, and their class organizations in control of the factories, farms, and in government.

No wonder the old ruling classes have become increasingly alarmed!

### 1980 Plan for Economic Reactivation

At the beginning of 1980, the FSLN further consolidated its political power.

Bourgeois figures formally in charge of the ministries of economic planning, agriculture, and defense were replaced by top Sandinista commanders.

Moreover, the government's 1980 Plan for Economic Reactivation made clear there would be no turning back from a top priority on improving the quality of life for Nicaragua's workers and peasants. Fully 62 percent of the budget is targeted for health, education, and housing, compared to 17 percent in Somoza's 1978 budget.

The 1980 plan takes account of the desperate economic situation left by Somoza, who ordered massive destruction of factories when he could no longer hold onto power. This came on top of the ravages of worldwide inflation, the 1972 Managua earthquake, the dictator's rampant corruption, and the disruption of industry and agriculture during the civil war.

The plan therefore projects restoring industrial production to at least its 1978 level, as well as significant increases in agricultural output both for export and domestic consumption. These targets are important in enabling the government to meet its social goals and keep up the revolutionary morale of the masses.

With key sectors of industry and agriculture still in the hands of private capitalists, the 1980 plan stresses the need for their cooperation. "We are no longer going to have what is called 'private initiative,'" explained government junta member Sergio Ramirez, "the kind of initiative that means investing in what is most profitable and not in what is required for economic and social needs." And upon taking charge of the planning ministry, FSLN Commander Henry Ruiz warned the private sector against taking "a wait-and-see" attitude toward reactivating production.

As recent factory interventions and land nationalizations indicate, however, many capitalists paid no heed to these warnings. Coffee growers have refused to complete their harvests, and cotton producers are threatening not to plant. Industrialists are illegally smuggling commodities, equipment, and money capital out of the country and holding production at below adequate levels.

This bourgeois resistance received a shot in the arm in mid-March. Government junta member Alfonso Robelo relaunched his Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) and began voicing many of the capitalists' concerns. Robelo made this decision shortly after returning from an unofficial visit with U.S. government officials in Washington.

Because of Robelo's greater legitimacy due to his participation in a government that has taken many progressive steps, his MDN is likely to become a major pole for capitalist opponents of the revolution who have already squandered their own credibility among the masses.

But the FSLN's decisive hegemony in

the government, its firm control over the revolutionary army and militia, and its reliance on the mass organizations ensures that in the coming class confrontations, the government will be a weapon of the workers and peasants against their exploiters rather than the other way around.

#### Washington's Counterrevolutionary Plans

Standing behind the bourgeois resistance to the Sandinista revolution are Wall Street and Washington, on whom the Nicaraguan capitalists are dependent.

U.S. imperialism is determined to crush the Nicaraguan revolution. But its failure to keep the FSLN from coming to power, on top of its notorious record of installing and propping up the bloody Somoza tyranny, have so far forced Washington to avoid a publicly hostile attitude toward the new government. Nonetheless, the Senate's freezing of a \$75 million loan package—and the outrageous conditions that had already been placed on it—are only the latest signal that Washington plans to do absolutely nothing to help reconstruct Nicaragua.

Some bourgeois governments in Western Europe have done a bit more. But the bulk of their aid has aimed at strengthening the private sector against the FSLN, rather than enabling the government to carry out its social and economic programs. And initial pretensions of friendliness by capitalist regimes in Panama and Venezuela have faded—and in Colombia, been transformed into overt belligerence.

For nearly a century the U.S. ruling class has gotten away with "sending in the marines" whenever something it didn't like was happening in Nicaragua or elsewhere in Latin America. But things are no longer so simple.

The widespread opposition to Carter's draft registration proposal shows that American workers, especially young workers, have no intention of fighting in another Vietnam. This poses an enormous problem for the rulers, as recent events in Iran and Afghanistan testify.

With a showdown approaching, prospects for the Nicaraguan revolution are also brightened by the rapid rise of other revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean. The Sandinistas have recognized this, making solidarity with El Salvador a major theme of recent demonstrations and statements by top FSLN leaders.

A victory in Nicaragua is vitally important for Cuba, which has made clear that it will stand beside the Sandinistas in their battles. The escalating attempts by imperialism to stop the socialist revolution in Nicaragua will be accompanied by renewed threats against the Cuban revolution.

For workers in the United States and other imperialist countries, victories by oppressed peoples such as those in Nicaragua

are a school in the class struggle. They learn more about the violence and inhumanity of the employing class, but they also learn that the government of their exploiters is not invincible.

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants have already fought heroic battles at the cost of many lives. Today, they are prepar-

ing for another, decisive battle. And so are their class enemies in Nicaragua, elsewhere in Latin America, and in Washington.

Supporters of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants must make sure that we are ready, too. The Sandinista revolution is our revolution! □

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## New Land, Factory Takeovers Meet Capitalist Resistance

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—The 135 workers at the Polymer, S.A., plastic factory here—a subsidiary of the U.S. multinational United Brands—occupied the plant on March 13. They locked out management personnel and called on the Sandinista-led government to “intervene” the company. The workers at no time halted production; in fact, they increased output by some 29 percent during the first days of the takeover.

The “Ronald Saldaña” Union at Polymer, an affiliate of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), is demanding that the management live up to its May 1979 commitment to raise wages in line with the sharp currency devaluation carried out at that time by the Somoza dictatorship. Compensatory wage hikes of up to 30 percent were pledged but have never been implemented. The union is also demanding the removal of Polymer’s general manager and two other top executives, the right to hold union meetings more often than once a month, and a halt to other anti-union practices by the management.

The struggle at Polymer is the latest in a series of workplace occupations here aimed against private employers who are putting up resistance to the 1980 Plan for Economic Reactivation.

While such capitalist resistance sometimes involves contracts and attacks on union rights (as at Polymer), the most typical and more serious challenge is the decapitalization of enterprises—that is, the deliberate removal of equipment, raw materials, and money capital from Nicaragua. This is the prelude to the flight from the country of the capitalists themselves, as they search for greener pastures in countries whose governments, unlike the Sandinistas, place private profit above human needs.

Such decapitalization harms the Nicaraguan economy. The 1980 plan set vital production goals for private industry to complement the goals of the nationalized sector; these represent an important part of production in key fields such as food, clothing, construction, and pharmaceuticals. The plan also puts high priority on reducing unemployment, which obviously cannot be accomplished if factories are decapitalized and shut down.

In response to growing evidence of such economic sabotage of the revolution, workers carried out takeovers of a number of enterprises in late February and early March. The first of these, on February 19, involved the CST-affiliated union at El Caracol industries, a large food processing

plant. (See *IP/I*, March 17, 1980.)

The El Caracol action was quickly followed by similar takeovers at Standard Steel (office equipment), SOVIPE (construction), Nicarao (pig stiles), the Hurtado Leather Tannery in Granada, and, most recently, Polymer, S.A.

In the midst of this wave of struggles, the government issued a tough decree on March 2 giving itself the legal power to meet the workers’ demands for intervention and investigation of enterprises suspected of decapitalizing.

The decree defines “the crime of economic decapitalization” as the use of “deceitful or fraudulent means to remove from the country the fixed or circulating assets of enterprises (that is, the capital of such enterprises).” The Justice Ministry is empowered to “intervene,” or administer, decapitalized enterprises on behalf of the state. Stiff penalties are provided, involving fines of up to three times the amount of capital removed and jail terms of up to three years for management personnel found guilty of collaborating in or condoning decapitalization.

“The best guarantee” that the law will be enforced “is the worker *compañeros* themselves,” Justice Minister Ernesto Castillo emphasized at the March 2 news conference where the decree was announced.

Castillo’s remarks reflected the increasing importance the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is placing on *workers’ control of production* as the best means of fighting decapitalization and guaranteeing the success of the 1980 economic plan. An article in the February 14 edition of the FSLN weekly, *Poder Sandinista*, termed workers’ control “as or more important than the legal measures taken to control the illegal practices of various unpatriotic businessmen.”

The article went on to say:

In the event situations of this type [decapitalization] are detected it is necessary to denounce them immediately, defend the means of production, demand maintenance of production levels, and call for a review of the real accounts of the enterprise. . . .

The working class has to begin to be concerned with maintaining the economic balance, understanding that this is not a problem for the private owners, but rather an axis of the workers’ class interests—an eminently popular question and thus cause for concern and study on the part of the workers.

### Land Expropriations

Simultaneous with the decree against decapitalization, the government junta

also declared the expropriation of all private lands previously intervened by the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). These either involved estates whose owners had refused to meet government standards on wages and working conditions for farm laborers, or else holdings of non-Somozaist landowners occupied by peasants after the dictatorship fell last July 19. Expropriation of these lands was one of the demands raised by the FSLN-led Rural Workers Association (ATC) at a massive demonstration in Managua on February 17. (See *IP/I*, March 3.)

Until the March 2 decree, the only lands expropriated had been those that belonged to the Somoza family, its business partners, and top military officers. Those lands had been seized without compensation. Owners affected by the March 2 decree are to receive bonds (“Agrarian Reform Certificates”) once they prove to INRA’s satisfaction that they were not subject to the earlier decrees confiscating Somozaist land.

### Capitalists Alarmed

In face of the continuing mobilization and organization of workers and peasants by the FSLN-led mass organizations, capitalist forces in Nicaragua have begun asserting their discontent more and more openly.

The Nicaraguan Development Institute (INDE), a group of private businessmen who had opposed Somoza, held a general assembly in the last week of February. INDE President Enrique Dreyfus denounced “dogmas according to which the only road to social improvement for the majority would be the abolition of private property in the means of production.”

He called for full compliance with the “Program of Government” set forth for the five-person Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (JGRN) last July before the triumph of the insurrection. Reflecting the will of the toiling majority who made the revolution, the Sandinista-led junta has modified or ignored provisions of that program that favored the capitalists over the workers and peasants.

Nicaragua’s main national organization of capitalists and landlords, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), declared on March 5 that the decrees on decapitalization and land “seriously prejudice the government’s credibility.” The COSEP denounced what it said was an “atmosphere of anarchy and social disorder that is shown by the takeovers of

enterprises, invasions of haciendas, and gratuitous aggressions. . . .

"If all these things are not stopped definitively," COSEP threatened, "they will lead to situations of scarcity and suffering that our people do not deserve."

In addition to the COSEP statement, the Chamber of Industry complained of an alleged lack of "due process of law" in the decapitalization decree, and warned that this could have "grave consequences."

On March 9 the right-wing Democratic Conservative Party (PCD) took out a two-page display advertisement in the bourgeois daily *La Prensa* for a wide-ranging attack on the 1980 Plan for Economic Reactivation and the FSLN's policies. Failure to fully comply with the July 1979 Program of Government, the PCD said, was leading to "a climate of social anarchy in which it is not possible to conceive a serious effort or an active cooperation by all sectors in the productive process."

The nationalized industries, the PCD charged, are being run by "political functionaries, some without either capacity or experience, and all certainly lacking the material incentives to increase production enjoyed by those who own their own land or enterprises."

The PCD opposed INRA's efforts to encourage poor peasants to form cooperatives and to move toward democratic administration by the agricultural laborers themselves on the big state farms. Instead, it called for dividing nationalized lands into small individual plots, with property titles to be distributed to the peasants.

#### Imperialist Pressure

While the local landlords and capitalists step up resistance to the revolution and try to sabotage the economic plan, pressure on Nicaragua from U.S. imperialism is also

on the rise. The most open indication of this was the freezing by the U.S. Congress of the paltry \$75 million loan promised to Nicaragua months ago by the Carter administration.

Earlier, the House of Representatives held an almost unprecedented secret session to hear a report from the CIA on alleged "Communist infiltration" in Nicaragua, and then added a series of conditions to the aid bill that attacked Nicaragua's right to accept the generous assistance in education and other fields being provided by the government of Cuba.

Washington is also boosting both its covert and open intervention in neighboring El Salvador in hopes of shoring up the tottering military dictatorship against the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants there. The imperialists are well aware of the inspiring impact a revolutionary victory in El Salvador would have on the Nicaraguan masses—and the demoralizing effect of a major defeat.

The FSLN has not backed down in the face of threats and pressure from the imperialists and the native capitalists. Quite the opposite—Sandinista leaders stress the importance of organizing and extending workers' control and vigilance to enforce the decapitalization decree. Marches and rallies have been held around the country to denounce the efforts of Washington—and the CIA in particular—to "destabilize" the Nicaraguan economy. The CIA's role in undermining the Allende regime in Chile is widely understood—"Nicaragua will not be another Chile" is a favorite slogan. Solidarity with El Salvador has also been an important theme of these actions.

An FSLN statement in the March 13 *Barricada* summarized Washington's aims in Nicaragua. "The strategic objective of

U.S. imperialism," the FSLN said, "is to destabilize the economy so as to smash the Sandinista people's revolution and install a power that would serve its interests."

The statement continued:

Imperialism has based its entire policy of alliances and its actions against our revolution on this perspective. Abroad it seeks to interest in its plans those countries and reactionary governments that have always been on its side. At the same time—on each occasion that their position is not so firm as before—the imperialists try to pressure the countries and governments that supported the FSLN and the Nicaraguan people during the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship. Inside the country imperialism is also obviously seeking allies—stable, conjunctural, and indirect ones. Moreover, it seeks to base its actions on the objective weaknesses of our process and at bottom seeks to divide the motor forces of the revolution. [It foments] divisions inside the vanguard, inside the workers movement, between the workers and peasants, among the petty bourgeoisie, and so on.

To counter the imperialist strategy, the FSLN statement pointed to three main tasks.

In the first place, it is necessary to denounce, both abroad and at home, the counterrevolutionary actions of the Yankee imperialists. . . . In the second place, the Sandinista people must fight to see that the measures and decrees of the JGRN are concretized, mobilizing the Sandinista mass organizations to force compliance with the decrees. . . .

The third task is "the organization of the People's Militias." The arming of the workers and peasants through the militias "signifies for the imperialists that their interests and the economic and political interests of their allies are in danger. That's why the decision to organize the people's militias in the workplace is so important."

March 14, 1980

## 'Party of Bourgeoisie'

## Alfonso Robelo Relaunches Nicaraguan Democratic Movement

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—Discontent and alarm among the bourgeoisie and upper middle classes at the deepening anticapitalist course of the Nicaraguan revolution has begun to find its reflection in a political regroupment around the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) led by Alfonso Robelo Callejas, a member of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction.

The MDN, founded two years ago by businessmen and professionals opposed to the Somoza regime, was relaunched at a March 16 rally here after a period of

relative inactivity following the July 19, 1979, overthrow of the dictatorship. A crowd of some 5,000—almost exclusively middle and upper class, well-dressed, arriving in Mercedes-Benz's, or similar vehicles—gathered at the España Sports Complex in southeastern Managua, beneath the MDN's red and white banners, to cheer Robelo and other leaders of his party.

The March 16 rally was the culmination of a series of MDN gatherings and public appearances by Robelo the week after he returned from a "private visit" to the

United States and talks in Washington with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Robelo addressed a rally of some 1,500 well-off cotton planters and other MDN partisans in the northern city of Chinandega on March 9 and two meetings of Managua merchants organized by the Chamber of Commerce during the week before the March 16 rally.

At all these events the message of Robelo and the MDN was the same: Nicaragua must have "free elections in the shortest possible time"; the Program of

Government adopted by the junta last July "must be respected"; the literacy campaign to be launched March 24 must not be "manipulated to domesticate the minds" of the illiterate; the army and police must be "at the service of the nation and not of a particular ideology or party"; "individual property" and "private property in the means of production" must be respected; merchants should receive "just prices" for their goods.

The MDN's anticommunism was evident in its declarations that Nicaragua "must not copy any other revolutionary processes," that it opposes "all imperialisms," and that while it is against "exploitation of man by man" it also "condemns exploitation of man by the state."

To make its defense of capitalist interests more palatable in a situation where the FSLN's anticapitalist course enjoys the support of workers and peasants, the MDN claims to be "truly revolutionary and Sandinista." It presents a confused mixture of social democratic notions, calling for "socialism and liberty," "democracy of the proletariat and not the dictatorship of the proletariat," "trade union freedom," "progressive socialization" and the creation of "mixed enterprises," the "integral development of the human being," and so on. As the party's main slogan, Robelo has chosen a phrase General Sandino often used to sign his letters—"Patria y Libertad" (Homeland and Liberty).

It was obvious from the mood of the March 16 crowd, however, that anti-Sandinism is the glue that binds the MDN supporters together. When a small group of peasants from Masaya Province came into the auditorium bearing a red and black FSLN banner, they were met with widespread booing and perfunctory applause.

#### Shift by Robelo

The relaunching of the MDN represents a shift by Robelo and his supporters away from collaboration with the FSLN. Unlike Nicaragua's other small bourgeois parties—the Social Democrats, Democratic Conservatives, and Social Christians—the MDN supported the anti-Somoza insurrection. It did not take part in the last-ditch efforts of the Social Christians and others to block the FSLN victory by encouraging a military intervention by Venezuela and other Andean Pact countries. Robelo accepted a position in the five-member Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction put together by the FSLN, and other MDN figures took posts as ministers and functionaries.

Until the MDN's recent flurry of activity, Robelo had never expressed any public criticism of the measures taken by the government. In fact, he often served as its spokesman. Since the latest wave of worker and peasant mobilizations and the measures adopted by the junta in response to them, however, Robelo has become far

less visible in his capacity as a junta member. He did not participate in any of the recent visits abroad by government and FSLN leaders to seek economic aid and diplomatic support. He has not spoken out against CIA meddling in Nicaragua's internal affairs and has ascribed the blocking of Washington's long promised \$75 million loan to Nicaragua to procedural difficulties in Congress rather than an attempt to put pressure on the revolutionary government.

Notwithstanding Robelo's March 16 declaration that "reactionaries who defend the interests of the privileged classes" are unwelcome in the MDN, his party is bound to become a pole of attraction for precisely such forces. Urban landlords, outraged by the decrees that cut housing rents in half; merchants fined for violating food price controls; industrialists alarmed by the decapitalization decree and the workers control measures being taken by the FSLN-led trade unions; cotton and coffee planters who fear the powerful Rural Workers Association—all these components of the old dominant classes in Nicaragua, despite being divided among themselves and often resenting Robelo's own erstwhile cooperation with the FSLN, will now begin to rally around him and his

movement. This will be true if only because previous efforts to launch more openly right-wing bourgeois parties have failed.

The MDN's implicitly anti-FSLN stance is the least common denominator for all the various layers of reactionaries. Precisely because the MDN has participated in the revolutionary government and collaborated with the FSLN, it has a certain prestige and a wider following that groups such as the Social Christians and Democratic Conservatives lack.

#### Sandinistas Respond

The FSLN wasted no time in responding to the political challenge posed by the MDN and Robelo. Even before the March 16 rally in Managua the Sandinista daily, *Barricada* carried a full-page statement on "Sandinism versus 'Democratism'" that took up and answered many of the charges and veiled attacks on the FSLN and the revolution that the MDN was making. (For excerpts see page 311).

Reports on the big Managua rally in the FSLN communications media took special note of the composition of the crowd. "The people were not present at the España Sports Complex on Sunday," said Radio Sandino in its coverage of the gathering

## Sandinista Delegation Visits Moscow

MANAGUA—A top level government and FSLN delegation left here March 17 for a tour of the Soviet Union and several countries in Eastern Europe. The delegation is conducting talks on material aid, trade relations, and ties between the FSLN and the ruling Communist parties. It includes Commanders of the Revolution Tomás Borge, Henry Ruiz, and Humberto Ortega, as well as government junta member Moises Hassán and a number of cabinet ministers and other top functionaries.

The delegation's first stop was Moscow, where it was greeted by large crowds waving the blue and white flag of Nicaragua. Talks were held there with a number of Soviet officials, including CP political bureau member Andrei Kirilenko.

On March 20 accords were signed between Nicaragua and the Soviet Union for various forms of technical, scientific, and cultural collaboration; the opening of commercial air service between the two countries; and increased trade relations. Under these agreements, the Soviet Union will send experts to Nicaragua to help develop agriculture, power engineering, transportation, and communications.

The delegation to the workers states

was part of a series of visits abroad by government and FSLN leaders aimed at strengthening diplomatic ties, gaining further material aid, and building solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution.

In early March Commander Daniel Ortega, junta member Violeta Chamorro, and other officials, conducted a tour of Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Italy, and the Vatican. Ortega also stopped in Grenada to participate in that country's celebration of the first anniversary of its revolution, and in Cuba for talks with President Fidel Castro and Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos.

On March 21 Commander Bayardo Arce and junta member Sergio Ramírez returned from a tour of several countries in Western Europe where they addressed large solidarity rallies and negotiated agreements for some \$60 million in material and financial aid and contributions to the literacy campaign.

Commander Tomás Borge also visited the Dominican Republic during the second week of March. He addressed a number of solidarity rallies and held talks with President Antonio Guzmán and leaders of the ruling Dominican Revolutionary Party.

—Fred Murphy

held by the "party of the bourgeoisie."

On March 20 Sandinista television carried interviews with two government ministers who announced their resignations from the MDN—Minister of Industry Fernando Guzmán and Vice-minister of Domestic Trade Pedro Antonio Blandón. Blandón said he had joined the FSLN. Among other top figures who have left Robelo's party since March 16 are Vice-minister of Planning Arnoldo Montealegre and Emilio Rapaccioli, director of the Nicaraguan Energy Institute. All have

reaffirmed their support for the revolution and the FSLN.

On March 19 the FSLN National Directorate issued a statement that expressed "optimism" regarding Robelo's declarations "in the sense that he proposes to work consistently within the revolution," but pointed out that "in order to reanimate the movement that he leads," Robelo had "carelessly employed attacks on various actions of the government of which he himself forms a part at the highest level."

"The FSLN," the statement concluded,

"seeks through this communiqué to call for reflection in favor of strengthening national unity for the revolution. At the same time we call on the revolutionary democratic and people's organizations that form the broad base of Sandinism to maintain a thoughtful attitude in face of enemy provocations that seek to produce fissures among the ranks committed to the revolution. We also encourage the development of a constructive and effective ideological struggle against the diversionist maneuvers of reaction and imperialism." □

# DOCUMENTS

## FSLN Answers Bourgeois Critics

### 'The Workers Will Put an End to Inequality and Exploitation'

[The following are major excerpts from a statement published in the March 14 edition of the Managua daily *Barricada*, official organ of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). An introduction appeared on the front page under a banner headline, "Sandinism is not 'Democratism.'" The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

Forty-six years after Sandino, revolutionary Sandinism—now in power—uncompromisingly reaffirms the principles of the Sandinista People's Revolution. Ideological struggle is an ongoing task within the revolutionary organization. It becomes more urgent whenever rejuvenated, ideological currents arise to try to "revise" Sandino to the detriment of our historic legacy. "Democratism" involves just that—the most recent effort to revise Sandino and recast him in terms of liberal bourgeois ideology, turning into an abstraction the anti-imperialist, class character of Sandinism, the essence of which is expressed in the revolutionary struggle of the masses and their vanguard, the FSLN.

Sandinista militants and the entire people of Sandino must continually renew the ideological battle without ceding a single inch to the pretensions of "Democratism" and other ideological currents.

As a contribution to forging the masses' weapons in this struggle, the FSLN National Secretariat of Propaganda and Political Education points out here several aspects of our positions. Collective discussion and the militant enrichment of these points will be indispensable for reaffirming the principles of the Sandinista People's Revolution. With the contribution outlined here and the revolutionary prac-

tice of our militants, we will put "Democratism" in its place.

\* \* \*

*"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."*

Comandante Carlos Fonseca<sup>1</sup>,  
Chief of the revolution

#### 1. The FSLN—Vanguard of the Revolution

The hegemony of Sandinism that is now spreading throughout our homeland and that represents the dominant political force in the revolutionary process cannot be explained or encompassed by taking Sandinism as an abstract idea or by amputating the Sandinista movement of 1927-34 from the revolutionary process as a whole.

Above all, Sandinism is a political, military, and ideological line; an example in action that has been followed, defended, and developed to its ultimate consequences only by the Sandinista National Liberation Front. The FSLN is thus the only repository of the struggles, historic legacy, and revolutionary leadership of our people. The FSLN has been and remains the only revolutionary alternative for the children of Sandino.

The FSLN is the vanguard because it arises out of the roots of the homeland—the proletarian peasant army of Sandino, the anti-imperialist people's war, the class consciousness of the Sandinista movement

and its armed revolutionary strategy. In turn, the FSLN is the continuation of a historic line of the anti-interventionist and anti-oligarchic struggles of the past century. . . . In sum, the FSLN is the historic continuity of the struggles of our people.

Sandino was not the heritage of one group but the heritage of all. However, he was upheld as a symbol and a banner of struggle only by the workers and peasants. Only their vanguard, the FSLN, converted him into the road to victory.

The other patriotic forces in Nicaragua also have the right to aspire to make Sandinism their own—something that only the workers, peasants, and their vanguard have done up to now through their heroic struggle. But those other forces must understand that Sandinism cannot be adapted or subordinated to their particular political aims, because it is now the expression of the interests of the workers and peasants—whose task is to lead the patriotic sectors and never again be led by some other social force.

#### 2. The Vanguard, Tollers, and their Allies in the Struggle Against the Dictatorship

"Vanguard" is the honorable title that a revolutionary organization gains in struggle throughout a long process by leading the forces that it represents first toward taking political power and then in consolidating it.

There was only one vanguard in the fight against the dictatorship—the FSLN. That position was gained during twenty years of uninterrupted struggle in the interests of the toilers in the cities and countryside. The irrefutable power of the fact speaks for itself.

While the traditional "opponents" [of Somoza] were fooling the people with false

1. Carlos Fonseca Amador was the founding leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in the early 1960s. He was killed by Somoza's National Guard on November 7, 1976.—IP/I

slogans in order to obtain—exclusively for their own benefit—a quota of power alongside the dictator, the still embryonic FSLN—armed fundamentally with confidence in the toilers and with the power that comes from reason, right, justice, and revolutionary principles—pointed the way to national liberation.

The allies came later. They were the ones who, no longer having their interests represented by the dictatorship and because of the power shown by the popular movement, found themselves obliged to act against the dictatorship. They thus coincided with the aims of the FSLN and the toilers. And it is only thanks to the FSLN's correct policy of regrouping all the anti-dictatorial forces under a single democratic and anti-imperialist program that the progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie became allies of the toilers to overthrow the dictatorship.

It flows from this that the allies who decided to accompany the toilers down the last stretch of the road played what could be called an important role—but not the decisive role. The latter is reserved historically to the fundamental forces—those who shed their blood at the barricades, in the trenches, in the mountains—the toilers of the city and countryside. The FSLN is their most advanced political instrument, their vanguard, a political and military leadership of the revolution.

### 3. Nationalism and Anti-Imperialism

Nationalism is another of the values of Sandinism. But in the epoch of imperialism, a nationalism that is not also anti-imperialist cannot favor the interests of the people.

As our General of Free Men put it, the sovereignty of a people is not to be discussed, but to be conquered arms in hand. Nonetheless, in the history of Nicaragua there have been citizens and organizations that have discussed their sovereignty at various negotiating tables.

Between the times of Sandino and those of the FSLN, no organization or political party could defend our sovereignty—none dared to really confront U.S. imperialism.

We want to make quite clear that “in-between” situations do not or should not exist. One is either an anti-imperialist nationalist and in favor of the peoples' interests, or one is a “nationalist” who is in favor of imperialism and thus against the peoples' interests. In the latter case, one could hardly be called Sandinist; the most typical example of such nationalism was Somoza's false patriotism.

### 4. The Specter of Private Property

Independently of the different ideological and political forms assumed in the course of the historic struggle of the oppressed classes for their liberation, all progressive and revolutionary movements are inevitably confronted with the dilemma of reform versus revolution. Be-

tween the two rises the specter of private property.

This phantom is once again being brandished demagogically to sow terror and uncertainty with the aim of gaining political ground among the middle classes and the petty bourgeoisie.

To affirm the need to defend private property in the means of consumption—furniture, housing, refrigerators or cooking utensils—amounts to no more than a ridiculous attempt to uphold this old specter. Like all revolutions, this one has not only defended private property in such goods but is even making access to them possible, not only for the petty bourgeoisie, but also for the workers and peasants. The revolution not only affirms this form of private property but also seeks to broaden it to all sectors and social classes of Nicaraguan society.

### 5. Bourgeois Liberty or the Liberty of the People?

When Somoza was exploiting and massacring the people, he always did so in the name of the “sacred principles of liberty.” As a good Liberal<sup>2</sup>, he defended with blood and fire his liberty to impose, with the support of imperialism, a system of domination and exploitation against the interests of the people.

Thus peasants were expropriated, so that they might have the “liberty” to sell their labor power to whomever would buy it. The entire people were kept in ignorance to preserve their “liberty” to decide if they want an education or not. “Liberty” was given to the capitalists and the landlords who could exploit the people however they chose. The organizations that represented the vast interests of the masses were repressed, supposedly so that the masses could “freely” choose whether or not they wanted to be organized without being “manipulated.”

No more nor less than all of this was ever proposed by the Conservatives, with the exception that they wanted greater “liberty” to exploit the people and Somoza was depriving them of it.

So our people have always been spoken to about “liberty,” as though it were something pure and abstract that has always existed in the same form—precisely to hide the class content of the concept. But with the Sandinista People's Revolution, those old stories are finished for all time. Today the masses understand that it is not enough to just pronounce the word “liberty” for it to exist, but rather that it has two totally opposed meanings depending on the class outlook from which it is viewed. An abstract, sacred liberty does not exist for the masses, because the only truly sacred thing is their own class interests and the principles of the people's revolution.

2. The Liberal Party was Somoza's political party.—IP/1

Bourgeois liberty has nothing to do with the popular liberty that reflects the objective interests of the people themselves—their right to organize and arm themselves as a class (politically, militarily, ideologically), to pass forward the historic social project that corresponds to their nature as the majority class.

The revolution has already defined clearly the true context in which liberty should be conceived. And the moment has arrived to return the words to their true meaning. To seek to cover them up with subterfuges is to attack the interests of the people.

### 6. Education is Liberation Not Domestication

Before the triumph of the revolution, education in Nicaragua was a class privilege that kept the great exploited masses of the country in ignorance and at the mercy of the most criminal political ideological domestication and manipulation. Education was a class privilege, not only owing to the limited access the great masses had to education because of their economic situation, but also because of the very content of an educational system that was designed to reproduce the ideology of the dominant classes and guarantee the basis of the reproduction of the economic relations of exploitation. As in all capitalist countries, that was the role played by the educational system along with the other ideological institutions of the bourgeois state (communications media, cultural apparatus, etc.).

With the revolutionary victory and the exploited classes' access to power, this situation has changed radically. The new socioeconomic reality, the objective needs of the revolutionary process, and the class interests of the majority demand a new type of education—no longer to cover up exploitation and make it appear as something normal, but rather precisely to expose exploitation before the eyes of the exploited in order to liberate them and endow them with the instruments for becoming active subjects of their own history. If the real taking of political power by the exploited means anything at all, it means their technical and political ability to consciously direct the society on a new economic basis. The new educational system will have to play a fundamental role in creating such conditions.

The literacy crusade that is about to begin is nothing else than the first, firm step in that direction.

The political-pedagogical content of the literacy campaign is determined precisely by the imperative need to break with the domestication to which the great masses and the youth of our country themselves have been subjugated. An ignorant, divided, and disorganized people can easily be domesticated to accept exploitation and the ideology of their exploiters. But an



organized people, conscious of its historic role, can be subjugated by no one.

The literacy campaign will not only liberate the vast peasant masses, but also the thousands of youth who yesterday were domesticated to take up the ideology of the dominant class and thus reproduce the system of exploitation. Whoever may oppose it, we are going to carry out a literacy campaign to liberate the people.

#### 7. A Single Working Class, A Single Trade Union Organization

The overthrow of the dictatorship, a product of the revolutionary action of the masses and their vanguard, opened a historic course through which workers, peasants, and other sectors of the oppressed people are standing up and pressing ahead with their own political and socioeconomic projects. The toilers are thus the principal protagonists in the construction of the new Nicaragua.

That historic reality shakes the enemies of the people to their roots and leads them to carry out the most varied forms of ideological diversion inside our working class with the aim of dividing it and preventing the organic and political cohesion of the class.

The Nicaraguan working class, like all the rest of the world, is one single class. The interests of the workers of our country are the same, whatever their particular place in production, independently of whether they work in Fabritex, El Caracol, Standard Steel, or an agricultural production unit. Their ideology is the same and their union organization as an instrument of class struggle is the same.

Values such as "union democracy" and "ideological pluralism" are therefore out of place if—by counterposing freedom of union organization to the platform of workers' unity that the revolution is encouraging—the aim is to fragment the class and to divide it into as many parts as union organizations can create in the country.

Only the revolutionary struggle of the masses, the creative initiative of the workers and peasants, is capable of achieving the goals of the toilers. True trade union democracy, therefore, corresponds to the historical imperative of forging a single, organic political and class-struggle instrument of the workers.

#### 8. Redistribution or Revolution?

Capitalism has resorted to the little game of dividing a portion of business profits among the workers as a means of halting the class struggle.

The capitalists dream of a world in which handing over five pesos of their profits to each individual worker will bring about the longed-for equilibrium between "justice and liberty." Such charity might yield better fruits if it were not for the fact that the real world is radically different. The capitalists' desires are out of step with

reality because of the system's own contradictions. Workers do not act as individuals, but as a class organized around its own ideology.

Sandinism has given rise to a concept among the workers, that they do not sell themselves for a few pesos. The political power of the toiling classes cannot be changed even with an enterprise's entire profits. What matters is participation in decisions of the enterprise; even more importantly, participation in the economic and political decisions of the entire society.

Redistribution, like reforms—however radical they might be (such as the ones in



Managua anti-CIA demonstration. Pig-shaped balloons bear letters CIA.

El Salvador)—cannot replace the revolutionary power of the popular masses. And listen well—when we speak of revolution, we are talking about organized participation of the workers to build a society that puts an end to inequality and exploitation.

Even the most advanced model of capitalist development is one that requires the workers to leave democracy behind at the doors of the factories or enterprises. It involves regulating exploitation to preserve exploitation.

#### 9. The Sandinista Revolution Guarantees Individual Values

We have said it on many occasions, and we say it now as we said it during the hard-fought battle against the dictatorship: The FSLN, unquestionable vanguard of this revolution, guarantees the individual practice of all values and beliefs of all religious creeds. We are and we will always be respectful of these beliefs. Liberty exists in Nicaragua, but it is a liberty that does not harm the interests of the people, the interests of our revolution. What the Sandi-

nista People's Revolution will never accept, however, is the practical political organization of such beliefs against the revolution. What we will never permit is the making of counterrevolution in the name of freedom of belief or of religious failures.

Religious practice is a private matter as far as the state is concerned. But our state cannot allow the workers to be kept in poverty, enterprises to be decapitalized, production to be sabotaged, or actions to be carried out against the revolution, in the name of religion.

In the same way that our revolution respects individual freedom of belief and thought, it also guarantees the existence of the family and the rights of parents over their children. Such rights do not exempt parents from their obligations or from respect to their children's own rights. The youth of Nicaragua have demonstrated great maturity with their example and their massive participation in the struggle. They know how to defend their own rights and the rights of the Sandinista People's Revolution.

#### 10. Patria Libre o Morir!

"Patria Libre o Morir!" [Free Homeland or Death!] means "liberty or death" in the struggle of the FSLN and our workers to exercise the collective right to political, economic, and social emancipation without constrictions by imperialism and its local allies. This is the highest expression of the class heritage of the thought and action of General Sandino in his army of workers and peasants. It is this *patria* that Sandino fought for. For its heritage the Sandinista National Liberation Front—as political, military, and ideological guide of our revolution—conducts and leads the workers and peasants in the building of the new society.

This is not the patria that Somoza and his henchmen upheld in order to repress and soak the people in blood. Nor is it the patria in which opportunists wrapped themselves in order to revise Sandino's thought and gain a political following.

In the language of our workers and peasants, this patria we are building today is one free of all exploitation and imperialist domination; the patria with a popular democratic and internationalist course; one in which our workers and peasants recover our wealth and natural resources to benefit the vast dispossessed majority; where national values are respected; where the toilers defend, arms in hand, the social wealth produced by their efforts—in sum, the patria that restores the programmatic and political legacy of Sandino and his Army to Defend National Sovereignty.

Sandino never lent his slogans to the bourgeoisie, because "only the workers and peasants will go all the way; only their organized forces will bring about the victory."

*Patria Libre o Morir!* □

# Reign of Terror in El Salvador

By Lars Palmgren

[The U.S.-backed military junta in El Salvador responded to an effective general strike March 17 with the massacre of scores of people. The strike, called to protest the growing repression by the government and rightist paramilitary groups, was organized by the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses, a coalition of the four main revolutionary groups.]

[The day after the massacre, the junta claimed that "leftists who provoke violence in search of martyrs" were responsible for the deaths. "This is not a repressive Government," declared José Antonio Morales Ehrlich, a Christian Democratic member of the junta. Officials of the regime admitted that at least sixty people had died during the strike.]

\* \* \*

SAN SALVADOR, March 17—The massacre began about 2 a.m. when the army surrounded the National University with about 1,000 soldiers. You could hear steady shooting until about 10 a.m. when it calmed down a little.

At that moment I was on my way down to the industrial area. All the factories were closed and banners hung outside expressing support for the strike and demanding an end to the repression and to U.S. military intervention.

From there I went to another area with about twenty or twenty-five factories. The streets were empty as everyone was inside the factories. I stopped to talk with Red Cross workers, who said the army was preventing them from going down the street even though there had been heavy shooting.

After a while we saw a convoy coming from the factory area, including two small tanks, two or three trucks filled with soldiers, two small pickup trucks filled with men who were civilian dressed but heavily armed. Beyond them, about fifty soldiers were on foot.

When I tried to take photos of them, one pointed a gun at me, screaming threats.

After they passed, we went down to the factories. The worst hit was Aplear, a producer of electronic equipment owned by a U.S. company. Young women came out the door crying and screaming.

Inside, we saw blood all over the floor and on the walls. The doors and furniture were broken. About fifty people were still there, most of them wounded by bullets or beaten.

In another room, we saw the dead bodies of four men and one woman.

Outside the factory, there was another man lying dead in a pool of blood.

The people told me the soldiers had been there about two hours terrorizing them.

This was a factory that had been shut down by its owners in December. The workers had asked the government to resume production, and it had tentatively agreed. This was the very day that the government was supposed to come and discuss the proposal and pay the workers for the month of February. Instead they came with soldiers.

From there I went downtown and saw four other factories surrounded by the army. The soldiers wouldn't allow journalists or the Red Cross near.

The military blockade was very far away from the university, so I was unable to see what was happening inside. One witness told me he had seen planes bombing the university area in the morning.

There were also a lot of civilian-dressed police and paramilitary rightists. Every

branch of the repressive forces joined the massacre—police, army, national guard, and air force. I saw the army and police arm civilian men and send them away.

It was a day of war and terror for the people of El Salvador. But there were also expressions of courage and determination to fight. The fact that workers in almost all the factories supported the strike was a big success for the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses.

People here condemn U.S. intervention. They talk of the millions of dollars of military aid given. They say trucks from the ports arrive daily with arms from the U.S. They report the U.S. is helping to construct three new helicopter bases, from which the military sends nightly missions to terrorize the peasants.

There are reportedly thirty-two U.S. military "advisers" here, and U.S. Marines from the embassy have directly participated in acts of repression. □

## U.S. and Salvadoran Governments Blamed by Amnesty International

Amnesty International has accused the Salvadoran military dictatorship of carrying out "a campaign of murder and abduction against peasants." According to the human rights organization, "hundreds of men, women, and children" have been slaughtered by the regime, and many more have been forced to flee their homes.

In a March 17 statement, released as striking workers in El Salvador were facing murderous attacks by the National Guard, Amnesty also protested stepped-up U.S. aid to the Salvadoran junta. President Carter has proposed sending \$5.7 million more in arms and several teams of U.S. "advisers" to El Salvador.

Citing the fact that \$200,000 worth of what Washington called "riot control" aid "was followed by the deaths of scores of people in the breaking up of street demonstrations by Salvadoran authorities last November," Amnesty warned that additional U.S. aid "could be expected to lead to further violations of human rights."

Giving specific examples of the impact of the junta's "land reform," Amnesty reported that since March 9 it has received information of eighty people—including at least twenty-eight children—

killed in Cuscatlan Department alone.

In the case of one village in Chalatenango Department, government troops killed some forty people and kidnapped many more after lighting a ring of fire around the village to prevent people from escaping.

In addition, Amnesty said, "Troops operating in open coordination with the paramilitary organization ORDEN have shot or abducted peasants, razed villages and destroyed crops in Suchitoto and Morazan Departments. . . ."

Land seized under the junta's "reform" law has been handed over to members of ORDEN as a reward for their activities.

Opposition to U.S. aid for the junta was also expressed at a March 17 news conference in Washington, D.C., held by three former leaders of the Salvadoran Christian Democratic Party.

Héctor Dada, until recently a member of the ruling junta, former presidential minister Ruben Zamora, and Alberto Arene said that U.S. aid to the junta would only worsen the violence in their country. More than 600 people have died at the hands of the military and its rightist allies just since the beginning of this year. □

## 'Kargar' Interviews Candidates for Iran's Parliament

By Gerry Foley

*Kargar*, the newspaper of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), was published twice weekly leading up to the March 14 elections for Iran's new national parliament.

The HKE used the extra issues of *Kargar* to step up its work to build and extend the anti-imperialist mobilizations focused around the occupation of the U.S. embassy.

Along with this, the campaigns of the HKE candidates and independent workers candidates supported by the party made it possible to offer concrete proposals for carrying forward the anti-imperialist struggle.

On its front page, the March 6 issue of *Kargar* carried a large picture of a demonstration outside the occupied U.S. embassy. The headline said: "Workers Representatives Are the Only Guarantee That the Anti-Imperialist Struggle Will Be Carried Forward in the Parliament."

A headline below the picture said: "Solidarity With the Students Following the Imam's Line Must Be Organized."

Inside, the paper featured an interview with Rahim Khoshvel, a thirty-three year old Tehran textile worker. Khoshvel was one of the independent workers candidates supported by the HKE. He has worked in various textile factories since he was thirteen.

Khoshvel began by saying:

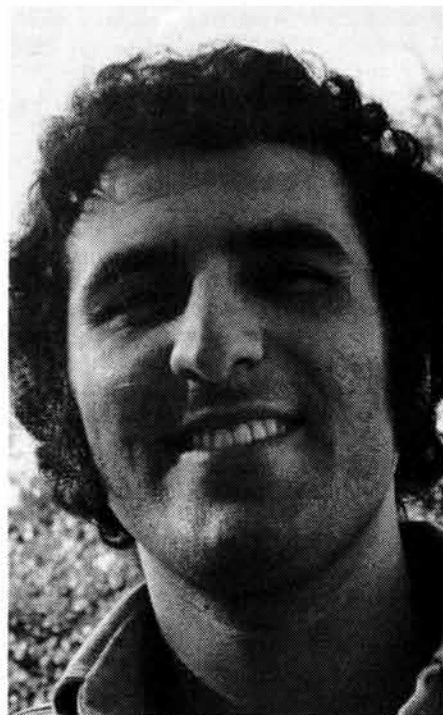
The only ones who can really defend the rights of the workers are those who know the life of the masses from living among them, those who have borne the same chains as other workers, toiling in an environment filled with acid, dust, and dirt.

The only ones who can really defend the rights of the workers are we workers ourselves. It was

for this reason that when the people in my neighborhood and all the workers in my plant asked me to run, I agreed to be a candidate.

Khoshvel was one of the leaders of a sixteen-day strike at his factory in 1977, in which the workers raised both economic and political demands—opposition to the dictatorship of the shah. Khoshvel recalled:

Some of our brothers who were taken away by the SAVAK never returned. But we did get a wage increase.



HAMID SHAHRABI

The conditions in this factory are so bad that the demand for early retirement has become a major issue. Our fathers either died before reaching retirement age, or they died a couple of months afterward.

Khoshvel continued:

We are convinced that our revolution was not just made against the shah but against all his laws as well. Under the old regime, the shah published a book of labor law. But when we looked inside, it was full of torture for the workers. Political prisoners were tortured in jail; we workers were also subjected to torture by the labor code.

To complete the revolution, the workers have to build their own organizations and take control of the country. "There must be a union of shoras [workers committees]. The shoras must solve the problems in the

factories and in the country by uniting."

Khoshvel stressed the importance of assuring democratic rights for the masses, including respect for the rights of the oppressed nationalities.

"Our revolution is an Islamic one and its task is to establish brotherhood and equality and abolish oppression and tyranny."

In its March 3 issue, *Kargar* featured an interview with two candidates who had considerable experience in the fight to assure democratic rights after the fall of the shah. They were Hamid Shahrabi and Mustafa Gorgzadeh, HKE activists in the oil-producing province of Khuzestan, where the majority of the population are Arabs. They, along with twelve other HKE members, were jailed last May and June at the same time that the government was conducting an offensive against the Arab and Kurdish communities in Iran.

All but two of the HKE prisoners have been released since the start of the new anti-imperialist upsurge centered around the embassy occupation. Gorgzadeh and Shahrabi were freed in January.

"A lot of people in Khuzestan know us and our ideas," Gorgzadeh told *Kargar*. They were worried about us when we were in prison. When we got out they greeted us warmly. They saw that our release was a victory for all working people and for the oppressed Arab people."

Both candidates pointed out that the Arab masses in Khuzestan had been quick to join in the great anti-imperialist mobilizations around the embassy occupation. Shahrabi said:

Now the elections for the Islamic parliament are an opportunity for the working people to strengthen their organizations and to advance the anti-imperialist struggle. In these elections, our basic proposal is that the working people should not place any confidence in capitalist candidates. We want to increase the unity of the shoras and to encourage the workers to turn to their own independent representatives.

In the Caspian Sea port of Bandar-e Enzeli, the HKE candidate was the president of the Northern Fishermen's Association, Jalil Vatandoust.

Last summer, Bandar-e Enzeli was the scene of sharp fighting between fishermen and Revolutionary Guards. In an interview in the March 6 *Kargar*, Vatandoust said:

Since this tragedy, in which a number of fishermen and guards were killed, it has become clear that those who bear the basic responsibility for this conflict are the capitalists in this area.

The fishermen do not want to fight their

### No Election Results Yet

Despite press reports of the initial results of Iran's parliamentary elections, it is too early to draw valid conclusions. Official results are not yet in. And each day, as counting continues, the reported results change. Many charges of voting fraud have been made, and the Islamic Revolutionary Council has appointed a panel to investigate these allegations.

A runoff round of elections will be held in early April. Final first round results are not expected until after the Iranian New Year, towards the end of March. □

Revolutionary Guard brothers. The fishermen expect the Revolutionary Guards to defend the working people and curb the plotting of the capitalists. Revolutionary unity between the fishermen and the guards is a vital aspect of mobilizing the masses against imperialism and building the army of twenty million.

The March 6 *Kargar* also carried an interview with the three HKE candidates in Tehran: Shohreh Amin, Babak Zahraie, and Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh.

Zahraie explained why the HKE was calling for a Workers Anti-Imperialist Front.

"In the decisive struggle that is going on between the forces of our revolution and the counterrevolutionary forces that serve U.S. imperialism, the capitalists and the big landlords stand in the way of the struggle of the workers and peasants against imperialism."

The capitalist candidates did not openly avow their class allegiances. But it could easily be seen who they were. Zahraie explained:

The capitalist candidates are those who oppose the struggle against imperialism, who show dislike for the revolutionary and heroic actions of the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line, who want to sabotage the shoras, who don't want to hear talk about an army of twenty million, who continually try to deny the rights of the oppressed peoples, such as those in Turkmenistan, and who continually cause bloodshed and fratricide.

Zahraie continued:

Now these counterrevolutionary forces are marshalling their strength so that they can consolidate this dirty work of undermining our revolution through the parliament. Many working-class and Islamic militants realize this. So, after nine months of the Bazargan government, which was imposed on them, and after the [January] presidential elections...the working people feel that they have to have their own representatives in parliament in order to solve the problems of the country and get satisfaction for their demands.

The Workers Anti-Imperialist Front was a way to focus this feeling.

Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh said: "In his speech, the Imam indicated what the character of the Islamic parliament should be. It should be made up of deputies who unconditionally support the demands of the broad masses of our people in their struggle against American imperialism. We don't think that the representatives of the capitalists and big landlords are that kind." □

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## Iran Socialists Hold Campaign Rally

By Janice Lynn

The Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) held a wrap-up campaign rally in Tehran March 17. More than 200 people attended. A fund-raising appeal for the HKE newspaper, *Kargar* (Worker), raised 120,000 tomas (\$12,000) in pledges.

Among the speakers at the rally were the three HKE candidates from Tehran—Shohreh Amin, Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh, and Babak Zahraie. Yousef Khandazeh, a Tehran railroad worker, also spoke, thanking the HKE for its support to his campaign. Khandazeh was one of seven workers supported by the HKE who ran independent campaigns for the parliament. Many of these candidates received support from their co-workers.

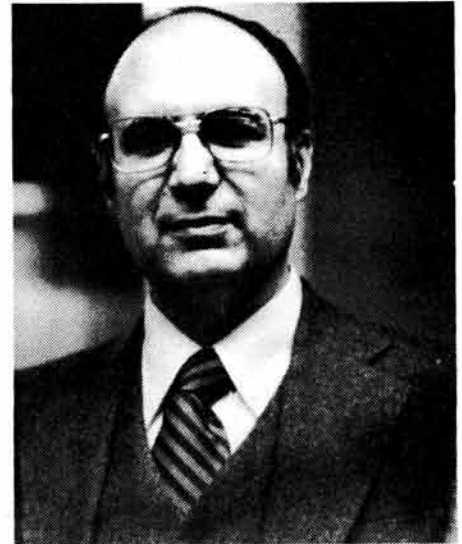
Among those attending the rally were autoworkers from Tehran's General Motors Plant, clothing workers from the Pushan textile factory, workers from the Phillips plant, Ray-O-Vac battery factory, and others. Many pledged a month's wages to the *Kargar* fund.

The HKE met with a good response to election material that it distributed at factory gates and in the working-class neighborhoods of south Tehran. Many workers pasted copies of the leaflets on bulletin boards in the factories.

In Khuzestan province, one of the HKE candidates, Mustafa Gorgzadeh was ruled off the ballot at the last minute in the city of Ahwaz. Gorgzadeh was one of fourteen socialists imprisoned in Ahwaz last June for his political ideas. As a result of the

international defense campaign that won his release, Gorgzadeh is well known and respected in the city.

Ahmad Janati, judge of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Khuzestan, publicly declared that some candidates had "criminal political records." As a result,



MAHMOUD SAYRAFIEZADEH

Gorgzadeh was disqualified from the elections. Officials went so far as to announce on the radio and put up signs on voting booths announcing that Gorgzadeh had been eliminated from the ballot. □

## Support Grows for HKE Women Prisoners

In the last week, important new support has been won for the two women socialists imprisoned in Iran, Mahsa Hashemi and Fatima Fallahi. Both are members of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) and longtime activists in the fight against U.S. imperialism.

The appeal is being circulated among supporters of the Iranian revolution. Among new signers in the United States are clergymen who have been particularly outspoken against the crimes of the shah. They include Dr. William A. Jones, president, Progressive National Baptist Convention; Rev. William J. Stafford of Atlanta, a participant in the November 16 National Black Pastors Conference in Detroit that unanimously called for the extradition of the shah; and Rev. Dr. William B. Cate, director, Church Council of Greater Seattle.

Other new signers include Gene Guer-

rero, executive director, Atlanta American Civil Liberties Union; Duma Ndlovu, steering committee, Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa; Sheila Ryan, chairperson, Palestine Solidarity Committee; Elias Ayoub, Palestinian activist facing deportation from the U.S. for his political views; Gilberto Gerena-Valentin, New York City Councilman from the South Bronx and strong advocate of Puerto Rican independence; and Karen Valenzuela, director, Associated Students of the University of Washington Women's Commission.

The March 7 issue of the Los Angeles based Farsi-language paper, *Iran News*, carried a favorable article on the two women socialists.

Telegrams should be sent to president Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, Tehran, Iran, with copies to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* and *Kargar*, P.O. Box 41-3586, Tehran, Iran.

# STOP NUCLEAR POWER!



## Bretons Oppose Nuclear Plant in Plogoff

The French government has been trying to drum up support for its deadly plans to dot the French countryside with forty nuclear reactors by the year 1985.

But it has been meeting with stiff resistance, especially at one of those proposed sites in the northeastern region of Brittany, an economically underdeveloped area that has a strong independence movement. This is where the government wants to build one of the largest nuclear plants—actually four plants in one.

Aside from the dangers of nuclear radioactivity, the discharge of superheated water into the ocean would alter the temperature of the sea water, affecting the livelihood of the Breton fishing villages. The threat of nuclear contamination would discourage tourism along the beaches, and the possible discharge of radioactive waters would add another ecological disaster on top of the one last year caused by a giant oil spill.

In response, the Breton fishing village of Plogoff, on the peninsula of Cap Sizun, has been the scene of militant antinuclear protests.

Under French law, the state-owned power company must consult residents of an area before constructing a nuclear plant. So the company, Electricité de France (EDF), tried to set up facilities in the town halls of Plogoff and two nearby villages in order to hold its public inquiry and promote its plans for the nuclear plant.

In an act of defiance, however, the mayors shut down the town halls. The EDF was forced to resort to using vans to try and hold the inquiry. These vans and the hundreds of armed riot police that were brought in became hated symbols. The Bretons organized a boycott of the entire inquiry.

The six-week inquiry began February 4. And for six weeks hundreds of Bretons—fishermen, village women, and youth from throughout the region—maintained daily vigils outside the vans. In the evenings they were joined by other villagers on their way home from work, and each night they erected barricades to try and prevent the vans from returning.

Night after night they diligently placed broken bottles, trees, burning tires, and garbage in the road. And each morning the riot police smashed down the barricades to let the vans through.

Over the six-week period, demonstrations were organized on the weekends. The

French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge* reported that some 30,000 people participated on February 3.

At a February 29 protest, nine demonstrators were arrested.

To mark the final days of the inquiry, shops and schools in Plogoff were closed down March 14 in an impressive display of the village's determination not to allow the nuclear plant to be built. On March 16, tens of thousands turned out for an antinuclear gathering. The French daily *Le Monde* estimated that between 30,000 and 50,000 attended.

In the nearby town of Pont-Croix, scuffles broke out between the police and several hundred demonstrators. The police used tear gas and concussion grenades against the protesters.

## Harrisburg One Year Later

It has been nearly a year since the March 28 nuclear accident at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But the problems with the reactor continue.

Decontamination and demolition of the nuclear plant is expected to take at least three to four more years. Moreover, the project is fraught with danger for the 1,700 workers now involved in the clean-up as well as residents of the Harrisburg area.

Already the cost of the clean-up is expected to reach \$500 million. Ten workers have so far been exposed to high radiation doses, while residents have been exposed to vented radioactive krypton gas.

Over the past year, the clean-up attempts have been restricted to an auxiliary building. No one has tried to enter the 203-foot tall containment building holding the reactor itself, since the atmosphere inside is highly contaminated and the building is flooded with seven feet of contaminated water. This water constantly evaporates and then recondenses at the top of the building, resulting in a steady radioactive rainfall inside.

To complicate matters, the nuclear reactor is still generating heat and needs constant cooling. However, large parts of the cooling system are under water and subject to corrosion. If the cooling system fails, heat would build up in the reactor,

The residents of Brittany have not only been demonstrating their opposition to nuclear power and its deadly consequences, but also to the six-week military occupation and the government's brutal use of force.

Although the French Communist Party is for building the giant nuclear plant in Brittany, CP Mayor Michel Mazéas of Douarnenez, the largest town on Cap Sizun, felt compelled to also come out in opposition to the plant.

The Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International, protested against the police brutality in Brittany and demanded the release of the nine arrested demonstrators. It called on the workers' parties and trade-union federations to mobilize in support of the antinuclear protesters.

Amnesty International has announced that it will send observers to attend the trial of the nine Breton activists. □

with the possibility that fission might begin again.

There are similar worries about the possible failure of the system that prevents krypton gas from suddenly escaping into the atmosphere. Plans now call for solving that problem by releasing all the radioactive gas into the atmosphere over a two-month period, which has sparked protests by hundreds of area residents.

Attempts to decontaminate all of the one million gallons of radioactive water at Three Mile Island have failed. When and if a successful filtration process is developed, the million gallons would be pumped out of the facility and shipped 2,700 miles by truck to Hanford, Washington, for disposal.

Once that step is completed, work would finally begin on decontaminating and dismantling the containment building and the reactor.

Finally, 2,000 truckloads of the nuclear waste would be shipped the 2,700 miles to Hanford!

It will take decades to assess the health damage *already* done to Pennsylvania residents by the Three Mile Island accident. Given the record of the nuclear power industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, it will be a minor miracle if the years-long clean-up effort is accomplished without causing at least as much damage as the accident itself. □

## Rightist Revolts: Tibet in 1959, Afghanistan Today

By David Frankel

Bourgeois propagandists claim that the rightist rebellion in Afghanistan is a national liberation struggle of a whole people, provoked by repression and Soviet expansionism. They accuse the Afghan government and Soviet military forces of wiping out villages, perpetrating wholesale massacres, and using poison gas.

These atrocities, it is claimed, are designed to secure Afghanistan as a base for further Soviet aggression. Pakistan or Iran are next in line. And if nothing is done, the official language in Saudi Arabia may soon be Russian!

There is nothing new about this kind of propaganda. Twenty years ago, when Chinese troops suppressed a counterrevolutionary revolt in Tibet, the same charges were raised.

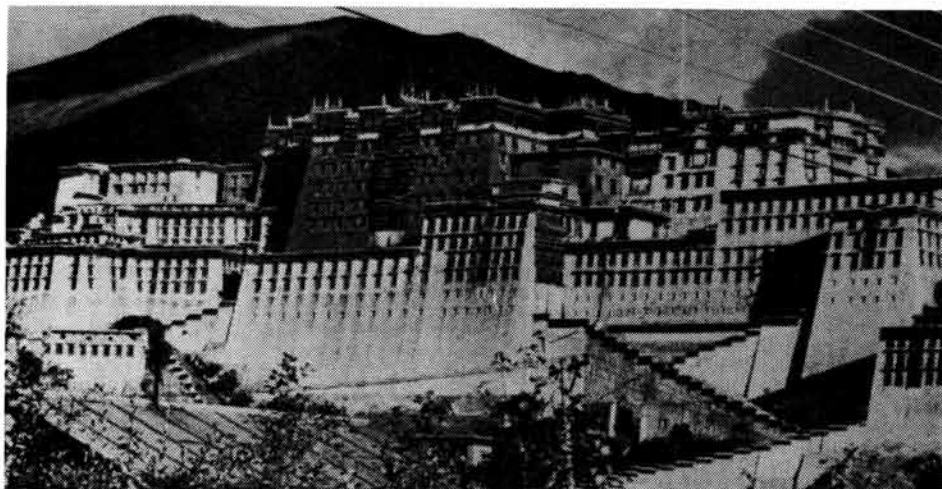
Tibet, historically a separate country, had been controlled by China for several centuries. Following the first Chinese revolution of 1911 and the disintegration of the Chinese central government, however, Chinese rule in Tibet existed more in name than in fact. After the third Chinese revolution in 1949, Tibet was reoccupied by Communist Party-led troops.

The Peking regime initially promised the feudal rulers of Tibet that it would not touch the oppressive property relations there. Over the next few years, however, it proved less and less possible for Tibetan feudalism to coexist with the Chinese workers state. Feudal rebellions broke out in 1954 and 1956, and again in 1959.

As in Afghanistan, one of the big complaints of the rightist forces was "Communist education" of children—meaning any education at all—and the undermining of the political authority of the traditional religious leaders. The religious leaders also happened to be, along with the nobility, the only landowners. The Drepung monastery outside of Lhasa, for example, owned estates with 25,000 serfs.

The feudal lords fought bitterly against the curtailment of their ancient privileges. Defenders of capitalism glorified this fight as a struggle in behalf of the Tibetan people and its national rights. Thus, Indira Gandhi, at that time president of India's Congress Party, was described in the March 31, 1959, *Christian Science Monitor* as backing the rebels because "all that is good in the Tibetan way of life was being destroyed. She feels that while Tibetan feudalism must disappear, the Dalai Lama [the Tibetan priest-king] is the right man to lead his country to progress."

Typical of the charges in the big-



Dalai Lama's palace in Lhasa. Imperialists portrayed struggle of feudalists to maintain their rule as a fight for national rights of the Tibetan people.

business media were the widely syndicated articles of British journalist Noel Barber. The April 20, 1959, issue of the U.S. Trotskyist weekly, the *Militant*, summarized Barber's claims as follows:

Barber charges that the Chinese are carrying out genocide against the Tibetans. They are driving the Tibetans off the land, massacring them, and replacing them with Chinese colonists now numbering four to five million. . . . They have 750,000 troops to carry out the butchery. All this is preparatory to building up Tibet as a staging ground to invade India. The Tibetan people are fighting a heroic battle to the death whose meaning is to alert Asia and the West to the true nature of Chinese Communism.

As the *Militant* explained, all this was a pack of lies. The feudal nobility and the Lamaist theocracy in Tibet, who monopolized the country's wealth and lived by extorting unpaid labor from the toiling masses, were not fighting in the interests of the Tibetan nation. Nor was the Chinese army fighting a whole people.

The capitalist press claimed that Chinese forces were suppressing the Tibetan masses in the same way the Soviet bureaucracy suppressed the Hungarian revolution in 1956. Tibet was characterized as an "Asian Hungary," just as the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan is today being compared to the Kremlin's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Answering this charge, Daniel Roberts explained in the April 13, 1959, *Militant*:

In Hungary an industrial working class fought for socialist democracy—the most advanced form of social organization that mankind can attain in this epoch. The revolutionaries, it is true, also

demanded national independence, since the main oppressor of the Hungarian people was the Soviet bureaucracy. But that wasn't what determined the progressive character of the Hungarian uprising. The workers led the revolt. They rejected any idea of returning to capitalist or landlord rule. They sought to advance further on the road to socialism by eliminating the misrule of a bureaucratic parasitic caste. That is why, in the 1956 conflict, social progress was on the Hungarian side.

In Tibet, the landlords and monks lead the revolt in order to preserve a social order that most of mankind has left far behind. *Although the Mao regime is bureaucratic (and although this undoubtedly affected Chinese dealings with Tibet adversely), the Chinese Communist Party defends social relations that are progressive not only in comparison with feudalism but with capitalism as well. Unquestionably, in the present conflict, the Chinese government fights on the side of social progress.* [Emphasis in original.]

Unlike the case in Afghanistan, where a revolution had been going on independently of the Soviet intervention, Roberts noted that in Tibet the peasants "were evidently not yet ready to rebel against the Dalai Lama, the nobles and the monks."

The crime of Mao's Stalinist regime was not in eradicating the feudal system in Tibet—it was in preserving and defending it for nearly a decade. The Tibetan serfs were terrorized and brutalized by their overlords. But the Peking bureaucracy did nothing to help them free themselves from this oppression until it had no other choice but to defend its own base against imperialist-backed threats.

Of course, the imperialists took full

advantage in their propaganda of the lack of any independent revolution in Tibet. As Roberts noted:

"The fact that the Chinese were forced to fight off a feudal rebellion before the class antagonisms in Tibetan society could explode the old order from within has given every reactionary in Asia . . . a field day for anti-Communist agitation."

However, that did not change the lineup of class forces in Tibet and the conflicts between those forces. Today, it is easy to see how correct it was to focus on the basic class forces involved in the struggle.

To begin with, both the narrow base of the counterrevolutionary rebels and the involvement of imperialism in aiding the rebellion has now been proved. In an interview with Chris Mullin published in the January 19, 1976, British *Guardian*, the Dalai Lama admitted that his forces had received extensive aid from the CIA.

"The situation was desperate," he told Mullin. "Our forces were quite ineffective on their own; a few thousand could not destroy the Chinese military."

A special training program for Tibetan rebels was established at Camp Hale in Colorado, according to Mullin, and other Tibetans were trained in Taiwan. A CIA-backed army of more than 2,000 Tibetan tribesmen was established in Nepal's Mustang Valley.

Raids into Tibet by this CIA-sponsored outfit "continued sporadically for about eight years—the last being in the autumn of 1969." At first, Mullin reported, the CIA's employees "were able to strike as far as eight days on horseback into Tibet, but after 1963 the Chinese began to fortify the border and by 1967 the raids had become virtually impossible."

The Tibetan rightists were also aided by the Indian regime, which fought a brief border war with China in 1962.

As for which side represented social progress and the interests of the Tibetan nation, we are now in a position to produce the testimony of the same capitalist newspapers that at one time were talking about Chinese genocide against the Tibetan people.

In 1979, the entire foreign press corps resident in Peking was invited to visit Tibet. Reporter John Fraser noted that "we

have been allowed unprecedented access not just to the people of Lhasa, but also to the nomads and herdsmen of the interior."

According to Fraser, "Road building, electrification, and agricultural reform have been carried out by the Chinese in a conscientious way for the average Tibetan peasant, and life has become more circumspect and dull, but material well-being has improved from what he would have known under the theocratic government before 1951." (*Christian Science Monitor*, July 24, 1979.)

*New York Times* correspondent Fox Butterfield concurred with Fraser's report of progress. In a dispatch carried in the July 20 issue he said:

Under the old Lamaist theocracy, it was said, the only thing in Tibet that turned was a prayer wheel. There were no roads, no motor vehicles, no industry, not to mention no schools or medical care outside the monastery. Lhasa was so remote it took over 100 days to walk to the nearest real city, Chengdu, in Sichuan Province. The bulk of the population were impoverished serfs.

Now the Tibet Autonomous Region, which sits at an average altitude of 14,000 feet, has 260 factories, 10,000 miles of roads, and 6,300 schools. Television was introduced to Lhasa this spring, for three evenings a week, along with a telephone service that reaches New York. . . .

In the electric-equipment plant, Tibetan workers earn an average of \$51 a month. Workers in China as a whole average only \$35 a month. The Tibetan workers are beneficiaries of Peking's policy of heavily subsidizing development and living standards here.

Tibet, like the rest of China, continues to be ruled by a Stalinist bureaucracy that places the preservation of its own material privileges ahead of the needs of the working class and of the world revolution. But the destruction of the feudal system in Tibet was entirely progressive, regardless of the leadership under which this task was accomplished. It has benefitted the Tibetan masses.

It is possible, of course, that at some future point a struggle by the Tibetan workers and peasants against the Stalinist bureaucracy in Peking may take the form of a national struggle, with demands for the right to self-determination. Socialists would support such a struggle.

It is one thing when the toiling masses

raise national demands as part of a struggle against their oppression. It is another thing when the exploiters, fighting to preserve their class rule, try to cloak their reactionary aims in the rhetoric of national liberation, as in Tibet in 1959 and in Afghanistan today.

There is a danger to the national independence of the Afghan people today. *It is the imperialist-backed counterrevolution.* A victory for the rightist forces in Afghanistan would ensure that the country would once again be subordinated to Wall Street and used as a pawn in Washington's counterrevolutionary maneuvers in that part of the world.

Moscow does not claim that Afghanistan is part of the Soviet Union, and it has repeatedly insisted that Soviet forces will withdraw from Afghanistan following the defeat of the imperialist-backed counterrevolution there. Like Peking's move against the feudal forces in Tibet, the Kremlin's decision to intervene in Afghanistan was not based on any intention of extending the socialist revolution. It was a defensive response to Washington's attempt to turn the country into a base of operations against the Soviet workers state.

However, U.S. policymakers are clearly afraid that, regardless of Moscow's intentions, the defeat of the rightist forces in Afghanistan will create conditions more favorable to completion of the social revolution that began in April 1978. The stakes are far higher in Afghanistan than was the case in Tibet. Afghanistan has more than ten times the population of Tibet and is more strategically located. The class struggle in Afghanistan before the entry of Soviet forces there had attained a far higher level of development than had the class struggle in Tibet, and is therefore potentially more explosive. Finally, the conflict in Afghanistan is occurring at a time when the workers and peasants are on the march around the world and when imperialism is on the defensive.

That is why the imperialist ruling class has raised such an outcry over the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan. And that is why it is so important for revolutionists to answer the lies about the Soviet presence there being a violation of Afghan national rights. □

## An Exchange of Letters

# In Answer to Joan Baez's Campaign of Lies About Kampuchea

[The following exchange between Joan Baez and Doug Hostetter, a resource specialist for the United Methodist Office for the United Nations, appeared in the March 4 and March 15, 1980, letters column of the *New York Times*.

[In February of this year, Baez was

instrumental in organizing the "March for Survival," which brought 120 celebrities to the Thailand-Kampuchea border where they visited refugee camps. Their aim was to focus international publicity on allegations by Baez and others that Vietnam and the Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea are deliberately starving and exter-

minating the Kampuchean people.

[Reports from numerous relief workers in Kampuchea—confirmed even by the U.S. State Department—showed that Baez's charges had no basis in fact. On the contrary, famine had been overcome in Kampuchea for the time being and progress was being made in beginning to

rebuild the country.

[All reports stressed, however, that famine might recur unless massive aid continued to be sent. The famine was pushed back primarily by food shipments from Vietnam and the Soviet Union, along with aid sent by some relief agencies.

[The "March for Survival" aimed to divert attention from the real crimes being committed along the Thai border. There, hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean refugees are brutalized and plundered by right-wing gangsters and Thai military men who get rich off the aid supposedly being sent for the refugees. This operation is backed by Washington and the Thai military rulers in an effort to bring down Heng Samrin.

[Although Baez has visited the border area several times, she keeps a tight lip about these crimes. The latest incident was a bloody battle in a border refugee camp headed by Khmer Serei chieftain Wan Sarin. At least 11 civilians were gunned down in the fighting, including six children, according to a March 19 Reuters dispatch. The Thai army directly intervened in the fighting, and more than 55,000 refugees were reportedly driven deeper into Thailand.

[Little wonder that most of the refugees long to return to their homeland, which is slowly recovering from a decade of war and famine. According to reports by United Nations officials cited in the February 29 *Christian Science Monitor*, about 250,000 refugees have returned to Kampuchea in recent months as the food situation has improved.]

### Joan Baez

I do not wish to detract from the tremendous efforts of the numerous relief organizations that have done a superhuman job on behalf of the Cambodian refugees. However, there is a general attitude promoted by a few of these groups of adopting a highly diplomatic, if not fawning, public manner toward the puppet government of Phnom Penh. This attitude is that the less the public knows about food distribution, the better.

When our "March for Survival" made an appeal at the Thai/Cambodia border to allow doctors, medicine and food into the outlying provinces and rural areas of Cambodia, we were accused of "kicking down the back door when the front door is already open." I am sure the front door is open. I am also sure that the foyer is well polished. And I am equally sure that visitors are well screened.

Reports by visitors and friends to Phnom Penh directly conflict with reports by refugees and observers at the Thai/Cambodia border. It is alleged by the head of the international relief effort in Cambodia that "disaster has been averted" and "there is no mass hunger or malnutrition." Yet the respected and knowledgeable Henry Kamm, reporting for

The New York Times from Thailand under a Feb. 13 dateline, states: "People from all over Battambang are coming here, and their accounts are all the same. The small amounts of rice that were distributed after the communal harvest are running down. Many villagers are sick with fever, diarrhea and bronchial illnesses. Most are malnourished, all are hungry and a few have the bloated bellies and swollen limbs associated with severe malnutrition."

Many refugees, upon examination in their host countries, are found to be suffering from malnutrition, even after several months of recuperation and two meals a day in the camps. Further, pregnant and lactating women suffer irreparable damage from malnutrition, and damage to the health of infants carried and born under such conditions is irreversible.

These facts point up the greater need for medical aid. Hundreds of doctors from around the world (including France, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Canada, Scandinavia and Russia) have applied to Phnom Penh for visas. To date, only a small team of Russian doctors has been allowed into Cambodia. Right now 400 doctors work in Thailand round the clock with 150,000 refugees to aid in combating malaria, tuberculosis, malnutrition, dysentery, pulmonary pneumonia, intestinal parasites and countless other diseases and illnesses. Are we to believe that the victims of starvation within Cambodia have become healthy since the "disaster has been averted"? After consulting pediatricians, nutritionists and other medical people, I find this impossible to believe.

Almost all parties agree that there will be a new famine, expected in less than two months. Let us gird ourselves for a fresh appeal to the enormous generosity already shown by the international community. It is clear, however, that the flow of aid will dissipate if irresponsible and conflicting reports of "no hunger" and "no malnutrition" continue. In order to forestall this event, I suggest the following:

Accurate and responsible reports of the situation should be made, paying heed to the fact that what is at stake here are the lives of the Cambodian people. Public reports should be made by impartial, non-political, qualified and independent observers, detailing amounts, methods and locations of distribution.

Secondly, with regard to the desperate need for medical aid, my suggestion is that every qualified doctor and nurse who is prepared to offer time apply or reapply immediately for a visa to Cambodia. If Hanoi and Heng Samrin care one iota about Cambodians, they will surely greet the requests for entry and proffered help with great enthusiasm.

### Doug Hostetter

Having just returned from a two-week visit to Cambodia and the refugee camps

on the Thai-Cambodian border, I wish to express appreciation for Joan Baez's March 4 letter and concurrence with its main point, namely that "a new famine [is] expected in less than two months" and that we should "gird ourselves for a fresh appeal to the enormous generosity already shown by the international community."

Perhaps I can also shed some light on the apparent discrepancy between this anticipated urgent appeal and the reports of all the international agencies working inside Cambodia, as well as my own observations, that there is no mass starvation at the present time in most areas of Cambodia.

I arrived in Cambodia in late January, shortly after the completion of the December-January harvest. That crop had been planted in September of 1979 and was small, because of the shortage of draft animals, weakness of the population and the fact that many people were still looking for relatives and still in the process of returning to their native villages.

We were told that the rice from the winter harvest, along with the international aid on hand, would be sufficient to carry the country through the month of March. There would then be a shortage of rice until the summer harvest in August. Unfortunately, the summer harvest is always a small harvest, estimated to supply the country for only the months of August and September of this year. This will leave another rice deficit until the winter harvest next year.

I also agree with Miss Baez about the need for responsible reporting. In that light, perhaps, I should clarify the situation of foreign physicians in Cambodia. She said that "today, only a small team of Russian doctors has been allowed into Cambodia." At the time of my trip, there were, in addition to 11 doctors from the Soviet Union, 13 Cuban, 5 East German and over 60 Vietnamese doctors practicing in that country. There were also a West German and a French professor in the medical school in Phnom Penh, which reopened with 800 former students the week I was in Cambodia. The Ministry of Health was also expecting a medical team from Hungary, which was to arrive in early February.

The Government in Phnom Penh did, however, seem to be quite skeptical about receiving medical personnel from capitalist countries. Officials pointed out that the intense interest of the West in the medical and humanitarian problems of the people of Cambodia seems to have arisen only after the Vietnamese invasion and the setting up of a new government in Phnom Penh.

Where, they asked, was Joan Baez and where were the Western relief agencies during the reign of Pol Pot, when even by Western estimates at least three million Cambodians died of malnutrition, disease, and execution? □



## Tito and the Yugoslav Revolution

By Ernest Mandel

Tito is the last living representative of that first generation of Stalinist leaders who came out of the pre-Stalinist Communist movement. That was the generation that lived through the movement's transformation from a Communist International encompassing the program and hope for the world socialist revolution to Communist parties reduced to the role of tools of the Kremlin's diplomacy. Tito expressed and incorporated all the agonizing contradictions of that generation.

He was genuinely attached to the cause of communism, as he understood it. He wanted to win political power in his country by overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie. But at the same time he was fanatically faithful to the leadership of the Soviet Union, which he identified with international communism. This insoluble contradiction led to duplicity and cynicism.

When Stalin murdered the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party, which was characterized by factional struggles, Tito accepted the leadership offered to him by Stalin in order to rebuild the Communist Party. He paid for this gift by tacitly approving the murder of several of his closest comrades in the Soviet Union, some of the most prestigious figures of Yugoslav communism such as Milan Gorkic, former general secretary of the Yugoslav CP.

### The Yugoslav Resistance Movement

But Tito became neither a servile lackey nor a simple executor of orders received from the Kremlin. When Yugoslavia was invaded by the German and Italian imperialist armies in 1941, Tito took advantage of the advanced state of decay of the royal bourgeois state, the political confusion of the petty bourgeoisie, and the desire of the vanguard workers and students to get rid of the torturers who had introduced barbaric superexploitation into their country. He launched a massive, anti-imperialist insurrection that developed into a true saga.

What began as armed resistance by several thousand communists became, after years of heroic battles against the most powerful army in the world, an uprising of more than 300,000 partisans. The entire mass of working people were involved. Despite the undeniable bureaucratic manipulation and demagogic use of unbridled nationalism, the class character of this war of liberation became increasingly clear.

The anti-imperialist uprising was at the same time a civil war that divided every city and village into two irreconcilable camps: the camp of the exploiting class and the camp of the exploited.

Thus, Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party were the only ones in all of occupied Europe to accomplish what should have been the task of all communists and revolutionary Marxists: to transform a mass resistance movement against the oppres-



JOSIP BROZ TITO

sion and superexploitation introduced by the imperialist occupiers into a real socialist revolution, destroying the bourgeoisie's class power, private property, and state.

Stalin did not miss this fact. He sharply criticized the creation of proletarian brigades in the Yugoslav partisan army. He criticized that army's massive recruitment of Italian, German, Bulgarian, and Hungarian prisoners of war and deserters. He reproached Tito for endangering the solidity of the alliance with the British and U.S. imperialists through his "extremist" policies.

Stalin reduced material aid to the Yugoslav partisans to a minimum. He tried to bolster the opposition within the Yugoslav leadership that was most loyal to the Kremlin.

To help Roosevelt and Churchill, Stalin

forced Tito to accept a temporary political compromise, with the presence of bourgeois ministers in a coalition government. Stalin also forced Tito to agree to a referendum on the question of the monarchy.

Nothing worked. The civil war was too deep, the mass mobilizations too broad, and the revolutionary dynamism of the partisans too solid, to allow restoration of the bourgeois order. After the 1945 referendum, what was left of the bourgeois state was swept aside. Capitalist property was quickly eliminated. The socialist revolution triumphed in Yugoslavia. A bureaucratically deformed workers state was established in that country.

### The Victorious Opposition to Stalin

For this reason, conflict with the Soviet bureaucracy became inevitable. Stalin, as was his manner, had only one way of thinking. A Communist Party that escaped from the control of the Kremlin, even if it were Stalinized in its ideology and methods, was an open breach in the whole bureaucratic fortress. It was a breach through which all sorts of "monsters" would infiltrate. Thus, the heretic had to be dealt with and eliminated. The Cominform\* was created for this purpose. And in 1948 the excommunication took place.

But having state power themselves, Tito and the Yugoslav Communists had a material base that enabled them to successfully resist. They became the first opponents to successfully take on Stalin, not only in the realm of ideas, but also at the level of power.

Despite the economic blockade, despite attempts to incite insurrectional movements and even assassination attempts, and despite the massing of Soviet troops on the Yugoslav border, the second Yugoslav resistance, like the first, was crowned with success.

In 1955 when Khrushchev landed at the Belgrade airport and publicly apologized for the seven-year campaign of insults and slanders against Tito orchestrated by the incredible propaganda machine in Moscow, he provided the old Yugoslav Communist leader with a degree of vindication and political triumph that was unprecedented in Soviet history.

In order to successfully organize their resistance against Stalin—which was eminently progressive and which in a way officially opened the crisis of Stalinism—Tito and his companions had to simultaneously develop the largest possible popular base and a theoretical and political basis

\*The Comintern—the Communist (or Third) International—was organized under Lenin's leadership as the revolutionary successor to the Second International. Stalin dissolved the Comintern in 1943 as a gesture of goodwill to his imperialist allies in World War II. The Cominform—Communist Information Bureau—was set up in September 1947.—IP/I

for the resistance that went beyond the conjunctural situation. To this end, they reversed their previous forced collectivization of agriculture and they adopted a system of workers self-management.

Yugoslav Communism was identified by the slogan: "The factories to the workers, the land to the peasants."

#### Yugoslav Workers Self-Management

The Yugoslav system of workers self-management is a striking demonstration of the socialist revolution's tendency on a historical scale to carry out long-term self-criticism. This tendency was prophetically predicted by Marx in his preface to the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. The Yugoslav system represents a correction of the system of bureaucratic management consolidated in the Soviet Union since the Stalinist dictatorship. But it represents only a partial correction.

First of all, it was bestowed from above, by a wing of the bureaucracy itself. The successive changes and transformations in the system were basically the result of initiatives from above, even though there was an increasingly pronounced interaction between these initiatives and movements within the working class.

Furthermore, the system contained a fundamental contradiction. Self-manage-



Tito whispers to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev during Khrushchev's last visit to Yugoslavia in 1963.

ment that is limited solely to the economic sphere, and is still basically limited to single enterprises, loses most of its potential because the monopoly of political power still remains in the hands of the

Yugoslav Communist Party. Weakened on the economic level, the bureaucracy can thus get its revenge on the political level.

According to the thesis of Edvard Kardelj, the number one Titoist theoretician, political parties are "at bottom" incompatible with a system of self-management. This is nothing more than an apologetic sophism to justify the existence of a "single party" regime, even if it is called the *League of Yugoslav Communists* rather than a *Party*.

The Yugoslav experience confirms, by negative example, the programmatic thesis of the Fourth International. Without real political power in the hands of democratically elected workers councils, there can be no real exercise of economic or political power by the working class. Without a multiparty system and without real democratic rights for all working people, the workers councils can have no real power.

#### The Gains and the Limits

Even on the economic level, the limitations of Yugoslav self-management become quickly apparent. There is an inescapable need to centralize economic decisions given the present level of development of the productive forces. But the Yugoslav leaders reject democratic and conscious centralization by a congress of workers councils that could effectively exercise supreme power. That is, they reject self-management being expressed on the level where decisions can be effectively and validly made.

They reject it, not on the grounds of doctrinal consistency, but because as a faction of the bureaucracy they want to prevent, at all costs, decisive power from being placed in the hands of the working class. The fragmentation and division of

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the working class remains the precondition for maintaining power in the hands of the bureaucracy.

Because of this, the centralization that they prevent at the top reasserts itself more or less spontaneously at the bottom—through the market and competition. Yugoslav self-management increasingly incorporated the myth of “market socialism,” with all its flagrant economic, political, and social contradictions. The crisis of 1968-1972 brought these contradictions to a head for a time, particularly in a real “explosion” of mass unemployment and social inequality, and a return to the primitive accumulation of capital in the pores of the socialized economy.

Despite the fact that Yugoslav self-management is a product of the bureaucracy and is caught up in a thousand imperfections and contradictions, it is nonetheless a step forward with regard to the system of bureaucratic management installed in the Soviet Union under Stalin and transplanted from there to most of the workers states.

Its principal merit is that it provides the working class with a qualitatively greater margin of self-defense. The number of strikes, demonstrations of working-class opposition, and the extent of workers democracy are qualitatively greater in Yugoslavia than in all the other workers states.

Of course, this margin is far from sufficient. Political repression continues to be leveled against opposition tendencies, including those that are Marxist and Communist. It is often used to cynically deny the very same principles of self-management, as was the case with the repression against the Marxist philosophy professors at Belgrade University.

But the margin is real. Yugoslav workers often say with pride that their country is the only country in the world where the managers cannot fire the workers but the workers can fire the managers. This is not yet socialism, nor even socialist democracy. But, even so, this is no small attainment.

#### **Yugoslavia After Tito**

Tito's death will leave a Yugoslav CP government that is deeply shaken precisely because of the contradictions of Yugoslavia's self-management system. Many forces are in motion, acting with relative autonomy. Many contradictory social and political appetites are manifesting themselves almost overtly.

In this country with many nationalities, the deepening of social inequalities had led to worsening conflicts among the nationalities. The party leadership as well as the bureaucracy appeared to be divided along lines of national cleavage. Only the army was relatively united under Tito's bonapartist authority.

With Tito gone, the temptation for some forces to stress the autonomist course and

the risk that others would respond by trying to deepen the centralism, could give rise to foreign intervention. And the Soviet bureaucracy, and American imperialism (especially with its NATO troops in Italy), could try to take advantage of a crisis in the Yugoslav regime to change the relationship of forces in the Mediterranean.

Moreover, the disappearance of the supreme arbiter will sharpen the conflict between the working class and the forces in the bureaucracy who question the maintenance of planning and full employment (forces who ultimately would give rise to

tendencies to restore capitalism).

Yugoslav Marxists, as well as the international revolutionary movement, must understand the stakes in the coming battles. We must relentlessly defend the gains, and defend the workers state and self-management against all their enemies. But, we must defend them through the proletariat's independent class methods, as part of a resolute battle for direct political and economic power by democratically centralized workers councils, and as part of a battle for the full and complete flowering of proletarian democracy. □

## **International Brigades for Yugoslavia in 1950**

By Cyril Smuga

In openly opposing Stalin in 1948, not only did the Yugoslav leaders save the revolution in their country for a period, but they also brought to light the crisis of Stalinism, which from then on would continually deepen. In challenging Stalin they pushed forward the world working class, allowing it to more forcefully question the Stalinist stranglehold on the workers movement.

At the time, the Fourth International was the only workers organization that understood the importance of this rift. All its forces—however weak they were then—were thrown into organizing support for the Yugoslav revolution and into the fight to defend the workers state there.

Where our forces permitted, as in France, we initiated committees for defense of the Yugoslav revolution. These committees brought together members of the socialist left, Communist Party members who could not accept the sudden transformation of “Tito the hero” into “Tito the traitor,” anarchists, and especially unaffiliated youth for whom the measures taken by the Yugoslav CP gave hope for a socialism that had rid itself forever of the sinister image of the Moscow trials.

It was within this framework that the idea to form “international brigades” was born, brigades that would go to Yugoslavia to aid in the reconstruction and view first hand the realities of Yugoslav society.

Despite the old anti-Trotskyist prejudices that had to be overcome (and a corresponding sectarian reflex within our own ranks about the internal struggle “among Stalinist bureaucrats”), the Yugoslav representatives immediately gauged the importance of our active support in the face of a CP-dominated workers movement whose violent hatred against the Yugoslav workers state far surpassed its hatred for its own bourgeoisie.

In the summer of 1950, 3,000 brigade members from France and several hundred from other capitalist countries went to Yugoslavia to work and make contact with Yugoslav workers. Their slogan, borrowed

from the pre-World War I French socialist leader Jean Jaurès, was: “Courage means seeking the truth and speaking it.” Other groups followed this first “Jean Jaurès Brigade.” There was a “Rosa Luxemburg Brigade,” a “Renault Brigade” totally made up of autoworkers from Billancourt, etc.

In spite of the difficulties resulting from Yugoslavia's extreme poverty and the thick-headed bureaucratic behavior that some of the Yugoslav leaders delighted in, the majority of brigade members returned with strengthened convictions. They saw the necessity of aiding this state where the workers were enthusiastically constructing the future, formulating plans, and establishing workers councils. They were ready to continue the experience, but with larger, and more seasoned contingents.

This hope collapsed, however, at the end of the year when the “cold war” heightened, following the start of the Korean War. Yugoslavia capitulated to the imperialist pressures and lined up with those who denounced “North Korean aggression.” There was never any question about the position revolutionists should take: North Korea had to be supported.

In Yugoslavia, the “return to Lenin” was stopped. The logic of the state's international policies (conceived in a narrow nationalist fashion) was extended to its domestic policies, permitting a return of strong, ossified bureaucracy and closing any open channels.

Several years later, Tito would repress Djilas, who with a theoretical confusion characteristic of the inarticulate opposition, criticized the bureaucratism of the Yugoslav party and state.

Later we saw the reconciliation with Stalin's heirs (with Khrushchev being called the “authentic representative of the return to Lenin” in the Soviet Union); the admittedly embarrassed support for the Soviet invasion of Hungary; and the denunciation of the Polish proletariat's strikes in 1956, in terms worthy of *Pravda*. □

## Progress for the Masses and Setbacks for Imperialism

By David Frankel

[Last of three parts]

In November 1969—five months after the left wing of the National Liberation Front (NLF) had come to power in South Yemen—it began a series of sweeping economic measures.

All eight of South Yemen's banks (of which seven were foreign-owned) were nationalized and amalgamated into the National Bank of Yemen. Twelve insurance companies (all foreign) were nationalized and amalgamated into a single company. All other insurance companies were ordered to liquidate. Five foreign trading companies were also nationalized and two state enterprises—one for foreign trade and one for domestic trade—were set up. All Aden Port service companies were nationalized and placed under a Ports Board, with the exception of bunkering operations. Finally, all five petroleum distribution companies operating in the country (all were foreign-owned) were taken over and placed under a Petroleum Board.

At the time these changes were being implemented, notes *The Middle East and North Africa 1971-72*, "there were reports of Saudi troops massing on the ill-defined frontier with S. Yemen, and Saudi sources claimed that an extensive battle took place in December. . . . This occurred again in March 1970 and coincided with a report of an attempted coup d'état in Aden."

However, such imperialist-backed attacks were not successful in preventing the NLF from moving forward with its economic measures.

In the area of agriculture, the previous regime—headed by Qahtau ash-Shaabi and other figures from the less radical wing of the NLF—had, in March 1968, ordered the confiscation without compensation of all land held by sultans, sheikhs, and emirs who had collaborated with the British. A land reform law had also been passed at that time, but it had little impact on the social relations in the countryside.

Following the defeat of Shaabi, the government began to encourage the peasants to organize against the landlords.

. . . in October 1970 hundreds of poor peasants in the Batis region of the Third Governorate, armed with forks and scythes, occupied the lands and houses of the landowners, arrested them and set up a popular committee to administer their assets. The lands were then distributed in 3-5 acre lumps and grouped in a cooperative. [Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (Penguin Books, 1974), p. 248.]

A new agrarian reform law was promul-

gated on November 8, 1970. The implementation of the law in the Fourth Governorate was later described by an NLF militant in *Le Monde Diplomatique*:

We persuaded the peasants that the exploiters would never change and that they had to act. They took their hatchets and sickles and immediately arrested all the sheikhs, sada [those claiming descent from Mohammad] and other feudalists—eighty-two in all. The population were stupefied. They thought that these people were untouchable and that whoever lifted a hand against them would die on the spot. When they saw that the lords remained in prison and that the town was not struck by any cataclysm all tongues were loosened and all the other peasants joined those who had taken part in the risings and came into the peasant leagues. There are now five Peasant Defence Leagues in the province. It was important that the peasants themselves took the people to prison. Some were armed, but we did not distribute arms because we were afraid of a massacre. [Quoted by Halliday in *Arabia Without Sultans*, p. 248.]

Joe Stork describes this process in greater detail in *MERIP Reports*. At first, he says, the landowners reacted to the new agrarian reform law by trying to intimidate the peasants. They withheld credit and cash advances that the peasants depended on prior to the harvest. Some merchants refused to sell the peasants seed and supplies. According to Stork, the NLF leadership

. . . met this challenge by proposing that Front members from rural areas, especially students and young workers, return to their homes and villages to help organize demonstrations in favor of the reform law and to convince the peasants (their own parents and neighbors) that the state authorities would stand behind their own initiatives to implement the law.

Saleh Ali Aqlan was a student in secondary school in another province, and he was one of the National Front cadre who returned here to his village [in Lahej] to help organize the peasant land seizure, the uprising, which took place on 15 May 1971. Now, at 23, he has stayed to be the director of the lower Tuban Valley Cooperative, an area covering nearly 5,000 acres and 1,300 families.

"The peasants were afraid at first," he told me, "until they realized that the Front stood behind them. They were finally convinced when we distributed arms to them and formed a peasant militia. Then it was the owners who were afraid. We kept them in their houses while we took over the tools and other supplies and organized committees to distribute the land. Each family got from three to five Feddan [one feddan is roughly one acre], according to its size."

Saleh went on to describe how the cooperative was set up to purchase supplies and handle

marketing. Each family belongs to the cooperative and participates actively through branch committees in each village, which chooses a 10-member higher committee to handle questions of distribution and, through a Board of Directors, deals with the Ministry of Agriculture over matters of new machinery, fertilizers and production quotas. This Higher Committee meets fortnightly with each of the six village branch committees in this cooperative. National Front members, now including many of the peasants themselves, are well represented on these committees, which serve as political education groups as well. [*MERIP Reports* No. 15, March 1973, p. 12.]

Awad al Hamad, an NLF leader in Lahej, told Stork:

The peasant committees have replaced the feudalists. The cooperatives are linked with the Ministry of Agriculture, which supplies the peasants with foodstuffs, equipment, fertilizers and all the means of production. The relationship of the peasants with the local big merchants has been severed. The peasants now own the land and have formed their militia and are actively defending their land. [*MERIP Reports* No. 15, p. 14.]

### Mobilizations in Abyan and Mukalla

Mohammed Abdullah Sayeed, the director of a cooperative in the town of Husn, told Stork about the land reform in the Abyan area:

I had joined the Front before independence, when I was a student in Giar [a larger town near Husn]. After the unsuccessful uprising [in August 1968] we continued to work quietly among the peasants, talking about the land question. We worked with those who had emerged as peasant leaders and we formed committees to survey land ownership and distinguish the real feudalists from the small holders. We held extensive meetings on how to solve the land problem for a year and a half.

The landlords complained to the government about us subversive elements. They didn't know that the Front was involved. So the Government appointed someone to meet with both parties, as a cover. The main function was to set up a meeting of both sides: to get the landlords and peasants together in one room and see how courageous the peasants were in speaking out. The peasants came right out and claimed the land of those landlords, even the ones right there in the room. The landlords said they were all for agrarian reform, but according to the law. The peasants replied that the land was theirs: they worked it. They said they would just take it.

The meeting turned into a large demonstration. The peasants went out and surrounded the homes of the landlords. There was some fighting, but no real bloodshed. The landlords tried to instigate and rouse up old tribal feuds, but it was too late for any of that. . . .

The committees that had been formed now worked openly. There are 11,000 feddans here, and 1,700 families. The land is owned by the individual families, not collectively. The cooperative provides supplies, and handles marketing. Now we're undertaking propaganda stressing the ways in which collective operations minimize expenditures. [MERIP Reports No. 15, p. 14.]

Immediately after the uprising in Husn there was another one a few miles away in the Zinjibar area, where there were 2,250 peasant families. Further away from Aden, in the Hadramaut, the peasant uprisings were still in progress in 1972.

Similar actions were also organized by the NLF among fishermen in Mukalla. A militia-member from Mukalla described the events of June 16, 1972:

On that day I and my comrades went around to all the shops. You know, all the shops where the equipment and gear, hooks and such were sold. All the merchants used to sell us small things—a hook say—might cost 5 shilling for example. Now, with the support of the authorities, we just went to the shops and took over all the fishing nets, the hooks, and we put locks on the shops and guards around them. We didn't remove anything from the stores. This was in the afternoon when we did this. In the morning we took over the boats. There was no resistance from the owners. They disappeared that day from the town for about four days. It had been kept completely secret. We chose the date for the uprising at a big meeting about three days before. There had been a lot of meetings before that. This was the last one before the uprising. There were about 150 persons at this last meeting which made the decision. Of those, I think about 35 or 40 were members of the National Front.

After taking over we selected a temporary central committee to coordinate our activities. . . . We elected intellectuals—sons of fishermen and those who can read and write and discuss. [MERIP Reports No. 15, p. 16.]

Local merchants used to run the fish market in Mukalla, raking off about 75 percent of the sales.

Fifteen large boats that could take crews of six or seven were taken over by a cooperative established by the fishermen. Individual canoes were not taken over, except in cases where merchants owned large numbers of them and rented them out for half the catch.

Bakr Sa'ad Bahmran, a forty-five-year-old fisherman and one of those responsible for the operation of the cooperative, explained its functioning:

We provide services to the individual owners of the small boats, and we market the catch for them. Those who work in the productive units [the large boats] are paid shares, minus deductions of 20% for the cooperative development fund, 5% for social insurance and 10% for state taxes. So the total deductions amount to 35% for those in the productive units. Those who work individually and sell their fish through the cooperative give only 5% commission. But of course these individuals will not catch as much per person as those working in the larger boats, the productive units. [MERIP Reports No. 15, p. 16.]

For the fishermen, the establishment of the cooperative has meant a big improvement in living standards. One explained:

I have a wife and five kids, and my mother to take care of. I had been a worker on the boats. We used to get a small share of the income from the catch, but there would be five or six days when we got no money. We would go to the sea for two or three days with no fish. When there was a good day, we would get between eight and 10 shillings a day. Now the daily income is 17 to 20 shillings, and we are paid every two or three days, and work every day. [MERIP Reports No. 15, p. 17.]

The NLF's policy of relying on the masses to carry out major economic measures had its counterpart in the reorganization of the army following the defeat of the rebellion by the South Arabian Army and of Shaabi's faction. Minister of Defense Ali Antar explained in an interview in the December 11-24, 1972 issue of *Afrique-Asie*:

"Our border is more than 3,000 kilometers long, and our small army certainly cannot patrol all of it. We have distributed all the arms that we have, not only to the militia, but also to the people, both men and women. What better proof is there of a revolution?"

Asked how the army was organized, Ali Antar replied:

"It functions above all as a small corps of 'technicians,' whose role is to teach the population how to defend itself. The peasants, nomads, and workers are a 'continuation' of the army. Within the army, all power is in the hands of political leaders, who are obliged to carry out the decisions of our last congress."

#### South Yemen's Economy Today

According to the government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), by 1978 some 59 percent of South Yemen's economy was in the state-owned sector. The government intends to raise this total to 68 percent in the course of a five-year plan scheduled to end in 1985.

The accompanying chart from a World Bank report on South Yemen published in

March 1979 indicates the growth of investment in the state-owned sector compared to the private sector. (Investment in the private sector is mainly in construction of private housing.)

Agriculture and stock raising remain the most important sectors of the economy from the point of view of the numbers of people engaged. Almost 70 percent of the population live in farming villages or as bedouin herders. However, agriculture and stock raising account for only 12 percent of South Yemen's gross domestic product.

"Structurally," according to the World Bank report, "the agriculture sector now comprises 35 state farms with a total area of about 30,000 acres (of which 18,000 acres is actually cropped) and about 3,000 permanent workers; 44 production cooperatives with 214,000 acres of land (about 100,000 acres is cropped) and 30,000 members; and a very small number of private farmers in remote areas."

All agricultural product supplies, marketing, and processing concerns have been nationalized.

The PDRY's fishing industry accounts for about 10 percent of its GDP. At the time of the shift in government in June 1969, the entire fish catch was taken by some 13,000 private fishermen.

Today, according to the World Bank, 7,000 small-scale fishermen are organized into fourteen cooperatives. These supply domestic consumption, and the government is building a system of cold stores so that fish can be supplied to the interior of the country, where it previously never reached. The cooperatives accounted for 80 percent of fish production in 1976.

Eleven percent of the fish catch is taken by the government's Ministry of Fish Wealth, which runs a large-scale fleet and also participates in a joint venture with the Soviet Union.

Finally, a Japanese company pays the PDRY in order to fish in Yemeni waters.

Industry accounts for 8 percent of the GDP. The biggest plant remains the refinery at Aden, with 1,800 workers. In 1976 the refinery accounted for 9 percent of the value of industrial production in the coun-

**Gross Fixed Capital Formation, Public & Private Sectors**  
(in millions of Yemeni dinars; current prices)

	Public Sector			Private Sector	Total GFCF
	Dev. Plan	Other	Total		
1969	—	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.0
1970	—	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.0
1971	3.1	0.6	3.7	0.8	4.5
1972	7.8	1.1	8.9	0.7	9.6
1973	11.7	1.3	13.0	0.6	13.6
1974	18.6	1.5	20.1	1.0	21.0
1975	24.3	2.4	26.7	1.5	28.2
1976	39.2	3.0	42.2	1.8	44.0
1977	57.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

try. But it was forced to operate at less than one-fifth of its capacity because oil producing countries withheld petroleum supplies for political reasons. If it were able to operate at full capacity, the refinery would still account for about one-third of all industrial production.

Along with the refinery (which was taken over by the government in May 1977), and a Chinese-built textile factory employing 1,300 workers, there are about a dozen other factories in the wholly nationalized sector. Eight factories employing a total of about 700 workers are in the mixed sector (with the state having a 51 percent share). Finally, there are about a dozen privately owned factories employing perhaps a thousand workers, and a large number of small private establishments (bakeries, repair shops, tailor shops, etc.) that employ about 13,000 workers.

South Yemen's biggest economic asset, the port of Aden, is wholly owned and operated by the state. Trade, transport, finance, and other services account for 70 percent of South Yemen's GDP, and most of this is generated by Aden Port.

Although the Suez Canal has now reopened, the port still functions far below its former level of activity. "We have better facilities and reasonable prices," the PDRY minister of information told *New York Times* reporter Marvine Howe last year, "but some shipping companies prefer Djibouti or Jidda for political reasons."

A state monopoly over foreign trade involving essential consumer goods and basic production has been established by the PDRY. The March 1979 World Bank report on the PDRY states:

All commodity imports for domestic consumption and indigenous exports are planned and the transactions conducted largely through public companies. Public sector agencies are responsible for about 90 percent of total commodity trade transactions. There are about two hundred registered private traders but their activities are confined to import of minor consumer goods (spices, sweets, household utensils, mats, etc.) and exports of some traditional commodities (hides and skins, etc.).

Finally, the importance of remittances from emigrant workers should be noted. In 1976 the Gross Domestic Product of the PDRY was \$326 million. Compared to this figure for economic activity within the PDRY, \$115 million was sent into the country by Yemeni workers living abroad. (The average yearly amount sent by emigrant workers from 1973 through 1977 was \$85 million.)

#### Social improvements

What have the economic changes instituted over the past decade meant for the toilers in South Yemen? There have been substantial advances in a number of key areas.

• **Housing.** In 1972 all housing units except those occupied by the owner were nationalized. Rents in nationalized hous-

ing were cut by 25 percent. Since then, there has been no change in rents despite the fact that there is a continuing housing shortage.

• **Medical care.** Article 41 of the PDRY Constitution, adopted in 1970, states "Medical care is the right of each citizen, the Government guarantees this right . . . through the expansion of free health services."

Average life expectancy in the PDRY has increased from 42.3 years in 1970 to 46 years in 1977. (The British didn't bother to keep such statistics during their rule.) In 1970 there were 71 doctors and 444 nurses in the country. By 1977 this had tripled, to 222 doctors and 1,362 nurses.

Modern health-care facilities established by the government include 26 hospitals, 17 health centers averaging about twenty beds each, and 263 smaller health units. "Despite strict limitation on resources," the World Bank reported, "a prevention program against cholera, smallpox and malaria has been carried out fairly efficiently."

Private clinics and the practice of private medicine have been abolished in the PDRY.

• **Education.** Enrollment in educational institutions quadrupled from 64,502 in 1966-67 to 263,920 in 1976-77, when one out of every seven residents in the country was a student.

Literacy in the PDRY went from 18 percent in 1966-67 to 32 percent in 1976-77 as a result of a literacy campaign inspired by the example of the one in Cuba. In the latter period, 89 percent of all children aged seven to twelve were enrolled in primary school.

Special schools with boarding facilities were established for Bedouin children. About 29,000 Bedouin children were enrolled in such schools in 1976/77.

• **Women's rights.** A comprehensive law passed in 1974 accorded legal equality to women (including equal pay, maternity leave with full pay, prohibition of child marriages, prohibition of unilateral divorce, and abolition of the dowry system).

In 1971-72 demonstrations organized by the General Union of Yemeni Women took place in the rural areas in opposition to the wearing of the veil. The government has actively encouraged women to join the labor force, and they now account for about 20 percent of the work force.

As Marvine Howe reported in a dispatch from Lahej in the May 28, 1979, *New York Times*, "Women can be seen here working in a spare parts factory, driving tractors and building roads as well as in the usual women's jobs of teaching, nursing and secretarial work and, of course, in the fields." Women are also active in the militia.

• **Food and nutrition.** In July 1974 the government began subsidizing the price of wheat, flour, rice, sugar, milk powder, ghee, and cooking oil. According to the

World Bank, prices for these items remained unchanged from July 1974 to June 1978, when its report was written.

As part of its effort to equalize living standards in the town and country, the government absorbs the cost of transporting food to remote parts of the countryside. Prices for food are the same in all areas. It has also made fish available in new areas, as described above, and a system of state-owned retail shops has limited the ability of private traders to raise prices of other basic commodities, especially clothing.

Living standards were traditionally much higher in Aden than in the interior. There is still a big gap between the cities and the agricultural areas. But Howe, in a May 26, 1979, article, indicated that gains are being made.

While Aden appears rundown and badly in need of paint, progress is visible in the countryside. Al Wahat, a village of 5,000 inhabitants, mostly farmers, about 25 miles to the north, has seen important changes. Most of the houses, even those of mud brick, and the six mosques are newly painted or restored. The village has acquired electricity and piped water, two schools, a general hospital, a market, a state food store and a fish market, according to a local official. . . . Almost every family has a television set, the village has a club and there are plans to build a cultural center.

Despite the substantial gains that have been won by the workers and peasants in the PDRY over the past decade, South Yemen remains a desperately poor country. According to Halliday, "In 1971-72, as the *intifadhat* [uprising] spread to Aden, the NLF encouraged calls for wage cuts in addition to those of 1968. In August 1972, after seven days of demonstrations in Aden, all wages in state enterprises were cut by one third" (*Arabia Without Sultans*, p. 250).

The NLF argued that these austerity measures were required by the country's difficult economic situation. According to the World Bank, wage reductions carried out on a graduated basis and a steeply progressive tax system have had the effect of leveling incomes. It says, "The resulting income distribution (on domestically earned income) is probably one of the most egalitarian in the world." The maximum wage differential is estimated at 3.5 to 1.

However, Fred Halliday reports that recently "top party officials in Aden have received increased material privileges in the form of access to restricted consumer goods shops. . . ." (*MERIP Reports* No. 81, October 1979, p. 19.)

Another indication of the ferocious economic pressures faced by the PDRY is the fact that between 1967 and 1974 every single trainee sent abroad for advanced education on the operation of the Aden refinery failed to return to the country.

Emigration has also contributed to a labor shortage in the PDRY. The World Bank report suggests that "manpower shortages may soon constitute as a major

constraint to the economic and social development of the country.”

In the course of carrying out the economic and social transformation that has been described, the NLF drew into the government representatives of the Vanguard Party, an Arab nationalist group that was part of the Baathist movement, and of the People's Democratic Union, an Aden-based organization described as communist by Halliday.

These groups were formally absorbed into the NLF in June 1975, and in October 1978 the NLF renamed itself the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP). Its Political Bureau includes members from the ex-Vanguard group and from the former People's Democratic Union, but the big majority are NLF veterans.

On the governmental level, Halliday reports that “. . . today there is virtually no personnel continuity within any section of the state apparatus between the pre-and post-independence periods. All ministers are veterans of the guerrilla struggle, or are party militants subsequently trained abroad” (*MERIP Reports* No. 81, p. 10).

According to Halliday, the YSP numbers about 26,000. In addition, there are a number of mass organizations. These include the General Union of Yemeni Workers with 84,000 members; the Democratic Yemeni Youth with 31,000; and the General Union of Yemeni Women with 15,000.

#### International Ties

Cut off from any substantial economic aid from other Arab regimes and from imperialist sources, the PDRY turned to the workers states. Marvin Howe notes:

Russians trained and equipped the armed forces, drafted the five-year economic plan, provided most foreign aid and are active in agricultural development and geological exploration. . . . Cubans trained the militia forces and are involved in health care and agriculture.

While China has been a major donor, building roads and setting up factories and a hospital, relations are increasingly cool because of the strong Soviet presence. [*New York Times*, May 25, 1979.]

Not surprisingly, the course followed by the PDRY has provoked bitter opposition among the reactionary regimes on its borders. During 1972, for example, there were major clashes on the Saudi, Omani, and North Yemeni borders. The Saudi and Omani regimes in particular are heavily armed and backed by U.S. and British imperialism.

Tension subsided for a while, especially after the reactionary Omani sultanate—with help from British advisers and the shah of Iran—managed to contain the rebellion in Dhofar. The PDRY had given aid to the Dhofari rebels.

But with the Ethiopian revolution and the arrival of Cuban forces in the Horn of Africa, there was a new crisis. On October 17, 1977, rightist officers backed by the Saudi regime murdered North Yemen's

President Ibrahim al-Hamidi, two days before he was scheduled to make the first official visit by a North Yemeni president to South Yemen.

Token aid that the Saudis had been giving to the PDRY was halted and attacks on the PDRY by rightist exiles in Saudi Arabia were renewed.

Meanwhile, the PDRY committed a small force to fight on the side of the Ethiopian revolution against the U.S.-inspired Somali invasion of the Ogaden. By the end of November 1977, Soviet transport planes were refueling in Aden and the Soviet dry dock that had been ordered out of Berbera by the Somali regime was transferred to Aden.

#### Imperialists Strike Out

It was during this period of sharply increased imperialist pressure that there occurred the first major split in the PDRY's leadership since the left wing of the NLF came to power in June 1969.

On June 24, 1978, President Ahmed al-Ghashmi of North Yemen was assassinated by a bomb when he opened a case allegedly containing a message from PDRY President Salem Robea Ali. Northern authorities accused the PDRY of being responsible.

Early in the morning of June 26, 1978, heavy fighting broke out in Aden. According to a statement released by the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Ali had attempted a coup and had sent a bomb to Ghashmi with the intention of provoking a crisis that would set the stage for his action. Ali was accused of being in league with reactionary forces abroad, and was shot.

Events in Aden were interpreted in the imperialist press and by the U.S. State Department as a pro-Soviet coup. A U.S. diplomatic mission that had been on its way to Aden to discuss reopening relations with the PDRY turned back without completing its mission.

Paul Findley, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, said in an article in the July 7, 1978, *Washington Post*:

I am probably the only U.S. citizen ever to have had personal discussions with the slain president of South Yemen, and the only U.S. official, elected or appointed, to visit Aden since 1969. My first interview with Ali was in May 1974, when he made his first move for better relations with the United States.

Findley reported that he met again with Ali in September 1977, when the PDRY president addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Findley complained bitterly:

“The State Department fiddled too long. An internal power struggle cut down the outstretched hand just as it was about to welcome a long-awaited U.S. negotiating team to Aden.”

Following Ali's fall, the Arab League clamped a tight boycott on South Yemen,

although this fell apart in short order because of the rift in the Arab League opened by Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat's signing of the Camp David accords with Israel.

Moreover, David Hirst of the British *Guardian* reported in a dispatch from South Yemen that was picked up in the November 23, 1978, *Washington Post* that “according to the South Yemenis, their neighbors are mobilizing troops all along the frontiers, from the Red Sea to the Empty Quarter deep inside Saudi Arabia.”

Hirst reported, “There have been no clashes yet but, according to Jabri [the local South Yemeni commander], the northern troop concentrations which he showed me at Qaataba—and which he estimated at 1,200 men with tanks, mortars, and artillery—are already greater than those of September 1972. . . .”

Fighting did break out in the Qaataba area in February 1979, but the Northern forces did badly. President Carter responded by charging the PDRY with invading the North and rushing an aircraft carrier to the Gulf of Aden. (See *IP/I*, March 12 and March 19, 1979.)

What about the situation in the PDRY after the June 1978 crisis?

Although Ali had been one of the preeminent leaders of the NLF since its inception, the big majority of the old leadership cadre remains in power. Among the most prominent are Abdul Fatah Ismail, secretary-general of the Yemeni Socialist Party and a member of the five-member presidential council; Ali Nasser Mohammad, prime minister of the PDRY; Minister of Defense Ali Antar; and politburo member Ali al-Beedh.

Ali Antar was the NLF military chief in Radfan during the war of independence. Ismail headed the struggle in Aden. Ali al-Beedh played a prominent role in the Hadramaut and later in the struggle against the right wing of the NLF. And Ali Nasser Mohammad was a long-time member of the NLF.

Elections to the PDRY's Supreme Council of the People, in which 300,000 people voted, took place in December 1978.

On October 25, 1979, the PDRY signed a twenty-year treaty of friendship with the USSR. It has continued its strongly anti-imperialist foreign policy, most recently voting in the United Nations against the imperialist condemnation of the Soviet role in Afghanistan. The PDRY has also gained observer status in Comecon, the economic organization of the Soviet Union and East European workers states.

Any balance sheet of events in South Yemen over the past ten years would have to conclude that the toiling masses have made big gains, and the imperialists and their local agents have sustained big setbacks. Washington clearly fears that the next ten years—especially in neighboring Saudi Arabia—will be even worse from the point of view of the exploiters. □

### 'I Remember Vietnam, I Won't Fight Afghanistan!'

By David Frankel

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Just the threat of reviving military conscription brought tens of thousands of American young people into the streets here March 22.

Press estimates of the antidraft protest went as high as 30,000. These demonstrators were joined by several thousand in San Francisco and thousands more in other U.S. cities.

Here in Washington, the marchers were overwhelmingly young, and they were in a militant mood. As they swung past the White House, they chanted loudly, "Hell no, we won't go, we won't fight for Texaco!"

There was widespread recognition that President Carter is trying to prepare the American people to accept new wars, and the youth on this march weren't having any of it. Their sentiment was summed up by a group of Vietnam veterans who loudly chanted, "I remember Vietnam, I won't fight Afghanistan!"

Another group of Vietnam veterans carried a banner saying, "We won't be fooled again," while a contingent of Latinos chanted, "No draft, no war, no Vietnam in El Salvador!"

Demonstrators clearly rejected Carter's cynical claim that his proposal to register women for the draft should be supported by those who favor ratification of the Equal Right Amendment for women. "No draft, no way—ratify the ERA!" was a popular chant.

There were a large number of high school students on the demonstration—from throughout the East Coast, South, and Midwest. Students from Ann Arbor, Michigan, had held a three-day teach-in and a boycott of classes at the University of Michigan there, and their discussions continued on the buses to Washington. "All I've heard all night is politics, politics, politics," commented one student.

Most speakers at the rally, held behind the U.S. Capitol Building, reflected the militancy of the crowd. "Young people want no part of putting down rightful revolts in Africa, Latin America, and God help us, even in our own country," said Rev. William Sloane Coffin in his opening speech.

Andrea Lubrano, of the Washington Area Coalition Against Registration and the Draft, declared: "The Carter administration is trying to sell us a bill of goods. It tells us that the people of Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, and Afghanistan are our enemies. They are not our enemies—they're working people and students just like us here today. They're fighting for a better

life—just like we are. They are our brothers and sisters.

"Our enemy is right here," said Lubrano. "We should be fighting the Klu Klux Klan—not the people of Iran or Afghanistan. Our enemy is big oil, and it's big oil that wants to send us to die so that they can keep raking in the big bucks."

Former member of Congress Bella Abzug addressed some remarks to those leaders of the National Organization for Women and others in the feminist movement who have mistakenly fallen for Carter's portrayal of his proposal to register women along with men as a question of equality. "If Congress were to enact capital punishment for men only, that doesn't mean feminists have an obligation to run around demanding that women be included."

Although 1980 is a presidential election year, there was little evident excitement over any of the capitalist candidates. Only a handful of signs backing Senator Edward Kennedy's candidacy were visible, and when Abzug urged the marchers to support Kennedy, she received an unenthusiastic response.

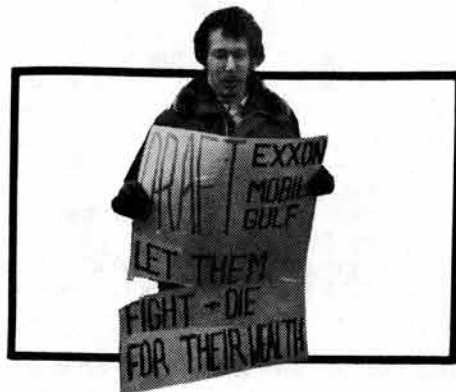
In general, the crowd responded best to the more radical speakers. Rev. Ben Chavis, a civil rights fighter and defendant in the Wilmington Ten frame-up, was roundly applauded when he said:

"We must not only send Jimmy Carter a message. We must send the Democratic Party a message. We must send the Republican Party a message. And that is, we aren't going to fight any more wars for imperialism."

Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and currently head of the All African People's Revolutionary Party, urged solidarity with the revolutionary struggles around the world. Both he and antiwar leader Dave Dellinger pointed out the much greater consciousness about these struggles among the antidraft demonstrators at the March 22 action compared with those who marched during the early years of the movement against the war in Vietnam.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance were active builders of the demonstration. They participated in committees and coalitions in many cities and publicized the march through their newspapers, the *Militant* and *Young Socialist*.

The Mobilization Against the Draft, the sponsoring coalition for the March 22 action, was heavily influenced by the Democratic Socialist Organizing Commit-



tee (DSOC), a major social-democratic organization. DSOC succeeding in passing an official call for the demonstration that included an attack on the Soviet Union for its role in Afghanistan and on the Iranian militants occupying the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

These positions were not contained in the leaflets, posters, or other building materials for the demonstration, however. And the thousands of young people who turned out March 22 did so to protest against the *U.S. government* and its drive to strengthen the military for use against struggles abroad.

DSOC did use the official call, however, as an excuse to exclude the SWP, YSA, and Communist Party from the steering committee of the national coalition. The CP's youth newspaper distributed at the march expressed the fear that the antidraft movement could develop in an anti-Soviet direction. Nevertheless, the CP had a large contingent in the march.

A few rally speakers, including DSOC leader Michael Harrington, attacked the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. And there were some DSOC placards that said "Americans Stay Home! Soviets Go Home!" as well as some picket signs and chants against the Soviet Union by pro-Peking and pro-Mao sects. These blended in with slogans carried by a group of perhaps seventy-five members of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's ultrarightist Unification Church.

Chanting slogans such as "The KGB says no draft," and "Stop Soviet imperialism," these right wingers made a sustained effort to disrupt the rally. However, they were successfully contained by marshalling teams organized by the antidraft coalition.

The success of the March 22 demonstration is an important blow to Carter's attempt to revive the draft. It shows the potential to involve broader social forces and mount even bigger and more successful protests in the future. □

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