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As U.S. Draft Registration Opens

Carter's Conscription Campaign in Disarray



Antidraft demonstration in Berkeley, California, June 13, 1980.

Peter Seidman/IP-1

On-the-Scene Report

**500,000 at
Celebration of
First Anniversary
of Nicaraguan
Revolution**

Revolutionary Unionism in Grenada



Diane Wang/IP-1

Participants in trade-union seminar sponsored by Grenada's Bank and General Workers Union and Commercial and Industrial Workers Union.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Carter's Conscription Campaign in Disarray

By David Frankel

Some four million American youth, aged nineteen and twenty, were scheduled to begin registering for a draft July 21. But what started out as an attempted show of strength by U.S. imperialism has been converted into a demonstration of weakness.

When President Carter proposed his registration plan last January, in the wake of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, he presented it as an indication of American resolution, of willingness to fight new wars, and as a first step toward reinstituting the draft. The capitalist media trumpeted the end of the "Vietnam syndrome" among the American people.

But the militarization drive has so far failed to enlist the masses of American workers. Protests against Carter's registration scheme erupted as soon as the proposal was made public. They took place all across the country, they were militant actions that linked the draft to the interests of the giant oil corporations, and although largely student-based, they represented the sentiments of millions of workers.

Carter himself was forced to reverse his original stance of pushing openly for the revival of the draft. Instead, he claimed that his registration plan would help prevent a new draft.

Also reversing themselves were the editors of the liberal *New York Times*, who had originally supported Carter's registration plan. They declared April 30 that "this is a half-baked measure that would do little for the armed forces and could further erode the constituency that real preparedness now requires."

With a glance over their shoulders at the antidraft protests around the country, the *Times* editors complained, "This most sensitive issue is being managed in the sloppiest possible manner."

Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan, despite his generally hawkish stance, said "I do not favor a peacetime draft or registration," as he accepted his party's nomination July 17. Reagan's position on the draft reflects his reading of the mood among voters.

While continuing its barrage of general militarist propaganda, the ruling class was apparently unwilling to stir opposition by pushing its registration plan too hard. A total of only \$400,000 was allocated for publicity. Prior to July 21, there were hardly any radio and television commercials informing young men that they

were supposed to register, or when and how to do so.

Already in trouble politically, the registration plan lost even its clear legal authority July 18, when a three-judge federal court unanimously held that it was unconstitutional. Although U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan later issued a stay of the lower court's order, many lawyers express doubt that the government will be able to legally prosecute anybody who fails to register.

As *New York Times* reporter Richard Halloran put it July 21, "The registration will begin in a political climate that would appear to discourage full compliance. . . ."

Although the *Times* has joined with the rest of the capitalist media in promoting the rulers' militarization drive, Halloran gave a candid presentation of the actual mood among draft-age youth. He noted that "large numbers of men were unenthusiastic and said they would register only because they wanted to avoid prosecution and penalties of up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine."

"Still others openly said that they would not register and were active in trying to persuade others not to register. . . ."

"In Boston, Gino Napoleone said: 'I'll wait for them to come get me. Why should I fight for Carter's mistakes?'"

Nor was there much for the rulers to be joyful about in the view expressed by Steve Carper, a young man from Boise, Idaho, who told Halloran: "This is a good country and I may as well fight for it. I'll defend my country, but not someone else's. I don't want any of that Vietnam stuff."

Of course, "that Vietnam stuff" is precisely what the U.S. imperialists have in mind. U.S. advisers are already operating in El Salvador, and if the rulers have their way, the draftees may well follow.

Pushing ahead with their militarization drive and the draft is not a matter of choice for the American capitalist class. It is an iron necessity, a matter of life and death for U.S. imperialism, which must halt the spread of social revolution if it is to survive. And the wars necessary to do that will not be any different from the ones in Vietnam and Korea.

Taking up the Carter administration's phony argument that registration has nothing to do with an imminent draft, the federal court ruled July 18: "Registration of a class of citizens with absolutely no purpose would be unconstitutional under any standard of review. The imposition of the burden to register . . . must be justi-

fied. The justification here should relate to the governmental need to raise military forces by conscription."

However, the court's ruling on the draft has postponed the showdown on this issue.

The court decision was couched in terms of women's rights. By not including women in the registration program, the court said, "the Military Selective Service Act unconstitutionally discriminates between males and females."

The Supreme Court must now rule on the constitutionality of the current registration law, which will likely take many months. If the Supreme Court upholds the lower court's ruling, it will then be necessary for Congress to pass a new law.

Despite the immediate effect of the court ruling, which has been to strike a body blow at the current registration plan, on a broader level the political content of the decision was prodraft and promilitary. Nor did the court ruling have anything to do with equal rights for women.

The vehicle for the July 18 ruling was a lawsuit initiated in 1971 by a group of male students who claimed that since women were not included in the pool of those eligible for the draft, the chance of a man being drafted was effectively doubled.

The logic of this reactionary, devious argument, is that women should be drafted so that some men would not have to be. In practice, however, inclusion of women in the draft would not help any male worker. It would merely provide the imperialists with the opportunity to raise a bigger army.

As one Pentagon official explained in the *Wall Street Journal* July 21, "Either a male registration or a male-female registration is adequate for us. If Congress has to reconsider the matter, he said, "we would recommend a coed registration as we did the first time."

Moreover, the court decision suggested that women draftees could be used to release more men for combat. One hundred fifty thousand women are already serving in the U.S. military, and the judges argued that there is no reason why "women can contribute to the military only as volunteers and not as inductees."

Noting some of the advantages to the imperialist army of having women in the ranks, the judges pointed out that "women in the military as a group suffer only about half the lost time of men." Also, they argued that the smaller size of women is "at times an advantage."

When he included women in his first registration plan Carter was not only proposing a way to strengthen the imperialist military machine. He also wanted to present the draft in a progressive guise, to undercut the struggle for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution, and to confuse the antidraft forces and divide men and women. The July 18 decision promotes these same ideas. But

few workers have been taken in by this ruling-class demagoguery.

Regardless of the formal arguments in the July 18 decision, it illustrates the difficulty that Carter is having in carrying out his plans. The U.S. ruling class is trying to impose its militarization drive from a position of weakness. It must continually maneuver to try to get around the basic political fact that the masses of American workers do not want any draft or any war.

Carter's campaign to restore the draft is in a shambles, and even the main capitalist dailies are being forced to admit the existence of widespread opposition. The challenge before antidraft activists now is to organize this opposition and to draw in broader layers of the working class.

As Paul Mailhot, the national organization secretary of the U.S. Young Socialist Alliance explained in the July 18 issue of the socialist weekly the *Militant*, "The initial two weeks of draft registration must be seen as opening a long-term fight, not as the final showdown for the antidraft movement. . . .

"The stance of the antidraft movement should be to defend the rights of *all* not to be registered or drafted, and to seek to draw *all*—whether they decide to register or not—into massive protests. . . .

"It is especially crucial that the antidraft movement reach out to the unions, which can be instrumental in providing the muscle needed to defeat the militarists. . . .

"The unions, the draft-age youth, Black and Latino groups, the foes of nuclear power, the women's movement, and the opponents of social service cutbacks—these are the forces that, united in massive actions, can stymie the government's drive to militarize society and prepare war." □

Thatcher's Tridents

At a time when the Tory government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is cutting back on much needed social services for Britain's working people, it has announced a major increase in arms spending, particularly for nuclear weapons.

On July 15, Defence Secretary Francis Pym told Parliament that the government would spend \$11,500 million for a new Trident missile system. About \$2,500 million of that would go for the purchase of 100 missiles from the U.S. government. The rest would be spent on the construction in Britain of new submarines and nuclear warheads.

An additional \$3,000 million would be laid out for new tanks and armored personnel carriers. Thatcher has pledged to increase military spending by 3 percent a year.

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Half Million Celebrate Nicaragua's Revolution

By Fred Murphy and Mary-Alice Waters

MANAGUA—Even before the sun rose on July 19, revolutionary songs and slogans were ringing out from one end of this capital to the other. Tens of thousands of Nicaraguans, having traveled throughout the night from all parts of the country, were arriving in trucks and buses for the celebration of the revolution's first anniversary.

By 7 a.m. marchers were pouring into the huge July 19 Plaza, constructed especially for the occasion. Contingents from Managua's neighborhoods, all organized by their Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), joined workers from other major cities and peasants from remote villages. Waving thousands of red and black flags and homemade placards and banners, the multitude gathered behind the disciplined ranks of militia, army and police units.

By the time the rally got under way at 10 a.m. more than half a million people were assembled in the plaza—some 20 percent of Nicaragua's population. It was the largest demonstration in the country's history, a striking reaffirmation of the support and confidence that the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) enjoys.

Around the edges of the plaza were freshly painted billboards bearing the revolution's most characteristic slogans, including a quote from General Augusto César Sandino—"Only the workers and the peasants will go all the way . . ." A block-long banner carried the words of martyred Sandinista intellectual Ricardo Morales Aviles—"After taking the first step we will never again stop walking."

Following the musical presentations and a vibrant performance by a Black dance troupe from the Caribbean port city of Bluefields, army Commander-in-Chief Humberto Ortega and militia Commander Eden Pastora reviewed the assembled troops. The crowd chanted, "One single army," a slogan that sums up the readiness of the Nicaraguan people to defend their revolution.

An International Event

The rally, chaired by FSLN leader Julio Lopez, began with the introduction of the many international delegations in attendance. Three heads of state were present: President Fidel Castro of Cuba, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop of Grenada, and Prime Minister George Price of Belize. Among the government delegations were those from Vietnam, Kampuchea, North Korea, the Soviet Union, and most Eastern European states; from Algeria and other African states; from Mexico, Honduras, El

Salvador, Panama, and Venezuela; from Iraq and Syria; and from the United States.

Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh was present, and was former Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez and a delegation from the Socialist International that included Spanish SP leader Felipe González.

Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat had planned to attend the celebration, but was delayed by transportation difficulties and arrived in Nicaragua only after the rally had ended. But solidarity with the Palestinian struggle was evident on banners and T-shirts worn by many Sandinista supporters.

Other liberation groups included the Polisario Front, which is fighting Moroccan attempts to annex the Sahara, and FRETILIN, which is battling the Indonesian government in East Timor.

By far the biggest applause was reserved for the representatives from El Salvador's Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) who were greeted by repeated chants of "Nicaragua Won, El Salvador Will Win."

Example of Cuban Revolution Hailed

Grenadian revolutionary leader Bishop led off the speakers list. July, he said, is an historic month for the people of Latin America, not only because of the Nicaraguan revolution, but also because the opening battle of the Cuban revolution, the attack on the Moncada barracks, took place on July 26, 1953.

"Who can doubt," Bishop said, "that if there was no Moncada movement and if there was no Cuban revolution in 1959—we say without the Cuban revolution, there could have been no Grenadian or Nicaraguan revolution."

"It must therefore be our task, the task of the free peoples of Latin America—by our unity, by our solidarity, by our cooperation—to continue to show the way forward, to make sure that by 1981 we will be able to speak not only of revolutionary Cuba, not just of revolutionary Nicaragua, but also of revolutionary El Salvador. . . ."

Following remarks by Price of Belize and Pérez of Venezuela, Fidel Castro came to the podium amid prolonged applause and chants of "Fidel! Fidel!" Once the acclaim died down however, there was a striking silence as the huge crowd listened with intense interest and respect to hear what the Cuban leader would have to say.

Castro returned the respect with a unique tribute of his own to the workers and peasants of Nicaragua. Recalling that

Somoza had told the counterrevolutionary troops that invaded Cuba from Nicaragua in April, 1961, to bring him at least one hair from Castro's beard, Castro said.

"I have come with my entire beard in order to offer it—if only symbolically—to the heroic people of Nicaragua." Standing in the July 19 Plaza, Castro said, "reminds me so much of our own people, of our own rallies, and since you constitute a profoundly revolutionary people, we have the impression that we are in our own homeland."

Castro went on to recall the admiration he felt for the Nicaraguans in 1978 and 1979 as they fought the Somoza dictatorship. He named off battles, events, and heroes from Nicaragua's long epic of anti-dictatorial struggles. "The pages of heroism you have written will go down in history," he declared.

Castro hailed "the men who at an hour when freedom seemed most distant, sought, organized and elaborated a strategy of struggle—those men are the Sandinistas—the Sandinista National Liberation Front."

"They managed to pull the entire people behind them. They are the vanguard, not because they want to give themselves the title of vanguard, but because they learned how to win for themselves the place of vanguard in the history and in the struggle of their people."

Solidarity 'Without Conditions and Advice'

Before Castro spoke, ex-President Pérez of Venezuela had sought in his remarks to lecture the Sandinistas on the blessings of "democracy," "pluralism," and independence from "the great bloc that seeks to commit us to their policies and manipulate us." (The bourgeois daily *La Prensa* featured Pérez' speech the next day, focusing their coverage of Castro on his "half-gray beard" and "corpulent physiognomy.")

"There are those who seek to teach the Sandinistas what to do," Castro said, implicitly responding to Pérez, "but we will never try to tell the Sandinistas what they should do or offer you fortuitous advice. We are ready to give you all of our support, all the solidarity of our people without conditions and without advice."

"We do not come here to teach or to influence. We came humbly to learn and to be influenced. We are sure that the Sandinista revolution will teach us a great deal and that the Sandinista revolution will have a great influence on us. Just as we are also certain that your example will extraordinarily influence the rest of Latin America."

"Some might claim," Castro noted, that we have come to Nicaragua "to try to set fire to Central America or to Latin America. . . ."

"It is impossible to set fire to a people, to bring a torch of revolution. As one of you recently said, the best and most fundamental and decisive help you can give to the

revolutionary movement is your example because people are like volcanoes. No one sets fire to them. They explode by themselves. And Central America and the Andean mountain range are volcanic."

Need for Aid

Castro devoted the final portion of his thirty-five minute speech to Nicaragua's continuing and pressing need for reconstruction aid from abroad. Despite the "miracles wrought in the revolution's first year," he said, "we must sadly conclude that only a few tens of millions of dollars is the effective aid received by Nicaragua up to now."

"We declared a year ago that a campaign of emulation was necessary among all countries" to aid Nicaragua. "We take the opportunity of this anniversary to reiterate the challenge and to appeal for this emulation in aid to Nicaragua."

"We even salute the aid that the United States is reportedly going to give. I only lament really and sincerely that it is so little, given the wealth of the United States. It is little for a country that devotes \$160 billion [a year] to military spending, for a country that according to projections is going to spend a million million dollars in the next five years on military items. How much more fruitful and beneficial those useless expenditures on the arms race would be if they were devoted to aiding the underdeveloped countries of the world—countries like Nicaragua that need so much."

U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Donald McHenry, who headed Washington's delegation to the July 19 event had "no further comment" when asked about the Cuban leader's challenge at a news conference after the rally. *La Prensa*, which has never seen fit to criticize the scantiness of U.S. aid, lectured Castro the next day that the Soviet Union devotes a higher percentage of its gross national product to defense than the United States does.

Following the Cuban leader's speech, FSLN founder and commander of the revolution Tomás Borge led the crowd in swearing renewed commitment to the revolution's goals—to carry the literacy campaign through to a successful conclusion, to join and strengthen the mass organizations and the Sandinista People's Militia, to keep boosting production in industry and agriculture, to provide solidarity to other peoples struggling for their liberation.

Expropriation of Idle Land Announced

The final speaker at the rally was government junta member and Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega, who used the occasion to announce a new government measure that will mean an important deepening of the revolution in the countryside—the expropriation of huge tracts of idle land.



Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro at first anniversary celebration of Nicaraguan revolution.

"The Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction," Ortega said, "will bring before the Council of State a draft law on agrarian reform covering the rational use of land. . . ."

"The revolution has provided facilities to the small, medium, and big landholders so that they could put their land to use, helping economic reactivation. But there are those who are not interested in responding to this call from the revolution, those who prefer to keep their lands idle instead of renting them out at the just prices the revolutionary government has established."

"It is not possible that while there are peasants who want land to plant, latifundists and big proprietors hold fertile land they are not putting to any use. For this reason of elemental justice these lands will cease to be idle by means of the new agrarian reform law."

Ortega's speech also included a ringing condemnation of the terror and repression carried out by the Salvadoran junta and a stern warning against imperialist military intervention in El Salvador. While Salvadoran government representatives sat uncomfortably on the platform, Ortega declared:

"We are in solidarity and we identify with the just and unstoppable struggle of the heroic Salvadoran people and their search for a new society dedicated to freedom and justice. . . . We condemn the crimes committed against that heroic people."

"We demand of the free, democratic, and progressive peoples of our continent and the world an attitude of firm condemnation in face of the genocide the Salvadoran people suffer and we demand a policy of nonintervention on the part of those who promote such solutions."

Ortega also condemned the July 17

military coup in Bolivia pointing to it as a part of a broader effort to "halt the new winds" in Latin America and "destroy the example of unity the Latin American governments gave when Nicaragua was fighting against the Somoza dictatorship and against the threat of foreign intervention."

Finally, referring to U.S. Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's support for Somozaist counterrevolutionaries, Ortega warned:

"Make no mistake Mr. Reagan. Don't come on a witch-hunt in Nicaragua. Because we are ready here to sweep away all the garbage you want to throw at us."

"But none of our enemies forget that all the people of the world are with the Nicaraguan revolution—including the North American people who enjoy our entire respect."

An impressive military parade by newly formed militia units from across the country, regular army troops, and police followed the rally. It was led off by a contingent of some fifty weather-beaten peasants, seventy or more years old—veterans of the plebeian army that drove U.S. marines out of Nicaragua under the leadership of General Sandino in 1933. Also included in the parade were newly purchased artillery and antiaircraft weapons as well as a display of armored vehicles, tanks, helicopters, and jet fighters, refurbished from the equipment Somoza's National Guard left behind. A few moments after the last unit of the parade passed the reviewing stand, a heavy tropical downpour began to soak the departing crowd. Its cooling effects were welcome after a long day in the hot sun, but it could not dampen the revolutionary spirit of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants or drown the thousands of voices still chanting, "In Nicaragua It Will Always Be the 19th of July." □

Educating for Class-Struggle Unionism in Grenada

By Diane Wang

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada—The house on a hilltop overlooking this city once belonged to a minister in the corrupt Gairy regime. Now thirty-two trade unionists, seventeen of them women, sat on folding chairs in what was once the living room. Posters proclaim solidarity with international struggles; another publicizes a women's conference. One hand-made sign urges, "Youth man—Forward on and take your revolutionary stand."

This was the final session and commencement ceremony of a week-long seminar cosponsored by the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU) and the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU). The home of the former Gairy official is today a center of Youth for Reconstruction, and it is used for gatherings and conferences of many other groups.

Speaking at the July 11 commencement were several of Grenada's trade-union leaders: Anslem DeBourg, CIWU vice-president; Danny Roberts, general secretary of the BGWU; John Ventour, general secretary of the CIWU and of the Grenada Trade Union Council; and Vincent Noel, president of the two unions and a leader of the New Jewel Movement (NJM). (See accompanying article for Noel's speech.)

Andrew Pulley, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States and a member of United Steelworkers Local 1066, had been invited to attend the session and give greetings (see box). Pulley is visiting Grenada to see the progress made since the revolution on this island in March 1979.

"The most important weapon Grenada has to defend itself is the truth," Pulley commented following the ceremony. "That's what we'll use, telling people in the United States what has been done here." Pulley will tell campaign audiences this fall what he has seen in Grenada, the achievements in education, health—and in the labor movement.

This was the tenth seminar of its kind, each lasting a week. Since the seminars were negotiated into contracts, bosses have to pay workers for the time spent studying unionism.

Under the former regime, unions were hedged in by repressive antilabor laws and by the dictator Gairy's connivance with the bosses. Since the revolution, trade union membership has boomed. Now some 80 percent of the work force is organized, according to Vincent Noel. The seminars are important for training a new generation of labor leaders.

The seminars are important, too, for

revolutionary Grenada as a whole. On the way to the session, Anslem DeBourg told Pulley, "We teach about why it is important for people to participate in their unions. This makes it harder for the reactionaries, because workers get used to democratic procedures."

John Ventour, who had conducted the seminar, explained in his speech, "When we educate workers in this manner, we expect that when you go back to your workplaces you'll see things in a wider focus."

By teaching workers to see their struggles in a "wider focus," the seminars help strengthen the revolution and promote the campaigns of the new government. *Workers' Voice*, published for trade unionists by the NJM Workers Commission, says the seminars are aimed not only at "giving workers a basic knowledge of trade unions," but also at "increasing discipline and production, and encouraging a better industrial climate."

"Of course," Pulley pointed out, "this government's idea of a 'better industrial climate' is one that advances the interests of the workers. The fight for increased production here is not aimed at raising the bosses' profits but at raising the living standards of the masses, getting another school or clinic for workers, another industry opened to provide new jobs and funds to develop the country."

Seminars included classes on trade-union history and functioning. Judging from the students' and leaders' comments, the main lessons were trade-union democracy, solidarity, and political action.

"Before, I thought that only the people elected took part in the unions," commented one woman participant. "Now I know that *we* are the union." The ease with which participants spoke up, the mutual respect shown by the union students and leaders, were evidence of the democratic unions being built here.

Workers solidarity is urged on billboards throughout the country and in the

unions. "Workers unity is workers strength" is the slogan on CIWU T-shirts.

"How can we achieve that unity," DeBourg asked the class, "if workers on the picket line or workers we pass on the street are only trying to go about their own business, trying to keep their own heads above water, trying to seek only their own interests?"

Workers' Voice also pursued the question: "A few workers are saying that they do not care what happens to other workers. Others say that they do not care about farmers, that farmers are not important to them. Yet others feel that agricultural workers are not important to dock workers, commercial workers, bank, electricity, telephone, or other workers. . . .

"Where does the money come from to pay . . . workers employed by the government?"

"Where does the money come from to buy . . . goods from other countries?"

"Discuss these questions with your co-workers and make sure to get the next issue of *Workers' Voice* to hear what we have to say."

In a country where the governing party's slogan is, "Let those who labor hold the reins," the unions' political action is also the subject of a lively discussion. That political action must be based on working-class independence was a basic lesson of the seminars.

DeBourg reminded the unionists, "Workers feel they cannot do without a capitalist. But what we have to understand is, who are the capitalists? Where does capital come from? Capital can only come from labor. And if you ask yourself who labors, isn't it the workers? So is it the workers who need the capitalists or the capitalists who need the workers?"

Opponents of the Grenadian revolution influenced by the AFL-CIO in the United States have criticized the unions for participating in the new government. For example, Vincent Noel has come under fire because he is Minister of Home Affairs.

Next Week: Exclusive Interview with Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop

Andrew Pulley, presidential candidate of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, conducted a week-long fact-finding and solidarity tour of Grenada beginning July 9. He was accompanied by Steve Clark, managing editor of *Intercontinental*

Press/Inprecor, and Diane Wang, a steelworker and SWP member.

Next week's *IP/I* will feature an exclusive interview with Prime Minister Maurice Bishop conducted during the tour. Don't miss it!

Workers' Voice answered these attacks sharply: "These same people will come to Free Grenada and run their mouths on Brother Vincent Noel because he is a member of government and a leading trade unionist. But they will never say that the employers should not be in government, where they always make laws and do things to suit their interests. If the workers' representatives should not be in government, then who should be, the employers?"

The seminar lessons on political action

extended to international questions as well. Most of the students had copies of the Cuban paper *Granma*. That afternoon the class had seen a film about the CIA.

The CIA exposés have especially angered the bosses. *Workers' Voice* scolded the electrical company manager: "Rodney, why you did not want electrical workers to see the CIA film? You afraid workers will see the light?"

John Ventour stressed that the seminars, like every other gain since the revolution, need to be defended. "The capitalists

will resist holding further seminars. We have to struggle for it. Whether we can get it depends on the struggle."

The unionists sounded ready for that fight. Many talked about sharing the lessons they had learned with co-workers, and about the need for more classes.

"The bosses say the trade unions are brainwashing the workers," Matilde Chase, a CIWU member from the Buy-Rite supermarket told the seminar. "But really the unions are educating us." □

Speech by Grenada Union Leader Vincent Noel

'Everything That Affects Society Is the Workers' Business'

[The following is the speech by Grenadian trade-union and New Jewel Movement leader Vincent Noel to the final session of a week-long union seminar.]

* * *

Comrade Ventour, visiting guests from the United States, Fraternal comrades.

As you know, we in the progressive labor movement have been trying for some time now to do what we can to improve the consciousness of the entire working class of the country. This ninth and tenth seminar is the first time in the history of the trade-union movement in this country that any unions whatsoever, or any group of unions, are coming together to have as much as ten seminars—regardless of size, because some of them have not been very big. And this has taken place in under one year.

It is an achievement of which we in the progressive leadership of both unions are very proud. And I'm sure—judging from the response that we have received from all the previous seminars, and from what you yourselves have said here this afternoon in calling for more of these seminars, more of this type of thing—that you have been touched by it and want to continue it.

As you have learned from the period here over the last five days, we have basically two purposes for carrying out these seminars. One, and definitely the lesser one, is to help with the technical tasks of trade unionism, to help comrades identify and solve problems, how to negotiate and bargain, and so on. That's what we call technical tasks. That's about the operation of trade unions in general.

The other is much more fundamental to the survival of the working class and of the revolution. And that is to try to raise and improve, awaken and then raise the class consciousness of workers. This is what we see as the second reason, fundamental and very important.

We have done this by trying to show

you, first of all, the development of human society itself. There is a trend of thought being thrown around in Grenada and elsewhere that we have always had the capitalists, we have always had the poor, that we've always had the masters. We have shown you why this has been so, but doesn't have to be so.

We have shown you the origin of trade



Diane Wang/IP-I

Vincent Noel (left) and seminar leader John Ventour look through graduation certificates.

unionism, why it arose in human society, at what point it arose, what its present mission is now, how it is being used by different class forces, how it is being used by imperialists, and how we as workers, as progressive workers, should use it in our own interests.

There are some who tell us that the trade unions should have nothing to do with whether or not we have full employment, what the cost of living is, whether or not we have education, whether or not we have health services, whether or not we have corruption in the government, whether we have brutality, and all the other ills. There are some who tell you that is not the trade unions' business.

What we are saying here is that *every single thing* that affects the society is the

workers' business, because workers form the majority of society, and in fact they support the entire society through their labor. So fundamentally anything that affects the worker is the workers' business.

Comrades, brothers and sisters, at this time, we face a very difficult period in our history. We have to decide for ourselves what the future will be. And there's no other appropriate group to decide what the future will be than, of course, the working class. Because we are the ones who are working; we are the ones who are producing; we are the ones who are keeping the economy afloat, keeping the country afloat.

And therefore in what is done, we have to play a leading role in guiding and shaping it. We have to make sure that what is done is always in our interests. He who pays the piper calls the tune. We are right now not only paying the piper, we are also making the flute! And therefore we will damn well dictate what tune is played on that flute.

There are some who see Grenada as a threat at this time and are trying their best to see what levers they can throw in our spokes to keep us back. They are slandering us throughout the region and North America and, in fact, throughout the world.

We, as a small country, do not have the resources to in fact launch the kind of international campaign to help in beating back these rumors and slanders and lies. But each of us, of course, can do a little bit.

For one, we can write to our families abroad. We can encourage our friends who have families abroad to write to them. We can write to the international newspapers, although they won't publish it. But they will see how the working class feels. We can talk to tourists when they come here, all kinds of visitors, and encourage them to come back and tell them something about our beautiful country.

And we can of course struggle to make

sure that the pro-working-class government remains a pro-working-class government. And that we struggle and we fight to keep our revolution afloat.

In the final analysis, it is we who will suffer. You know what happened in Chile; I don't have to tell you, it was the working class that was massacred.

And when they come, as we are sure and know that they are coming, it is the working class that will have to bear the brunt of their attempt. Because it will only be an attempt. Because as we have already made it known, if they come you know what will happen to them. If they don't drown in the sea, they will have to drown in their blood.

You have called this afternoon—as in fact has every group that has been in this room for the different seminars we have had—you have called for continuing education. You can only do that in close contact with us in the political movement. We do have advanced education classes. If you want to do that, we can assist you with that, wherever you may be or which village you are, we can try to help you to develop your working-class education.

Those of you who would like to volunteer to improve your understanding of the local and regional situation, can put your name down, with your address and workplace, and we will get in contact with you. □



Noel and Pulley

Diane Wang/IP-I

Pulley's Greetings to Grenada Union Seminar

[John Ventour, general secretary of the Grenada Trade Union Council and seminar leader, asked Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Andrew Pulley to present greetings to the closing session.

["Comrades, we have a comrade from the United States of America," Ventour told the seminar participants. "He is not a North American imperialist. We've talked about imperialism and capitalism in America, and about the working class in America. I think it is fitting to have with us a comrade who will be running against President Carter and Reagan and to have him say a few words to us."]

[Below are Pulley's greetings.]

* * *

To all the comrade workers gathered here today, the leading members of the revolutionary movement here in Grenada, I want to say it is a great honor for us from the United States to be among you, and to have the opportunity to sit

in on a portion of your class and say a couple of words to you.

Your slogan, "Forward ever, backward never," is a slogan that aptly and correctly describes not only your perspectives for solving the problems that confront Grenada. It is also the perspective that must be adopted by the rest of the workers movement of the Caribbean, the United States, and the world.

And it is precisely the pursuit of this idea, this simple idea, that drives the U.S. rulers up the wall. It is this idea that has forced the Pentagon, the CIA in the United States, and their media, their newspapers and radio and television, to go on an incredible slander campaign denouncing Grenada. They are trying to turn the population of the United States against Grenada in the same way that they are trying to do with regard to Cuba and Nicaragua.

In truth, the slogan of the U.S. rulers is "Forward never, backward ever," as it relates to the working people of the

United States and the world. And for themselves, the capitalists' slogan is, "Forward ever, backward never," as it relates to their profits.

This is very true. Because what we find in the U.S. today is that the money for education, for child care, for medical care is all being cut back. While the money for the bombs and the war machine and the CIA is all being increased.

While down here the money for education is being increased. The money for social needs is being increased. In Cuba social services and other needs of the people are receiving increased financial commitment, and real forward motion is being achieved. And in Nicaragua the same thing.

So, as the American people learn more about what is really happening here, especially the Black community in the United States, they will increasingly come down here to see what is going on. They will identify with the revolutionary movement here and begin to call it their own movement.

The U.S. rulers know that this will occur.

I'm sure this is the first time any of you have heard there is a socialist running for president of the United States. Well, most people in the United States don't know that I'm running either. That's because the capitalist media does not tell anyone that there are alternatives. They simply lie about the elections, about Grenada, about everything else.

We're here today to try to find out more facts and go back to the United States and tell the working class and the Black community about the great things that are happening here, and to tell the working class in the United States of the need to oppose U.S. military perspectives against Grenada, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Cuba, and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Thank you.



Diane Wang/IP-I

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Andrew Pulley presents greetings to seminar.

U.S.-Backed Coup Attempt Foiled in Iran

By Fred Feldman

The Iranian government appears to have succeeded in breaking up a large-scale U.S.-backed coup attempt by army officers, the Iraqi government, and followers of Shahpur Bakhtiar. Bakhtiar was the shah's last premier, who has been attempting to organize counterrevolutionary forces from Paris.

The conspiracy came to light at a time when the Carter administration is becoming more open about its role in efforts to topple the Tehran government and impose a military dictatorship on the Iranian people.

Despite the U.S. media's hostility to the Iranian revolution and the Tehran government, none have disputed the statements of Iranian officials on the attempted coup. Some provided extensive details of the plot from their own sources.

President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr announced July 10 that a coup had been put down. He said it had centered among air force officers in the area of Ahwaz, capital city of Khuzestan province. Others indicated army officers were also involved.

Two former generals from the shah's regime were reported July 13 to have confessed that they had planned to bring Bakhtiar back to power. They were Said Mehdiyun, the shah's air force commander, and Ahmad Mohaqeqi, who had headed the military police.

Counterrevolutionary Officers

A July 12 Reuters dispatch stated that "senior revolutionary guard officers had taken over several key military installations and units" in Khuzestan province.

The officer caste of the Iranian army, riddled with former servants of the shah, has long been a source of opposition to the revolution. It has frequently come into conflict with the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), which arose out of the fight to bring down the shah and are popularly regarded as much more loyal to the revolution.

A detailed version of the coup plans appeared in the July 14 *Christian Science Monitor*.

"The plotters planned to set up a military junta in Iran," stated correspondent Leslie Keith. "They would then have installed former Premier Shahpur Bakhtiar as president."

Their blueprint called for even more initial bloodshed than the 1953 coup which Washington engineered to bring the shah back to the throne.

After capturing the Hamadan air base, 200 miles southwest of Tehran, "about 30

American-made Phantom aircraft were to have taken off to bomb various sensitive targets. . . .

"The most important of these was the home of Ayatollah Khomeini. . . . About 15 Phantoms were given the job of bombing this target. . . .

"Another target was President Bani-Sadr's office in central Tehran. . . .

"Ten of the Phantoms were to have headed for Qum, about 80 miles south of Tehran. They were to have bombed the Faizieh school and important institutions of religious learning. . . .

"The Phantoms were also to have bombed and totally destroyed the Park Hotel in Tehran and a teacher's club where most of the deputies in Iran's new parliament are staying, thus wiping out in a stroke the majority of the members."

'Put Them Against Walls'

"One of the first acts of the new junta," Keith claimed, "was to have been to release the 53 American hostages. [The number is now 52, after the release of Richard Queen.] They were then to have rounded up about 70 of the top leaders, put them up against walls wherever they were found, and shot them."

Keith leaves to the imagination of the reader what would have been the fate of Iran's workers, urban poor, students, and peasants under the new rulers.

According to Keith, the Iraqi government was to stage a diversion:

"The night the coup was to have been

staged, Iraqi aircraft were to have entered Iran to bomb a number of unimportant targets. This, say the Iranian authorities, was the excuse the plotters were to have had to take off from Hamadan.

"In fact, Iraqi aircraft did violate Iranian air space the night the coup was to have been staged. They overflowed three border towns, but the power supply in the area was cut and the Iraqis reportedly missed their targets."

Keith's sources confirmed the assertions of Iranian officials identifying Gen. Said Mehdivan as the operational commander of the coup.

The coup attempt lent powerful support to President Bani-Sadr's assertions that Washington's April 24 raid against Iran was not intended primarily to release the hostages, but was part of a broad military plot to bring down the Tehran government—regardless of the danger to the hostages that would certainly have resulted.

CIA Broadcasts

The latest exposures followed the admission by U.S. officials that the CIA is providing transmitters for counterrevolutionary broadcasts into Iran from Egypt.

Broadcasts call for army officers to organize a coup, and indicate support for Bakhtiar to head a new government—an identical program to that of the exposed plotters.

Other counterrevolutionary outfits are also getting Washington's backing for plots against Iran.

The April 30 *Christian Science Monitor* cited the case of General Gholam Oveissi, who commanded the shah's ground forces until January 1979. Oveissi was directly responsible for organizing massacres of tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators against the shah, including the Bloody Friday slaughter of September

Abadan Oil Workers Released From Prison

An important victory for Iranian workers was won June 14 with the release from prison of four Abadan oil worker leaders.

Their two-month long imprisonment had been protested by more than 5,000 oil workers at the Abadan oil refinery, the Abadan Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards), Abadan Islamic high-school councils, and other Abadan groups.

Support for their release had also come from the Tehran workers represented by the federation of Islamic shoras (committees), from the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), and others.

The four oil worker leaders—Mousa Souri, Haj Ali Shahkari, Abdullah Jafari, and Ahmed Golisourani—had been

arrested in Tehran last April where they had come to discuss the oil workers' grievances with Iranian president Abolhassan Bani-Sadr.

An editorial in the June 24 issue of *Kargar*, the HKE's weekly newspaper, declared:

"The release of the four militant oil workers is a victory for revolutionary freedom of expression, a victory for the workers shoras, and a victory for the anti-imperialist movement and for the Iranian revolution. This triumph shows that class solidarity can accomplish what seems impossible and that it can remove the obstacles placed in the way of the workers organizations."

1978 in which about 5,000 died.

Oveissi heads a right-wing gang called Azadegan. He recently visited Washington and held discussions with U.S. officials. He "has moved quietly," reported *Strategy Week*, a newsletter with close Pentagon ties, "to develop a strong military team and the bases from which to prepare. His funding position is known to be sound."

Oveissi has been given bases by the Iraqi regime.

Speeches by Oveissi and Bakhtiar are beamed daily from a radio transmitter in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. Funding for the bases and transmitters probably comes from the same source that paid for the broadcasts from Egypt—the CIA.

Oveissi "is reported to be actively in-

volved with the Iraqi government in pushing an invasion through Kurdistan that would be coordinated with uprisings within key army garrisons," wrote Henry Eason from London in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune/States-Item*.

Rightist Guerrillas

Other options being pursued by Washington include organizing rightist guerrilla operations modeled on those in neighboring Afghanistan.

Eason continued: "One of the most important sets of military counterforces within Iran are tribal guerrillas similar to the ones who are resisting the Soviets in Afghanistan, who conducted raids on horseback and are armed with automatic

rifles. They have not yet conducted a full scale attack on government forces, but their potential is highly regarded by the counterrevolutionaries."

To the overwhelming majority of Iranians, the latest revelations confirm their correctness in viewing the shah's trip to the United States "for his health" last November as a sign that Carter was stepping up moves to crush their revolution. Their massive mobilizations, which included the seizure of the U.S. embassy, have become a big obstacle to Washington's plans.

Iranians are stepping up demands for a thorough cleaning out of the shah's personnel and other rightists from the government offices and military barracks. □

'Restive Times Ahead' for South African Rulers

Black Students and Workers Press Their Demands

Fierce government repression notwithstanding, the Black student and labor unrest that has been sweeping South Africa since April is continuing. So far, dozens of young Blacks have been killed by police gunfire.

By early July, the national student strike against the racist education system had spread to broader layers of the Black population. Initiated primarily by Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry), it is now drawing greater participation from the more numerous African student population as well.

As of July 11, at least forty African schools in the Eastern Cape region had been affected by the strikes, as thousands of students walked out of their classes. Huge crowds gathered at several high schools in Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown to sing Black freedom songs.

In Soweto, the large Black township near Johannesburg that was at the center of the 1976 rebellions, pamphlets were distributed by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) calling on students to boycott classes. Although many COSAS leaders had been arrested, impairing the group's ability to organize the boycott effectively, hundreds of students nevertheless followed the strike call.

In Grahamstown, a Black woman was shot and killed during a police attack on 2,000 Black student protesters. Several dozen demonstrators were arrested.

In the Onverwacht settlement near Thaba Nchu, a section of the Bophutha-Tswana Bantustan (African reserve), some 600 students poured out of their classes. The police, claiming that the students had attacked a police station, arrested about twenty of them.

The student boycott in the Black town-

ships around Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, was reported to be almost total. Riot police in camouflage uniforms have been deployed in the area.

In Zwelitsha, a township in the Ciskei Bantustan, 127 Black students were taken to court on charges stemming from the demonstrations in that area.

In Paarl, east of Cape Town, sixty-six political prisoners at the Victor Verster maximum security prison went on a hunger strike to demand that they be either charged or released. (They are now being held under the Internal Security Act, which allows indefinite detention without charge or trial.)

In Uitenhage, some 3,500 striking Black

workers at the Volkswagen auto assembly plant won a 27 percent raise in their hourly minimum wage, returning to work in mid-July. In Secunda, several thousand Black construction workers walked off their jobs at a strategic synthetic fuels plant following reports that one of their co-workers had been shot to death by troops. In Johannesburg, Black bus drivers struck for one day on July 3 to press their pay demands.

The South African ruling class is worried that the strikes will continue. An editorial in the July 8 issue of the Johannesburg *Star* warned, "Strikes among meat workers at the Cape, motor workers at Uitenhage and bus drivers on the Rand presage restive times ahead on South Africa's labour front."

The same editorial also pointed to the obviously growing interconnection between the Black student and labor struggles, noting that the "political unrest has made [Black workers] more aware of their economic muscle." □

Cuban Ships Attacked by Moroccan Jets

In a serious provocation against Cuba and in retaliation for Cuba's support for the Western Saharan independence struggle, Moroccan warplanes strafed two Cuban fuel tankers off the coast of the Western Sahara on the night of July 12.

Manuel Ventura, the captain of the *Moroboro*, was killed. Several Cuban sailors were wounded and taken to Las Palmas, in the Canary Islands, for medical treatment.

The *Moroboro* and the *Gilberto Pico* were in the region to supply fuel to a Cuban fishing fleet that operates in the mid-Atlantic.

The Mirage fighters that attacked the ships were not immediately identified. According to the Cuban news agency, Prensa Latina, the planes carried no identification marks.

But in Las Palmas, the Cuban consul,

Jesús Fernández Ponce, said in reply to a reporter's question about who was responsible for the attack, "Who do you think has got fighter planes in that area? The men I've talked to say they were Moroccans."

The Moroccan government of King Hassan initially refused to either deny or confirm that its planes had carried out the assault.

The attack came less than three months after the Moroccan regime broke diplomatic relations with Cuba on April 23, following Cuba's recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, which has been proclaimed by the proindependence Polisario Front. The Western Sahara, a Spanish colony until 1975, was annexed by the Moroccan monarchy. Its troops occupy the area with U.S. support, in defiance of United Nations resolutions recognizing the Saharan people's right to self-determination. □

Salvadoran Peasants Seek Refuge From Army

By Will Reissner

There has been a sharp increase in the rate of political murders in El Salvador recently, reflecting the deepening class polarization there. In a one-month period ending in early July, for example, more than 1,200 people died. That compares to about 2,000 deaths during the first five months of 1980.

Catholic human rights activists say that 80 percent of the victims (their figures do not include armed guerrillas or government troops killed in combat) have been murdered by rightist paramilitary gangs. Others were civilians killed by Salvadoran uniformed forces.

Salvadoran church figures point out that the victims were killed on the presumption that they had associated with political opposition groups, peasant leagues, or trade unions.

The Salvadoran military has also been waging a reign of terror in rural areas, which was dramatically highlighted on July 11, when some one hundred peasants from eastern El Salvador burst into the Costa Rican embassy in San Salvador "seeking political refuge." They stated they wanted "to call attention to the extreme repression in the countryside."

The peasants, who included 30 children, 25 women, 35 elderly people, and 10 teenagers, were reportedly affiliated with the February 28 People's Leagues (LP-28), one of the largest leftist groups in the country.

The peasants told Costa Rican ambassa-

dor Alejandro Alvarado Pisa that they were fleeing the Salvadoran army, and charged that army patrols were burning crops, killing cattle, and destroying peasant homes in sweeps through their area.

Military counterinsurgency sweeps have taken place throughout the Salvadoran countryside. The worst have occurred in the departments of Chalatenango, Santa Ana, San Vicente, and Morazán, although the departments of San Salvador, Cuscatlán, Usulután, and La Unión have also been under more or less permanent military occupation since March.

The July 11 *Latin American Regional Reports* states that "independent observers have drawn comparisons between the US-trained Salvadorean military's counterinsurgency and the USA's own Phoenix Programme in Vietnam in the late 1960s. Phoenix in effect assumed that there were no 'civilians' as such in the war zones, but only supporters, or potential supporters, of the armed opposition. These were, therefore, considered to be fair game for the military."

Amnesty International has charged that U.S. aid to the Salvadoran military and police apparatus "can be expected to worsen the widespread murder and torture of peasants and suspected opponents of that country's government."

In a July 16 letter to Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, the human rights group stated that "it is indeed reasonable to expect that assistance intended to improve

the operational capabilities of the Salvadoran security system, including training and material assistance, will contribute to worsen the human rights situation in that country."

The Carter administration has proposed an aid package of some five-and-a-half million dollars in U.S. security assistance for fiscal 1981, which begins October 1, 1980.

While the ruling military/Christian Democratic junta has been carrying out its massive sweeps of the countryside, it has also sent representatives abroad to bolster its image and counter successful tours by members of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a coalition of trade unions, professional organizations, and political groups that oppose the regime.

Christian Democratic junta member José Napoléon Duarte visited a number of European capitals to argue that the armed forces in El Salvador are actually committed to reforms and should be supported. Julio Alfredo Samayoah, the minister of labor, also toured Europe and the United States to counter what he described in New York as the slanders that are being spread by "extremist" elements in the news media around the world.

Samayoah has been pushing the line that the present junta is actually carrying out the program of the left, claiming that it is the only government that "can carry through a revolution without violence or bloodshed."

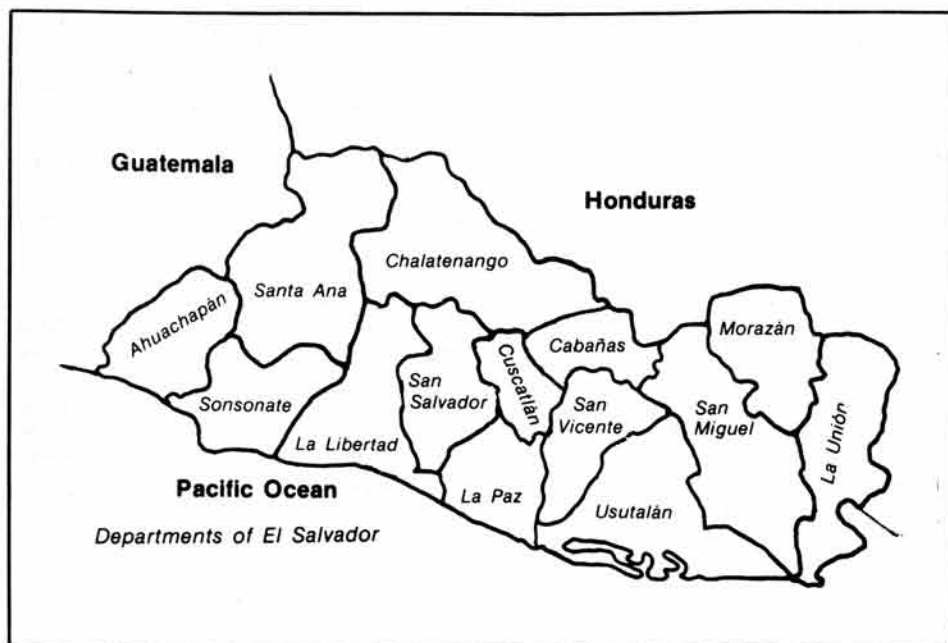
In addition, Col. Adolfo Majano held two days of meetings in Panama in June with Panamanian strongman Gen. Omar Torrijos and president Aristides Royo to convince them to continue supporting the ruling junta.

Torrijos has strong ties with the Salvadoran military, having graduated from the El Salvador military academy, and has close personal friends in the Salvadoran military hierarchy.

Meanwhile, a major confrontation between the ruling junta and the FDR may be brewing over the military occupation of the University of El Salvador, which began on June 26. On July 10 the FDR announced it had set a ten-day deadline for the withdrawal of the military occupation.

The FDR warned that if the deadline passed, it would launch a campaign of street demonstrations by "the fighting organizations" and the mass organizations to press the demand.

Previous street demonstrations have been savagely repressed by Salvadoran security forces. □



2. The Communist Party of El Salvador

By Will Reissner

A bloody confrontation is now taking place in El Salvador between the ruling military/Christian Democratic junta and the mass worker, peasant, and student organizations struggling for democratic rights and social progress. At the risk of his life, Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez Rodríguez was able to conduct interviews with underground leaders of three of the organizations fighting the U.S.-backed junta.

From some ninety hours of taped interviews, Menéndez wrote a seventeen-part series on the positions and outlook of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces (FPL), the Communist Party of El Salvador (CPS), and the People's Revolutionary Army-Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (ERP-PRS).

The entire series was published in the Cuban English-language weekly *Granma* between March 16 and June 15, 1980.

Because the revolutionary struggle is reaching a showdown in El Salvador, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* decided to summarize the contents of the Menéndez series for the information of our readers. The first article, which dealt with the positions of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces, appeared in last week's issue.

The following article is based on Menéndez's interviews with Schafik Jorge Handal, general secretary of the Communist Party of El Salvador. The interviews with Handal took place on March 11, 15, and 16, 1980, and appeared in the June 1 and June 8 issues of *Granma*.

* * *

The Communist Party of El Salvador was founded on March 28, 1930, under the leadership of Farabundo Martí, a legendary figure on the Salvadoran left. Less than two years later, in January 1932, the CP led a massive insurrection of peasants and workers, which the military crushed. In the aftermath of the defeated uprising more than 30,000 workers and peasants were murdered, including Farabundo Martí himself. Unions were broken up, and the CP was outlawed.

According to Schafik Jorge Handal, in the repression that followed the 1932 insurrection "the CPS was the only organization that managed to survive, albeit in extremely precarious conditions." Until 1970 the CP was virtually the only organization functioning on the left in El Salvador, according to Handal.

Since 1970, however, there have been a number of splits in the CP. These were sparked mostly by the CP's single-minded

focus on electoral politics.

The factional struggles within the CP began just after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, according to Salvador Cayetano Carpio, who was for many years the general secretary of the CP until he broke with it to found the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces.

In 1969, following a decade-long struggle within the CP, Carpio resigned as its general secretary and left the organization soon after. "I made the move," he explained, "when it became evident that it wasn't possible to get the Party to understand the need for a political-military strategy, that is, an overall revolutionary strategy. . . ."

CP Opts for Armed Struggle

Schafik Jorge Handal himself acknowledges that the CP's decision to participate in the armed struggle "was a bit late, but still in time."

For more than a decade, from 1966 until February 1977, the Communist Party of El Salvador's primary orientation was toward electoral activity in coalition with the Christian Democratic Party and other organizations. Most of this work was carried out through its legal arm, the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN).

In 1972 the CP supported Christian Democrat José Napoléon Duarte for president. Today Duarte is the leading civilian figure in the viciously repressive military/Christian Democratic junta. The CP-backed slate in 1977 was Col. Ernesto Claramount and Christian Democrat José Antonio Morales Erlich, who is also a member of the current junta.

Handal told Menéndez that "the Salvadoran people and their candidates running on the ticket of the National Opposition Union (UNO) won the 1972 and 1977 presidential elections" but the military did not accept those results.

Following the February 1977 electoral fraud, the CP abandoned its orientation toward elections, at least on paper. Handal notes that "eleven years of legal struggle and electoral participation had left their mark upon us as well. Over 87 percent of the CPS membership in February 1977 had joined the Party during that period and had been educated in that form of struggle."

Handal adds that "the ideological imprint left by those eleven years upon the members and even the leadership of the CPS—without exception—also stood in the way of a speedy, effective change to higher forms of struggle." So although the CP's orientation formally changed in April

1977, there was no attempt at the time to carry out that change in practice.

In 1979, says Handal, the CP made a major self-criticism, and at the 7th Congress of the CP, held underground in April 1979, moves toward armed struggle were taken in earnest.

"Two years behind the times, we took the step in the direction of armed forms of struggle, which historically had been placed on the agenda and no longer for the revolutionaries alone, but for the masses of the people."

Another False Start

On October 15, 1979 a military coup overthrew Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero, with the backing of the U.S. embassy in San Salvador. Romero's regime was so unpopular that the U.S. State Department feared a repetition of Somoza's overthrow in Nicaragua, where the rebel forces militarily defeated that dictator and destroyed the existing armed forces.

The new military junta claimed to favor reforms and it invited members of the reformist and left groups to participate in a joint military-civilian coalition. Although the other organizations engaged in armed struggle refused any participation in the junta, the Communist Party accepted the offer.

On October 21, 1979, Roberto Castellanos, a leader of the CP, declared "we support the junta because we believe it is going to comply with its promises and open the possibility of democratizing the country." (Castellanos was murdered by the junta's repressive forces in March 1980.)

In retrospect, Handal explains the CP's participation in the first ruling junta from October 1979 to January 1980 somewhat differently.

According to Handal's explanation, "the CPS took part because the Salvadoran revolution also needs the democratic forces. . . . And, since the CPS was the revolutionary organization with the oldest ties with the democratic forces, with which it had earlier conducted a policy of alliances, it had to accompany those forces, stand beside them until the project met with failure in order to prevent their dispersion after defeat and be able immediately to link them up with the revolutionary movement."

Handal now agrees that "the October 15, 1979 coup was a maneuver by imperialism and the Salvadoran right wing," but he argues that it also involved "a patriotic, progressive current of young army officers who were unaware of the objectives of our main enemy and who in fact had placed their hopes on such a solution to the national crisis."

Soon after the CP resigned from the junta in early January, it joined with other organizations engaged in armed struggle to form the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) on Janu-

ary 11, 1980. This was the first of a number of steps that have led to military and political coordination by the forces seeking to overthrow the junta.

This cooperation developed, says Handal, due to mass pressure. "The rank and file of all our organizations, the broad masses that are influenced by us, bore the burden of division as an unjustifiable evil."

According to Handal, the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution in July 1979 had a big impact on the Salvadoran left. He feels that the main factor that "precipitated the Salvadoran unity agreement was the unity of the three currents comprising the Sandinista Front and which led to the victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution."

Structural Changes in El Salvador

Handal explains that in recent decades El Salvador has undergone major structural changes. "In the '50s an industrialization process began in El Salvador that had been going on for 20 years in the countries of the southern cone of Latin America." He contrasts this with the situation that prevailed after the defeat of the 1932 uprising, which consolidated the power of the coffee-growing, export-oriented oligarchy. At that time it was illegal to build factories in El Salvador.

But following a military coup in December 1948, a gradual process of industrialization began. That process picked up steam in the 1960s after the creation of the Central American Common Market. Along with the increased industrialization came greater "penetration by big United States and Japanese corporations. . . ."

"The industrialization process," Handal states, "led to substantial changes in the class structure." An industrial proletariat began to take shape. People migrated to the cities from the countryside, living a marginal existence in the urban areas for the most part.

"At that same time," Handal continues, "due to the needs of the industrialization process itself, the education system is expanded," and a big student and intellectual population developed, "which, to some extent, is also marginal. Its members cannot be absorbed by the industrial development process, and hence, they lack prospects in El Salvador." He notes that the university student population grew from about 3,000 students in 1963 to 35,000 in 1980.

Along with the growth of the urban working class and student population, "in the '60s and in the early '70s, dependent capitalism in El Salvador made considerable inroads into agriculture." Tenant farmers and sharecroppers were driven off the land "by modern capitalism, which, as it gained the upper hand, proletarianized those people and implanted up-to-date techniques, geared to export."

The result was an upsurge of class

struggles in the countryside, many of which were organized by groups that had broken from the CP in the 1970s.

No Prospects for Bourgeois Democracy

Despite the Salvadoran CP's long history of supporting Christian Democratic candidates and its participation in the first military-civilian junta from October to January, Handal now maintains that "there is no possibility whatsoever for a reformist solution to the national crisis" and that the "repressive machinery built up over a half a century cannot be brought into line even with a bourgeois-democratic process."

Handal adds that "the Salvadoran oligarchy and almost the entire bourgeoisie . . . totally oppose deepgoing reforms and social transformations," which leads the CP general secretary to conclude that "when the CPS speaks of driving forces of the Salvadoran revolution, it does not include any sector of the bourgeoisie." He does feel, however, "that some individuals or groups, or even sectors, at a given moment could adopt an attitude in favor of the process."

Handal maintains that "this policy is in line with a CPS thesis that independent capitalism is now historically impossible in El Salvador, and we think in Latin America as well. Therefore, no sector of the bourgeoisie . . . can carry out and be consistent with the anti-imperialist tasks which, in the long run, determine the fate of the revolution and its democratic objectives."

And "because there is no longer any possibility for independent capitalism," therefore "there is no bourgeois sector that can consistently confront imperialism."

Despite this, Handal argues that "with a revolutionary situation ripening and the crisis sharpening to an extreme degree, the bourgeoisie is splitting apart, and there are sectors which, for the sake of finding a way out or a way to rule, may at a given point adopt a position in favor of revolution," as happened in Nicaragua.

CP's View of New El Salvador

Schafik Jorge Handal maintains that "the Salvadoran revolution is democratic and anti-imperialist," and that its main goals are to establish human rights, carry out a thorough land reform, and win real national independence.

"We're not talking about a directly socialist revolution," Handal asserts. But he adds that "because independent capitalism is historically impossible in our country, and we think in the rest of Latin America as well, and because power will be wielded by the great majority of the people, democratic, anti-imperialist tasks and objectives will thus become the first phase of a single revolution, which is essentially socialist in nature."

Menéndez asks: "In the present international situation, does the CPS feel that

these democratic, anti-imperialist tasks and objectives can be attained without heading for socialism?"

Handal categorically responds: "No, that's impossible," explaining that the victory of the revolution means that "the great majority of the people—the working class in general, the peasants, the middle layers—destroy the old machinery of repression and set up revolutionary power."

"Then, democratic, anti-imperialist tasks and objectives become the first phase of a single revolution, which in the final analysis is in essence socialist."

The pace of the transition from the "democratic" phase of the revolution to the "socialist" phase, Handal argues, is determined by "the interests of the people and the defense and advance of the revolution."

"That phase may be brief or protracted, violent or relatively peaceful. In Cuba, for example, the defense of the revolution called for a rapid transition to socialism. In Nicaragua, it remains to be seen. Such things can't be decreed; much less are solutions possible ahead of time or in the abstract."

Lessons for Latin American CPs

Handal admits that the CP's long-time rejection of armed struggle and the "errors" in its support for the Salvadoran army in the 1969 war with Honduras go far to explain why the CP was largely bypassed by other organizations in recent years—organizations that emerged from splits in the CP. But he argues that there are also fundamental reasons why the CP was surpassed and maintains that this development is rooted in the patterns of Latin American development.

He argues that as a result of the dependent capitalism that exists in Latin America—with students, peasants, and urban workers consigned to a marginal existence—the CPs can no longer claim to be the sole revolutionary vanguard.

Instead, "a sufficient social base exists for the appearance, not of one, but of several revolutionary organizations in a single country. . . ."

For that reason, the CPS "supports unity of action between the Communist Parties and all the revolutionary organizations that are struggling in Latin America, just as it has in El Salvador."

Handal adds that "the CPS feels that the Latin American communist movement has no monopoly of the revolutionary vanguard and that the latter must emerge in the unity process of the revolutionary organizations."

The CP general secretary believes that "a single revolutionary leadership can be expected in the near future, and the creation of a single party in the medium term."

[The next article in this series will deal with the positions of the People's Revolutionary Army-Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (ERP-PRS).]

Where Does American Labor Stand Today?

By David Frankel

What is the state of the American working class today? How are events affecting its combativity and consciousness?

Right now, American workers are living through the United States' second deep recession in five years. The economic crisis at home is accompanied by political turmoil around the world.

With the rise of the world revolution over the past few years, Washington has been arming more feverishly than ever. It promises to stand fast against revolution in South Korea, in Thailand, in Saudi Arabia, in Central America and the Caribbean—in short, wherever it might break out.

Current projections are that the U.S. government will devote \$1 trillion (\$1,000,000,000,000) to military spending over the coming five years. Activation of the Pentagon's new Rapid Deployment Force (now up to 300,000 troops) was announced June 18. And registration of young men for a draft has been signed into law.

During the Vietnam war, President Lyndon Johnson insisted that fighting revolutions abroad would not affect the standard of living of working people in the United States. He promised to eliminate poverty at home and build a "great society" while crushing the Vietnamese.

Today, this pretense has been tossed aside. Gripped by economic crisis, American capitalism can no longer police the world in the interests of big business without driving down the standard of living of the working class that provides its profit base.

Ever-higher military budgets are to be accompanied by cutbacks in social services. As President Carter put it March 14, American workers can expect "pain" and "discipline."

The same economic forces that are driving the U.S. ruling class into battle against the world revolution are also driving it into battle against the American workers. It is not just a matter of financing counterrevolutionary wars abroad. American capitalism is facing the loss of markets not only to proletarian revolutions, but also to its capitalist competitors in Western Europe and Japan. To compete effectively, it must drastically increase productivity and lower wages. That is, it must drive back the living standards—and hence the rights and organizations—of the American working class.

Pursuit of private profit—the be-all and end-all of capitalism—is forcing the rulers onto the offensive. They cannot attain

their aims of pushing back the revolutionary upsurge abroad, and of reducing real wages and cutting back social gains at home, without blaming foreign enemies and convincing American workers to sacrifice in the interests of defeating those supposed enemies.

Thus, the imperialist offensive against the toilers of the world and against the toilers at home is a *single offensive* that is being carried out on a world scale.

Inflation and Unemployment

The effects of the ruling class offensive at home are painfully evident to American workers. Real wages dropped by more than 5 percent in 1979, and the loss promises to continue in 1980.

During the first quarter of this year, with consumer prices leaping upward at an annual rate of 18 percent, Carter announced wage guidelines limiting raises to an average of 8.5 percent.

As the new recession began to take hold, inflation abated to an annual rate of 11 percent in April and May. A *New York Times* headline expressed relief at this "modest monthly increase," although the same rate was viewed as calamitous in 1973. The worsening condition of the U.S. economy is indicated by the fact that inflation prior to the 1974-75 recession peaked at about 12 percent, compared to 18 percent before the current downturn.

Unemployment has also hit the working class hard. The huge U.S. construction industry is in crisis. Its decline in March was the sharpest monthly fall since World War II, and between January and May, more than 300,000 construction workers lost their jobs.

The slump is even worse in the auto industry. Out of some 800,000 hourly workers, more than 300,000 have been thrown out of work. A sharp downturn in steel is also taking place, with some 50,000 steelworkers unemployed.

Official unemployment figures in April soared from 6.2 percent to 7 percent—a jump representing 825,000 newly unemployed workers in a single month. In May, another 889,000 workers were thrown onto the streets, bringing unemployment to 7.8 percent. The two-month increase was the biggest since records began being kept early in the century.

One difference between this recession and the 1974-75 downturn is the extent to which the ruling class is taking advantage of the crisis to shut down less productive plants, especially in auto and steel, and to merge rail lines. Because of increasing

international competition, the capitalists must move toward restructuring older branches of industry.

Since the beginning of this year, the U.S. Steel Corporation has cut 13,000 jobs through plant closings. The Firestone Rubber Company has shut down six plants, eliminating 9,000 jobs. Five thousand auto workers lost their jobs at a single stroke when Ford closed its Mahwah, New Jersey, plant June 20.

Social Gains Under Attack

Meanwhile, federal, state, and city governments are cutting back or eliminating many of the social gains won in previous battles—social gains that are a basic part of the standard of living of the working class.

Municipal hospitals and health services are starved for funds or closed down outright. Less money is spent on education. Libraries are closed or forced to reduce their hours. Garbage collection and fire protection are cut back. Public parks are not maintained.

Accompanying these budget cuts have been attacks on the wages and working conditions of public workers. In Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C., Detroit, and other cities, public workers are being told they must give back gains that they won in the past.

This is another difference between the current recession and the one in 1974-75. During the earlier recession, the attack on social services and government workers was less generalized. It was concentrated in New York, and it was explained as the result of bad management by New York City authorities. Today, cities across the country are facing similar budget crises as state and federal subsidies are cut back while inflation mounts.

An indication of the social tensions being generated by the recession and the attacks on social services was the Black rebellion in the Liberty City section of Miami, the biggest since the 1960s. Although Miami ranks well below the national average in overall unemployment, the jobless rate among youths in Liberty City is 50 percent.

A particularly ominous sign from the standpoint of the capitalists was the extent to which white workers sympathized with the Miami revolt and felt that the Black population was expressing legitimate grievances.

The rulers are also trying to push back the gains made by women. Discriminatory layoffs are driving women out of newly

won jobs in industry, thus worsening the economic squeeze on working-class families—both those headed by women and those that have come to depend on two paychecks. By forcing women out of industry, employers are also trying to sap the militancy these fighters have brought into the unions.

The attack on women's rights is emerging as a central aspect of the capitalist offensive.

In June, the Illinois legislature voted down the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. constitution. This was followed by the Supreme Court's decision that the government does not have to finance medically necessary abortions for poor women. And in July the Republican Party voted to drop its forty-year-old plank in support of the ERA from its platform and to come out for completely outlawing abortion.

Demands for social equality, such as those raised by the women's liberation movement, stand directly in the way of what the rulers are trying to do. They must increase social inequality, not eliminate it.

Overall, the capitalists are probing, testing, constantly pushing, looking for weaknesses and openings that will allow them to go after the trade unions.

Although there has been no frontal assault on a major industrial union since the 1977-78 nationwide coal miners strike, it is only a matter of time until the ruling class again tests the resistance of the industrial workers.

UAW Joins Anti-Import Campaign

Accompanying the drive against working people has been an ideological campaign aimed at putting the blame for what is happening on other workers—especially on foreign workers.

Layoffs are blamed on Japanese and European imports.

Rising gas prices are blamed on the Arabs and Iranians.

Racism against immigrants is being whipped up. Emigrés from Cuba were greeted by Ku Klux Klan demonstrations.

What has been the reaction to this capitalist offensive among the top officials of the trade unions?

Trade-union officials in electrical, textile, steel, auto, and other industries have joined with the companies in blaming plant closings and unemployment on imports.

United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser, for example, asked the government June 12 for higher tariffs and trade quotas. "With more than 300,000 U.A.W. members in the auto industry laid off," Fraser said, "there is a pressing need to restrain imports, particularly from Japan."

Earlier in the month, buttons, banners, and placards at the UAW's twenty-sixth convention proclaimed slogans such as: "Buy an import, lay off a neighbor" and "Hungry? Eat your Toyota."

Fraser has cultivated a reputation as a



Osborne Hart/Militant
UAW PRESIDENT FRASER: Urges restraint on imports, 'particularly from Japan.'

progressive trade unionist. He has been friendlier than most other union officials—at least in word—to the demands and struggles of Blacks, Latinos, women, and other oppressed layers.

But on the life-and-death issue of jobs, Fraser gives the same answer as the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy. His progressive facade breaks down as soon as the question of using the power of the unions in combat against the bosses is posed. He blames the Japanese instead.

Bureaucrats such as Fraser used to function in a well-established framework. They would deliver electoral support to the capitalist parties—generally the Democrats—and line up the trade unions behind the bipartisan foreign policy of American imperialism. In return, they expected modest but steady economic gains for the union membership, especially the better-paid, skilled workers.

With the intensification of the capitalist offensive, however, the old methods no longer seem to work. The established framework has been thrown out of joint, and the union leadership is at a loss for what to do.

Shifts by Union Leaders

Of course, the union tops have not been entirely supine. The organizations that they rest on are under attack, and they

have been forced to undertake some defensive actions. Modest organizing efforts have been undertaken in the South in response to the rising desire of workers there for union protection, as well as to try to counteract plant closings in the unionized North and Midwest. (Companies frequently close down unionized plants in the North and reopen a nonunion operation in the South.)

Also, the union tops are searching for allies. They have seen the necessity of responding to the big influx of women into the labor force by taking a friendlier stance toward the women's movement, for example. A rally in Chicago in support of the ERA, held on April 26, drew many of the top labor leaders in the country, including Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, the U.S. labor federation. Until it changed its position late in 1973, the AFL-CIO had actively campaigned *against* the ERA, and only recently has it begun to give any active support to the ERA struggle.

More and more, union officials are talking about radical proposals, such as nationalization of the giant oil companies, and about the possibility of forming a labor party.

All these shifts by the top leadership have contributed to new openings in the labor movement, to a new mood. However, the shifts by the leadership remain within the framework of class collaboration. Their starting point is that the fate of the workers must be tied to the profits of the bosses and to the capitalist system. They seek to maneuver and put pressure on the rulers within that framework.

Once the framework of protecting capitalist profits to "protect jobs" is accepted, the logic leads to retreating from the fight to protect workers' interests on all fronts. After all, the capitalists have fought every advance for the working class—from laws reducing hours of work and limiting child labor to the introduction of trade unions—with the argument that restricting profits would cause businesses to shut down and would only hurt the workers.

This is the logic that has been accepted by top American trade union leaders. A grim example is the performance of the UAW in face of the threat of bankruptcy by the Chrysler Corporation. In the name of keeping Chrysler going and preserving the jobs of Chrysler workers, the UAW agreed to accept the layoff of tens of thousands of Chrysler workers and substandard wages for those who remained.

The union urged tax-breaks for Chrysler—that is, government subsidies, paid for by the taxes of working people. And it also urged the lowering of government pollution and safety standards. Nothing was to be allowed to stand in the way of profits for "our" auto industry!

Light at End of Tunnel?

In May, Fraser was elected to a seat on Chrysler's board of directors—symboliz-

ing his commitment to corporate profits. On June 18, the UAW chief hailed a U.S. Senate resolution on the auto industry, saying "Our members appreciate the Senate's action in their behalf."

What the Senate had done in behalf of auto workers was to endorse policies "designed to create adequate capital [i.e., profits] and to produce a climate for the American automobile and truck industry to achieve a rapid conversion of plant capacity. . . ."

The resolution also urged that during "this period of transition for the U.S. auto industry, reasonable restraint should be exercised by all affected parties with respect to prices and wages. . . ."

Nor is Fraser the only top union bureaucrat to be forced into a position of taking more and more responsibility for the implementation of the capitalist offensive. The Steelworkers and Rubber Workers unions have both pushed substandard contracts in reply to threats of plant closings.

James Smith, a top aide to Steelworkers President Lloyd McBride, was approvingly quoted in the June 23 issue of *Iron Age*, an industry publication. Smith's advice to the workers was to moderate their demands on the companies, since "the money tree just doesn't have all that much money up in the branches anymore and shaking it may destroy the roots."

This perspective is not an inspiring one for the millions of American workers who need jobs or for the millions who are being told that they must accept cuts in their wages and working conditions so that the employers can be assured of big enough profits.

Speaking June 1 at the opening of the UAW convention, Fraser told the assembled delegates: "I wish I could come here with some optimistic news. [But] if you see a light at the end of the tunnel, it is probably an oncoming freight train."

Confusion, Frustration, Anger

Among the workers themselves, there is considerable demoralization because of massive layoffs and plant closings. Many feel nothing can be done about the economic downturn and its results.

There is also confusion and frustration, a lack of clarity about who the enemy is and what can be done to resist the attacks that seem to be coming from all sides. Among steel and auto workers, there is widespread acceptance of the idea that jobs are threatened by imports. At the same time, however, there is an openness to other explanations and a thirst for new ideas about what is behind the crisis.

Finally, there is anger. Workers are feeling the impact of the capitalist offensive, and they are being driven to fight back. This has been reflected in strike statistics. Except for the period of the national coal strike in 1978, strikes during the first quarter of 1980 were at the highest level in ten years.

Virtually all of the strikes have been defensive in character, with workers struggling to maintain past gains under attacks by the bosses. A good example was the strike by 60,000 members of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW), which began January 8 and lasted more than two months. (At some Texas refineries, the strike lasted five months.)

Certainly the oil companies were in a position to meet the modest demands of the workers! In 1979 they had chalked up the biggest profits in history, and so far 1980 profits have been even larger. Exxon, for example, raked in \$1,925 million in the first three months of 1980. Mobil only made \$1,381 million.

Such profits, as the oil barons repeatedly explain, are for the good of the whole country. Therefore, they refused to pay for any dental plan for the workers, they refused the demand for a fully paid medical plan, and they stood fast on their offer of a 9 percent wage increase with no cost-of-living escalator.

In provoking the nationwide oil strike, the most powerful sector of the ruling rich was doing a service for their entire class. They were trying to hold any wage increase within Carter's wage guidelines, and they were hoping to strike some blows at OCAW—and through OCAW at the trade-union movement and the working class as a whole.

Three days after the strike began, the oil giants stopped negotiating with OCAW. Scabs were moved in to keep the struck refineries operating. And the companies began turning the screws on the strikers.

Letters were sent to strikers threatening disciplinary action. Strikers were threatened with being fired and some union militants were fired. Payments on the medical insurance of striking workers were cut off by the companies.

The bosses also used the courts. Injunctions limiting picketing were granted in a number of areas, and police harassed and arrested picketers. Private detectives were hired to film picket lines and to take down license plate numbers of cars used by striking workers.

Government complicity with the oil barons extended well beyond the police and courts. On March 14, in the midst of the strike, Carter came out with a new austerity plan whose effect was to back up the position of the employers. Moreover, federal and local antipollution and safety boards refused to cite the oil companies for gross violations caused by having scabs run the struck refineries.

But the union ranks held solid. With each passing day, the threat of a disastrous explosion at the scab-operated refineries was growing, and the bosses knew it. Also, solidarity actions involving other trade unions began to develop, particularly in California.

Solidarity rallies were held in Los An-

geles and San Francisco, and on March 1, dockworkers brought the Los Angeles-Long Beach harbor to a near standstill. The stoppage by the harbor workers gave the bosses a sobering jolt.

Fear that a prolonged battle would lead to further mobilizations by the workers and of the danger to refineries posed by scab operations convinced the oil companies to begin negotiating seriously. Within two weeks a tentative settlement was announced.

Need for Labor Party

It is worth noting a number of general points in regard to the oil strike.

Although the oil industry in the United States is largely unorganized, and despite the fact that OCAW was unable to halt production at the struck refineries, the companies were not able to go very far in taking on the oil workers.

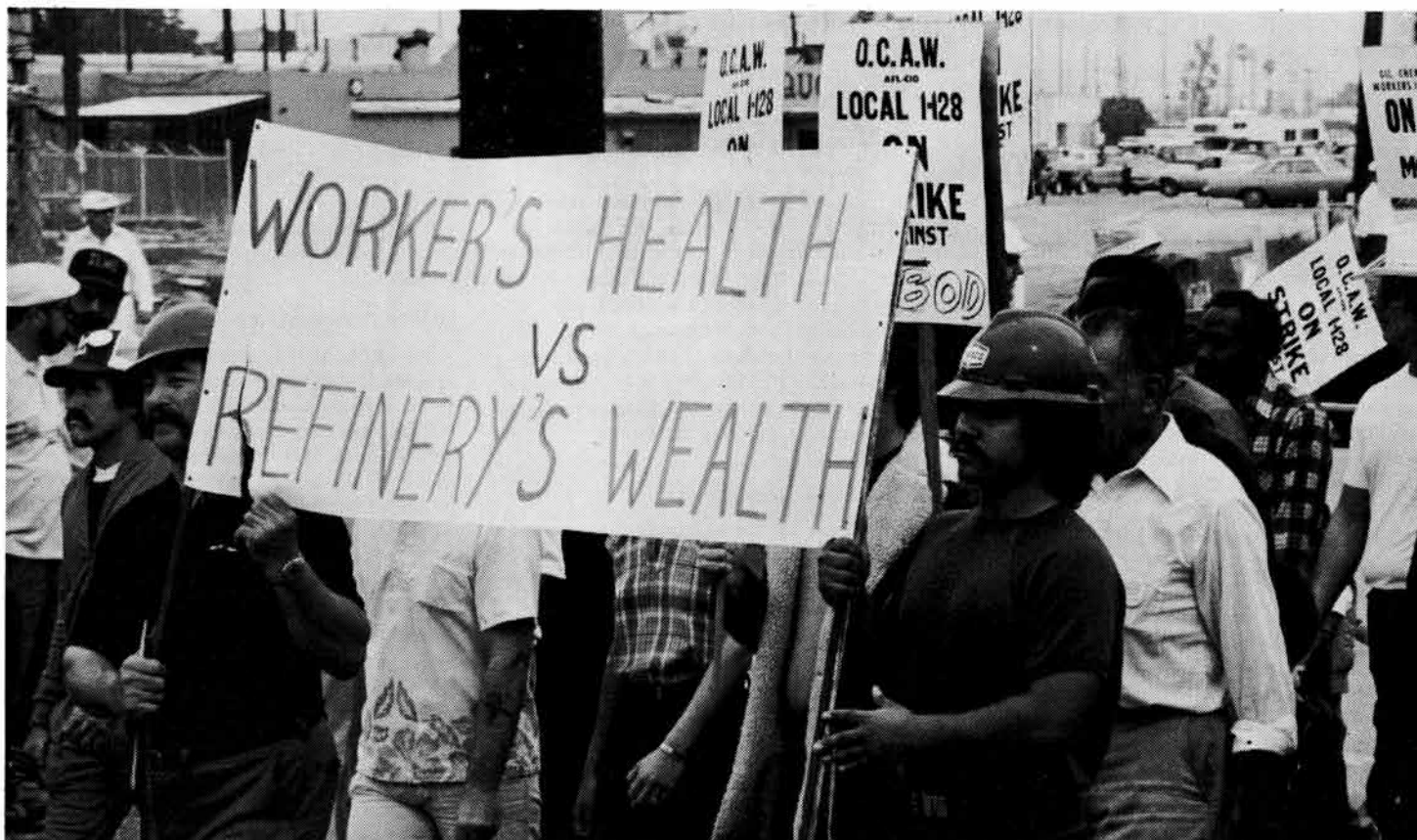
OCAW won an average wage increase of 10.5 percent—less than what the workers need to keep up with inflation, but still above Carter's guideline and the original company offer. The workers also won an increase in medical benefits, a new dental plan, and most importantly, they stopped widespread reprisals.

In short, the defensive battle fought by the oil workers, while resulting in no big gains, did succeed in holding back the worst effects of the company offensive. The overall relationship of forces remained unchanged. The inability of the ruling class to take its attack on OCAW any further is an indication that they are not yet ready to make a frontal assault on the far stronger unions in other branches of basic industry.

Another aspect of the oil workers strike was also closely tied to the general state of the class struggle in the United States. That was the union's complete political paralysis.

Like the trade-union bureaucracy as a whole, the OCAW officialdom is closely tied to the capitalist Democratic Party. But it is the Democratic Party, led by Carter, that is implementing the austerity policies that OCAW members were fighting on the picket lines. In states such as Texas and Louisiana, where the bulk of striking OCAW members were, the union confronted Democratic judges and local officials. It was widely noted (by OCAW members) that not a single Democratic or Republican politician came out in support of the strike.

Following OCAW's battle with the oil barons, Anthony Mazzocchi, the OCAW health and safety director, who was narrowly defeated in the election for the union presidency last year, spoke to a gathering of trade unionists in New Jersey. The meeting addressed by Mazzocchi was a labor conference called "Big Business on the Rampage"—which gives an indication of how the labor officialdom views the situation in the United States today.



Oil workers demonstrate in Los Angeles March 1.

Walter Lippman/Militant

In a speech that reflected the experience of the oil workers strike, Mazzocchi declared, "There will be no relief" from the antilabor offensive "within the context of the current political situation. In fact it can only get worse."

Mazzocchi continued: "A common thread of agreement running through our entire union is the need for independent political expression."

Lack of a mass political party based on the working class organizations—the trade unions—has crippled the ability of American workers to defend their interests. Some of the more farsighted trade-union officials are beginning to worry about their own future in light of the attitude taken by the Democratic Party in recent years.

Labor finds itself unable to make legislative gains, Mazzocchi said, "because we have agreed to play by the rules of the game that have been created by big business. The Democratic Party is the party of oil. We have to be naive not to understand that."

"I know that many of us, and I'm one of them, played a key role in the Democratic Party for many years. In looking back, it is no longer productive."

Turning to the 1980 elections, Mazzocchi said, "Let's suppose we elect everyone the labor movement is endorsing. Our lives will be precisely the same the day after the election. We will not have advanced our interests one iota."

As proof, Mazzocchi pointed out that although labor helped elect Carter and an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress, not one piece of pro-labor legislation has been passed. The unions count it as a legislative victory when the worst antilabor bills are blocked or toned down.

In the past ten years, he noted, the only significant pro-labor legislation was the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act—and that was passed under the Nixon administration.

Chicago Fire Fighters . . .

Nowhere has the political dead end that the labor movement is in shown up more clearly than in the case of the assault on public employees. The two biggest cities in the United States—New York and Chicago—have both been the scene of battles this year between city workers and budget-cutting municipal governments. In both cases, the city unions faced Democratic Party mayors elected with union support.

During her 1979 election campaign, Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne had promised fire fighters a union contract. But in February Byrne, who had already forced transit workers and teachers out on strike, turned her guns on the fire fighters union and reneged on her campaign promise.

Aided by the courts, which issued an injunction barring the strike and picketing, and which then hit the union and its

leaders with fines of \$40,000 a day, Byrne attempted to break the union. She hired hundreds of scabs to replace the 4,300 strikers and was backed up by a vicious labor-baiting campaign in the media.

But the striking fire fighters were able to reach out to the rest of the Chicago labor movement and to the Black community, especially after union President Frank Muscare was sentenced to five months in prison for defying the court order against the strike.

Four thousand people turned out at a solidarity rally February 23 at which James Balanoff, director of the powerful Steelworkers District 31, declared that "the steelworkers gathered in this district pledge moral, financial, and physical support if necessary—physical support by staffing the picket lines."

Balanoff had earlier attended a meeting of the 18,000-member Steelworkers Local 1010 and urged them to support the fire fighters strike and attend the rally.

A solidarity committee including Balanoff and other union leaders was set up.

Mass picketing, marches, and rallies by the fire fighters continued. On March 5, the foremost figure in the Chicago Black community, Rev. Jesse Jackson, appeared at a strike rally. Jackson made a militant speech in support of the fire fighters, and the next day he and union officials led several thousand chanting fire fighters

and their families on a march through downtown Chicago.

At Jackson's initiative, the mostly white fire fighters included an affirmative-action clause in their contract demands. This clause, providing for the hiring of more Black and Latino fire fighters, undercut Byrne's attempt to turn the Black community against the union. It reflected the rapid development of consciousness among the union ranks on the need for an alliance with the Black community, as well as with the rest of organized labor.

Faced with the possibility that a continuation of the attack on the fire fighters might backfire and result in even greater solidarity and an even bigger victory for the workers, Byrne was forced to back down and concede the union's demands.

. . . And New York Transit Workers

The struggle of the Chicago fire fighters set an example for municipal workers around the country. But the lessons of the strike were not generalized and assimilated by the labor movement. In part, this was due to the role of the capitalist media, which simply lied about the strike and its outcome, portraying it as a defeat for the union. However, it also reflected the fact that, with the exception of the small Trotskyist forces, there is no leadership layer in the American labor movement that saw the importance of the fire fighters' struggle and attempted to convey the lessons of that struggle to the labor movement as a whole.

Only three weeks after the end of the Chicago fire fighters strike, some 33,000 New York City transit workers went out on strike. The New York transit workers were not asking for any new gains. Their main demand—for a 30 percent wage increase—would have just made up for the buying power that they had lost through inflation since their last contract in 1974.

The potential power of the New York transit workers was far greater than that of the fire fighters in Chicago. For eleven days they shut down tight the vital transportation network that usually carries some 5.4 million people a day.

As in Chicago, the capitalist media kept up a vicious propaganda barrage against the strikers. Huge punitive fines were levied against the union and individual strikers. But in New York, unlike Chicago, no sector of the local trade-union officialdom actively supported the strike. Nor was there any Black or Latino leader of Jackson's standing who was able to play a role in helping to forge an alliance with the oppressed nationalities.

The leadership of the transit workers opposed any attempt to mobilize the union ranks in marches and meetings, as in Chicago. Nor did it initiate the kind of solidarity campaign that made such an impact in Chicago. The workers held firm on the picket lines, but they were isolated in the political battle.

In the end, the workers were left with a contract that provided a 9 percent wage increase in the first year and an 8 percent raise in the second. This compares with an 8-percent-a-year offer that the transit workers had rejected right after the strike began.

Also included in the contract was the elimination of some gains the union had won in the past, such as twenty minutes a day of break time. New workers will be required to work at substandard pay, according to the new contract.

Clearly, in the case of the transit workers strike, the ruling class was successful in chipping away at the position of the unions and in moving its austerity drive forward.

Need for Solidarity

A big part of the austerity drive, which has been going on in New York for six years now, has been the attempt to divide the working class.

Workers in private industry are told that they must pay high taxes to provide high wages and fringe benefits for public workers.

Public workers are played off against each other—they are told that if one sector wins a wage increase, it will come out of the wages and benefits of another sector. Similarly, teachers, sanitation workers, transit workers, and others are pitted against each other on the issue of layoffs, with union bureaucrats urging layoffs in job categories other than the ones they represent.

Employed workers are incited against the unemployed. There is a continuous stream of propaganda about welfare payments and unemployment benefits being too high, thus boosting taxes. Another part of the propaganda campaign is the big lie that those on welfare are living a life of ease at the expense of employed workers.

And of course, there is the ongoing attempt to turn American workers against their brothers and sisters in other countries. Workers are constantly told by the capitalist media, the capitalist politicians, and their lieutenants in the labor movement that if immigrant workers don't take their jobs away, foreign imports will.

The impact of this divisive propaganda was indicated in a negative way by the failure of the rest of the labor movement in New York—and nationally—to come to the defense of the transit workers.

The deadly fear that the rulers have of solidarity within the working class was indicated during a strike by 800 ferry boat workers in April.

The ferry workers, who transport commuters across Washington State's Puget Sound, were forced out on strike April 5. Both the union president and the secretary-treasurer were jailed for refusing to order the workers back. Heavy fines were imposed on the union. The state was demanding take-away contract terms, ref-

using to negotiate, and clearly hoping to break the union.

But on the eleventh day of the strike, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and the Teamsters union shut down every port on Puget Sound for twenty-four hours. Solidarity and financial support was also voted by machinists in the area's huge aircraft industry. On the twelfth day of the strike, the state settled.

Unions Defend Women's Rights

In light of the concerted attempt to deepen the divisions within the working class, it is particularly significant that the ruling class has had less success than ever before in using its traditional weapons of racism and sexism. This reflects the impact of the civil rights movement and the women's liberation movement.

Defense of affirmative-action plans to increase the number of Blacks and women in jobs previously barred to them is the official stance of the trade-union movement as a whole. Unions such as the Steelworkers and the United Mine Workers have held officially sponsored women's conferences and have joined in the campaign for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

At the Illinois Labor Conference for the ERA, held in Chicago April 26, the leadership of the entire American trade-union movement came together on a single platform, together with feminist leaders and Black trade unionists. Among the speakers were AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland; United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser; and Teamsters Secretary-Treasurer Ray Schoessling.

Nor surprisingly, the stance of the unions in defense of equal rights has been an important factor where there have been victories. This was the case in the Chicago fire fighters strike, and it has also been the case in organizing victories in the South.

Unionization in the South was largely prevented in the past due to the division of the working class imposed by the system of legal segregation known as Jim Crow. But the destruction of the Jim Crow system by the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the economic crisis of the 1970s have led to a new wave of union activity throughout the South.

A historic victory in the drive to unionize the open-shop South was won in late March, when nearly 16,000 workers at the Tenneco shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, won a union contract. The victory of the Steelworkers union at Newport News, after a bitter four-year battle, represents the biggest organizing victory anywhere in the country in decades.

About half the Newport News workers are Black. Nearly one-third are women. Blacks and women served as organizers and leaders of strike committees and were crucial in keeping the picket lines going.

When more than 5,000 trade unionists

and members of women's and civil rights organizations marched in Richmond, Virginia, January 13 to demand ratification of the ERA, they were led by a contingent of Steelworkers from Newport News.

Other workers in the heavily industrialized Tidewater area have been inspired by the victory at Tenneco. Workers at thirty-six work places have asked the Steelworkers for help in organizing drives, and the UAW is also carrying out organizing campaigns in the area. In addition, the Steelworkers have announced that they intend to organize the Avondale shipyard in New Orleans, with nearly 10,000 workers.

UAW 'Jihad' Shows Spirit of Workers

There is no lack of fighting spirit within the American working class. The willingness of the workers to fight has been demonstrated in general by an increase in long strikes involving large numbers of workers, such as the OCAW strike.

Another example was the International Harvester strike by 35,000 UAW members. The Harvester strike lasted more than five months—from November 1, 1979, to April 21, 1980. It was the longest national strike in the history of the UAW.

When it was over, the workers had successfully beaten back the company's attempt to impose mandatory overtime. No Harvester worker will have to put in more than forty hours a week over the next three years unless he or she wants to. This is an inspiration for the hundreds of thousands of UAW members who are forced to work fifty, sixty, or more hours each week.

The ban on forced overtime was won by the Harvester workers in the 1940s. As the union newsletter explained in early February, "We're sure not giving up the forty-hour week. We're not going backward thirty years."

Cletus Williams, a member of the union bargaining committee in Canton, Illinois, told reporters: "This here's a jihad. Isn't that what they call those holy wars over there in Iran, jihads. That's what this is."

By the time the Harvester workers' jihad was over, the company had lost almost \$500 million. Archie McCardell, the union-busting executive who had been brought in to cut the workers down to size, claimed it was all part of the game plan.

But as *Wall Street Journal* reporter Meg Cox pointed out, "Even a cursory look at the new three-year contract shows that Harvester didn't get anywhere near its original demands. Many analysts agree with one who concluded: 'They've lost more than they'll ever gain back.'"

The combativeness of the working class was also shown this year by events in the West Virginia coal fields, where the biggest strike since the 110-day walkout in 1977-78 took place.

It began in February with a walkout by members of United Mine Workers Local 4060 over job assignments. The conflict



Eric Simpson/Militant

Newport News Steelworkers won biggest organizing battle anywhere in the United States in decades.

quickly took on larger importance when the company fired local President Mike Zemonick. Nearly all of the 6,000 miners in UMW District 31 then joined a week-long solidarity strike.

Consol, as the Consolidation Coal Company is known, answered by firing twelve more miners. When arbitration rulings began upholding those firings, 3,500 Consol miners walked out again March 19.

A procompany judge—the only kind there is in the United States—ordered the strikers individually fined \$25 for each shift they missed and banned them from making public statements or distributing literature "relating to the strike."

The renewed strike lasted nearly a month. At its height, nine of West Virginia's ten largest mines were shut down.

Consol's provocations were intended to soften up the union for the upcoming national contract negotiations. One local UMW leader told the U.S. revolutionary socialist weekly *Militant* that the companies "want strict control of the work force. They're telling the members that you will do what we want you to do, when we want you to do it, and how we want you to do it. They want to use this to intimidate every local union officer and every local mine committee."

The strike, which was not sanctioned by the national union leadership, ended after an agreement was reached in which fines against the strikers and the union local were dropped and the company agreed not to take reprisals against miners who had picketed during the work stoppage. How-

ever, eleven miners originally fired by Consol were not rehired.

Where Labor Stands Today

In looking back over the class struggle in the United States over the past six months, it is clear that there have been no big gains by the workers except for organizing victories in the South. There have been some defensive actions that have prevented serious defeats. And there have been some setbacks. In general, the unions are on the defensive and the workers are under attack on numerous fronts.

Unemployment is the most pressing immediate issue facing the trade unions. But the union officialdom has not even attempted to address this issue in contract negotiations. It has made no move to fight for a shorter workweek.

Up to now, the capitalist offensive has been conducted mainly on the level of a general austerity drive, through budget cutting and through attacks on unorganized or weakly organized workers. The rulers are still at the stage of chipping away at the main industrial unions, trying to weaken, divide, and demoralize them, in order to prepare the way for frontal attacks at a later time.

Labor's political dependence on the capitalist parties has hamstringed the unions in every area. They cannot defend the workers against unemployment without taking on the employing class politically and placing the blame for unemployment on the capitalists, where it belongs.

The unions cannot fight effectively for

prolabor legislation as long as they are tied to parties that say labor's interests must take the back seat to the "national interest"—that is, to the interests of the employers.

Unions today cannot even wage effective strikes without taking on the capitalist courts, the strikebreaking laws passed by the capitalist parties, and Carter's wage guidelines. To do this effectively requires a political offensive against the employers and their representatives in government and the mobilization of the workers and their allies. Only a party of labor, speaking in behalf of all the oppressed and exploited, can conduct the kind of fight that will be required for the workers to make real gains.

Steps Toward Labor Party

Discussion on the idea of a labor party has been taking place for some time now within the trade-union movement. The speech by OCAW Health and Safety Director Anthony Mazzocchi, quoted earlier in this article, is an example.

A more extensive discussion has been taking place in California. In September 1979 John Henning, secretary-treasurer of the 1.8 million-member California Labor Federation (CLF), which represents the AFL-CIO unions in California, declared that "labor must consider the advantages of a separate political party."

On September 6, 1979, the CLF executive board unanimously approved a motion authorizing a conference "to reassess our political activity and to give serious consideration to the feasibility of establishing a Labor Party."

Resolutions supporting such a discussion were passed by Central Labor Councils in four California counties and by numerous local unions. In March, the California State Council of Carpenters, representing 100,000 union carpenters, passed a resolution "to cooperate with other labor organizations in support of the concept of a Labor Party. . . ."

Most recently, on June 5, some 200 delegates attended a CLF-sponsored conference on "Labor's Political Action." Justin Ostro, general vice-president of the International Association of Machinists, declared at the conference:

"The labor movement is under serious attack. This is probably the most severe attack that the labor movement has ever faced. It is not just a whim, something they're trying. They smell success and they believe that they can be successful in ridding their environment of unions."

Support for the idea of a labor party was strong at the conference. Henning reported that the 71,000-member District 38 of the United Steelworkers had just passed a labor party resolution. Others, including top AFL-CIO officials, defended the policy of supporting the Democratic Party. But they were unable to use the old methods of silencing any opposition.

At one point Al Barkan, head of the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education—the union federation's vote-getting machine—saw a delegate shake his head in disagreement over Barkan's reply to his question. "Brother, don't shake your head," Barkan snapped.

Henning interjected, "Al, the right to shake one's head is protected in the constitution."

In closing the conference, Henning said, "We're opening a new door for the labor movement of this state. . . . We've heard liberal thinking, we've heard conservative thinking, we've heard a little bit of radical thinking. The labor movement should be a forum for free thought."

Officials such as Henning and Mazzocchi have helped initiate the labor party discussion in the unions partly as a way of threatening the Democrats in order to try to get more concessions from them and partly as an expression of their frustration over the complete failure of their previous electoral policy. And however timid they themselves would be in actually taking the step, they realize deep down that the formation of such a party is the next step for the American working class.

And the labor party idea is being taken up by wider layers. In the most important step so far, activists in the Steelworkers union in the Youngstown, Ohio, area, have decided to run their own independent

candidate for Congress against the Democrats and Republicans.

This labor campaign grows directly out of a three-year struggle against steel plant closings that have devastated Youngstown. Four of the five major mills there, which form the base of the city's economy, are completely or partially shut down.

Ed Mann, president of Steelworkers Local 1462, a steelworker for twenty-eight years and a leader in the fight against the plant shutdowns, is the candidate.

"The platform is jobs," he told the *Militant*, noting, "After we are certified for the ballot . . . we are going to call a meeting in the congressional district and develop the platform from that."

When asked why he did not run as a Democrat or Republican, Mann replied, "I don't think anything would change if I ran as a Democrat or Republican. We're looking for change."

A New Trend in the Unions

Ed Mann and the Youngstown steelworkers backing him are not the only ones looking for change. A new generation of young workers has entered the American labor force and the trade unions. The changing composition of the American working class and the changing views of the workers are being reflected in the unions.

During the last recession, the official

Socialist Program for Jobs

The Socialist Workers Party proposes the following emergency steps to provide jobs for all and to protect working people against inflation:

1. **Emergency relief.** The government should pay all jobless workers, including youth and others just entering the labor force, unemployment compensation at full union-scale wages for the entire time they are out of work.

2. **Funds for jobs, not for war.** Dump the inflationary \$150 billion military budget and use the money to expand social services and launch a public works program to meet the needs of working people for schools, housing, hospitals, clinics, child-care centers, libraries, parks, and public transit systems.

3. **Shorter workweek.** Ban forced overtime and reduce the legal workweek to thirty hours, with no reduction in current weekly take-home pay (including normal overtime premiums).

4. **Open the books of the monopolies.** Make public all the secret documents and transactions, financial and other records of the oil, steel, auto, coal, and other corporations that jack up prices or lay off workers. Let us see the

truth about their profits, tax swindles, payoffs, and bribes, as well as their resources, production statistics, and technological possibilities.

5. **Public ownership of industry.** Nationalize the energy industry, whose hoarding and price-gouging are the biggest inflationary problem facing society. Nationalize the steel, auto, rubber, and other companies that are closing plants, dumping workers into the street, and devastating communities. Control over production—work speed, automation, hiring and firing, health and safety—should be in the hands of the workers themselves through their unions or committees. The nationalized industries should be managed by elected public boards whose meetings and records are open to all.

6. **Cost-of-living escalators** to automatically raise wages to fully compensate for all increases in the cost of living. Also COLA [cost of living allowance] for Social Security, pensions, and veterans' and disability benefits. No wage controls. Repeal Taft-Hartley and all other laws restricting workers' right to organize and strike.

labor movement was widely viewed as an enemy of those fighting for social change in the Black and women's liberation movements, just as it had been viewed as a prowar force during the struggle against U.S. aggression in Indochina. That is no longer the case.

Trade union leaders are now identified as supporters of the ERA, instead of opponents. A similar shift has taken place in regard to affirmative action for Blacks and women. The official contract demands of the Steelworkers this year included pregnancy benefits, childcare, and affirmative action.

Last year the AFL-CIO executive council raised the idea of nationalization of the energy industry.

The United Mine Workers union has come out against nuclear power and for the development of coal as an alternative. The UAW and the Machinists have called for a moratorium on the development of nuclear plants. Locals of the Mine Workers, the Steelworkers, and various rail unions have set up environmental and safety committees and held public meetings around the nuclear danger.

Foreign policy questions have been where the union bureaucrats have followed the line of the ruling class most closely. But even in that area, dissent is beginning to be registered. When the AFL-CIO executive council voted to back up Carter's call for draft registration, the heads of the Machinists and of the Service Employees International Union objected.

And the discussion at the top is only a pale reflection of what is happening among the ranks of labor.

So far, no new leadership has yet emerged within the labor movement. Until that happens, there is little prospect for dramatic changes in the performance of the unions. But the direction that things are moving in is clear.

Socialist Program for Labor

Within this context, members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance are participating in the day-to-day struggles to defend the interests of the working class, while putting forth ideas for how the labor movement could respond most effectively to the capitalist offensive.

Especially important right now is the fight for jobs and to protect the working masses from the immediate effects of the capitalist crisis. (See box.)

In addition to the struggle for a shorter workweek and for public ownership of industry, socialists in the United States are centering their propaganda around three basic ideas:

- The need for labor solidarity against the capitalist offensive. Breaking the solidarity of the working class and turning one section of the workers against another is the key strategy of the rulers—both within the United States and internationally.



Charles Ostrofsky/Militant
Trade unions are now identified as supporters of ERA, instead of opponents of women's rights.

At home, the trade unions need to defend and extend affirmative action programs designed to alleviate discrimination against women and oppressed nationalities. They must defend the rights of immigrant workers, of the unemployed, and of others who are singled out for victimization. This is a necessary part of uniting the working class as a whole in the battle to defend our interests.

Nor will the trade unions be able to defend the interests of workers in the United States unless they also defend the rights of our brothers and sisters around the world who are struggling for a better life. If the capitalists can turn American workers against workers and farmers abroad, they will have taken a giant step toward forcing through the sacrifices they are demanding.

- A second key concept is the need for democracy within the labor movement. Assuring the right of the union membership to raise ideas, to debate them, and to decide democratically between different courses of action is essential if the union ranks are to be mobilized and the strength of the masses thrown into effective combat against the bosses.

- Finally, there is the need for labor to break with the parties of the ruling class and establish its own political voice—a labor party based on the trade unions.

These ideas are winning a hearing from growing numbers of workers. Big opportunities lie ahead for revolutionaries in the

American labor movement. The crisis of capitalism is educating our class from day to day, and revolutionary socialists have the opportunity to take part in the process that will produce a new layer of working-class leaders and a revitalized American labor movement. □

Peruvian 'Democracy' in Action

An analysis of the results of the May elections for Peru's Chamber of Deputies and Senate shows that the average socialist deputy needed more than three-and-a-half times as many votes to get elected as the average deputy from Acción Popular (AP—People's Action Party), the bourgeois party that took more than half the seats in the parliament.

An article in the July 3 issue of the Peruvian weekly *Marka* notes that while the AP's 1,619,616 votes yielded it 98 elected deputies, the leftist parties, whose 854,485 votes came to more than half the AP total, elected only 14 deputies.

This means that AP received an average of 16,527 votes per elected deputy, while each leftist deputy represents 61,035 votes. Although the AP received less than 40 percent of the vote, it captured over 50 percent of the spots in the Chamber of Deputies. By contrast, the left's 20.9 percent of the vote yielded only 7.8 percent of the deputies.

Israeli Society in Deep Crisis

By Michel Warshawsky

JERUSALEM—According to the Camp David accords May 26 was to have been the deadline for the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations on the status of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since the June 1967 war. Today even the most fanatic supporters of those accords are forced to recognize that this May 26, far from witnessing the birth of the plan for autonomous administration of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, was instead marked by rejection of the imperialist accords by the Palestinian people and by an important turning point in their struggle for liberation against the Zionist occupation.

People's Rebellion on West Bank

"The situation on the West Bank is becoming more and more serious and one does not need too great an imagination to fear that the latest events in the occupied territories signal a beginning of people's rebellion." That is how an April 28 editorial in the most serious Israeli daily *Haaretz*, described the situation on the West Bank.

The term "people's rebellion" is not an exaggeration. Since early March there have been no fewer than eight general strikes, including a three-day strike on the anniversary of the independence of the state of Israel. All those strikes had mass participation. In contrast to previous strikes, the latest strikes involved not only high-school students and shopkeepers, but also the workers, including a major segment of the approximately 80,000 who travel to work within Israel's 1948 borders.

Significantly, the population and the shopkeepers in the Arab section of Jerusalem took an active part in these actions, which was not at all the case in previous years.

Along with the strikes, street demonstrations have also become a widespread phenomenon. Whether they took place in university centers like Bir Zeit, in big cities like Ramallah or Nablus, or even in small villages like Anapta, every few days a demonstration would "disturb the peace" somewhere. These demonstrations are, of course, formally prohibited and are nearly always met with violent repression by the occupation forces.

It is especially important to note that the composition of these demonstrations is changing. They are no longer composed exclusively of high-school students, although obviously these students continue to play a central role in them. But now for

the first time the masses of common people are also mobilizing in the streets.

On May 8, for example, more than 2,000 people with Palestinian flags demonstrated in the main street of Arab Jerusalem on the anniversary of the "unification" of the city thirteen years ago.

The depth of the radicalization in the occupied territories can be seen on the level of individual reactions: people throw stones and molotov cocktails at military patrols, they refuse to hold their tongues and bow their heads during identification checks, they wear clothes bearing the Palestinian colors, and above all they have the courage to publicly declare that they reject the occupation and the autonomy plan and support the Palestinian organizations.

The most significant incident in several months was the May 2 attack on a large group of Kiryat Arba settlers that took place in the middle of Hebron. (Kiryat Arba is the largest Jewish settlement in the occupied territories and overlooks Hebron.)

That attack, which took place only a few yards from Israeli soldiers, was different from other armed operations carried out by the Palestinian resistance. The differences lay not only in the audacity of the commandos, but also in the choice of objectives, the moment chosen, and especially the interconnection of this operation with mobilizations of the local population and with the sentiments of larger and larger currents within the Israeli population.

The Conjunctural Causes of the Radicalization

Clearly, as the previously cited editorial in *Haaretz* stated, "the roots [of the rebellion] must be sought in the very logic of a military occupation whose oppressive character brings with it terrorism, and terrorism in turn brings even stronger repression, and so on. . . ." But in addition to this root cause, we must also look for the conjunctural causes of the present radicalization.

In fact, after late 1976, when the occupation forces used fierce repression to stop several months of big demonstrations, there was relative quiet in the occupied territories.

In the first place, contrary to the statements of Israeli authorities, the resistance demonstrations did not provoke the intensification of the occupation, but rather it was a series of Israeli provocations that provoked a chain reaction within the occupied population.

The most important of these provocations is the all-out settlement policy being carried out right in the heart of the Palestinian population centers. In contrast to its Labor Party predecessor, the present Likud government *openly and publicly* argues that the territory of Israel (Palestine) is indivisible, and asserts it has the right and duty to establish Jewish settlements throughout all of Palestine.

With support at the highest levels, and with the crude methods and provocative statements of General Ariel Sharon, the Likud government began a campaign of accelerated settlement throughout the occupied territories. It started expropriating thousands of acres of private, cultivated land—which the Labor Party had tried to avoid, or at least tried to do as discreetly as possible. And it announced to the whole world, and particularly to the Palestinians, that the West Bank was for once and for all an integral part of the state of Israel.

This policy, linked to Prime Minister Menachem Begin's draft plan for autonomous administration, was undoubtedly the biggest factor in sparking the appearance of a new wave of struggles in the occupied territories. "Today we are carrying out a defensive struggle," one of the central leaders of the nationalist movement in the occupied territories told me two months ago. "And our objective is at all costs to prevent the Begin government from achieving new successes in its policy of creeping annexation."

In fact it is the Begin government that launched the offensive. Not only through the creeping settlements policy, but also by stepping up military and paramilitary repression. This repression involved systematic attacks against educational establishments (in particular the University of Bir Zeit, the teachers college in Ramallah, the closing of Abou Dies College of Sciences, etc.), threats against the political leaders and the expulsion decree against Nablus mayor Bassam Shaka, and particularly repeated attacks by the Gush Emunim settlers who, with the tacit support of the military government and armed by it, have become an autonomous police force in those occupied territories.

Those settlers go out on Arab-bashing expeditions; they organize punitive operations in neighborhoods, villages, or camps suspected of creating trouble; and, on several occasions, they have fired on Palestinians. A year ago in Halhul they shot two Palestinians to death.

All this strengthened the feeling within the Palestinian masses that they must put up fierce resistance to the occupation if they are to prevent the Likud autonomy plan—meaning the perpetuation of the occupation—from being applied.

Why Resistance Runs So Deep

Starting from the Begin government's offensive, a series of additional factors help explain why the Palestinian rebellion

runs so deep and how it differs from the preceeding wave of struggles in the occupied territories.

First is the existence of a local nationalist leadership which, while supporting the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and seeing itself as a transmission belt between the PLO leadership and the Palestinian masses, has taken on the task of coordinating the resistance activities of the Palestinian population and unifying the various organizations and institutions against the Zionist authorities and against the plan for autonomous administration.

For example in recent months a Committee of National Guidance was set up, bringing together representatives of most of the municipalities, clandestine political organizations, and professional, trade-union, and university associations.

This committee called the various general strikes and street demonstrations over the past year. The whole population looks to this committee as its leadership, and the committee has a degree of prestige that is unprecedented in the history of the occupied West Bank. But most of all it provides, for the first time, a framework for uniting the struggles that have, until very recently, remained unconnected.

In the second place there is a new generation of militants who have no illusions about the temporary character of the Israeli occupation. These militants have had no experience with the situation prior to the Israeli occupation, and they reached political maturity at a time when the Palestinian national struggle and some of its gains were already an established fact.

But even more important, this new generation knows the Zionist occupation from close up and therefore the Zionist state holds no mystery for them. After thirteen years of occupation, the Palestinians know Israel. They know its brutality and its expansionism. But they also know its weaknesses—its international isolation and internal tensions.

This new consciousness of being part of a conflict that is not simply a military confrontation between one of the best armies in the world and the Palestinian commandos, but that instead involves various social forces on the local, regional, and international level, provides a much more realistic framework for the struggles carried out by the occupied population.

Thirdly, the new wave of struggles bases itself on several victories in previous struggles, victories that have shown the limitations of the Begin government's plans and its weaknesses.

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Zionist settlement of Kiryat Arba (top) overlooks Arab city of Hebron. Acceleration of Zionist colonization program has helped spark rebellion on West Bank.

These victories include the Israeli Supreme Court's decision to dismantle the settlement at Elon Moreh, the annulment of the expulsion decree against Nablus mayor Bassam Shaka, the reopening of the university of Bir Zeit, and the government's inability to outlaw the Committee of National Guidance. These have been correctly seen as proof that it is possible to deal blows to the occupation forces and to turn an offensive into a debacle.

The Iron Fist Policy

Although the Israeli government tried to use the Hebron commando operation to justify tightened repression, it did not have much success in this regard. Today it is rather common knowledge that the decision to apply the so-called "iron fist" policy was made *several days before* the commando operation.

That operation was only used as a pretext for applying the new policy in a spectacular and intransigent manner. In the middle of the night the mayor of Hebron, Fahad Kawasmeh; the mayor of Halhul, Muhammed Milhem; and Hebron religious leader Sheikh Tamimi were expelled, in total violation of even the reac-

tionary laws in force in the occupied territories. A dozen houses were blown up near the scene of the commando operation, and finally a total curfew was imposed on the city of Hebron.

Immediately after that, the supposed leaders of the Committee of National Guidance were threatened with expulsion unless they immediately ceased their political activities. The mayor of Beituniya was arrested for having supposedly incited a strike in solidarity with the people of Hebron.

A curfew was imposed on several refugee camps and in a Bethlehem neighborhood where some incidents had taken place. Several thousand people—demonstrators and passers-by alike—were arrested in Hebron, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bira.

Two families were deported from Beit Sa'hour and the Balata camp when one of their children was suspected of having thrown stones at a military vehicle. And of course Arab-bashing and personal attacks took place throughout the occupied territories.

Obviously Hebron, a city that had until very recently remained rather quiet, has been hit hardest by the iron fist. During

the curfew, which lasted more than two weeks, soldiers had orders to terrorize the population. Several hundred houses were searched, with all that implies in the context of a policy of terror against the population. Nearly 2,000 people were arrested, meaning they were beaten up. Thousands of shots were fired, and crops were ravaged.

In addition there were punitive operations by the Kiryat Arba settlers, who for weeks have been specializing in breaking car and apartment windows.

In recent weeks collective punishment has become the rule. When a child is suspected of having thrown rocks, the home of the child's parents is blown up. When a refugee camp is a little too noisy, a curfew is imposed. When shopkeepers go on strike, members of the municipal council are held responsible, arrested, and threatened with expulsion.

Along with the official measures, the Gush Emunim settlers and Gen. Sharon's Green Patrol (an official body of the Ministry of Agriculture designed to "protect" public lands from the Arabs) have also decided to apply their own "iron fist" policy. They did not wait for the pretext of the Hebron operation.

On April 24 a group of Gush Emunim settlers broke hundreds of car and apartment windows in the city of Ramallah. Several days later Rabbi Meir Kahane and several dozen supporters staged an armed march through Ramallah, having informed the military authorities in advance. They demonstrated in front of the city hall chanting "Palestine does not exist! Arabs out!"

A week later several kilos of explosives were found in one of the Gush Emunim centers in Jerusalem. The explosives were to be used in a reprisal against the Hebron operation.

The Green Patrol has distinguished itself by destroying vineyards (in Artas) and other crops (in Dura and Idna), using defoliants or pulling up the plants.

Limits on the Iron Fist Policy

Judging by the response that the various initiatives of the Begin government and the Gush Emunim settlers provoked, even before the "iron fist" became official policy, it is quite unlikely that intensified repression can provide a lasting solution to the situation on the West Bank. Three weeks after the leaders from the Hebron region were expelled, the occupied territories did not at all seem to be on the road to "pacification."

Despite the threats against the mayors and the attempts to open shuttered stores by force, despite the collective punishments, not a day goes by without molotov cocktails being thrown at military vehicles, including one thrown at the vehicle of one of the military governors.

The Palestinian population is very conscious of the pressures being brought to

bear on the Begin government and how those pressures make it harder for the government to carry out a superrepressive policy.

In fact, Israel is in the midst of negotiations with Egypt regarding the future status of the occupied territories. For Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat, it is absolutely essential that these negotiations move forward in order to prove that he never sought to reach a separate peace with Israel and that Israel is fully obliged to negotiate a withdrawal from the occupied territories.

At stake in the negotiations on the autonomy plan is not simply Sadat's credibility. What is fundamentally at stake is the chance for a negotiated solution in the Middle East, which is the absolute prerequisite for stabilization of the imperialist order in that region.

Any intensification of the repression, any new settlements—in a word, any Israeli attempt to strengthen the occupation—is also a step away from consolidating the Camp David accords, upon which American imperialism at least has staked its cards.

That is precisely why American imperialism has recently joined with the European bourgeoisies in criticizing certain "excesses" in the Begin government's policies. The European bourgeoisies have long been aware that imperialist interests require reining in the Israeli government's annexationist policy.

The United Nations Security Council's adoption of a series of resolutions condemning Israel for the expulsion of the Palestinian leaders and for establishing settlements reflects the Carter administration's embarrassment and nervousness over the Begin government's policy.

But even within Israel the Begin government's policy is running up against increasing opposition. Within the Zionist establishment itself there are many voices demanding a radical change in the occupation policy, and even some voicing total rejection of it. "There path is not ours" asserts a statement published in all the newspapers, signed by two hundred central figures in Israeli politics, including several generals, a number of Labor deputies, industrialists, and some former cabinet ministers.

The previously cited editorial in the daily *Haaretz* was entitled "The Damned Occupation." That newspaper of the big Zionist bourgeoisie went so far as to admit that "for a number of years we hoped we could escape the infernal logic of every occupation, a logic that people larger and stronger than us have not been able to escape. . . . But, in spite of ourselves, reality haunts us and we must now pay the price. The reality is that on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip one people is trying to dominate another people against their will. . . . Despite ourselves, we have been led to this situation since the Six Day War.

But the truth is that a number of us have come to like this post-1967 situation and have the illusion that it can last, perhaps even forever. Day by day it is becoming increasingly obvious that that is an illusion."

And several days later, after the Hebron operation and the decision to apply an iron fist in the occupied territories, the same *Haaretz* published an editorial that said: "It would be nice if one could be convinced that the expulsion of three leaders in the Hebron region, the dynamiting and expropriation of several houses in Hebron, and the tightening of measures against all the mayors on the West Bank would lead to order. Unhappily it is doubtful that such measures . . . will put an end to the stirrings taking place within the Arab population east of the Green Line. Those who think that it is enough to repress 'disturbances' are mistaken. . . . All the 'iron fist' measures will only increase the Arabs' resentment against us, and the plan to expropriate 120,000 dunums [30,000 acres] of private lands to build new settlements and to enlarge those that already exist, can only pour oil on the fire."

Polarization in Israel

The tensions created by the impact of events on the West Bank have not been restricted to the ruling class and the coalition in power. Within the general population of Israel itself we see a growing polarization.

The sentiment described by the *Haaretz* editorial is becoming more and more widespread, and is expressed by an increase in demonstrations in solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people. Even the left Zionist organizations, which during the thirteen years of occupation have maintained a wait-and-see, passive attitude regarding solidarity tasks, today feel they must mobilize to put an end to the Begin government's suicidal policies.

Demonstrations are increasing, although they still remain small and in most cases divided. The central slogan of various solidarity actions has become "Down With the Occupation!" For twelve years that slogan has remained restricted to anti-Zionist groups. For the first time, we have even seen an attempt to set up a united committee against the occupation, in which left Zionists and anti-Zionists work together.

Among the many activities protesting the expulsions of the Palestinian leaders from the Hebron region, we should particularly mention the demonstration on the Allenby Bridge (which links the West Bank and Jordan) that was jointly organized by Israeli organizations, including Zionist organizations, Palestinian organizations, and the deported leaders, who demonstrated at the same time a few dozen yards away on the other side of the border.

An equally significant phenomenon is the unrest that the present policy is caus-

ing within the army itself. While refusal to serve in the occupied territories remains the exception, it by no means runs up against general hostility, and in recent weeks, with the "iron fist" policy, this unrest has even been seen among the occupation forces. On several occasions, for example, the Israeli press reported that soldiers and officers refused to follow orders from their superiors.

Uri Avneri, a member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) distributed a report to Knesset members in which soldiers— young recruits with no history of political activity—stated they were shocked by the orders they received (indiscriminate beating of all those questioned, wrecking furniture, terrorizing . . .). Reserve General Mati Peled went so far as to predict that the time is drawing near when the military authorities will face mass refusal to carry out the iron fist policy.

Within the Palestinian population living inside the 1948 borders of Israel, there have been a number of demonstrations in solidarity with the brothers in the occupied territories, despite the passivity of the Communist Party. In several villages painted slogans and posters have appeared on walls, and meetings of several hundred people each have been organized.

On May Day a march called by anti-Zionist organizations drew more than 2,000 demonstrators in the village of Kabul in Galilee. Their slogans focused on denunciations of the repression in the occupied territories. The militant spirit and slogans of this demonstration were in sharp contrast to the atmosphere at the several parades that the CP, despite itself and in contrast to previous years, felt compelled to organize in some Arab localities.

The universities have once again become arenas of ongoing mobilization against the occupation. There are one or two demonstrations each week in the three most important universities in Israel, generally organized by the Arab Student Unions and the leftist organizations that are active on campus.

The universities are also where one best sees the polarization that is taking place. Increasingly, demonstrations by Arab students are being physically attacked by far-right groups demanding the deportation of Arab students and even the whole Arab population.

Petitions circulate calling for the outlawing of Arab Student Unions. Sometimes the far-right groups use weapons in going after those who dare to express their solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people.

The Gush Emunim settlers are not remaining passive in the face of the present situation. Rather they are increasing the pressure on the government to step up its pace in settling the West Bank and annexing those territories to Israel. After a more than one-month long hunger strike by leaders of the settlements, the government



Carter has criticized Begin's 'excesses' because he fears Zionist regime may upset Camp David framework.

set up a commission to develop a plan for expropriating an additional 30,000 acres of land and to change the legal status of the settlements. The settlements are still formally under the sway of Jordanian law, which remains in effect on the West Bank.

Along with various demonstrations, the far right continues to arm itself and speaks more and more openly about its sacred duty to "maintain order" in the occupied territories and to use any and all means to prevent the redivision of the "holy land."

They know that as long as Begin is in power their interests will be safeguarded. What they worry about is preparing for the future and preventing at all cost any change whatsoever in the status of the West Bank if the "defeatists" return to power.

Economic Costs of the Occupation Policy

It is not only the most politicized elements of Israeli society who are concerned with the latest developments in the occupied territories. One of the most significant and deepgoing changes in the political situation in Israel regards the attitude of the Israeli masses, and particularly the working class, toward the Begin government's policy of settlement and annexation.

In a diffuse way, although it is becoming

less and less diffuse, the Israeli working masses are beginning to understand that it is impossible to separate the catastrophic economic situation from the present government's policies as a whole.

Without a shadow of a doubt the economic situation is catastrophic. The balance of payments deficit has reached \$4.6 billion, the total government debt (foreign and domestic) is some \$34 billion, of which \$19 billion is foreign debts. In the wake of a "radical" policy of fighting inflation (which last year was 120%), inflation is now running at an annual rate of 140%, with prices rising 10.2% in the month of April alone.

These few figures confirm that the Israeli economy is on the verge of collapse, and they explain why panic reigns in Israeli financial circles. The economic measures taken by the new minister of finance, Yigal Horovitz, had to be radical if they were to refloat the Israeli economy. And they certainly were radical for the working class. Subsidies were eliminated on basic necessities, which caused price rises amounting to an average of 240% over two years on milk and milk products, eggs, chicken, gasoline, transportation, water, and electricity. The cost of bread, which rose 50% in a year, will now rise another 100%.

The public services budgets (health, so-

cial security, housing, education) have been reduced an average of 6%, meaning not simply a massive reduction in those services, but also, for the first time since 1967, a decline in the number of public-service jobs.

The decline in the workers' purchasing power, together with the reduction in government credit and subsidies to industrial companies, led to a shrinkage of the domestic market, and therefore to a decline in jobs in the industrial sector.

This means that unemployment is a reality in Israel. It is estimated that by the end of 1980 there will be 80,000 people jobless, which is close to 7% of the economically active population. For Israel 7% is a lot, particularly since this means that in the immigrant towns, where the least profitable factories are located, it can mean that as much as 25% of the local active population is unemployed.

So in the space of two years the Israeli workers have been simultaneously confronted with unemployment, reduced public services, and an average drop of nearly 10% in purchasing power.

Moreover, the economic situation continues to get worse, and at an accelerating pace. The reasons for this are obvious. Yigal Horowitz's "radical methods" of dealing with problems do not touch the causes for the deficit in the budget or inflation.

The real causes are found in the military expenditures and the expenses linked to the establishment of new settlements. Yet the only area of the budget that rose this year is defense (more than 12%), which now represents 25% of the Gross National Product and nearly one-third of the national budget.

When you add to this those parts of the budget dealing with the settlements, the areas linked to military expenditures, and the payment on foreign and domestic debt, we arrive at the approximate figure of 260 billion Israeli pounds, which is two-thirds of the national budget and nearly half the Gross National Product.

In addition to being anti-working-class and reactionary, the attempts to resolve the economic crisis by reducing public expenditures and cutting the purchasing power of the workers are completely ineffectual. It is no longer only the anti-Zionists who point out this fact. Amnon Gafni, the governor-general of the Bank of Israel, wrote in the April 4, 1980 *Ma'ariv* that "Israel is staggering under a heavy burden that is expressed:

"a. through orienting a major portion of our national product toward military expenditures,

"b. through an enormous foreign debt for financing arms purchases." Gafni noted that "while military imports during the 1960s amounted to \$200 million per year, since 1973 they have totaled \$1.5 billion per year."

Regarding domestic military expenditures, Gafni wrote that "in the 1960s they

represented 5% to 6% of the National Product; after the 1967 war they rose to 10% to 12%, and after the October war they rose to between 15% and 18%. . . . It is true," Gafni adds, "that the United States helps us finance these purchases. But half of these expenditures are added to our debts, on which the interest alone comes to \$1.5 billion per year."

Amnon Gafni's solution is simple: "It is a national necessity of primary importance to massively limit military expenditures. . . . It is urgent to understand that security is not limited to strengthening the army, but also involves the morale of the population, the cultural level, society's health. . . ."

And Gafni goes on to propose reducing military expenditures to 10% of the National Product, which would mean a reduction of 60%!

Along the same lines, Professor Assaf Razine—the former adviser to the Likud minister of finances and ex-director of the Economic Planning Commission—asserts:

"In my view [Finance Minister] Horowitz goes too far in reducing subsidies and social services, while at the same time military expenditures have grown, as have expenditures linked to construction and implantation in the occupied territories. As a result there is a deformation in the distribution of national resources, which works to the detriment of certain social groups, and at the same time there is an acceleration in the inflationary process due to a rise in government spending. . . ." [*Yedioth A'haronoth*, May 20, 1980.]

To the question "can't something be done?" Professor Razine answers: "Oh yes, we could do a lot, if we are ready to radically change the entire political and economic conception. . . . In the economic sphere, a radical reduction in military expenditures, a halt to expenditures for establishing settlements. . . . In the political sphere, we should rapidly achieve a solution to the problem of the occupied territories, through some sort of agreement that would permit us to receive massive financial aid from both the Jewish people in the U.S. and the U.S. government."

Reaction of Israeli Masses

The workers are becoming increasingly conscious of this same point that the central figures of the Zionist apparatus like Amnon Gafni and Assaf Razine are beginning to understand. Because the idea of national interest is still deeply rooted in the workers' consciousness, they would be quite ready to make big sacrifices if they felt that the burden was being shared by everyone and that their efforts would actually make it possible to refloat the economy.

But what is happening is that the bourgeoisie is getting richer, particularly as a result of the economic liberalization and the treasury bonds that are indexed to inflation. The workers see that the infla-

tion is rising higher and higher, and the balance of payments deficit and the budgetary deficits are growing before their very eyes.

At this stage the workers have gone beyond simply questioning the economic policy. Now they are questioning the Begin government itself and its overall policy. And we are now seeing the beginning of a qualitatively new phenomenon: the broad masses are conscious that the conditions of life and work are directly linked to the Zionist state's overall policy regarding the Israeli-Arab conflict.

The slogan "Money for the poor neighborhoods, not for the settlements" is no longer just used among the anti-Zionists. Tens of thousands of workers and residents of the shantytowns have also taken up that cry in recent months.

The Begin government has not bothered to hide its priorities. While maintaining that it would solve the housing question in the poorer neighborhoods—which is one of the most acute social problems in Israel—the government divided up the construction budget as follows: 5 billion pounds for construction in the occupied territories (which involves at most several thousand people); compared to 1.2 billion pounds for low cost housing for young couples and large families (which involves more than 100,000 people).

This sense of being fed up with this government has not yet provoked a massive and united response by the workers. Struggles have remained isolated and limited, involving either relatively privileged sectors (teachers, nurses, social workers, El Al technicians, workers at the electric company and the banks, etc.), or those who had nothing left to lose (workers in the textile industry where more than twenty factories have either shut down already or are on the verge of closing). In most cases these defensive struggles have suffered partial or total defeats.

The relative passivity of the industrial workers stems in part from the fear of unemployment and in part from the feeling that in any event the Likud government will soon be out of office and then people can begin to think about how to solve the problems.

But more than anything else, the absence of a general counteroffensive by the workers is due to the absence of working-class organizations that can provide a framework for such a struggle.

The Histadrut, as an organ of the colonial state's apparatus, is as frightened as the government is of any form of working-class organization and working-class struggle. The dynamic of such a struggle would necessarily run counter to the idea of national unity and the defense of the national interest. Therefore the Histadrut is content to exert pressure on the government to be allowed to participate in making economic and social decisions.

The Histadrut leadership is, however,

being pushed to increase its pressure on the government by two things: the general sentiment that the present policy is leading the Zionist state to catastrophe; and by the Histadrut's own fear of being bypassed. One worrisome sign for the Histadrut leaders in this regard was the establishment of a body to coordinate twelve workers committees representing the strongest sectors of the Israeli working class.

That's why this year, after more than ten years of boycott, the Histadrut decided to organize a mass demonstration against the government's policy on May 1. To the surprise of everyone, including the Histadrut bureaucrats, nearly 150,000 workers mobilized on that day, in spite of a vicious right-wing Zionist campaign arguing that "May Day is the holiday of the Russians and the Arabs, the enemies of Israel."

The Histadrut was able to retain complete control over the demonstration, the biggest one to take place in Israel since the June 1967 war. Slogans focused on defense of the national economy, on safeguarding the state, on defense of true national unity, on everyone making an effort to resolve the state's problems.

The *Internationale* was never sung once on the demonstration, while patriotic songs were heard throughout the day.

Nonetheless, this demonstration cannot be seen simply as a Histadrut operation, even though it remained within the framework that the Histadrut had chosen. For the workers who participated, it was a demonstration of strength against the Likud and in defense of their standard of living. In many of the contingents there were spontaneous slogans such as "Down with Begin!" "Bread and Jobs," "Money

for Low-Cost Housing, not for Settlements," and "Horovitz, Resign."

What was missing was an organizational framework that could organize these spontaneous responses, going beyond the limits set by the Histadrut, and provide a class-struggle response.

The Governmental Crisis

The Begin government's days are numbered. There is total discontent among the people and the polls indicate that for the first time in thirty years the Labor Party could win an absolute majority of seats in the Knesset. This does not, however, mean that the Israeli masses now have confidence in the Laborites' ability to resolve the structural problems of the state of Israel. It simply means that they feel that nothing could be worse than the Likud and that they must at all costs get rid of Begin.

This isolation from the population, the impasse in the negotiations with Egypt and the tensions with the U.S. which that created, and the dimensions of the economic crisis are causing a polarization in the ruling class.

On one side is Begin, Sharon, and the majority of the Herut faction in the Likud, who have chosen the policy of resolutely plowing ahead: intensifying the settlement process in the occupied territories and increasing the repression, including the possibility of cutting back on the civil liberties of Israel's Jewish society. This policy implies not only pushing ahead with the anti-working-class offensive, but also growing militarization of society as a whole, and, in the end, a new military adventure.

As we have shown, this policy is run-

ning up against more and more massive resistance even within the leading Zionist circles, including within the coalition now in power.

The most "realistic" people in the government have quit. Foreign Affairs Minister Moshe Dayan was replaced by a former leader of the Stern Gang who is opposed to the Camp David accords. The majority of the deputies of General Yadin's party quit the coalition. A large minority of the liberal Likud deputies do not hide their desire to establish an alliance with the Laborites.

And now Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman has resigned, officially over differences on the military budget, but actually because he no longer feels that the Sharon-Begin-National Religious Party team is capable of leading.

This government has, in fact, become the Gush Emunim government. Its central objective is accelerated settlement of the occupied territories, and to achieve that goal it is willing to jeopardize peace with Sadat, increase Israel's international isolation, and create tensions with the United States.

To achieve that goal it must militarize the entire society and radically reduce the standard of living and civil liberties of the workers. Not only is this a dangerous gamble, one that is far from being won, but it also runs a strong risk of being counterproductive.

For more than thirty years it was possible to maintain the "national unity" not only because the Israeli masses felt it was necessary to fight a common enemy, but also because they identified the Zionist state with their security and with the continuous improvement of their standard



Israelis demonstrate against settlements in 1978: Begin's policies are becoming more and more unpopular.

of living. They believed, obviously wrongly, that war was the only option, that it was imposed by the Arabs—that there really wasn't any choice and therefore that war was correct. That was the cement that held the idea of national unity together and was the basis of the Zionist state's strength.

Two-and-one-half years of the Begin government have made it possible to constantly speed up the development of a new consciousness among the Israeli masses. People increasingly see the war, the occupation, and the exacerbation of the Israeli-Arab conflict as what they really were: a deliberate decision by the Zionist state itself, for which the Jewish working masses have been called upon to pay an increasingly heavy price.

A Class Response to the Crisis of the Zionist State

A majority of the Israeli bourgeoisie wants to get rid of the Begin-Gush Emunim government and replace it with a new Labor government in order to prevent the shattering of the "sacred union" and the crumbling of the ideological cement.

Behind the desire to bring the Labor Party back into power is the idea that it would be better to make limited concessions regarding the dream of Jewish settlement of all of Palestine than to apply an all or nothing policy that threatens to destabilize the Zionist state, increase its international isolation, and spur the "Arabization" of the Jewish society.

Unhappily for the Zionist leadership, however, the present crisis of the state of Israel is not solely the result of the all or nothing policy of the Gush Emunim fanatics. Rather the crisis reflects the new political relationship of forces on the regional and international level. It is a reflection of the increased strength of the anti-imperialist movement in western Asia as a whole, the victory of the Iranian revolution, and the growth of the Palestinian nationalist movement. At the heart of the crisis and growing isolation of the Zionist state is the growth of the anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab region.

In this sense, while the more moderate Zionists are correct in saying that Begin's policy of plunging ahead is suicidal for the Zionist state, Begin is also quite correct when he says that a more moderate policy in the occupied territories, and especially withdrawal from those territories, would only strengthen the morale of the Palestinian masses and their struggle against Zionism.

Begin is also correct when he tells Carter that since the fall of the shah, Israel is now the only relatively stable element defending imperialist interests in the Middle East and that any weakening of the state of Israel would only strengthen the Arab anti-imperialist movement.

The state of Israel is in a blind alley, along with American imperialism, although U.S. imperialism has infinitely greater maneuvering room than its Israeli outpost in the Middle East has.

The question for the Israeli workers is to begin to understand that the Zionist state's blind alley need not mean that the Jewish workers are in a blind alley, that the crisis of the state is not necessarily a crisis for its inhabitants.

The Israeli workers, however, face some heavy handicaps in reaching this understanding. These handicaps include more than thirty years of multi-class "national unity," the absence of structures for independent working-class organization, the dominant racist ideology, and the still strong identification of the security of the workers with the security of the Zionist state.

It will take time to overcome these handicaps, through developing every partial struggle, every form of independent organization, so that the workers objectively oppose the priorities of the Zionist state, and on that basis, develop a class consciousness on the ruins of the national unity.

In the context of their struggles and their independent organization, the Jewish workers will progressively draw closer to the Palestinian masses in their struggle for national liberation. This would then make it possible for the Palestinian national liberation struggle to develop a proletarian perspective, which is the only thing that can offer Jewish workers a credible alternative to Zionism.

But for this to happen the Israeli work-

ers must begin to think and react in class terms, meaning they must break with the idea of national unity. Today, more than ever, the central question posed before the Israeli workers is the need to organize themselves independently from the Zionist state and to begin to react as a class, to develop an alternative program of priorities and to establish the means to impose that program.

Therefore revolutionary anti-Zionists in Israel have multifaceted, but basically linked, tasks. These tasks are to help build the Palestinian struggle for national emancipation and to orient it toward a proletarian perspective; to expand every form of struggle and organization by the Jewish workers that objectively weakens the national unity idea and makes it possible for the workers to move forward along the road of organizing themselves as an independent class force; and to expand solidarity with the Palestinian struggle within the Jewish population, particularly among Jewish youth, with the aim of showing that the interests of the Jewish masses and Arab masses involve a common struggle against the national oppression of the Palestinian people.

An anti-Zionist united front of the Jewish and Arab masses will be built from the fusion of these different struggles that reflect varied levels of consciousness. Only such a united front can put an end to Zionist oppression and guarantee the Palestinian masses their national rights. And only such a united front can guarantee the Jewish masses peace, security, and a normal life within the Arab world.

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The Iranian Parliament and the American Hostages

[The following is an editorial that appeared in the June 21 *Che Bayad Kard*, published by the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS). The translation is by the HKS.]

* * *

The so-called Islamic Consultative Assembly—that is, an assembly in which the majority of the representatives do not represent the will of the people, but who have been imposed upon them through the force of reaction and who are pawns in the hands of the autocratic rulers—has finally begun its session, and is about to begin a similar show of subservience to absolutism and reaction like those of the shah's period. This time, however, it will be more like a ridiculous passion play.

The rulers regard these selected and subservient representatives as no more than small children. These honorable "representatives" are not even allowed to express their approval by saying the traditional "true, true"; instead they are supposed to shout, "... hail Khomeini!" Even though more than the required two-thirds of the credentials have already been approved, the assembly is not allowed to start its work, because the representatives are supposed to wait until the "guardians" of Islam (that is, the guardians of the new order of oppression and exploitation) have formed their council to allow the official working of these small children.

This completely subservient assembly is supposed to form the legislative power of the country and pass laws in defense of our oppressed and toiling people! An assembly in which not a single representative of millions of workers has a place; an assembly in which the oppressed nationalities, that is, the majority of the population, do not have anyone to defend their rights; an assembly in which the only two women representatives, presumably the spokespersons of millions of oppressed women, are not even prepared to oppose compulsory veiling; an assembly in which the 20 million peasants of Iran do not have a single representative. What does such an assembly know about the demands of the oppressed and the toilers?

Instead, in this assembly we have the commanders of the thugs; the cruelest amongst the "pious" hangmen who have been executing our revolutionary youth; the greediest of the parasites who have taken the places of those from the old regime who escaped; the most disgusting of the infamous flatterers and yes-men; the most backward "religious" capitalists and landlords. In short, we have plenty of

representatives from the ruling reaction. In their own words, we have an assembly of "committed Muslims"—that is, those who are willing to drown the country in blood and fire in order to safeguard the interests of the new rulers and to protect the new order of absolutism and exploitation; that is, an assembly composed of "Muslims" from the exploiting classes, a new capitalist assembly.

In any event, this is the assembly that has become the lot of our people after decades of struggle against absolutism. This assembly wants to put an end to the chaotic state of affairs in the country and not only solve the numerous problems left as a result of decades of dictatorship, colonialism, and exploitation, but also to push forward the Iranian revolution! And one of the first problems on its agenda is the question of the American hostages.

For months the ruling class has faced a severe crisis in how to deal with the hostage question. So far, the different factions and pressure groups within the ruling class have proposed numerous solutions, and in order to convince each other and the people, they have resorted to numerous tricks and noisy demagoguery. But each time they have decided to postpone any resolution of the problem, hoping that somehow something will happen and the problem will disappear. Decisive sections of the ruling bloc consider the prolongation of the issue a useful tool in consolidating their power.

In the latest quarrel within the ruling bloc, the Imam himself intervened and left the decision to the parliament (and considering the nature of the parliament, it means that he simply postponed it until his own later decision). Of course, the parliament will also postpone a decision as much as possible. But the shows of the ruling class are reaching their final act and sooner or later a specific decision has to be made.

Early indications are that a faction of the ruling bloc (Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti and his band) favor putting the hostages on trial, while the other faction, that is, the conglomeration of all those who are in fact Beheshti's hostages, favor the release of the hostages. Of course, in both factions there are many variants. Some want a trial followed by sentences. Others favor a trial ending in their release. Some want a trial of America in which the hostages would act as witnesses. Some want the unconditional release of the hostages, and others their release only if the United States comes forth with some kind of apology, and so on.

It is still unclear which grouping will triumph and which formula will gain currency, because the "supreme guide" has not made up his mind yet.

The forces claiming to defend and represent the interests of the toiling classes have also intervened in this issue, often calling for a trial and sentencing of the hostages. But what solution really corresponds to the interests of the toilers and oppressed?

More than seven months have passed since the Students Following the Imam's Line occupied the American embassy. During this entire period, people have become involved in this issue as a central problem that has overshadowed all national political issues and all the social struggles of different classes. The internal quarrels of the ruling bloc, the daily struggles of Kurds, Azerbaijanis, workers, and women, the struggles related to the constitutional referendum and the presidential and parliamentary elections, all have been somehow affected by the issue of the hostages.

It is evident, therefore, that people are sensitive to this issue and to the question of what is to be done with the hostages, particularly if we remember that the deeply felt emotions of people against the Pahlavi regime and its crimes and against U.S. imperialism and its aggressions have become intertwined with this issue. Many consider the hostage-taking at the American embassy a justified and righteous action to exert pressure on the American government to return the shah and his property to Iran. They consider any compromise over this issue a betrayal of their revolution, and in the internal quarrels of the ruling bloc they support that faction which in their view is expressing more decisiveness over this issue.

The ruling class, aware of these justified popular feelings, attempts to pretend that this hostage-taking has been the most decisive measure in a struggle against American imperialism and that the most central demand of the revolution is the return of the shah and his property. And now that it has lost all hope for the return of the shah, it has put increasing emphasis on the issue of the hostages.

The most reactionary factions of the ruling bloc pretend that their "decisiveness" over the issue of the hostages is an indication of their anti-imperialism, and in this way tries to manipulate the deep popular feelings to consolidate its positions vis-à-vis the other factions, and to implement its reactionary policies under the cover of these so-called anti-imperialist

struggles.

But a cursory look at the political situation over the past seven months shows that the occupation of the American embassy and the hostage-taking and the mobilization organized around this issue by the ruling clergy and its spokesmen have not only *not* directly facilitated the struggles of the oppressed and the toilers, but they have generally been tools by which these struggles have been blocked, as have been the struggles against the constitution and the struggles of the Azerbaijani people. Popular anger and the attention of those in the struggle have been diverted from focusing on clerical rule and the problems in which the new ruling class has engulfed the society. The power of the most reactionary faction of the ruling class, which opposes all liberties, has been strengthened.

The hostage-taking and the threats made by American imperialism have become a club in the hands of the ruling clergy to beat back any just struggles. Under the cloak of "unity of the *Umma* [nation]" against "the great Satan," opposition of the constitution was declared blasphemy. The revolutionary uprising of the people in Tabriz was called an American conspiracy. Revolutionary Kurdish militants are called criminal agents of America, SAVAK, and MOSAD. The massacre of Turkoman people was justified as a measure against American conspiracies. Inflation and unemployment, a result of the policies of the ruling class in preserving the existing capitalist order, are blamed on the "great Satan." Workers are called upon to work harder, produce more, and suffer further capitalist exploitation. Workers' strikes and struggles to defend their rights against the capitalists are considered sabotage of anti-imperialist struggles. Freedom of the press is suppressed under the same pretext. All civil and political liberties are destroyed in the name of preserving unity.

Above all, over the past seven months, while the ruling class has been screaming "anti-imperialism," no real or basic measure against imperialism has been taken. The ruling class has in fact diverted the popular anti-imperialist sentiments and manipulated them. Endless radio and television broadcasts notwithstanding, not a single positive measure against imperialism has been taken. On the contrary, under the pretext of anti-imperialist demonstrations, masses of people have been attracted to gatherings, at the end of which statements against the left have been issued and every opposition has been beaten over the head with the club of "sedition."

On the international level, the imperialist rulers of America and other imperialist powers have used the situation to their own advantage. In these countries, particularly in the United States, the imperialist ruling classes have tried to whip up the

most reactionary racist emotions against the Iranian people, and have tried to strengthen militarism amongst their own population. Ever since the American military intervention against the Vietnamese revolution, deep antiwar sentiment among the American people has stopped the ruling class from military interventions against liberation struggles around the world. Now the American ruling class has tried to portray the hostage-taking as an act against the American people and is trying to strengthen racist and militarist sentiments among the American people to enable itself to intervene militarily, not only against the Iranian people, but also against the Nicaraguan revolution and other struggles.

It becomes clear, therefore, that the sooner this weapon is wrenched away from the hands of reaction in Iran and the imperialists, the more it will benefit the toilers of Iran and the world. Every day the situation continues like this, the life of reaction in Iran and the imperialist strength in the world will be increased.

Forces claiming to defend the interests of the toilers, instead of intensifying the illusions of the masses and thereby facilitating the consolidation of reaction, should put forward a program of real anti-imperialist struggles against these ridiculous shams of the ruling class. Militant and conscious workers should put forward their independent program for anti-imperialist struggles of our people and should not allow the ruling class to manipulate the popular anti-imperialist sentiments.

The question is not whether to put the hostages on trial. Hostage-taking itself has become a cover for not doing anything real against imperialism. Real struggles do not need hostages or trials of hostages.

The present ruling class has had in its possession all documents relating to the crimes of the shah and the imperialists, and all the military treaties. What exposure would be more effective than the publication of all these documents, something the ruling class refuses to do? They have had all the names of the SAVAK and CIA agents. What greater blow than the publication of this list? The ruling class, through its insane actions, has intensified the threat of American military intervention. What measure would be more effective against such a threat than the arming of the whole population?

Instead, what have been the measures of the ruling class? Except for one treaty that everyone knew about anyway, they have neither cancelled nor published any of the treaties between Iran and the imperialist powers. They have even agreed to new treaties. Not only have there been no exposures of SAVAK agents and those working for American imperialism, but many of them (from the top ranks of SAVAK down to ordinary informers) have been reemployed. Not only have no mea-

sures for general popular arming been taken, but under a thousand and one pretexts, real anti-imperialist forces have been disarmed.

Moreover, the most important real struggles against imperialism are the struggles against all the problems left in this country by imperialism, not heated speeches against Carter. In this field, it is evident that the ruling class has used anti-imperialist speeches and demagogic mobilizations in the service of intensifying the same problems and miseries.

Ever since imperialist domination of Iran began, suppressing democracy and establishing dictatorships have been the most important political tools of imperialist domination. The struggle against imperialism cannot be separate from a struggle to establish the most democratic government responsible to the people. In this area, the ruling clergy is beating the imperialists to the race and competes with the most antidemocratic regimes subservient to imperialism. The only reason that they have not yet succeeded in establishing the severest repression is because of the resistance of the oppressed and toiling people who are not prepared to lose the gains of their uprising. The struggle against imperialism means the struggle for democracy, against clerical rule, for preserving the gains made in the struggle against the dictatorship, and for the establishment of a really popular republic, elected by the people and responsible to the people.

Imperialist domination in Iran was reinforced through the establishment of Reza Khan's regime and the suppression of the nationalities and the denial of their national rights. How could anyone claim to be an anti-imperialist and organize the most barbaric suppression against oppressed nationalities, against the Turkomans, the Arabs, and particularly against the Kurds? Real struggle against imperialism means the recognition of the right of self-determination and the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the army and the occupying Pasharans [Revolutionary Guards] from the areas of the oppressed nationalities.

Imperialist domination in Iran has meant the reinforcement of a backward economy and culture that has kept half the population—women—imprisoned in traditional roles and has imposed upon them the most reactionary traditions and laws. Ever since taking power, the clergy that claims to be anti-imperialist has directed the severest attacks against women's rights, has tried to push women out of independent social and economic activities, and has tried to impose the reactionary Islamic codes on women. Real struggles against imperialism mean the abrogation of all such social and legal codes. Real struggles against imperialism mean liberation of women from these chains and their participation in all politi-

cal, social, and economic affairs without any discrimination.

Imperialist domination in Iran has meant a backward and poverty-stricken economy—the poverty of the peasants and the poorest working and living conditions for workers on the one side, and uncalculated wealth of a handful of capitalist parasites and landlords on the other side. A regime that claims to be anti-imperialist, over a year and a half of its rule, has only made this situation worse. The mass of peasants and workers are worse off, while new parasites have replaced the old.

Real anti-imperialism means rebuilding the national economy to benefit the toilers and workers, the establishment of a planned economy and the severing of Iran's links to the world capitalist market, the expropriation of all big capitalists, the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, the establishment of control over production through workers councils, and a thorough revolution in the countryside and the establishment of control over agriculture by peasants councils.

Imperialist domination in Iran has also meant social and cultural poverty. The ruling clergy that claims to be anti-imperialist considers this poor culture and art too much for the country. After the fall of the shah's regime, instead of opening all possibilities for a flourishing of cultural and artistic abilities, they have even eliminated that poverty-stricken culture, music, and art.

Real struggle against imperialism means the removal of all censorship, and stopping the autocratic control of the clergy over radio and TV, the press, theatre, and cinema; the abrogation of declaring music and other arts forbidden; encouraging materially and morally the development of all artistic aptitudes without clerical supervision; increasing the budget of the ministry of education; and increasing the number of schools and higher education facilities not the closing down of all schools and the massacre of militant anti-imperialist students.

This, in our view, is the real road of anti-imperialist struggles. But will this appointed and imposed parliament, subservient to the most reactionary faction of the ruling bloc, take on such struggles? This parliament itself reflects the fact that our people have a long road ahead on the struggle to liberate themselves from imperialism. Will such a parliament undermine its own existence? Clearly not.

It is time for the struggling masses to wrench away from the ruling class of Iran this club of suppression and this empty propaganda weapon of hostages and organize their own independent struggles. Whatever independent struggles workers, the unemployed, the oppressed nationalities, students, and all other toiling and oppressed masses have engaged in against imperialism—outside the framework of the demagogic noises of the ruling class show

the road forward. These are the struggles that must continue and spread wider. Otherwise, it is possible that the growing disillusionment of wider layers towards the demagogic so-called anti-imperialist faction of the ruling bloc and the actions of the other faction that is trying to end the

China

Protests Hit Move to Drop 'Four Big Freedoms'

A public forum held on April 4 in the Chinese province of Guangdong was marked by open condemnations of the Peking regime's moves to further restrict democratic rights.

The forum, called by the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the Young Communist League, was held to discuss the decisions of the Fifth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in January.

At the plenum, Deputy Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping attacked "so-called democrats and dissidents" who used wall posters to criticize the authorities. He said that the clause in the Chinese constitution on the right of citizens to put up wall posters would be eliminated at the next session of the National People's Congress, to be held in August.

The article in the constitution on the "Four Big Freedoms" says that people have the right "to speak out freely, air views fully, hold great debates and write big-character posters."

The Guangdong forum was addressed by a number of well-known Chinese dissidents, including Wang Xizhe, Li Zheng-tian, and Chen Yiyang, all of whom were members of the "Li Yizhe" dissident group. Members of the editorial boards of a number of underground newspapers in the provincial capital of Guangzhou (Canton) also participated, as did student representatives from Zhong Shan University, Hua Nan Teachers Training College, and Hua Nan Technical College and members of the Communist Youth Group in the Marine Transport Bureau.

Wang Xizhe, who had been imprisoned for several years for writing a wall poster in 1974, openly condemned Deputy Prime Minister Deng's speech. According to a report in the April 18 *Centre Daily News* of Hongkong, Wang said, "I think the abolition of the Four Big Freedoms is disrespectful of the constitution. Deng himself said to foreigners in 1978 that the masses have the right to put up big-character posters. This is a right that the constitution gives them and we have no right to object."

Wang's comments drew applause and shouts of approval from the audience.

quarrels with Washington as soon as possible will only result in demoralization and despair in popular struggles.

Let us not fall for the demagoguery of the ruling reaction and the games of its different factions! Let us build our independent struggles against imperialism. □

Students from Zhong Shan University reported that a similar forum had been held at the university and not one student came out in support of Deng's proposed abolition of the four freedoms.

Earlier, in February, a wall poster appeared in the Chinese capital of Peking that also attacked Deng's speech. The two-page poster condemned the proposed ban on wall posters.

Signed by a group calling itself China April 5, the poster was the first to appear in Yuetan Park, which was officially set aside for such wall posters after the more accessible Democracy Wall was closed down in December. □

2,300 Potential Three Mile Islands

During 1979, nuclear power plants in the United States experienced more than 2,300 mechanical failures, errors, and other potentially disastrous "events."

Critical Mass Energy Project, an antinuclear organization affiliated with consumer advocate and environmentalist Ralph Nader, released a report on the accidents July 13, based on the number of "license event reports" filed with the government's Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The accidents ranged from misplaced water samples to such serious hazards as cracks in the rods that control the nuclear chain reaction inside the reactors. Among the more serious mishaps—besides the near meltdown at Three Mile Island in March 1979—were the failure of control rods at the Brown's Ferry reactor in Alabama, the blowout of a coolant pump at the Arkansas Unit I reactor, and the failure of the electrical system at the Crystal River plant in Florida.

One nuclear plant, the North Anna I in Virginia, filed 130 mishap reports.

According to Richard Pollock, the director of Critical Mass, "This data speaks volumes about mismanagement, poor operator training, lax inspection and frequent mechanical breakdowns. It is a profile of an industry rushing headlong toward another Three Mile Island."

Workers Resist Bolivian Coup

By Ernest Harsch

Within hours of the military coup in Bolivia on July 17, the workers movement began to mobilize massively to resist the takeover. The powerful Bolivian Workers Federation (COB), which had been in the forefront of the resistance to previous coup attempts, again took the lead.

The National Committee in Defense of Democracy, in which the COB is a central participant, issued a call for an indefinite general strike. It declared a "state of emergency and general mobilization" throughout Bolivia to fight the coup and called for organized civilian resistance, including the setting up of barricades to impede military traffic.

In La Paz, the Bolivian capital, students and workers erected barricades on July 17, digging up the streets for paving stones and gathering wood and tin from construction sites. Signs reading "Death to the Fascist Coup Makers" and "Long Live the Bolivian Workers Federation" went up in the streets.

The general strike call met with a good response from workers in La Paz.

In the mining region in the south, thousands of unionized miners, many of them Indians, took up arms and barricaded mountain roads leading to the mines. Radio stations under the control of the miners' union broadcast appeals for opposition to the coup. "We are going to resist the coup until the ultimate consequences," one broadcast declared.

The new military junta dispatched troops and tanks to the mining region to try to crush resistance. The Democratic Solidarity Radio Network, which includes five union-controlled stations, reported July 20 that workers had clashed with troops in the tin and zinc mining region of Santa Ana, resulting in "many casualties." "A lot of working-class blood has been shed," it said.

Hernán Siles Zuazo, who received the largest number of votes for president in the general elections in late June, went underground following the coup and called for support to the COB-organized general strike. Siles Zuazo, the leader of the bourgeois Left Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, was supported by the Bolivian Communist Party (CP) in the elections. He had failed to win an absolute majority, but was widely believed to be the likely choice for president when Congress was scheduled to convene on August 4.

Siles Zuazo stated in a taped message that the new junta would try to make Bolivia "a huge cemetery in the very heart of South America." He added, however, "This regime of national destruction will not consolidate itself as long as there is a people ready to fight against it."

He also appealed for "international solidarity to strengthen the struggle of the

Bolivian people in quest of its freedom and its right."

The military coup was not unexpected. For months, various military figures had made it clear that they were unhappy with the increasingly turbulent political situation, especially with the growing influence of the COB. Worried that the weak and divided bourgeois parties would be unable to contain the resurgence of worker militancy, the generals finally decided to act.

The coup began in the northern city of Trinidad early on the morning of July 17. Troops then seized the Government Palace in the capital and detained President Lidia Gueiler Tejada, whose "resignation" was announced over the radio.

The entire country was placed under martial law. Newspaper offices were seized by troops. Radio stations were placed under military control. A 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. curfew was imposed. Tanks and armored personnel carriers with troops in combat dress took to the streets of La Paz and other cities.

A three-man military junta was set up to rule the country, composed of the heads of the army, air force, and navy. Gen. Luis García Meza, the army commander, proclaimed himself president.

In La Paz, troops occupied the headquarters of the COB and seized a number of union leaders, including COB head Juan Lechin Orquendo. Simón Reyes, a leader of the COB as well as of the Bolivian CP, was killed, as was Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party-1 in the June elections. (The SP-1 had done well in the elections, its share of the popular vote rising to 12 percent, compared to 4 percent in the 1979 elections.)

Besides moving against the COB and the workers movement in general, the military also disbanded the Congress. The generals had little confidence in the ability of various bourgeois political parties and politicians—Siles in particular—to restore some political "stability" to the country and counter the influence of the COB. But the generals themselves will not find it an easy task either.

Since 1978, when the Bolivian ruling class took some initial, timid steps toward relaxing the repression and restoring a semblance of democratic rights, the COB has greatly strengthened its political influence in the country. The Bolivian workers have also been inspired by the successful Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and by the rise in revolutionary struggles throughout Central America and the Caribbean.

In a previous right-wing coup attempt in November 1979, led by Col. Alberto Natusch Busch, the COB led the resistance. After sixteen days of strikes and demonstrations, in which more than 300 people were killed by the military, Natusch was forced to step down.

The COB's strength was also dramatically demonstrated during the May Day demonstrations that were called by the COB in La Paz. Many thousands poured into the streets. The peasant contingent alone was estimated at 50,000, pointing to greater collaboration between the workers and the rural population.

In striking against this mass movement, García Meza and the other generals are taking a serious risk.

The American imperialists are clearly uncomfortable with the coup—at least for the moment. Washington issued a statement expressing its "extreme disapproval." The U.S. government fears that it could backfire, like the Natusch coup attempt. □



Workers and students build barricades in La Paz streets.