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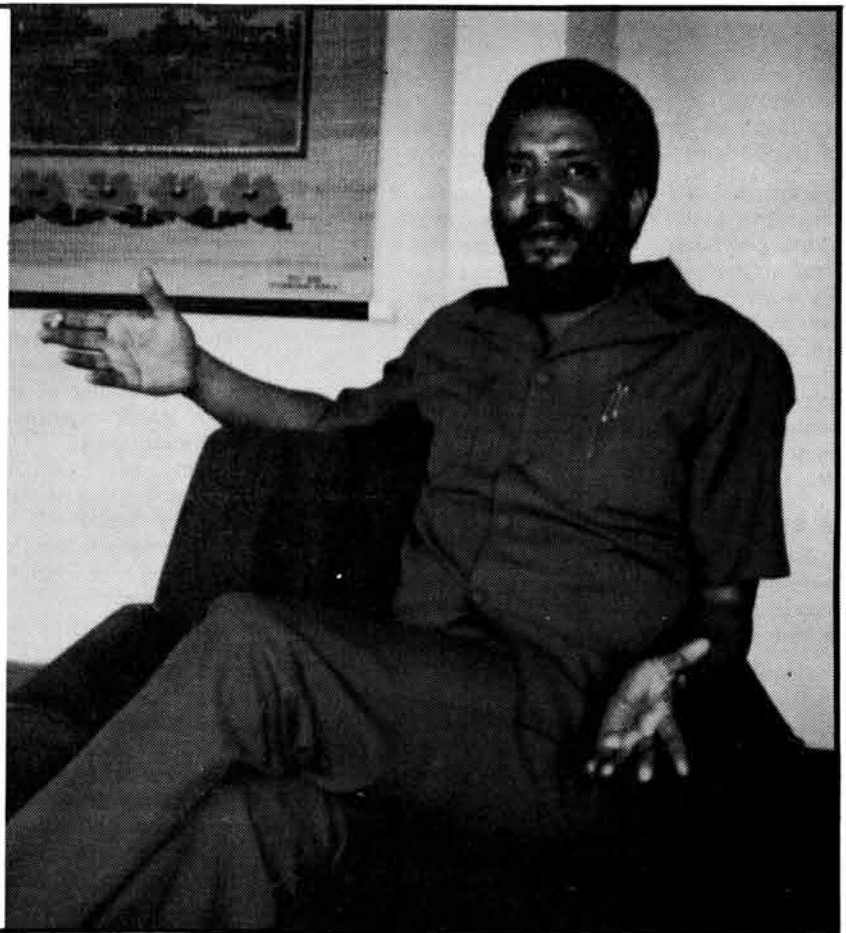
August 4, 1980

USA \$1

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***Exclusive Interview
With Prime Minister
Maurice Bishop:***

Class Struggle in Grenada, the Caribbean, and the U.S.



**United States: What the
Republican Party Convention Showed**



On-the-Scene Report:

***Cubans Celebrate
July 26th,
Hail Advance of
Central American
Revolution***

Cuba: More than 100,000 at July 26 Celebration

By Fred Murphy

CIEGO DE AVILA, Cuba—More than 100,000 Cubans gathered here on July 26 for celebrations marking the twenty-seventh anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada barracks, the opening battle of the Cuban revolution.

Participants came from throughout Ciego de Avila Province, an area of big sugar plantations and cattle farms in the central part of the island. Once part of Camagüey Province, Ciego de Avila was established in Cuba's 1976 geographic and administrative reorganizations. The national celebrations of July 26, Cuba's most important holiday, are held in a different provincial capital each year. This time the honor fell to one of the newest and smallest, Ciego de Avila.

'A Sandinista Event'

Just as last year's celebrations in Holguín had been, this one too was, as Cuban President Fidel Castro put it in his speech, a "Sandinista event."

Castro had returned to Cuba only one day earlier after a week's stay in Nicaragua. While there he not only addressed a rally of half a million in Managua July 19—the first anniversary of the Sandinista revolution—but also visited workplaces and farms, spoke to thousands at impromptu rallies at several cities, and held meetings with trade-union activists, militants of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and with a large group of Catholic priests and nuns who support the revolution.

The theme of Castro's speeches in Nicaragua—the history of solidarity between the two revolutions and the growing bonds of friendship between the two peoples—was echoed in FSLN Commander Jaime Wheelock's speech to the July 26 rally in Ciego de Avila. Wheelock was part of a Nicaraguan delegation that also included junta member Arturo Cruz, Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardinal, and the renowned Nicaraguan folk singers Carlos and Luis Enrique Mejía Godoy.

July 26, 1953, represented not only the

beginning of "the end of tyranny in Cuba," Wheelock said, but also "the beginning of the new revolutionary wave in Latin America."

In the FSLN's early guerrilla front of the 1960s, the Sandinista leader went on, "in Pancasán, in Río Coco-Bocay, in Zinica, the Cuban revolution and the example of the Cuban revolution were also present."

Even at the moment when the Sandinistas were reduced to a handful of militants, Wheelock went on, Cuba's solidarity never wavered. When political differences caused the FSLN to divide into three tendencies, "the support and advice of our brother, Fidel, was of great importance for the unity of the Sandinistas."

"And when our people—children, youth—were confronting a superior and well-trained army with pistols and contact bombs and were ready to fight with stones and even with their own teeth, we also had the concrete solidarity of Cuba and of Comandante Fidel Castro. Because we know that revolutions are not made with one's teeth."

Wheelock was repeatedly interrupted by applause and chants of "Cuba, Nicaragua, united will win!"

But the crowd's loudest and most prolonged response came when the FSLN leader spoke of the "extraordinary housecleaning here in Cuba in recent days"—a reference to the exodus of some 100,000 Cubans to the United States, which began after the events at the Peruvian embassy in Havana in April—"which is going to enable the revolutionaries to work much better, firmly united with your party and with the revolution in Latin America."

"The Cuban people have kept the revolution alive despite all the difficulties," Wheelock concluded, "and we can say that for us Nicaraguans this made our own revolution much easier."

"There is much to be done among our people. We have just seen a few days ago how a military coup has struck the people of Bolivia. We see how the people of El Salvador and the armed people of Guatemala are being massacred. But we also know that somehow, very soon, just as Nicaragua won, El Salvador will win."

After Wheelock spoke, greetings were read to the rally from the newly formed United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) of El Salvador.

Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba

Fidel Castro was the final speaker. He discussed the Nicaraguan revolution and

its significance for Cuba and Latin America, the world political situation, and Cuba's economy and domestic tasks.

Having just arrived from "the second Latin American country to be liberated from imperialism," Castro began, it was "almost obligatory that we say something about Nicaragua." In the hemisphere as a whole, "there are now not only two of us, but three, because we have to include Grenada."

Nicaragua, Grenada, and Cuba were not the only "progressive countries," Castro said, citing regimes such as those in Mexico, Jamaica, and Panama that maintain cordial diplomatic relations with Cuba. "But we are the three that have really shaken things up in a radical and definitive way."

"By the imperative of history, one day it will have to be all of us. . . . The slogans of 'Patria Libre o Morir' 'Patria o Muerte, Venceremos,' will have to be the slogans of all the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean."

The Cuban leader went on to recount what he had learned on his visit to Nicaragua, citing details of the country's geography, economy, history, and current political situation. He reviewed the deep-going measures, taken by the Sandinista government, as well as its efforts to get Nicaragua's remaining capitalists to invest and resume production.

Unlike what happened in Cuba, Castro said, strong unions and mass organizations have already been built in the Nicaraguan revolution in the first year. He noted the existence of "the multiparty regime" and a "broad form of government," which he considered "very beneficial when it comes to continuing to enjoy the broadest possible support internationally."

"Well now," Castro asked the crowd, "is there or is there not a revolution in Nicaragua?"

"Yes!" came the answer.

Castro continued the exchange: "Does the existence of a bourgeoisie, of private property, perhaps mean there is a bourgeois revolution in Nicaragua?"

"No!" the crowd shouted back louder than before.

"No," Castro agreed. "There is no bourgeois revolution in Nicaragua. It is a people's revolution—the fundamental forces are based on the workers, the peasants, the students, the middle layers of the population. . . ."

"The fundamental thing in a revolution is to have the people and to have the army. A Chile cannot happen in Nicaragua, because the people have the power and the people have the army. The revolution is guaranteed."

A Vietnam in Central America?

Castro went on to talk about El Salvador and the attempts of the rightist regime

Summer Schedule

This week's issue is the last before our two-week summer break. We will resume our regular schedule with the issue dated August 25.

there to crush the mass upsurge through terrorism. He asked: "Where are the democratic voices to save this heroic people? They are talking about possible interventions. I don't want to mention governments, but at the moment when some are condemning the coup in Bolivia, where there is a ferocious repression against students and peasants, these same governments support the genocidal government of El Salvador. And in the first place is the United States, sending arms and offering economic aid to the fascist/Christian-Democratic junta."

They speak of intervening, Castro added, but "let's see what they get into if they intervene. Let's see what they get into if they intervene in El Salvador. The imperialists should not underestimate the Salvadoran people. I am convinced that if the United States commits the stupidity of intervening in El Salvador, it will create a Vietnam in Central America."

Big Stick Policy

Turning to the response of the U.S. ruling class to the revolutionary upsurge in Central America, Castro singled out the Republican Party platform, which he described as "extremely dangerous and reactionary," and as an effort to return to the policy of the big stick.

Castro said that some Americans had warned him that if he criticized Reagan publicly he might improve the Republican candidate's chances. But Castro said he rejected such warnings because, "What is at stake here is not a presidential election in the United States. The fate of humanity, the destiny of the world, war and peace may be at stake."

In regard to the Cuban economy, Castro said that the three agricultural diseases that plagued the country last year—sugar cane rust, blue mould in the tobacco crop, and swine fever—are being brought under control. The tobacco mould and swine fever have been practically eliminated, and the cane rust is being overcome by replanting new varieties of cane.

Finally, Castro took up the great efforts made by the Cuban people in sending doctors, teachers, technicians, and other skilled personnel to help other countries combat the legacy of imperialist exploitation. Looking to the future, he declared:

"It's necessary to think about what will happen when the revolution triumphs in El Salvador, when the revolution triumphs in Guatemala and other countries, because sooner or later they will triumph. They will need more internationalist doctors, more internationalist teachers, more internationalist technicians. I think I interpret correctly the sentiment of our people when I say that this must be our consciousness and this must be our conduct—foreign to all chauvinism, foreign to all national egoism." □

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What the Republican Party Convention Revealed

By Gus Horowitz

[The following article appeared in the August 1 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly the *Militant*.]

* * *

The Republican Party's nomination of Ronald Reagan, longtime darling of the party's right wing, as its candidate for president and of George Bush, a former head of the CIA, as his running mate would ordinarily have evoked a touch of alarm among middle-of-the-road capitalist commentators.

In basic views, after all, Reagan is much the same as Barry Goldwater, the 1964 nominee, who was treated as an unreliable extremist by most of the media.

This year, however, Reagan has been portrayed in respectful, even deferential tones.

One reason for the change is that Reagan is now favored to win the election. So prudent journalists and newscasters render him proportionate courtesies. It's all part of what *Newsweek* columnist Meg Greenfield called "taking Reagan seriously."

More important, though, is that Reagan's policies do accurately represent the capitalist mainstream today, while his campaign style—in contrast to Goldwater's—fits in with the general image that the capitalist ruling class wishes its leaders to project.

Whereas Carter is seen as bungling and irresolute, Reagan is presented as decisive, yet prudent and flexible.

Whereas Goldwater personified narrow, doctrinaire conservatism, Reagan has sought to widen his appeal.

'Look Like Democrats'

As *New York Times* reporter Adam Clymer put it, "the Republicans are trying to look like Democrats this year. Last night Ronald Reagan was nominated with a speech that stressed his concern for the poor and the disadvantaged. His acceptance speech tonight was barely begun before he called for an end to discrimination against women, and as he finished he was quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt."

That, at least, is the current public relations image.

The Republicans' real policies were spelled out more candidly in the platform, adopted early in the convention. It included the following planks:

- **Taxes:** An "across-the-board" tax cut, that is, a cut that would grant most benefit to the rich.

- **Government spending:** They favor

"fiscal and monetary restraint" as regards social services; and an "immediate increase in defense spending."

- **Women's rights:** Withdrawal of support for the Equal Rights Amendment; opposition to Medicaid funds for abortion.

- **Labor:** Reaffirmation of support for the antilabor "right to work" laws.

- **Unemployment and welfare:** They "categorically reject the notion of a guaranteed annual income"; they attack the welfare system as "fostering dependency."

- **Blacks and Latinos:** They reject any new measures to meet the needs of Blacks and Latinos, claiming only that incentives to business would provide new jobs.

- **Environment:** They favor "revision of cumbersome and overly stringent Clean Air Act regulations."

Does the program of the Republican Party sound different from life under Carter? Not at all. *On every one of these planks Republican proposals are virtually identical to Democratic practices.*

Foreign Policy

As for foreign policy, the tone of the Republicans is decidedly beligerent.

The platform "contains some of the most alarmist rhetoric either major party has used against the Soviet Union in a decade or more," comments *New York Times* reporter Hedrick Smith, "but it is less hard-line on specific programs and it gives Ronald Reagan, the expected Presidential nominee, considerable flexibility to set his own policies."

Indications of that flexibility are the planks in the platform against peacetime draft registration and in opposition to the grain embargo on the Soviet Union. The Republicans, sensing the adverse reaction to these moves among young people and farmers, are hoping to score a few more points in the voting booths over these issues.

On this or that foreign policy measure the Republicans and Democrats have their differences. But what is noteworthy is the bipartisan agreement on fundamentals. The Republicans favor what the Democrats have been practicing: a step-up in U.S. militarism in preparation for new wars.

The Republicans would like to accelerate the pace. But their leader, if elected, would be flexible enough to adjust his policies to what he could get away with. The same as Carter, in other words.

All through his administration Carter has been pressing to undo the "Vietnam syndrome"—that is, the legacy of antiwar

feeling among the American people—and reassert Washington's readiness to intervene militarily in other countries.

Shift to Right

The nomination of Reagan does not, therefore, signal a bid for presidential power on the part of a right-wing fringe of the capitalist spectrum. On the contrary, it reflects the fact that the entire axis of capitalist politics has been shifting to the right.

In the person of Reagan the ruling class has found a candidate who openly and forcefully expresses that shift. The rulers count on Reagan's candidacy—even if he is not elected—to help push things further in that direction. That is why Reagan is treated much more seriously this year than in campaigns past.

Why, then, did Reagan invoke the name of Franklin Roosevelt in his acceptance speech? Why did he speak of concern for the poor, for working people, for Blacks, for women? Why is it, as Clymer said, that "the Republicans are trying to look like Democrats this year"?

It is a pitch for votes, of course. But the fact that Reagan had to make his pitch in language that has tended to conceal his real program is significant.

It is capitalist politics that has shifted rightward, not the masses of working people.

Search for Alternatives

Working people do not accept the attacks on their standard of living, the cutbacks in social spending, the blows dealt to Blacks, Latinos, and women. Increasingly the mood is one of bitterness and anger, and a search for alternatives to the austerity policies of the Carter administration.

Reagan is trying to capitalize on this mood by speaking of the "unprecedented calamity" that has befallen the country, by offering a "crusade" to turn things around, and by baiting his line with quasi-progressive demagoguery.

But working people are not looking for the antilabor, prowar policies that Reagan offers. No more than they want Carter's.

In the labor movement, there is growing receptivity to the idea of breaking away from the two-party framework and forming a labor party based on the trade unions.

As the Carter-Reagan convergence on an antilabor course becomes more apparent, the labor party mood is bound to grow, take shape, and begin to chart a way forward for working people. □

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Colombian Regime Steps Up Repression

By Luis Rodríguez

BOGOTÁ—During the last week in June more than 3,000 people were detained in raids by the army in the Colombian city of Medellín, according to Col. Guillermo Camelo Cadas. All were picked up on suspicion of having thrown incendiary bombs at the office of the area's governor, Rodrigo Uribe Echavarría!

The following week the pretext used for similar raids in all of Colombia's major cities was the audacious escape of two leaders of the M-19 (April 19 Movement) guerrilla group from La Picota prison. The Bogotá daily *El Tiempo* reported July 2 that close to 500 people had been detained in the latter raids.

Putting the lie to government claims that its target was the guerrilla group was the fact that members of a number of legal leftist groups having nothing to do with the M-19 were detained, including members of the Communist Party and the "Firmes" group. Three members of the Communist Party, including an alternate city council member from Miranda, were murdered in the repressive wave of the past several weeks.

But why the heavy repression after a period of relative quiescence?

No one leftist group or trade union is the government's target. Rather, the target is the resurgent mass movement as a whole. Recession is hitting key sectors of the Colombian economy. Layoffs from Medellín's important textile industry have passed 10 percent of the work force. On top of the growing unemployment, working people are reeling under the blows of an inflation officially estimated at 28 percent a year. When, in this context, the government announced stiff hikes of 20 percent in the price of gasoline and increases of about 20 percent in bus fares, militant protests broke out spontaneously.

In the capital city of Bogotá, for example, thousands of poor residents in the *tugurios* (slums) blockaded key avenues in "operación tachuela" (the spreading of sharp nails that puncture tires) and stoned any buses attempting to move. In two hours time the city was paralyzed, with nothing moving in the way of public transportation.

In other cities the protests were similarly successful. Unlike last year when similar price hikes brought relatively isolated protests, this year's actions were more numerous and broadly based. It took the police and army days to smother them.

There has also been a resurgence of the student movement, with protests against the government's reactionary educational

"reforms." Numerous universities were invaded by the police and army. Some have been closed altogether, and others have been occupied, including the University of Antioquia in Medellín, the University of Pedagógica in Bogotá and the university in Tunja.

A number of strikes have also occurred. Although these have not been in key sectors of the economy, they have been marked by their militancy. "Paros Cívicos" have occurred in a number of municipalities and others are scheduled for July. ("Paros Cívicos" are local strikes organized by broad municipal coalitions, usually to protest the lack of basic services, such as water shortages, frequent electricity blackouts, poor or nonexistent highway repair, etc. The ones to date have been successful in shutting down not only the towns where they are based, but often in paralyzing regional commerce for as long as ten days.)

Such a growth in protest activity, especially in local strikes, characterized the period before the giant "Paro Cívico Nacional" (citizen's national general strike) that shook Colombia in September 1977.

Under pressure of these protests three of Colombia's four national labor federations, the Confederation of Colombian Workers (CTC), the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), and the Trade Union Confederation of Colombian Workers (CSTC), have voted to call another Paro Cívico Nacional. They are demanding a 50 percent increase in wages, an end to the repression, and lifting of the Security Statute, among other demands.

Although they have not set a date for the strike and are unlikely to do so without either the participation of the Union of Colombian Workers (UTC), the biggest labor federation, or more massive and organized pressure from the masses, numerous individual unions are vigorously propagandizing in favor of the action. Posters and stickers are appearing everywhere, creating a climate of expectation. Committees are being organized in poor neighborhoods, in many unions, and on a city-wide basis all over the country. Large numbers of activists are turning out at planning meetings.

Unlike a year ago, when leftist groups calling for a second Paro Nacional were isolated, this year the mass sentiment seems to exist and the context is one of more generalized protest.

A building action for the Paro in Bogotá, focusing on the shortage of *cocinol*, a fuel used (by the poor) for cooking, drew be-

tween 5,000 and 30,000 people (the latter figure was cited by the television news).

Significantly, the second National Forum on Human Rights is scheduled for August 15, 16, and 17. The first such forum, in April 1979, was broadly sponsored by the labor movement, the liberal opposition, the left, and intellectual and academic figures. It was a stunning blow to the Turbay government's massive use of torture and repression. The coming forum may well surpass the first in its breadth and impact.

It is this growing mass movement, and the momentum towards a second national general strike and the second human rights forum, that is the real target of the government's repression. The government is obviously hoping to intimidate the labor movement and the broad masses to stop them from mobilizing to defend their rights.

July 10, 1980

Conditions Improve for Mexican Trotskyist Prisoners

A campaign by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, to gain improved conditions and amnesty for three of its members who are now in prison scored a partial success on June 20 when two of the prisoners were given the right to receive visitors.

The two—Juan Islas and Arturo Gallegos—have been incarcerated since 1974, and were sentenced to thirty years imprisonment in 1977. In recent months they had been refused the right to have visitors, were receiving only one meal a day, were denied reading or writing materials, and were not allowed to use outside exercise areas.

In addition to now being able to receive visitors, Islas and Gallegos are being fed two meals a day, and can use a gymnasium two hours daily.

But authorities have refused to consider pleas that the prisoners be included in one of the periodic amnesties, charging that they are "highly dangerous."

Although Islas and Gallegos were arrested on September 20, 1974, and were accused of having assassinated an Aca pulco political boss, they were not brought to trial until 1977. Both had signed blank confessions after being subjected to savage torture.

The third PRT prisoner, Aquilino Lorenzo Avila, was seized in February 1978, and after seventy-two days of torture "confessed" to the assassination of an Aca pulco university director. All three joined the PRT while in prison.

The PRT is continuing its campaign for total amnesty for Islas, Gallegos, and Lorenzo. □

Cuban Emigrés Find Out They Made a Mistake

[The following are major excerpts from an article by Dan Williams that appeared in the July 16 *Miami Herald*, a major Florida daily.]

* * *

They came to America, tried it on for size, and found it didn't fit.

After braving the scorn of their countrymen and 90 miles of open sea to get here, some Cuban refugees want to return to the island they fled.

"I just can't adapt myself to this system," said Andres Sergio Alvarez, a plump blue-eyed teacher from Havana.

"In Cuba, you don't have to pay for electricity, water, things you need to subsist. I see the inflation here, taxes. You buy a car and you have to pay insurance, too. Everyone works all the time, there's not a moment even to read the newspaper," he said.

Alvarez, 31, served as spokesman for a group of six men living under the end zone of the Orange Bowl [a sports stadium] who say they wish they hadn't joined 116,000 in the Cuban exodus that began in April.

Officials say the six are among at least 20 who mill about the dusty temporary refuge at the stadium, lamenting their decision to flee. Perhaps hundreds more in refugee camps elsewhere want to return to their homeland, said a United Nations official who is trying to help them return.

The regretful refugees are alone and

miss their families. They are homeless and miss guaranteed housing in Cuba. They say longtime Cuban residents of Miami are too wrapped up in their work to bother with them.

More habituated to socialism than they may have known when they left Cuba, the refugees have become instant dissidents in the world's leading capitalist country. What Americans call the job market, these refugees call exploitation. What U.S. residents term competition, they call inhumanity.

For the moment, they have nowhere to go. The government of Fidel Castro in Cuba says the refugees cannot return.

The refugees wait, meanwhile, lulling in the cot-cluttered Orange Bowl. They are fed once a day and may sign up with social service agencies to find sponsors to clothe and feed them. Some had stayed briefly with sponsors or friends before seeking shelter in the stadium.

The six in Alvarez' group said they had made an impulsive decision to come to the United States, and most left wives and children behind. If earlier in their short exile they echoed the tales of Cuban repression told by other refugees, they don't now.

"We abide by the laws; we're not criminals. We have no trouble with the authorities," Alvarez said.

"It was the excitement," said Alberto Estrada, explaining why he came to the

United States. "I wanted to see what it was like. We don't have tourist flights from Cuba."

Estrada, 31, is a shoemaker. He said he never intended to stay, but he complained that the U.S. government has done little to help the refugees.

"If an immigrant arrived in Cuba, Fidel would dress him up and feed him, at least. Here we have this," he said, motioning to gate of the Orange Bowl's west end zone.

Estrada said Cuban residents of Miami take advantage of their new compatriots. "They raise rents, they want to pay only the minimum wage—to exploit us. They say they suffered at the beginning. So why do they want to make us suffer? I expected more humanity," he said.

Luis Lopez Quiala, a young stevedore, nodded. He said he came to stay, hoping to bring his family. But he is disillusioned.

He combed his bushy, curly hair and said exile visitors to Cuba "cheated" on tales of the good life in the United States.

"They came to Cuba with pictures of themselves standing in front of a Cadillac. They said everything was marvelous. They didn't say you had to know English to get a job. They didn't tell you about the expense of medical care," he said.

Some Cuban exiles of longer U.S. residence say it was predictable that not all of the new refugees would fit in.

"They've never been in a competitive market before," said Cesar Odio, assistant Miami city manager and the official directly in charge of the Orange Bowl refuge. □

Emigrés Protest

MIAMI—A police SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics—heavily armed and specially trained] team was brought in July 20 to put down a demonstration by 200 Cuban émigrés housed in the Orange Bowl.

Police said some of the Cubans claimed they got the idea of a demonstration from successful attempts by Black Miamians to focus attention on their problems through recent rebellions.

The homeless émigrés, part of the 750 sleeping on cots under the stands of the sports stadium, had set up barricades to protest unsanitary living conditions, as well as reports that they might be moved to a military camp to make way for an August 9 exhibition football game.

When cops tried to arrest one of the demonstrators, a scuffle broke out and some of the Cubans began throwing rocks and bottles.

The cop in charge of the operation said his team had used force "to show them they are guests in this country. . . . We had the SWAT officers mobilized anyway for the disturbances at Liberty City."



Cuban émigrés housed in Orange Bowl in Miami.

Women's Meeting Reflects Rise of International Class Struggle

By Janice Lynn

Thousands of women converged on Copenhagen, Denmark, July 14 for two weeks of discussion on the situation of women in the world today.

More than 1,000 delegates appointed by their governments were in attendance at the second world conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. And some 6,000 women attended workshops and seminars at a parallel nongovernmental

on its crimes.

U.S. and Israeli delegates, for example, strongly objected to any discussion on the effects of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian women. They claimed it was an obstacle to an "action-oriented conference that will develop programs helpful to women."

Women, according to this argument, should stay away from politics and focus

Sarah Weddington, a presidential assistant. They publicly stated their commitment to fight against any resolution "condemning Israel unfairly." At the 1975 Mexico City conference Zionism was equated with colonialism and apartheid.

Another walk-out took place as the delegate from "Democratic Kampuchea" (representing the ousted government of the butcher Pol Pot) got up to speak. The Soviet delegate pointed out that it was "inadmissible to hear from someone who represents no one—neither a government nor the people in that country."

A ten-member delegation from Iran was there, headed by Akram Hairiri who commented on the issue of Iranian women and the chador.

"I don't have to go to the hairdresser," she said laughingly, pointing to the scarf on her head, "so I can save money to give to my country. When we wear the chador, we can hide guns inside. . . ."

"We have the best situation now of any women in the world," Hairiri said, explaining that what they had was their country's freedom.

As news of the military coup in Bolivia reached Denmark, women attending the alternative conference marched from the university to the official conference site chanting "international solidarity" to register their protest with the head of the Bolivian delegation. They were led by Domitila Barrios de Chungara, the wife of a Bolivian miner.

The conference was also scheduled to discuss the effects of apartheid on South African women. The real world just could not be kept out, despite the wishes of the U.S. representatives.

The UN delegates heard a report describing how the status of women had deteriorated over the last five years, especially in the areas of health, education and employment. For example, women today constitute one-third of the official labor force and yet receive only ten percent of world income. The illiteracy rate of women, twice that of men, has increased. And female unemployment has risen faster than the rate for men.

What these figures reflect is how the worldwide capitalist offensive against the working class is having a devastating effect on women, and the need for women—as half the population—to fight back against the exploitation and oppression spawned by the capitalist system. □



Palestinian delegation protests harassment by photographers.

conference, called the Forum, at the nearby University of Copenhagen.

Although the Forum was also sponsored by the United Nations it was open to all women's groups. Many of the official government delegates shuttled back and forth to attend the lively workshop sessions at the Forum.

The fact that these conferences are being held at all is a reflection of the powerful impact that the women's liberation movement has had around the world. Even some of the most reactionary governments have been forced to pay lip service to improving the status of women.

Representatives from a number of the imperialist countries expressed dismay at the extent of political discussion and debate at the conference. They were fearful that the conference would serve as yet another international forum that would condemn imperialism and focus attention

on narrowly defined "women's issues." But those raising this argument were in a minority.

Among those in attendance at the UN conference was Leila Khaled, well known for her role in the Palestine Liberation Organization. Along with delegates from seventy other countries, Khaled participated in a protest walk-out as the Israeli delegate got up to speak. The representative from Israel was quick to lash out against this "politization" of the conference.

A similar walk-out occurred around the appearance of Jihan el-Sadat, head of the Egyptian delegation. One of the Syrian delegates later devoted her speech to denouncing the "traitor-agent [Egyptian President Anwar el-] Sadat" and the Camp David accords.

The U.S. delegation, appointed by president Carter, was co-headed by Donald McHenry, U.S. ambassador to the UN and

The Class Struggle in Grenada, the Caribbean, and the USA

[The following interview with Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop was conducted July 15 by Andrew Pulley, presidential candidate of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party; Steve Clark, managing editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*; and Diane Wang, a steelworker and SWP member. The three U.S. socialists were in Grenada on a fact-finding and solidarity tour.]

* * *

Andrew Pulley. What can supporters of the Grenadian revolution, antiwar activists, and Black activists in the United States do regarding the U.S. government's war drive and slander against Grenada? How can we help combat that?

Maurice Bishop. I think there are a number of areas. Certainly the question of mobilizing the population, particularly the Blacks, the deprived minorities, progressive forces, the working class, around the importance of world peace and détente. There might be some concrete ways of getting that message across. Certainly, for example, using the Vietnam experience and what it has meant concretely for people—not only for those who died, but those who are now permanently crippled or those who have come back war heroes but still cannot find jobs.

Secondly, I think it is very important to try to organize around one or two key slogans that could dramatize and really focus in a very concrete and spectacular way on this war drive. What I'm getting at is this, for example.

Everybody knows, but most people cannot quite articulate, that the reasons for war, the reasons for any war-mongering right now, have to do essentially with the developing crisis in international capitalism. The economic problems in the United States even more so.

Witness the \$142 billion defense budget or whatever it is. Fifty million dollars cut back on school lunch programs. The retrenchment, the general cutback in social expenditures.

Yet at the same time, it is equally clear that while they are cutting back in those areas, they are stepping up on defense spending. And inciting the countries of NATO, for example, to do likewise.

'Let General Motors Fight'

Now it seems to us that it should be possible to get that message across in a concrete way. To point out that really what the war drive is all about is a means of the transnational corporations, the elite in America, to try to revive their super

profits, which have been falling so dramatically. And the best way always of doing that is by getting a war economy moving—step up spending in armaments, step up spending in the area of the military generally.

So the slogan, for example, that makes the point: "We don't want a war. General Motors wants a war. Let General Motors go and fight." I'm saying that it should be possible to step up that kind of message in a very concrete way so that people can understand.

Because I get a feeling—certainly the last time I was in America—last year at the United Nations—that this war-mongering was beginning to seep through to the population in general to some extent. I wasn't there long enough, I didn't speak to enough people or to an especially wide cross-section to be sure that what I'm saying is right. But certainly listening to the radio, watching the television shows, and just talking to people here and there, that impression came across very strongly.

I don't think there's any need for that to happen in the United States. I certainly feel that a carefully worked-out program aimed at getting the message across that war is *not* in the interests of the American masses, that it's really only a very tiny minority who wants this war, essentially for economic reasons. Therefore, if they want the war, let them go and fight the war. Why should we go and die for them? It's not helping us.

Third, I think precisely what your party and your newspaper have been doing, and we certainly appreciate it. Focusing on the actual reality in the region and the efforts being made by progressive and revolutionary countries to try to get a better life for their people. And doing it in as concrete a way as they can, in terms of focusing on the basic needs of the population—jobs, health, housing, food, clothing. The concrete attempts to bring these about and therefore the developing perception in the minds of the Caribbean masses that this really is a way to measure progress. Not in terms of how many industries you have or how many hotels you have when the profits are going to a very tiny elite, but in terms of what benefits are truly getting to the masses.

Getting across the point, too, that there is absolutely no doubt that for all of us in the Caribbean who are trying to develop new paths and new processes, our concern is not with America. We have no axe to grind. All we want is to be able to live in peace. To have the opportunity to develop our own processes free from all forms of outside interference, from intimidation,



Diane Wang/IP-I

BISHOP: "The reasons for war . . . have to do essentially with the developing crisis in international capitalism."

from threats of invasion, from task forces and Solid Shields and whatnot. That's really all that the people of our region are asking—that it is our right to do as we wish in our own countries.

I think, as I said, that your party and your paper have certainly been making an important contribution there. And that, to us, is one very, very key area—continuing that work.

Grenada-U.S. Friendship

The fourth thing I can think of would be the question of Grenada-U.S. friendships, Cuba-U.S. friendships, Nicaragua-U.S. friendships—these societies, which exist in the case of the three particular countries I've named.

For Grenada, it's a fairly recent development, but it has begun to spread. It's gotten to the West Coast now. And I know there are plans for pushing it further along. The importance is getting, not necessarily progressive, but democratic forces in America to join organizations like that, so that they get an opportunity of learning at first hand what is really happening and give themselves the opportunity of being able to see the other side and being able to understand what the views of the people in these countries are. So that they would get a different point of view

and would not have to have to continue to be saturated by the official American propaganda.

Because, again, one of the things that struck me when I was in America—I hadn't been there in two or three years—was the extent to which the news is canned, the way it's focused. If that's really all people get exposed to—the stuff you see in the *New York Times*, what you see on all the different channels and on the radio—you really have no possibility of developing a different point of view. Because it's *all* just aimed at pushing their point of view.

And these are the same people who talk of the free press, the right to have independent views so that everybody gets to hear what's happening. I mean, I can't think of a more unfree press, a more unfree media than the American media.

Pulley. One big lie that they are perpetrating right now in the United States is that Grenada is an armed camp where every single person walks around with carbines and, therefore, if you fear for your safety, you should not go there as a tourist. The truth is that we see more people armed in a two-block area of Chicago, especially policemen, than I've seen here. Do you have anything to say about this line of propaganda?

The other line is that the new international airport that you are building here is simply a military base.

What do you have to say regarding more Black people and other Americans coming down here just to see for themselves what's happening here?

Bishop. On the first question, the question of everybody walking around with guns, the island being an armed camp, civil commotion, civil war, barricades, the rest of it. Obviously that is part of the whole attempt at propaganda destabilization.

We really have been having that from day one. Obviously the aim of that is to wreck the tourists coming here, in particular. To make tourists generally afraid to come to the country. And they are really pushing that very viciously over the past sixteen months.

Within the first few weeks, they were saying that we had cut down the forests in the middle of the island, in the Grand Etang region, and had missiles aimed at neighboring islands. Then there was another story saying that we had burrowed all the earth from under the island and established pontoons and a U-2 base so that the Soviets could attack. Another one said that there was a Soviet naval base on the offshore island of Carriacou.

Obviously that kind of propaganda cannot affect our people. The island is so small that in a quarter of a second everybody knows that it's a joke and a lie. But on people outside of the country, it can ob-

viously have an effect. And has had some impact.

It's the same with this new line about the island being an armed camp. That's just the latest round of propaganda destabilization. We've had a lot of it. They have of course been linking that to economic destabilization—attempts at wrecking the economy.

To go back to tourism again, there are two recent examples that you might find interesting. In February a hotel owner here, the owner of a hotel called the Calabash, received a letter from one of the travel agents in New York saying that the people who were booked to come down had cancelled out because the travel agency had been advised by the State Department that Grenada was off bounds. We pub-

All we want is to be free from all forms of outside interference . . .

lished that letter. The U.S. embassy, of course, denied it.

More recently still, someone did a survey for us in the Washington, D.C. area, and they discovered that of the twenty-five travel agencies *nineteen* advised against coming to Grenada, arguing that it was unsafe, the usual stuff.

So that economic destabilization has certainly continued.

As you know, they have been moving more and more now to the third leg of that system of destabilization, the violent destabilization, and more particularly to assassinations and straight terror. All of this is predictable.

'Come See For Yourself'

We would certainly see it as important for Black Americans to come down to Grenada, for the rest of Americans generally to come, members of the American working class, American working people in general to come to our country *to see for themselves*. We feel that in the final analysis that is the best proof. Don't wait and listen to the propaganda. Come down and see.

I just opened the Caricom [Caribbean Community] ministers of health conference a while back this morning. In talking to a few of the ministers right after the opening, they were all pointing out that they can't believe that they are in Grenada when they consider the propaganda that they were hearing on *all* of the radio stations, that they were reading in *all* of the national newspapers over the past few months.

One sister from Barbados was saying that two weeks ago she heard on the radio station in Barbados a report that said that the Cuban construction workers at the airport are all walking around in full jungle fatigues with AK-47's on their backs, and that government ministers are

likewise walking around that way. That children eight, nine, ten, years old walk around carrying guns in the streets. That children are going to school with guns in their hands. That there was a civil war going on in the country. That a barricade had been established in one part of the island near the airport, and people were saying they would not lift the barricade until all the Cubans were sent back home and all detainees released.

Of course, all of these are figments of the imagination. And this sister from Barbados was just so glad that she was able to come herself.

So one of our main slogans has been, "Come to see for yourself." We really think that's very important. The extent to which more and more people can have the opportunity to come down and judge for themselves. We feel that's one of the very best ways of countering these attempts at propaganda destabilization.

Steve Clark. What has been the response of the U.S. government to your government's request for extradition procedures for Eric Gairy?

Bishop. That has had a varied history. In the first few weeks and months before we even formally applied for the extradition, they were all giving the impression, the U.S. embassy people in Barbados, that it's a formality, a very simple matter and so forth. Then, of course, they told us that we should get down to the formal aspects of it—prepare the warrants, and the back-up witnesses, proofs, and whatnot. We did all of that.

By November, we got a written communication from them, saying that the papers were in order. No problem. Then by January they came back saying that they had discovered the papers were not in order. There is some more information they want.

In between all of that [U.S. Ambassador] Sally Shelton comes to Grenada last December, at our invitation, and her line was that America didn't want Gairy. So, we pointed out that, well then, *we* want Gairy. America doesn't want Gairy. Gairy is saying he is coming back tomorrow morning. So what's the problem. Let him come. [Laughs.]

Of course, she had no answer to that. Because obviously what was going on was just the usual hypocrisy.

More recently, in the last two or three months, they have come out publicly for the first time—not publicly, but privately to our ambassador—saying that they have lifted all surveillance on Gairy—something that they kept saying that they were doing to some extent within their limited resources and whatnot. And that, so far as they were concerned, the Gairy question was a dead letter.

So it has now come to the point where

they have admitted openly that they are not going to bother with our request for extradition.

Carter Harbors Eric Gairy

Obviously, this is going to be one of the main stumbling blocks to having any kind of reasonable relations with the United States. Because it is not possible to accept that any country, and one that deems itself to be a friendly country, has the right to harbor fugitives from justice from our country—criminals, people who are using the territory of this other country to incite aggression against our country, to actively plan counterrevolution, to plan for mercenary invasion and all that sort of thing.

Therefore, that certainly is going to be one of the major stumbling blocks to the development of any reasonable relations.

Clark. Going back to a point you made earlier. One of the slogans that very quickly has developed into probably the most popular antidraft slogan is, "We won't fight for Exxon." This relates most directly to the war dangers in the Middle East rather than in the Caribbean. But it shows the beginning development among these activists, who are the backbone of the growing antidraft movement, of a consciousness of the cause of war. In the early stages of the Vietnam War, there were many antiwar activists who thought this was just simply a mistake on the part of the U.S. policymakers. It took quite a while into the war before the consciousness of the role of big business, the consciousness that the war was being fought for a specific reason in the interests of a tiny handful, began to develop. But that's there now right at the beginning of this new fight.

Bishop. That's fantastic.

Clark. We think that another very positive thing in terms of mobilizing solidarity not only with Grenada but with Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the Cuban revolution, and against the CIA destabilization efforts in Jamaica, is the fact that Grenada is the first revolution of this power and scope in an English-speaking country with a largely Black population. So it makes it much easier for at least that segment—which is a large and important segment of the American population—to identify with the revolutions in the Caribbean and Central America.

Example for U.S. Blacks

Bishop. I agree fully. I have absolutely no doubt that one of the major factors responsible for all of the aggression and hostility against the revolution in Grenada being shown by the United States government is precisely the fact that they recognize that being a small Black country, with a large Black population, and as you say English-speaking, that it becomes a lot

easier for Blacks and other oppressed nationalities in the United States to identify with our goals and our aspirations. And that *must* be a real problem for them. It must be.

Because what you have in America with the Black situation is already a situation of great oppression. And they have not been able to find any solutions by the usual methods of political prisoners and continued shootings of people, like happened in Miami recently. And to have added to that the example of a Grenada-type revolution must be a frightening thing for them—particularly since they see this place as being in their backyard. And they understand only too well that more and more Blacks are going to hear about

We always try to fully involve the masses in whatever we do . . .

Grenada, about what we are trying to do. Many of them are going to join any movement that is opposed to trying to turn back our revolution.

I think your point is a key one. Extremely important.

Pulley. I'm looking forward to being able to pick up Radio Free Grenada soon in Miami.

It will be a very powerful development when its beam is strengthened, especially for the English-speaking Caribbean, of course, but also for the average person in the United States, in order to help refute all the lies. The American people are already suspicious of anything the government says about anything. Their first thought is whether the government is lying.

The more people discover that just out-and-out lies are being told about Grenada, Nicaragua, and Cuba, the more the U.S. government will have a tremendous problem trying to get away with its war drive. As people in the Black movement become aware of what your government and country is up against, they will be outraged. Because they will see it as a racist injustice, just as they have seen with regard to Haitians, the Haitian immigrants.

It was largely pressure from the Black community that forced Carter to change, at least in words, his discriminatory double-standard toward Cuban and Haitian immigrants.

A similar consciousness can be developed with regard to this revolution, the more that Black leaders, activists, and others are aware of it.

Clark. What are some of the gains of the revolution over the past year and four months that you are most pleased with? And what are the biggest challenges that you see ahead in terms of social programs

and economic development and reconstruction?

Bishop. Answering that question is not the easiest thing, because people's perspectives on that really differ very dramatically.

If you went out into the countryside and you spoke to an elderly sister, her response to a question like that might be something like, "I feel free. I feel good. I feel like a Grenadian for the first time." Intangible things.

Community Mobilization

As for those of us in the party and government, our view is that the greatest single achievement, the thing that we are happiest about, is the community mobilization, community involvement, community participation. That has really impressed us most.

I can tell you, over and over again, month after month, we keep saying, "It can't continue." [Laughs.] And then month after month, you make a call and people still come out.

When the rains came in November last year, it did us tremendous damage, more than \$50 million¹ worth of damage to the economy, twenty-three inches in one month. Before those rains came, there were some weekends when we'd have 85 percent of the villages around Grenada involved in community efforts. That's an extraordinary development. I tell you that in other English-speaking Caribbean countries, I don't think they'd get 2 percent of villages to be involved. And I'm not saying this in a boastful way, I'm saying it in a factual way.

In January, we closed down the schools for two weeks so as to hold seminars for all the teachers to talk about the work-study approach, curriculum reform, and so on. And during those two weeks, we asked people to organize themselves to repair, repaint, refurbish all the schools, because they were in disastrous condition. And sixty-six primary schools got refurbished and repainted in that two-week period as a result of that drive, saving the country a tremendous amount of money. Really quite extraordinary.

We see it also in the area of the village health committees that are emerging as part of our drive to move toward a primary health system. Our aim is that doctors, nurses, paramedics, and technicians working as teams will go out into the country and bring medical attention to people where they live and where they need the attention.

The disproportion in the health budget is really quite staggering. In 1978, the last year of Gairy, 70 percent of the health budget was spent on the three hospitals in Grenada and Carriacou. Those three hospi-

1. One East Caribbean dollar is equivalent to US\$1.00.—IP/I

tals, in turn, attended to about 25 percent of the sick. But under Gairy only 30 percent of the health budget was spent in trying to keep together the thirty-five health centers and medical clinics around the country where the people actually went for attention.

If you understand the situation in this country in terms of poverty, in terms of the high cost of transportation, in terms of the inaccessibility of many of these health centers and medical clinics, then you can see the problem. People are sick, but they really cannot move. Even if they manage to go once, they cannot return two days later and so forth.

So we see the primary health system as being key. And getting the masses involved in that through village health committees, where they do a number of things. One, involve themselves in public health education. Two, deal with overhangings, deal with unblocking drains, which is one of the main problems with mosquitos outdoors, which means yellow fever and so on.

Third, monitoring the *quality* of health care they receive. Because doctors, naturally, came out of the system of 350 years of colonial oppression and thirty years of Gairy's misrule and neocolonialism. Their education system was preparing a tiny elite and one that was not dedicated to service but to dollar bills and to migrating as fast as they could. And even when they stayed here, they either moved into private practice altogether or insisted on their right, while being paid out of taxpayers' money, to practice privately at the same time, using hospital facilities to do so.

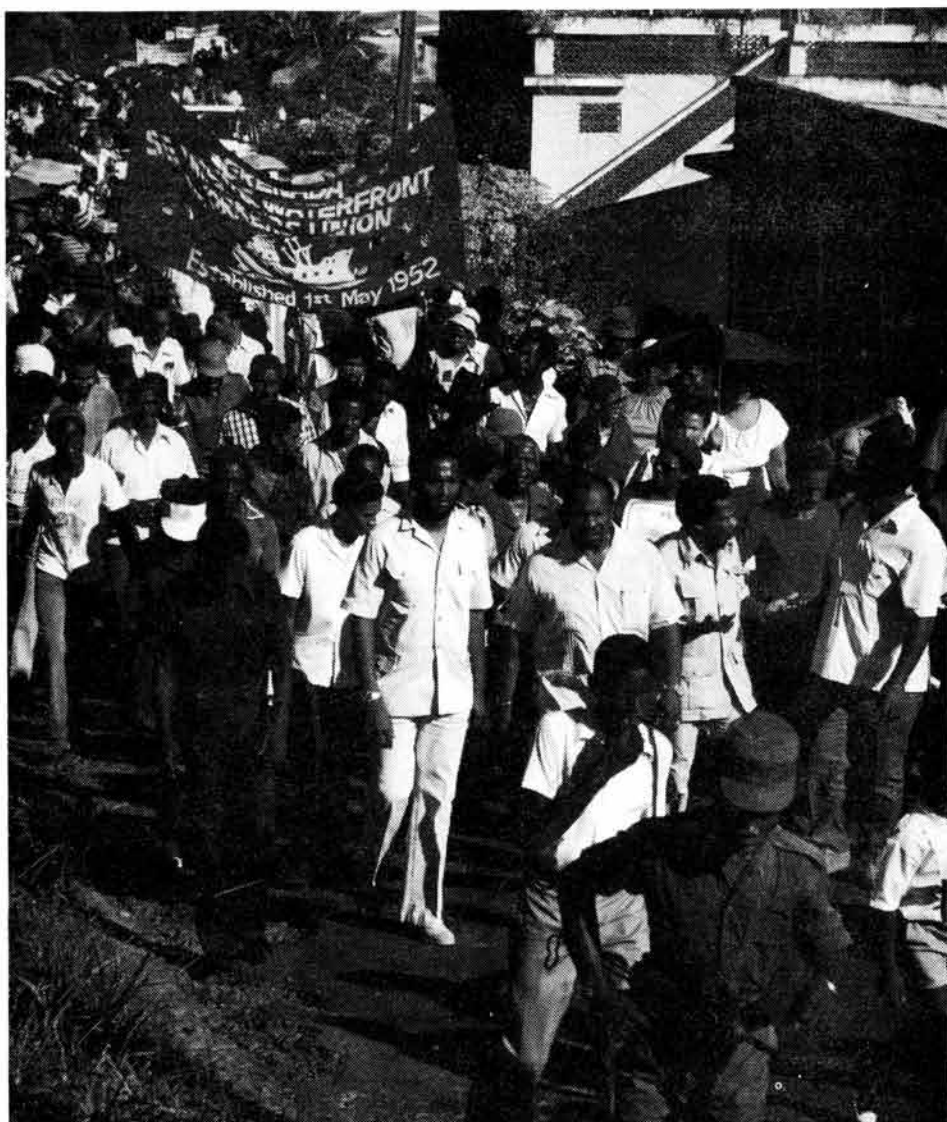
Now that kind of doctor is not going to join up as part of any medical team of nurses, paramedics, and technicians. So it's a real problem getting that struggle, that program going. We have been able to make some limited impact, but we have a long way to go. But we're sure it can be developed because of the community involvement and a new sense of oneness and unity in the country.

Some Concrete Benefits

The other way I think we can look at the question you asked is to try to identify a little more concretely and specifically some of the actual benefits that have come to the people. More jobs, for example, 2,500 in the first year. That has made a very small dent really in the overall unemployment rate of 50 percent, which we inherited. But obviously it has made a difference. It has helped, reduced it to about 35 percent.

Secondly, in the area of education. Before the revolution, the last year of Gairy, three students went away on university scholarships in 1978. One of the three was Gairy's daughter. After the revolution, in the first six months, 109 scholarships, 109 people are able to go abroad to study.

We've been able to reduce secondary school fees from \$37 a term to \$12 a term.



"The thing that we are happiest about is the community mobilization." Above, January 1980 demonstration headed by leaders of New Jewel Movement.

Next year, we intend to make it entirely free.

We have been able to increase greatly the number of scholarships in the secondary schools so that more children can get in.

We have started a breakfast and lunch feeding program in the schools so that those children who are too poor or are unable to return home for lunch will be able to keep themselves together—while your government is cutting it out.

In the area of health likewise. We inherited a situation where there were eighteen doctors working in the government service—virtually all of them concentrated in the hospitals, one or two moving around the clinics, but mostly doing a few hours every week, once a week for a few hours.

And in the first six months again, we were able to get seventeen new doctors to come to Grenada. In other words virtually the same figure as we had before were added to the system. And that has made

an enormous difference in the quality and quantity of health care available.

As you know, twelve of these seventeen doctors and dentists came from Cuba on loan to us and that, of course, has been an extremely important contribution, one of many they have made to the revolution.

So you have jobs, you have education, you have health. You also have the question of struggling with the infrastructure. Pipe-borne water has been greatly increased with the opening of the new Mardigras water project, and several others are about to be completed. That should ensure water for the whole of St. George's. There are pipes in some parts of St. George's that have not seen water for four and five years—not days or weeks, but literally four and five years, just rusted up.

We've been struggling with new feeder roads, opening the forests, for example, to get timber. Right now Grenada supplies something like 4 percent of our overall timber needs locally, when there's a lot of

forest land just going idle. Without doing any great amount, just cutting a feeder road, not even paving it, just enough for a vehicle to get in using four-wheel drive, buying a sawmill for \$20,000, that's all. And doing this now, we expect that in five years, we will be able to supply 90 percent of our timber needs.

There's a lot of little, relatively small things that overall have made quite an impact. These are some of the achievements.

Dependent Economy

In terms of the challenges. In a situation like ours, given our inheritance and dependent economy, we have an economy that was accustomed to looking outward for solutions never inwards toward our own needs and problems. We have a country that was misruled for so many years under colonialism and today continues to be exploited by imperialism. The inheritance, the legacy of not just waste and corruption, but of the lack of physical amenities, is really quite frightening. Three hundred and fifty years of British colonialism, for example, gave us *one* public secondary school. That's all they could build in 350 years! The other eleven were built by the churches.

When you come into that sort of situation, you obviously have to set yourself goals and targets for the revolution.

As you know, this year in Grenada is the year of education and production. And the two main things involved would be the CPE [Centre for Popular Education] and the land reform program.

The land reform commission has been established and is laying the basis for eventual agrarian reform. At this point we are mainly trying to identify the idle *lands* in the country, and to see how many of the idle *hands* are willing to work in cooperatives, so as to bring about that marriage.

Clark. And that also involves the development of a fishing industry?

Bishop. Right.

Clark. What are some of the main political features of the Grenadian revolution?

Three Pillars

Bishop. I would say that there are three main pillars of the revolution.

First, the organization and mobilization of the masses. That is very key. To always try to fully involve the masses in whatever we are trying to do, to keep them fully involved, to ensure that they understand what the problems are and where we are trying to go.

Secondly, the question of national security and defense—consolidation in those areas.

Thirdly, the question of building a sound national economy and bringing more benefits to the people, improving the quality of their lives.

Those to us are the three key pillars. And we believe that all three have to be worked on at the same time. We cannot afford to let any drop or lag behind.

In any revolutionary situation, in any progressive situation, the question of finding the right mix between the people of the country is key. The people without the guns, after all, is Allende, and we know what happened to Allende. The guns without the people, on the other hand, is Pinochet, and we know what will happen to Pinochet.

So it's a question of striking that balance, ensuring that our people understand the importance of being ready to defend our country from external attack, understand why it is that imperialism *must* attack us—why it is, therefore, that assassinations, terrorism, destabilization, mercenary invasions, *must* be a part of their agenda.

That's something that is not as easy as it sounds in our context. Generally speaking, the historical tradition of the English-speaking Caribbean has not been one of a great deal of state violence, or other forms of violence really against the people. It's much easier, I think, for people in Latin America, for example, to understand these realities.

Secondly, remembering the way we took power. While there was a long history of repression by the state, by Gairy, in the days leading up to the revolution, to some extent the people themselves were not really involved in receiving that violence on a personal level.

We don't have, in other words, a situation let's say of Nicaragua, where since 1935 people have been fighting with arms in hand from time to time to try to unseat the various Somozas.

Or a situation like Cuba. The Platt Amendment in 1902 and the constant struggle since then, year after year, the

We need to remain constantly alert, constantly vigilant . . .

years in the Sierra Maestra. You didn't have that kind of situation here.

The people's consciousness, in other words, did not come out of that objective situation that makes it fairly easy for them to understand what is possible at the hands of imperialism.

In addition, we didn't have the situation that the Cubans and Nicaraguans had, where there is a whole lot of land tied up in the latifundias, in the hands of one or two big exploiters, that you can take and just hand over, making easier the objective basis of proceeding on the subjective level. That is not our situation.

You talk about a big landowner in Grenada, you're talking about somebody with seventy-five acres of land.

So we have had right from day one this

tremendous difficulty of getting across to our people, getting them to internalize in their bellies, the fact that we *are* going to be attacked, the fact that economic destabilization *is* going to continue, that the propaganda war *will* continue, that they *are* going to move eventually to assassinations and to mercenary invasions. The objective conditions for getting that message across were not there from before. People did not have that period of socialization, and therefore internalizing this was not the easiest thing.

To that extent, the recent [June 19] events, unfortunate as they are in terms of loss of life, have gone a long way towards helping to raise consciousness. Because people are now able to say, "Right. From day one the comrades were talking about that." They now see that on June 19, even while [the terrorists] moved to wipe out the entire leadership, they did it in such a way that it didn't matter that hundreds of innocent women and children could get wiped out at the same time.

That has made a qualitative difference in the people's perception of what imperialism, what counterrevolution really means.

From that point of view, it has been an extremely important experience. That certainly is one of the biggest challenges that we face, trying to get that across, trying to get our people to understand that we need to remain constantly alert, *constantly* vigilant. To understand that the threats are not there in theory, but are there in practice. We have to be ready and prepared to meet that.

You read about Allende, and you know that three months before September 11, 1973, was the last attempt on his life. So that last assassination attempt was a prelude to an actual coup. So we make the point that, in much the same way, an assassination attempt here can easily be a prelude to a mercenary invasion.

What imperialism is admitting now by moving to terror tactics and moving toward assassination attempts is that they have failed. Because all the attempts to build a popular base [for counterrevolution] have failed. Their attempts to push Winston Whyte and his so-called UPP—the United People's Party. The attempts to revive Herbert Blaize and his GNP [Grenada National Party], when the masses literally ran them off the streets; they didn't want to hear what they were saying. The attempts to use the *Torchlight*,² the local media, to try to assist them in their propaganda in much the same way as they used *El Mercurio* in Chile or the *Gleaner* in Jamaica.

The attempts to try to find a popular base, using elements in the country who are trying to exploit *genuine* objective grievances of the masses. In other words, conditions *are* bad. There is a lot of unem-

2. The *Torchlight* was a right-wing capitalist newspaper opposed to the revolution.

ployment. There is a lot of poverty. They get these people, therefore, to try to incite strikes, to try to whip up sections of the population around issues that *are* pressing issues, that we *are* concerned about, that we *are* trying to do something about. But making them at the same time feel that revolution is like instant coffee; you just throw it in a cup and it comes out presto. That you can negate 350 years of British colonialism and thirty years of imperialism and neocolonialism overnight.

A New Civilization

That is really what they have been trying to do, and they failed miserably. Even their attempts to isolate us in the region, that has been a massive failure, notwithstanding all the adverse propaganda against Grenada. While undoubtedly several *governments* are hostile—they didn't need propaganda to become hostile; they were hostile from day one—the *masses* in the Caribbean understand well what we're trying to do. They understand that this is a genuine process. That we are really trying to build a new process that may become a new civilization, that could have tremendous relevance as a model to their own lives.

And therefore they have not been put off, and imperialism has seen that. They have seen, too, that their attempts at economic sabotage have not bitten deep enough, partly because America is our number seven trading partner. We get virtually nothing from America in terms of our shops and stores. So they have had problems crippling us in that way.

The only option left was to move to the top of the pyramid. At the top, of course, is the terror, is the assassination, is the mercenary invasions. And I think that's one of the major challenges—getting our people to understand that. Certainly in the last four weeks, that message has gotten across a lot more quickly.

People now see the importance, for example, of joining the militia in larger numbers. The original figures relatively speaking were small; you were talking about the vanguard really in the militia. Now quite a few more thousand have joined up.

People now begin to get a deeper appreciation and understanding that really the PRA [People's Revolutionary Army] and the small militia that we had at first cannot seriously defend the country in a situation of all-out attack. That we can really only do that through a people's war, to be able to fight on that front. So that when the mercenaries are passing and they look at what appear to be innocent children and women bathing in a river, as they get going they get a bullet in their back. I think our masses are getting to understand that better now.

And a lot of that consciousness has certainly come as a result of recent events, and not just in Grenada. There are the assassinations of Archbishop [Oscar Ar-

nulfo] Romero in El Salvador and Walter Rodney in Guyana; the destruction of the Eventide old people's home by fire in Jamaica on exactly the fourth anniversary of the similar destruction of Orange Lane in 1976³; the recent attempt on [Prime Minister Michael] Manley's life and the coup d'etat attempt over there. And then, of course, in Grenada, the June 19 bombing coming right after the April 26 plot.⁴



Jerry Hunnicutt/IP-I

Recent attacks have highlighted importance of revolution being able to defend itself.

When you think of it, after just fifteen months, four plots—the October plot, the November plot,⁵ April 26 plot, and a few weeks later, June 19. And in each of the plots, what is central is wiping out the leadership. So I think we are beginning to get that clarity a bit more now, and that certainly has been a very important development from our point of view.

At this point, our feeling very strongly is that what is happening in Grenada is really part of a regional plan that imperial-

3. In May 1976, at a time of U.S.-backed destabilization efforts against the Jamaican regime, fifty armed men attacked a tenement section in central Kingston that was a stronghold of Michael Manley's People's National Party. They set fire to it, killing ten persons. Four years later, in May 1980, a similar fire was set at the Eventide nursing home in Kingston, killing 144 elderly women.

4. In late April 1980, Kennedy Budhlall—an opponent of the revolution and a large-scale marijuana trader—was arrested along with several others for planning to overthrow the government on April 26. The plotters had several supporters at one army camp.

5. In late October and early November 1979, a number of counterrevolutionaries were arrested on charges of plotting to overthrow the government, including Winston Whyte, former head of the right-wing United People's Party; Rupert Japal of the bourgeois Grenada National Party; and Wilton De Ravinere, a former police corporal.

ism has devised for dealing with progressive forces and revolutionary processes in the region. It's more than regional, it's clearly worldwide—the attempts to roll back the Afghanistan revolution, the continued search for bases in that area, the question of Iran and the attempts to invade that country a few months ago, the military presence in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf area, the floating arsenal at Diego Garcia.

And in our own region, Carter's task force last year, Solid Shield '80 this year, artificial Cuban crisis in Peru, artificial crisis in Nicaragua over the two members of the junta who resigned, continuing destabilization attempts in Jamaica. The pattern is quite clear.

Cuba in the Vanguard

We feel that there are a series of concentric circles that imperialism has drawn up.

Into their first circle they have certainly put Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada as being the key countries to get at.

Cuba for obvious reasons. It is obviously the vanguard in this region.

Nicaragua because of its *tremendous* importance for Central America. Everybody in Central America wants to be a Sandinista. It's a massive problem there for them.

Grenada because of our powerful potential example for the English-speaking Caribbean countries, and indeed for the French- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries. So that's their first circle.

In the second circle we believe they have countries like Jamaica, Guyana, St. Lucia, Surinam, El Salvador. Countries where either there have been positive developments on the anti-imperialist front, or where there have been important attempts at building new structures for the people and bringing new benefits, or where there are important progressive forces in opposition or in power who are determined to bring about these changes.

Or where, as in the case of El Salvador, there is an ongoing national liberation struggle that clearly will not be settled in any reformist way. All attempts at reformism in El Salvador *must* fail.

Their third circle, therefore, will be aimed largely at all progressive forces, individually and collectively, whether in or out of office. That would explain, for example, the Rodney slaying or the Archbishop Romero slaying. They understand the potential that the left-progressive forces in the region have, and they are determined to crush that potential, using assassinations.

So it's an extremely dangerous period for us in this region.

Artificial Cuba Crisis

Clark. The U.S. propaganda around the Cuban emigrants has backfired on Carter, especially following the opening of the port of Mariel, the massive anti-imperialist marches in Cuba, and the racist treatment

of the Cubans in the United States. What was the impact here in the Caribbean?

Bishop. Was it in the *Militant* that I saw the Fidel interview with Lee Lockwood from way back in 1965? Did you repeat that in the paper? [See April 18, 1980, *Militant*.] That I found to be an extremely important interview, particularly as it was fifteen years old, in tracing the history of this whole emigration question.

It was really quite succinct, the way Fidel put it. Pointing out that from the word *go* it was an artificial crisis being created. That people, of course, when they were able to leave freely were leaving freely, nobody was blocking them. It became more convenient eventually for the Americans to force them to escape and then treat them as heroes, so that they can get propaganda out of it.

In South Africa, there are millions of Blacks being kept as hostages. Yet they are making so much fuss about fifty-three American hostages . . .

It was really quite an important article, coming at the time it did, especially as it was done such a long time ago.

That propaganda has really done damage, there's no question about it, in the English Caribbean. Given that there's all this talk about "boat people running from Communism" and so forth. I think a lot of the Caribbean masses have had difficulty in comprehending what is really happening and putting it in a full context.

Because what's the reality? If any of those islands had America's doors opened tomorrow morning, there would be six people left on the island. That's the reality. But they make this song and dance.

The imperialist-controlled media have the resources, they have the skills, everything else. We find that there has been a marked improvement in imperialist propaganda throughout 1980 on virtually every issue. First of all, the speed with which they respond and the amount of ammunition they throw into it has been quite extraordinary.

Consider Afghanistan, in December of last year. Just think of the speed with which they moved and how quick that propaganda built up and therefore how difficult it was to combat and counter it.

But really on every issue. Within seconds of the bomb attack here in Queen's Park, the United States embassy in Bridgetown [Barbados] was already sending reports out. Interestingly, their first reports were saying that members of the leadership had been killed. Very interesting. We want to know, how did they know that?

Or take Iran, the question of these fifty-three hostages. Again, the speed they

moved on that question, and the amount of support they were able to muster, made it difficult for people to put it in a full context in terms of the twenty-seven years of oppression under the shah, armed by American guns, and the very deep feelings of indignation as a result of all that by the people of Iran. The feeling that if America is harboring this man, then what is required?

But even more fundamentally, the fact that you have a situation like in South Africa, where there are millions of Blacks being kept as hostages. Yet here they are making so much fuss about fifty-three hostages. Millions of African hostages, imprisoned in a system of apartheid. That's not important. You never hear talk of sanctions about that, but they want sanctions for fifty-three.

It's difficult, because they come over with this powerful emotive line. They put it in the context of the need for international security of all embassies. And it leads many democratic, even some progressive countries to take a firm position against—without ever putting it in any kind of context.

Pulley. One thing that has hurt the imperialists in their drive against Iran has been the attitudes of a good number of the parents of some hostages. Many have come out against the U.S. raid, against the sanctions. A majority favor what Carter is doing, but it's certainly a large number who are vocal and are opposed to it.

They're having a rough time. They've been forced to back away from what was the case at the time of the raid in April, when it looked like imminent war. Everything blew up in their face.

Bishop. The OPEC countries came out with a very strong statement in the last two days. Really good news. I think it was the day before yesterday. Threatening an oil boycott.

Clark: Fidel had urged that in his May Day speech.

Bishop: That's right. That was a first-class speech. It really came over powerfully. What was important to me about that whole trip was the very, very close feelings between the Cuban people and their leader. That was extraordinary. It took Fidel about ten minutes before he could open his mouth. Everytime he tried to say something, the people just kept going again. I really found that extraordinary, because you're talking about a million and a quarter people or whatever it was.

And at the end, their tremendous discipline was another eye opener. Whole waves of people moved to the left while others stood still, moved to the right while others stood still. Then the front rows moved out by a few hundred thousand, the back rows by a few hundred thousand.

Whole waves of people, left and right, left and right, no pushing. And in ten or fifteen minutes, that square was empty. An extraordinary manifestation of discipline.

Diane Wang. Even the *New York Times* had to comment on that. They wrote with a great deal of consternation about that rally. They had to admit not only the enthusiasm, but the discipline.

Bishop. Yes, it was so striking. You would have had to write your article on the plane before you got there really—which they do sometimes.

Clark. The lies on Afghanistan are often particularly outlandish because it is so geographically remote. The media at one point recently were reporting that an army of 20,000 guerrillas—they always call them "Muslim freedom fighters," failing to point out that there are Muslims on both sides—were surrounding Kabul. But then a few days later, if you turned to the bottom of a remote page, you noticed a little item saying the story turned out not to be true.

One of the things we try to do with the *Militant* and *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* is simply to counteract the barrage of lies, just to keep reminding people that the capitalist press will stoop to outright deception. Lenin said that they often tell the truth in the little things so that they can lie in the big ones.

Bishop. On the Afghanistan question, we have been pointing out here in Grenada that what we are really concerned with there was the April 1978 revolution, not so much the December 1979 events. And in the intervening eighteen months, what was happening—in terms of the attempts at destabilization, the armed attacks from Pakistan and elsewhere, the plans of imperialism. And that what requires solidarity and support, therefore, is the right of the

We have nothing at all against the people of America. Our quarrel is with the system of imperialism . . .

people of Afghanistan to build their revolution. And people can relate to that over here, because they see it happening to us too. They know we can have a similar type problem.

Clark. One last question. What would you like to say to working people in the United States? To the Black community in the United States? What message would you like us to take back?

Bishop. First of all, we would like to stress something that imperialism has been trying to use as a means of dividing

and ruling—and that is that we have absolutely no quarrel with the American people. We have nothing at all against the people of America as a people.

Our quarrel is with the system of imperialism. Our quarrel, therefore, is with the American establishment and all its various manifestations—whether it's through the presidency or National Security Council or the State Department or the CIA or the powerful business lobby or the powerful media or whatever. That is who our quarrel is with. And particularly insofar as that establishment seeks to support by violence the right of their transnational corporations to continue to exploit and rape our resources. That is what our quarrel is with.

After all, more Americans come to our country every year than the entire population of Grenada—140,000 came by ship last year, and I'm not talking about those who came for stay-overs.

So that is not our quarrel and we want to make that clear. Because imperialism has been doing its best to try to sow all sorts of confusion in that area.

Likewise, when you come to the question of the Blacks and other oppressed minorities in America, obviously we have a particularly close feeling, given our own cultural background and our own history. There is a very close sense of cultural identity, which the people of Grenada automatically feel for American Blacks and which we have no doubt is reciprocated by the American Black community.

Because our own struggle is internationalist, we have over the years been giving our fullest support to all international causes that demand such support. We see that as our internationalist duty.

Since the revolution, we have continued in that vein. We were the first country in the Western Hemisphere to recognize the Polisario Front; the second country in the world to recognize the provisional junta in Nicaragua on May 23 last year, fully three weeks before they finally won their victory; our open and consistent support to the PLO, for Puerto Rican independence, and so forth. That is our position.

And therefore we see the importance of progressive forces worldwide joining together. We see that struggle as being *one* struggle, indivisible. And what happens in Grenada, we recognize its importance for all struggles around the world. And therefore we're willing to support any of the struggles around the world. And we feel that on that basis, the progressive forces and democratic forces in America ought to give their support to our revolution also.

We certainly place a great deal of importance on the activity, the potential, and the possibilities for the American working-class movement. Both in terms of mobilizing and organizing to stop any draft movement, and in terms of the potential of doing mortal damage to the international capitalist and imperialist system from within the belly of the main imperialist power on earth.

And thirdly, in terms of the great possibilities for expressing solidarity with the revolutionary struggles around the world. Something they have done before and can do again. For example, mobilizing and organizing themselves to refuse to load ships heading for particular areas.

So, our basic message would be to get across this sense: That what we are struggling against is the system of imperialism. That we have the greatest respect for the

people of America. That we feel a particularly close affinity to American Blacks and other oppressed minorities, to the working-class movement in America, toward progressive forces in America. That we certainly are willing to extend our solidarity with them in their struggles, and we cer-

We place a great importance on the activity, potential, and possibilities for the American working-class movement . . .

tainly would hope that they would extend their own solidarity to us in our struggle.

Finally, our message would be: We would love to see them. We believe that it is very important that instead of reading the propaganda that is being circulated in America, they should come out to Grenada, come out to Cuba, come out to Nicaragua, and see for themselves. So that they can understand what is happening and as a result be in a better position to appreciate what is going on in this part of the world.

Let me add just one final thing. That is to say that we, without intending to be disrespectful, would very strongly recommend to the Black movement in America the importance of developing the firmest and closest links with the white working-class movement and the white progressive movement. Our feeling certainly is that in order to win that struggle inside of America, it's extremely important that all progressive forces get together and wage a consistent fight against the real enemy. Don't spend time fighting each other, debating trivialities. That's something I think is important and that I would like to get across in the message. □



Clark, Bishop, and Pulley during interview

Diane Wang/IP-I

3. The People's Revolutionary Army-Party of the Salvadoran Revolution

By Will Reissner

Mexican journalist Mario Menéndez Rodríguez conducted some ninety hours of interviews with underground leaders of three of the organizations fighting against El Salvador's ruling military/Christian Democratic junta earlier this year. Those interviews were the basis for a seventeen part series of articles on Salvadoran leftist groups that was printed in the Cuban English-language weekly *Granma* between March 16 and June 15, 1980.

Because of the importance of the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* has been summarizing the Menéndez series to provide our readers with a better idea of the views and perspectives of leaders of the three organizations Menéndez interviewed.

The first *IP/I* article dealt with the views of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces (FPL) and the second with the Communist Party of El Salvador. This article examines the views of the People's Revolutionary Army-Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (ERP-PRS).

Menéndez's interviews with the ERP-PRS took place on March 6 and March 7, and were printed in the May 18 weekly *Granma*.

* * *

The People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) was founded in 1971. According to the ERP's top leader Joaquín Villalobos, "the ERP came into being in answer to the need to create and organize the armed apparatuses that would make it possible to carry out new forms of struggle in the Salvadoran revolutionary process. . . ."

Villalobos adds that initially "the organization was chaotic, comprised as it was of different groups with different approaches to strategy but sharing the desire to promote armed struggle in El Salvador."

In 1975, the ERP began the process of building a political party, which culminated in the first congress of the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution (PRS) in 1977. Villalobos is the general secretary of the PRS as well as being a leader of the ERP.

The early history of the ERP was very stormy, to say the least. According to Menéndez, that early period was marked by "pragmatism, nearsightedness, the thirst for power and individual control, and militarism," all of which had "tragic consequences."

Menéndez maintains that the ERP's initial line viewed military victory over the dictatorship as a short-term perspective. That line, he argues, "generated military conceptions and solutions for every type of

activity or problem and reflected a profound underestimation, even scorn, for the revolutionary movement of the Salvadoran masses, channeled through different methods, forms and means of struggle."

That "militarism . . . not only isolated the ERP from the people but from the very development of the political process in El Salvador," Menéndez states. "Because it expected a rapid denouement of class contradictions and spent its time preparing the instruments of war, the ERP was unable to influence the forces that were developing in the critical phases of the social movement."

When factional differences within the organization developed on how to proceed, these differences too were handled "militarily." Menéndez notes that there were "summary executions to settle political contradictions," as a result of which "prestigious members of the ERP were slain, including poet Roque Dalton García," who was killed in May 1975. Roque Dalton had been a leader of the Communist Party and was a well-known intellectual.

The present leadership of the ERP-PRS blames the internal situation in that period on Sebastián Urquilla, who was then its top leader. As a result of the inner turmoil, there were a number of splits in the ERP. The largest led to the formation of another of the principal organizations now fighting El Salvador's ruling junta, the National Resistance, whose fighting organization is the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN).

According to Octavio Ponce, member of the PRS Political Commission and of the ERP General Staff, correcting the excessive militarism in the organization was "very difficult and bitter. Recovery," he states, "has meant big sacrifices, but the results are there to be seen today." Ponce was a founding member of the ERP.

The ERP came, through experience, to realize that it had to link up with the mass movement and to work for unity with the other organizations fighting for social change in El Salvador.

In Villalobos's words, in the process of the struggle, "the guerrilla cadres reflect, mature, process their experience and start to acquire a political vision requiring links with the masses and a structure that permits suitable political work. . . . Thus, greater application of experiences led us on the course of building a Party. . . ."

By the time of the first congress of the Party of the Salvadoran Revolution, in 1977, "serious discussion" was possible and "the eradication of militarism from

the organization" had been achieved, according to Villalobos.

Today the ERP-PRS is the leading force behind one of the largest mass organizations in El Salvador, the February 28 People's Leagues (LP-28), which takes its name from a massacre carried out by the government of Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero on February 28, 1977.

ERP-PRS Strategy Today

"Our strategy," says Joaquín Villalobos, "is that of the people's revolutionary war. Imperialism is the fundamental strategic enemy, in alliance with the national oligarchy and the most reactionary sectors of the army."

To understand the ERP-PRS strategy, Villalobos stresses, it is important to bear in mind "that we arrived on the Salvadoran scene during a profound economic and political crisis in Central America," at a time when imperialism was "weakening."

This situation, he maintains, "created the conditions to proceed from guerrilla warfare and building an army . . . to a fundamental phase of the struggle for power . . . which we see in the short and medium term."

On a number of occasions Villalobos repeats the importance of the fact that the increased weakness of imperialism is a basic strategic factor in the struggle throughout Central America.

He argues that "the present crisis of the economic and political structures of Central America is manifested at a time in which imperialism, in our opinion, is fighting a defensive battle. . . ." Pointing to the Vietnamese victory over U.S. imperialism as "the greatest of all victories, forcing imperialist policy to retreat, placing imperialism in a situation of weakness," Villalobos adds that the victory of "the people of Vietnam made possible the victory of the Nicaraguan people and the future victories of the Salvadoran and Central American revolution."

Need for Left-Wing Unity

Given the ERP-PRS's view of the proximity of the struggle for power, it sees, along with other organizations fighting the junta, a pressing need for "unity of all the left-wing forces," says Villalobos.

He adds that since the prospect for taking power is opening up at this time "not only for the Salvadoran revolution but for the Central American revolution, and given the fact, in addition, that this prospect exists for the anti-imperialist forces in Latin America as a whole, in the concrete

reality of the Salvadoran situation failure to achieve the left-wing unity that would mean a new victory for the Latin American revolution would amount to a betrayal of the interests of that revolution. . . ."

Villalobos returned to this point to argue that "the unity of the revolutionary and democratic organizations is a vital necessity of this historic moment, when . . . the Salvadoran oligarchy and its reactionary forces, in alliance with imperialism, are going on the defensive."

"At this point," Villalobos states, "the idea isn't to wage a debate on political lines, since when it comes to concrete reality, we are all acting in unison for the same goals and we are all under attack by the forces led by imperialism, and they make no distinction between one revolutionary political-military organization and another. . . ."

On the question of how unity is to be achieved, Villalobos expressed very strong views. He stressed that "we are not party to the traditional concept of unity, that is, of organic unity established overnight, which tries to overlook the different styles, concepts, language, etc. that characterize each revolutionary organization."

"We look upon unity as a process built up from permanent coordination. . . . And by coordination we mean genuine, frank coordination, which has the Salvadoran revolution as its main goal."

He adds, however, that "the process to which we refer ought not take a year; it could take just a few months." He points out that "contacts at the grass-roots level between different revolutionary organizations and contacts in implementing our lines indicate that if coordination is established the organizations will be brought together fast."

According to Villalobos, this process can develop quickly because "today there aren't any political differences among the revolutionary organizations, but subjectivism almost forces them into being, because different organizations are involved."

In Villalobos's view, "as for the medium-term objectives, we believe they are the same for all the forces that make up the vanguard of the Salvadoran revolution: the taking of power and the establishment of a popular democratic government leading toward socialism," that is "a government that would be defined by all the revolutionary forces in alliance with the most advanced democratic sectors."

Attitude toward Ruling Junta

On October 15, 1979, Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero was overthrown in a coup that had the backing of the U.S. government. The new junta that came to power claimed to favor reforms, and it invited civilian groups to take part in the government.

In response to the coup, the ERP-PRS organized an insurrection on October 16.

"For 12 hours," says Joaquín Villalobos, "and in some cases for longer, we militarily occupied several villages, where lengthy combats took place, and in that fighting we were supported by the local population."

They took this action, Villalobos states, "because the overthrow of Romero was an imperialist maneuver, and this has been fully demonstrated, to deceive the Salva-

Literature Available

Ten of the articles in the *Granma* series we have been summarizing are available in pamphlet form, for those interested in further reading on the positions of the Farabundo Martí People's Liberation Forces. The pamphlet, *General Insurrection in the Making*, is available for 75 cents from the U.S. Friends of the Salvadorean Revolution.

Other pamphlets available from the same group include: *U.S. Involvement in El Salvador, 1947-80*, 75 cents; *Platform for a Democratic Revolutionary Government*, 50 cents; and *Interview With a Leader of the Solidarity Bloc of the BPR*, 75 cents.

There is a 25 percent discount on orders of 10 or more copies. Checks should be made out to "El Salvador: People in Struggle." Orders should be sent to the U.S. Friends of the Salvadorean Revolution, P.O. Box 40874, San Francisco, California 94140.

doran people. Had it become consolidated, it would have meant a defeat, of a temporary nature to be sure, but all the same a defeat for a revolutionary alternative."

The junta was, however, able to attract a number of civilian forces to cooperate, including the Christian Democratic Party and the Communist Party, which had members in the cabinet. This presented the ERP-PRS with the problem of explaining to the masses that the junta was essentially a creation of the military, despite the presence of some reformist civilian forces in the cabinet.

"If we had spoken out on the inner contradictions in the junta," the ERP-PRS leader explains, "we would have confused the masses." He stresses that "we couldn't adopt a stance on the basis of the intentions of the civilian personalities, who lacked decision-making power and were unable to apply reforms and changes in practice. . . . And so, regardless of the good intentions of the personalities belonging to that first ruling junta, our policy consisted of applying constant pressure so that the military sectors that were really

running the government would be forced to take up the defense of the true scheme of imperialism, the oligarchy and their allies. . . ."

The pressure exerted upon the junta, says Villalobos, speeded up its crisis and the resignation of most of the civilian forces in it in January 1980. "The democratic officials resigned, and the maneuvers of the enemies of the people were exposed. Now, the alliance between the military and the [remaining] Christian Democrats faces many political disadvantages, including a low level of credibility and very few possibilities for resolving problems. . . ."

The present military/Christian Democratic junta acts on the following premise, says Villalobos: "promise lots of reforms, make a minimum of concessions and go all out in repressing the people."

Role of Women

"Since the very inception of our organization, the participation of women has been highly significant" the ERP-PRS leader remarked. "Thirty percent of our Central Committee are women, and one woman comrade is a member of the PRS Political Commission. In our cells, women's participation as political and military cadres is notable."

He adds that "this participation is not the result of a line established by the Party leadership but is the reflection of a complex political process involving the masses of the Salvadoran people. . . . In the Salvadoran countryside, women cadres are practically strategic, irreplaceable pillars. And no kind of differentiation is established in regard to the work women take on. . . ."

According to Villalobos, "in our country, among the forces acting at the center of this society in conflict, the Church has played one of the most important and courageous roles. The revolutionary organizations are not unaware of the role played by the democratic sectors that seek a revolutionary solution to the crisis of Salvadoran society. Within those broad social forces, the Catholic Church plays a key role."

"And in this regard," Villalobos continued, "it should be pointed out that the grass-roots level of the Salvadoran Church is closely linked with the popular sectors."

On the international arena, Villalobos said, "We regard all the revolutionary forces of Latin America, especially in the Central American area, and most especially the Cuban Revolution, as fundamental strategic allies of the Salvadoran revolution."

"In defining ourselves as enemies of U.S. imperialism we also identify with the Non-Aligned Movement, with the struggle of the Palestinian people and of the liberation movements of the African peoples. In a word, we identify with the cause of all the oppressed and exploited peoples." □

The Changing Face of Japanese Politics

By Goro Hayashi

TOKYO—The lower house of the Diet (parliament) passed a vote of no-confidence against the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government of Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira on May 16. The no-confidence motion was submitted by the Socialist Party (SP) and supported by all the opposition parties. It came as a surprise when some 70 members of the LDP stayed away from the chamber, allowing the motion to pass by 243 votes for to 187 against. (The LDP had 257 deputies in the lower house.)

Among those boycotting the session were former prime ministers Takeo Fukuda and Takeo Miki. They were expressing their dissatisfaction with Ohira's indecisive attitude toward recent political scandals, and have formed the "Renovation League of the LDP." In fact, the LDP is now faced with a de facto split. The split in the LDP shows that there is no faction in the party capable of solving the structural crisis of bourgeois rule.

This was the first time in twenty-seven years that a no-confidence vote passed. Instead of resigning, the government decided to dissolve the House of Representatives (the lower house). A general election was announced for June 22. (The election for the upper house, which was originally scheduled for June 29, was also moved to June 22.)

Dissatisfaction with the LDP's rule has been increasing due to a succession of scandals involving corruption in government and business circles, the rising cost of living, uneasiness about job security, and so on. Also, the LDP government is increasing arms spending within the framework of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, which is a challenge to the deep pacifism of the masses. Finally, a drastic rationalization in governmental offices and public enterprises in the name of "normalization of finances," and attacks on wages are arousing anger among broad layers of the population.

After the last general election in November 1979, in which the LDP lost a majority for the first time in thirty years (they managed to keep a parliamentary majority by recognizing several independents after the election) the infighting within the LDP got worse. The faction headed by Fukuda and Miki openly opposed the reelection of Ohira as prime minister, denouncing him for being responsible for the LDP's electoral setback.

These divisions in the LDP resulted in the passage of the no-confidence motion.

At the same time, it is no accident that the collapse of the LDP government has

Japanese Election Results

The results of the June 22 general election in Japan surprised everyone. Although it was deeply split and in the midst of a severe crisis, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 284 out of 511 seats in the lower house—a gain of 27 seats.

The New Liberal Club (NLC), which split from the LDP after the 1976 Lockheed payoffs scandal, also did quite well, even though it had also been going through a deep internal crisis. It went from four seats to twelve, tripling its representation.

The Buddhist Komeito (Clean Government Party), which represents the urban petty bourgeoisie and defines itself as "middle of the road," lost the most, going from fifty-eight to thirty-three seats.

The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), the right wing of the Japanese Social Democracy, lost slightly, going from thirty-six to thirty-two seats. The Socialist Party (SP) won ten seats as compared to the seven it had won in the October 1979 general election.

Although the Communist Party (CP) lost parliamentary seats, its percentage of the vote remained stable, at slightly over 10 percent of the total.

The electoral victory of the LDP and NLC came after the unexpected death of Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira in the midst of the election campaign. A *Mianichi Shimbun* national opinion poll conducted before Ohira's death found that public support for the Ohira cabinet was at a new low—21 percent. More important, opposition had jumped 15 percentage points, to 46 percent compared with a similar poll taken in September 1979.

Ohira's death certainly had a definite impact, and provoked a conservative reaction among large layers of the petty bourgeoisie. But the petty-bourgeois layers were also reacting to the very obvious political crisis revealed by the vote of no-confidence in the government and the dissolution of the lower house only eight months after the previous general election, and to the dramatic developments in South Korea following the uprising by the people of Kwangju and the military's bloody repression.

The response of the petty-bourgeois masses was fear. They fell back on political conservatism in the face of a situation that was rapidly evolving toward a domestic and international crisis. They sought some illusory political stability.

During the October 1979 elections, these same petty-bourgeois layers gave a high vote to the Komeito, expressing their discontent and skepticism toward the policies of the conservative and corrupt bourgeoisie. Within ten months, there was a complete about-face in the voting pattern of the petty bourgeoisie. The LDP has gained an electoral victory, but it is one that reflects the instability of its electoral base. Nothing has been resolved in terms of the relationship of class forces, and the crisis of the LDP and the big bourgeoisie will continue.

The accompanying article, which was written before the June 22 election and before the death of Ohira, explains the background to the election and the situation within the workers movement.

been accompanied by the crisis in South Korea. The crisis of the Japanese ruling class and that of the South Korean military regime are inseparably linked. The struggle of the South Korean workers and peasants against the heirs of the Park regime is a serious blow to Japanese imperialism, which has backed the South Korean military regime in order to maintain its political and economic hold in that country. On the other hand, the struggles of the Japanese people against the capitalist LDP government are also hitting the South Korean regime by undercutting its base of support from abroad and by encouraging the democratic movement of the

Korean masses.

In this situation, many workers, students, leftist groups, and Christians in Japan are taking part in an emergency campaign for the defense of the struggle in South Korea. Almost every day there are demonstrations, rallies, and picket lines at the South Korean embassy, and Korean residents in Japan are in the forefront of this campaign.

LDP Weathers 1974-76 Crisis

The collapse of the LDP government began with the governmental crisis of 1974-76. Instability in East Asia after the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam

caused difficulties for the Japanese ruling class. At the same time, the "oil shock" hit the Japanese economy hard, highlighting the end of Japan's rapid economic growth in the post-World War II period.

Also, the combativity of the working class was increasing. The high point of this combativity was seen in the eight-day strike of public workers, including railway workers, in November 1975. Finally, the disclosure of the Lockheed scandal in 1976, which involved former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, brought the LDP government to the brink of collapse.

But this crisis of 1974-76 did not lead directly to the collapse of the government. Several factors intervened to prevent this.

Internationally, détente with China helped moderate the effects of U.S. imperialism's defeat. Since the diplomatic normalization between China and Japan in 1972, the Chinese leaders have been insisting more and more that the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the strengthening of Japan's military forces are necessary for stabilizing the status quo in Asia.

The sudden diplomatic shift by the Chinese leaders, toward encouraging a greater Japanese military role in Asia, caused consternation among Japanese workers, who had been fighting against moves toward capitalist militarization. Reformist leaders, using the prestige of the Chinese revolution and the pretext of Peking's diplomatic shift, began to abandon anti-imperialist struggles, and to change their stance toward the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the Japanese military establishment.

The Socialist Party and the leaders of Sohyo (the General Council of Japanese Trade Unions) revealed their inability to mobilize the workers against the LDP government as they moved openly toward class collaboration, calling on the workers to restrain their wage demands. The Social Democratic leaders stepped up their attacks against struggles on the shop-floor level, afraid that the militancy of the rank and file would go beyond their control. Their traditional policy of using the combativity of the masses to pressure the capitalists for tiny concessions had lost its material basis, since the rulers refused to grant such concessions with the Japanese economy no longer in a period of rapid growth.

The Communist Party aided this betrayal by its sectarian attitude toward any militant mass movement and its adaptation to the anti-working-class sentiment of the petty bourgeoisie. The CP launched a very antagonistic campaign against the Burakumin (outcasts similar to the untouchables in India) liberation movement. It also carried out a reactionary campaign urging teachers and other government office workers not to strike.

Fukuda's Harsh Policy Breeds Resistance

The Fukuda government, which replaced the Miki government in late 1976, stepped

up the offensive against working people. Fukuda's policy was more openly aggressive than that of Miki, who made some concessions to the demands of the workers and peasants.

But Miki's policy only postponed the crisis. Fukuda tried to reunite the political



OHIRA: He led LDP to relative defeat in October 1979, but after his death in June, the LDP made electoral gains.

forces of the bourgeoisie and to repress any independent movement of the masses. He succeeded in minimizing resistance from the reformist apparatus.

Faced with the crisis of the capitalist economy and with the uncompromising attitude of the government, the reformist leaders sought to avoid any class confrontation. Leaders of the Sohyo put forward the idea of a coalition government that would include the proimperialist Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and the Komeito (a petty-bourgeois, Buddhist formation), but would exclude the CP.

The Sohyo leaders also began to cooperate with the government's harsh rationalization in the public sector, especially in the Japan National Railway, in hopes of demonstrating their reliability to the capitalists.

These initiatives by the Sohyo leaders triggered a drastic rearrangement of forces on the political arena and in the trade unions. The moves of the Sohyo leaders met with resistance even in the SP.

At the same time, an active independent current developed in the SP. This current grew out of the Sanrizuka struggle (against Narita Airport), struggles against the layoffs of workers in the public sector, and from some very combative strikes in smaller enterprises, especially in the metal industry.

This independent current is centered around *Labor Bulletin*, which is published twice a month and has nearly 10,000 readers. The editorial board of this bulletin includes some prominent former Sohyo leaders. It has been calling for a workers movement on a class-struggle basis, and for coordination of struggles on a national as well as on a district level. Activists around this bulletin are active in the Sanrizuka struggle, in the solidarity cam-

paigns with Korea and Vietnam, and also in the antinuclear movement.

Just after taking office, Fukuda began to speed up the opening of Narita Airport, which had been suspended many times because of the uncompromising struggle of the farmers (whose land was taken) and their supporters. Fukuda hoped to reinforce his authority by smashing this outstanding example of militancy by the workers and peasants. But his plans met with unexpected results.

On March 26, 1978, militants led by the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL, Japanese section of the Fourth International) and other leftist organizations rushed into the airport and occupied the control tower for several hours, forcing Fukuda to again postpone the opening.

This spectacular action was an encouragement for various layers of the population and caused consternation within the government and spread dissension within the LDP.

Despite harsh repression of the Narita struggle and reprisals, including the firing of arrested workers from their jobs, and despite repression from the union bureaucrats, sympathy for such militant action spread among rank-and-file workers.

Indications of this were the massive boycott against the atomic-powered ship *Mutsu*; the struggle of the Chiba prefecture locomotive workers against the transportation of fuel to Narita Airport; and the postal workers' job action against the "Marusei Movement" (an attempt to organize workers behind management in order to enforce discipline in the workplace and demobilize the workers).

Another indication of this sympathy was that a petition for the release of the militants who took over the airport control tower, and who have been in jail since then, gathered more than 30,000 signatures in only two or three months in late 1979.

Fukuda also provoked the anger of the working class when he called for an Emergency Measures Law that would restrict civil liberties.

Criticism of the Fukuda leadership began to be expressed openly in the LDP itself. This led to Fukuda's replacement by Ohira, who was backed by former Prime Minister Tanaka, in December 1978.

Realignment in the Trade Unions

Under Ohira, however, the disorientation in the LDP continued to deepen, and the realignment of political and trade-union forces also proceeded.

The opposition parties continued to raise their proposal for a coalition government, with the DSP and the Komeito strengthening their antilabor stance in preparation for taking part in such a government. The Komeito and the DSP also pressed the leaders of the SP and Sohyo to cut their ties with the CP as proof of their willingness to help in stabilizing capitalist rule. The SP, for its part, moved closer to the

DSP and the Komeito. In accordance with this process, a move toward reunification of the trade unions was undertaken.

There are two major national trade-union federations in Japan. One is Sohyo, which is identified with the SP, but includes some CP-led unions. Sohyo also includes the Japan Federation of Iron and Steel Industry Workers Union, which participates in the International Metalworkers Federation-Japanese Committee (IMF-JC, a proimperialist organization). The other main union federation is Domei (Japanese Confederation of Labor Unions), which is led by the DSP.

During the 1960s, Domei and the IMF-JC achieved a strong hold on major unions in the private sector by carrying out, hand-in-hand with the employers, an all-out attack on the most militant workers. Since the late 1960s, there have been very violent confrontations between militant workers in Sohyo and the scabs of Domei.

Divisions in many unions were provoked by Domei, but it failed to gain a majority of the public sector workers. Young workers in the National Council of the Government Enterprise Workers Union (GEWU) beat back the harsh attacks from the government and Domei in the late 1960s and early 1970s, thus setting back the attempt to unify the trade unions on a pro-imperialist basis.

But since the late 1970s, the leaders within Sohyo have taken the initiative in the reunification effort. Leaders of the telephone and telegraph workers, who had been the main advocates of SP-DSP-Komeito collaboration, tried to cooperate with the government's rationalization plans and to strengthen their bureaucratic control over the workers, so as to pave the way for reunification. Leaders of the National Railway Union also tried hard to collaborate with management.

Rationalization of the public sector which would include tens of thousands of dismissals, has become one of the most pressing needs of the capitalist government because of huge financial deficits. Leaders of the rail union are trying to placate the antiunion sentiments of petty-bourgeois layers by supporting "reasonable" rationalization. At the same time, they want to show their "responsibility," and their fitness for partnership in the government to the capitalist class by taking the initiative in the reunification of the trade unions, as well as in the realignment of political forces.

But the reunification process is facing a lot of difficulties. One problem is the conflicting interests of the separate union bureaucracies. Domei and the IMF-JC insist on excluding any combative unions from the reunification process.

The CP, for its part, responded to the turn to the right by the leaders of Sohyo in a very sectarian way. They are calling for a third national federation, but only a few CP-led unions responded to this call. Lead-



Demonstration protesting construction of Narita Airport.

ers of Sohyo, without concealing their intention to expel unions following the CP's line, have denounced the CP's call as a splitting move.

Recently, there was a sharp confrontation between leaders of the Tokyo Teachers Union (headed by the CP) and leaders of the Japan Teachers Union (headed by the SP) over the participation of the former in a new "national federation" called for by the CP. That confrontation led to a split in the Tokyo Teachers Union.

The other difficulty is that there is still strong resistance to this reunification among rank-and-file militants, and even among some leaders of Sohyo and of unions who maintain a class-struggle orientation. As a result, open conflict has broken out among the tendencies in the GEWU.

The class-struggle left should intervene in this conflict in a united way. In Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures in Tohoku district, in northern Japan, several telephone and telegraph workers are now launching a fight against bureaucratic control. They were expelled from their union because they insisted on working-class unity, participating in the Sanrizuka struggle and antirationalization struggles despite the opposition of the bureaucrats. They are showing that this reunification scheme would only result in a tightening of bureaucratic control over the activities of rank-and-file workers.

Political Perspectives for Capitalists

One of the main issues in the last election was a tax increase proposed by Ohira. The capitalists have been faced with a swelling financial deficit, allegedly caused by the price of rice (which is maintained by the government), government outlays for the national health insurance system, and the deficit of the National Railway. The capitalists have been trying to over-

come this situation by victimizing the workers and farmers, as well as the urban petty bourgeoisie. The relative defeat of the LDP in the November 1979 elections shows that it is losing support from petty-bourgeois layers in both urban and rural areas.

The SP is trying hard to show the capitalists that it can be relied on as a partner in the government. It has abandoned its policy urging a coalition of all opposition parties, including the CP. In addition, SP Chairperson Asukata recently proposed that his party "suspend" its opposition to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and to the Japanese armed forces in order to make it easier to build a firm SP-DSP-Komeito coalition.

But the DSP responded coolly to this proposal. It maintains that the SP should not only "suspend" its opposition, but renounce it completely. On the other hand, there is still strong resistance to the right turn in the ranks of the SP itself.

Neither can the bourgeoisie rely on the DSP and the Komeito. The DSP consistently defends the interests of the capitalists, especially on the issue of military spending, and it often takes an even stronger procapitalist stance than the LDP. But its influence is limited to the best-paid layers of workers in the biggest companies, as in auto, metal industries, and shipyards. Even in those sectors, resistance is developing among the workers, as was shown in a long and widely supported strike at Sasebo Heavy Industry (SSK) early this year.

It is obvious that the DSP doesn't have the ability to contain the combativity of the workers, especially those in the public sector and in small private companies. Its antilabor, proimperialist policy is too well known.

As for the Komeito, its religious nature prevents its expansion. It has played an important role in dividing the urban petty

bourgeoisie from the working class and in forcing the SP to stop cooperating with the CP, but it has little influence in the trade unions.

Opportunity For Revolutionaries

Thus, the advent of a period of coalition governments also means the beginning of real class confrontations. And the dynamics of this confrontation will tear apart reformist parties and reformist trade-union leaderships. In other words, a really enormous opportunity is now opening up for revolutionaries.

In this situation, the most urgent need for working people is to build a visible alternative to the capitalist government and to any "moderate" or "moderate-conservative" coalition.

The JRCL is calling for a workers and peasants government based on a united front of the working class and an alliance of the workers and peasants. A step toward that is to build a united front of the class-struggle left, a front which now exists in embryonic form around the Sanrizuka struggle and *Labor Bulletin*. Right now, this current should intervene actively in the ongoing realignment in the trade-union movement.

Although the last six years have seen defeats for the struggles of workers for higher wages, and attacks on trade-union rights have been increasing, along with unemployment, the relationship of forces is not favorable for the bourgeoisie. The current crisis of the bourgeoisie is closely linked to the overall crisis of imperialist rule in Asia. What is at stake is the structural reorganization of the Japanese state apparatus in order to adapt to this drastic change in the international situation.

The reformist leaders of the SP and CP are seeking to defend the ruling class's national interest. They are currently rallying to the nationalistic, anti-Soviet campaign launched by the bourgeoisie. As a result, they cannot fight back effectively against the militarization drive, or against attacks on wages, inflation, and violations of the basic rights of the people in the name of the crisis facing the nation.

The capitalists are searching for a way to stabilize the situation in East Asia to minimize the effects of the turmoil in West Asia. They are relying on the reactionary foreign policy of the Chinese leadership and the U.S.-Japanese-Chinese peaceful coexistence deal to turn back the "Soviet threat." But the struggles of the East Asian peoples, especially in Korea, are challenging this status quo.

In view of this, a united front of the class-struggle left should be based first of all on internationalism and an uncompromising fight against the counterrevolutionary alliance of the imperialists and their allies.

Now that the reformist leaders have abandoned any effective struggle against the capitalist government, it is the respon-

sibility of the militant forces of the class-struggle left to lead struggles for the defense of living standards, and for political, economic, and trade-union rights.

The JRCL is calling for a united front around three major tasks: solidarity with the Korean people and in opposition to the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the Japa-

nese military; for the final victory of the anti-Narita-Airport movement (defeating the plan to build a second runway and fuel pipeline, thus forcing the airport authority to finally abandon the airport); and for defense of the living standard of the toiling masses faced with the capitalists' inflation and austerity policies. □

Palestinian Political Prisoners Die From Mistreatment

An Example of Israeli 'Humanism'

Two Palestinian political prisoners—Ali Mohammed Shehadeh el-Jafari, and Kassem Mohammed Halawi—are dead.

Jafari and Halawi were among seventy-six Palestinian prisoners in the newly opened Nafha Prison who began a hunger strike July 14 to protest the inhuman conditions there. The hunger strikers protested that the prison—in the middle of the Negev Desert—had cells with solid metal doors and only narrow slits for windows.

In addition to the poor ventilation, the cells are overcrowded, the prisoners are forced to eat and sleep on the floor, they are allowed only two hours of exercise a day, and they are given inadequate medical care and subjected to frequent terms of solitary confinement.

Israeli prison authorities tried to break the hunger strike by adding the torture of forced-feeding to the more routine forms of brutality practiced against Palestinian inmates.

At first, following Jafari's death on July 22, Israeli officials denied that he had been force-fed. But following the death of Halawi on July 24, a prison services official explained that the force-feeding was an example of "Jewish humanism," since it was meant to prevent the death of the hunger strikers. The official did not address the question of what kind of conditions would lead people to prefer death by starvation.

In a statement released by attorney Lea Tsemel, one of the hunger strikers who had been force-fed charged that guards and nurses at Ramle prison (where twenty-six of the strikers were transferred) beat him repeatedly when he refused to eat, and then forced a rubber tube from an enema bag down his throat. A salt water solution was forced down the tube.

"It was like drinking the Dead Sea," Yaacoub Dawani testified. He said that the liquid was forced into his lungs. Jafari and Halawi died from pneumonia as a result of the liquid forced into their lungs.

The customary brutality of the Israeli prison authorities has received further encouragement from Prime Minister Menachem Begin's policy of provocation and repression against the Palestinian popula-

tion as a whole. On July 23, twenty-six people demonstrating in support of the hunger strikers were arrested in East Jerusalem.

The death of Jafari and Halawi, and the conditions they were protesting, are not just the responsibility of a few sadists in the Israeli prison administration. Like the repeated instances of torture being used against Palestinian prisoners, these atrocities are the responsibility of the Zionist regime as a whole, including its highest circles. □



Palestinian political prisoners in Israel. Zionist regime is responsible for latest deaths.

Iranian Socialists Explain Issues Facing Women

[The following article was published as the editorial in the July 8 issue of *Kargar*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Iran. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

In view of the importance of the Revolutionary Council's decree making it illegal for women not to wear Islamic dress in government offices, and given the propaganda offensive the imperialist forces have launched around this question, we decided to publish the following interview with Mahsa Hashemi, one of the leaders of the Revolutionary Workers Party in this area.

Both *Kargar* and Mahsa Hashemi wanted to do a more extensive interview on this subject. But time factors did not permit. The following is a shortened text of the interview.

* * *

Question. Would you explain the views of the Revolutionary Workers Party on the struggle against the state bureaucracy and on the Revolutionary Council's order imposing Islamic dress on women in government offices?

Answer. In Iran, this question has been posed in an unclear way. So, it has to be analyzed step by step. For a start, we cannot understand this development by basing ourselves on the headlines and articles in the Iranian capitalist newspapers.

For example, the articles in *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* [Islamic Republic—the newspaper of the Islamic Republican Party] and *Ettela'at* have spread confusion about what is involved in this question.

The basic thing is that the demands of women, which were blocked under the Pahlavi regime, cannot be won separately from the ongoing anti-imperialist struggle.

One of the first things that is necessary to win these demands is unity on the part of women. There is no force that can give women their rights. The power to achieve these demands lies in the hands of women themselves. And the effect of the confusion created in the last few days has been precisely to sow disunity. So, the problem of restoring and strengthening the unity of women must be our starting point.

The kind of newspaper articles mentioned above are consciously designed to undermine and destroy the unity of women in the struggle against imperialism. And we women must realize this.

Q. Could you explain more what you mean about these newspaper reports?

A. Take the reports in *Jomhuri-ye Es-*

lami, for instance. After the struggle against the state bureaucracy started up, the need was to educate the masses of Muslim and revolutionary people about it. But instead of doing this, *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* devoted a lot of pages to pictures of women not wearing Islamic dress. And the writing that went along with them was of a very peculiar type, unworthy of the revolution. The writer of these captions, who was certainly a man, tried in the worst way to equate not wearing Islamic dress with shamelessness.

Also notable, in this respect, were the headlines in *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* a few days ago, which proclaimed, "A Thousand Ashraf Women Demonstrate."¹ There is no reason to be astonished that seventeen months after the victory of the revolution, the Ashraf set and the capitalists are hanging on in this society the way they are. And *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* gave us fresh food for thought about that.

But Ashrafism had nothing to do with one's external appearance. The Ashraf people are capitalists and big landowners. By the way, how do we explain the fact that the president of the republic addressed these Ashraf women as "honorable ladies"?

By the way it dealt with this question, *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* was only trying to cover up another problem, the existence of the 500 capitalist and big landlord families who for an entire epoch have used the state bureaucracy to serve their interests. The fight against these 500 families is a vital matter for the revolution, not a fight against a "thousand Ashraf women."

They all know that just because women do not wear the Islamic dress that does not mean that they are shameless. The propaganda in *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* is designed precisely to sow divisions among women by fostering this baseless notion. It is not true that women who do not wear Islamic dress are Ashraf women.

A few months ago when the universities and high schools were open, we could see that a minority of women in our society do not wear Islamic dress. We can see the same thing now at the beginning and end of the factory shifts. This is still more true in the government offices.

This question can be more easily understood if we view it in a broader context. The great majority of women in the world are just as concerned as men with the

1. Princess Ashraf, the sister of the shah and a leading opium smuggler under the Pahlavi regime. Under the shah, she was promoted as an example of "modern womanhood" and the new "liberated" Iranian woman. She has become the symbol of the corrupt, neocolonial ruling class.

problems of society, which are basically bound up with the struggle against imperialist oppression. The majority of women on a world scale do not wear Islamic dress. That does not mean that our women should not wear it. But this fact does indicate that the attempt to equate not wearing Islamic dress with the old regime is baseless.

The women of Cuba have fought shoulder to shoulder with the men against imperialism for twenty-one years, without wearing Islamic dress. This, I repeat, does not prove that there is anything wrong with wearing Islamic dress. It only indicates that in its propaganda, *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* has put the cart before the horse. It is not clear what *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* is trying to prove with this propaganda. If its contention is that everywhere Islamic dress is not worn, the dark-age corruption of the old regime still exists, why does it not say this clearly?

Why doesn't *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* print pictures of the rich men and big businessmen with gold rings and Western-style coats and trousers who we see every day driving fancy Mercedes Benz cars from one side of town to the other? It is obviously not clear what is involved in this question, there is more to it.

Q. Would you explain what lies behind this question?

A. What lies at the root of it is the inferior position of women in society. This is not just the heritage of the society that developed under Pahlavi and imperialist oppression. Its origins go back further. You can see this in the sort of propaganda that appears in the capitalist newspapers.

There is not a single instance of any of these newspapers saying a word about the origins of the question. If you glance through *Jomhuri-ye Eslami*, you see that half the pages have pictures of women wearing Islamic dress, the other half have pictures of women who are not wearing it. Does this mean that there are two groups at war with each other?

This is an example of the poisonous propaganda that threatens the rights of all our sisters. (I will take up the nature of the demonstration by women not wearing Islamic dress later on.)

I want to raise a question. Women were involved from the outset in the struggle against the dictatorship. They took part in the first nationwide wave of demonstrations that launched the struggle. Most of them wore Islamic dress. Many women who did not wear Islamic dress also took part in the struggle against the old regime.

The point of this is obvious. Women were drawn into the social struggle. They came out of the political isolation, out of the isolation in the home, in which they were kept by the Pahlavi society. They joined in the struggle against the dictatorship, wearing Islamic dress and Western dress both, although the majority wore Islamic dress.

It is a simple enough thing to take pictures of that.

My question for *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* is the following: Where is your program for the women who wear Islamic dress? Where is your program for fighting illiteracy among women, since the overwhelming majority, more than 90 percent, are illiterate? Where is your bold revolutionary program for setting up day-care centers for the small children of working women who wear Islamic dress and who want to participate in the economic life of the society? Where is your program for solving the problems of women, such as the need for social welfare provisions, housing, laundries, public cafeterias, equal pay for equal work, and equality in working conditions? Where is your immediate program for involving women in the struggle? Why don't you project programs instead of filling your pages with pictures? It's very easy to run pictures in the paper.

The question we pose to such forces is: What sort of program for liberating women have you put forward? Women have shown their capacity for revolutionary initiative in fighting the old regime. This was an uprising against the whole historic system of corruption and tyranny, one of whose aspects was the inferior status to which women were relegated. What does this show? That women fought against this system and came onto the political stage in the country.

Instead of remaining confined to the role of housewives, women proved themselves as leaders and organizers of the country. But *Jomhuri-ye Eslami* has failed to respond to any one of the gigantic steps that women have taken. It has not taken the slightest step to present an action program to solve their problems.

Q. What do you think women should do about this? What is your opinion of the recent women's demonstration outside the premier's office?

A. As I said, the basic question is how to achieve unity among women. And using the term "Ashraf women" when a crowd of oppressed women gather is no way to unite women. What is needed to unite women is not a flood of statements, circulars, and orders from the various authorities and the Revolutionary Council, which are always issued by men. What is needed is action by the women themselves.

You see, it is now the fourth day since the order imposing Islamic dress, and the women of Iran themselves have not yet sufficiently discussed this matter.

Let's look at these small demonstrations outside the premier's office in the context of the atmosphere that has arisen in the anti-imperialist struggle. It must be said that these demonstrations were not organized by anyone who represented all women or by the women's organizations rooted among the Muslim and militant sisters.

Iranian Socialist Tours New Zealand and Australia

By Janice Lynn

Fatima Fallahi, a member of the Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) who was released from prison last April, has been touring New Zealand and Australia to get out the truth about the Iranian revolution.

Fallahi explains that the purpose of her tour is to thank the working people of New Zealand and Australia for their efforts in helping to secure the release of the HKE members and "to explain the truth about our revolution which has advanced the rights of the oppressed in Iran."

Fallahi spoke in cities throughout New Zealand and Australia and appeared on over a dozen radio programs countering the lies and distortions spread about the Iranian revolution. "Ours is not a reactionary revolution, as the press is trying to say," Fallahi explained, "our revolution is very progressive."

In New Zealand she spoke to meetings at Westfield freezing works and the Otahuhu Railway Workshops in Auckland and to about 100 Gear meat workers in Wellington. In Australia Fallahi spoke to 220 people at the Sydney Trade Union Club and met with leaders of the South Coast trade union movement.

Fallahi talked about the gains Iran's workers have made since the revolution

and discussed the importance of the factory committees (*shoras*) that have been formed throughout Iran.

She also spoke about the gains made by the peasants and national minorities as well as the unprecedented and active involvement of women in the political life of the country.

"When you are in a revolution," Fallahi declared, "you are with the masses. . . . You realize the power of the majority. . . ."

"The most important thing is that the people are organizing themselves from below."

Fallahi also met with Maori activists in Wellington, visited with Black Power members in Auckland, met with a number of New Zealand Labour members of Parliament who had signed petitions for her release from jail, and spoke with trade unionists at a meeting organized by the Queensland Trades and Labor Council State executive in Australia.

Socialists in New Zealand and Australia report that Fallahi's tour has helped build new interest in and enthusiasm for the progress of the Iranian revolution.

The examples of workers reopening factories, electing councils to run them, and firing uncooperative managers were particularly well received.

Because of the atmosphere that arose, forces hostile to the revolution, Bakhtiari and others, were behind these very small "demonstrations." Therefore the Revolutionary Workers Party did not support these "demonstrations" since they could only have promoted intrigues and that sort of thing. Because of the atmosphere that arose, ways and means must be found whereby women can take up their own problems and discuss them.

The basic demands of women, the majority of whom in this country wear Islamic dress, have not yet been put forward by these women themselves. The majority of them have not yet expressed their opinion about imposing Islamic dress in any area. This must be clear.

Q. If the majority in the society decides that women must wear Islamic dress, will the Revolutionary Workers Party ask women to accept this?

A. The answer is definitely yes. The Revolutionary Workers Party is convinced that in such circumstances it will quickly become clear that the question is not whether women should or should not wear

Islamic dress, but that the real question is the rights of women and the struggle of the entire society against American imperialism.

Q. What can you say about the role that the counterrevolutionary forces are playing on the woman question?

A. They are exploiting it. This is nothing new. From the time of the victory of the revolution, and even before, the imperialists have sought to make Islamic dress, which is very commonly worn in this country, into a symbol of reaction in the eyes of people in societies that are not familiar with our revolution.

Fighting this poisonous propaganda is an important task of the revolution. And one of the best ways this can be done is for women to participate consistently in demonstrations such as the one held around last Friday's prayers.² Participation in such demonstrations showed that women are an important part of the revolution

² Millions took part in anti-imperialist demonstrations throughout Iran July 4, with an estimated two million participating in Tehran.

and that their interests are bound up with it. This is the strongest rejoinder to imperialism.

Q. Are the bureaucracy's measures imposing Islamic dress on women going to promote revolutionary administration?

A. Wearing Islamic dress is a tradition in Iran and since the majority do this, to oppose it is a divisive act and does not help advance the revolution. The action of the state bureaucracy with respect to this, however, was an attempt to divert the agitation of millions of people demanding the elimination of the old state apparatus.

One of the militant sisters told me that a worker sister said to her: "From now on I will wear a head scarf. But I know that this is not going to solve the problem of the bosses in this factory or the problem of oppression that is defended by the bureaucracy."

The attitude of the Revolutionary Workers Party toward this question is basically the same. This problem is one that the working women and all the militant and Muslim women in Iran must quickly come to understand.

The struggle of the broad masses against imperialism continues to advance. The action of the Islamic Councils in Paris³ shows the breadth of this struggle. Now with the decrees by the Revolutionary Council, all the brothers and sisters in the ranks of the millions are demanding the purging of the old-regime bureaucracy. They will have to go through the experience of having a new bureaucracy in Islamic dress.

All the militant and Muslim brothers and sisters understand that if the old state bureaucracy was filled with Ashraf women, putting veils on them is not going to change their nature. The Muslim sisters will find that the women left over from the old regime are not a serious obstacle on the road of revolution.

What is vital in order to advance and win the rights of women is to continue the anti-imperialist struggle and to coordinate the struggle of women with it. Then the plots of the forces supporting Bakhtiar and other counterrevolutionary figures will be eliminated. Then the tumultuous campaign in the press equating every woman who does not wear Islamic dress with Ashraf will be silenced.

Then women will see with their own eyes that equal pay for equal work, day-care centers for small children, accelerated literacy programs for women, and programs to train women in all occupations

previously reserved to men and to open the way for women to move into all areas of the society will become permanent things.

Despite the attempt of the bureaucracy to shift attention away from the anti-imperialist struggle to the question of wearing Islamic dress, the women of Iran have shown along with the rest of the militant people they will not stop fighting for the

victory of the revolution. From the demonstrations in the forty days after Ashura under the old regime until today, this combativity has been as clear as day. The program of the Revolutionary Workers Party is to reinforce the confidence of all the Muslim sisters and to maintain unity in the trenches of the anti-imperialist struggle. □

Behind the Upsurge in Cape Town

Much of the South African press—as well as the major bourgeois news media in the United States and Europe—attempted to portray the massive student and worker upsurge in the Cape Town region in June as an essentially Coloured struggle, rather than part of the Black struggle as a whole. This was aimed at reinforcing the apartheid regime's contention that there are deep divisions between the three sectors of the Black population—the Coloureds (those of mixed ancestry), the Indians, and the Africans.

However, an article in the July 19 Johannesburg *Star's* weekly international edition, based on interviews and discussions with various Black figures in the Western Cape, provided a glimpse of how Blacks themselves viewed the upsurge.

"June 16, 1980, was not a 'coloured' revolt," reporter Cilla Duff concluded. "It had very little to do with teachers' salaries, tatty textbooks and cramped classrooms. It had everything to do with black unity, a pulling together of all South Africa's oppressed and disenfranchised."

"It had everything to do with the final, absolute rejection of 'negotiation' with what is venomously called the 'regime'."

"What is more, any hope that life will return to normal, and that the white-biased status quo will be preserved, has been smashed. The people, you see, have finally run out of their 350-year supply of patience and trust and supplicating humility."

One academic Duff talked to—a political activist who had earlier spent ten years in prison and five years under a government banning order—commented, "We are beginning to realise that perhaps the only way to achieve peace is by making war."

Talking about the high degree of political consciousness among Black youths, he said, "They're far more aware than our generation was, even though we, the petty bourgeois varsity students and professionals, had the advantage of discussion groups, lectures and workshops."

"It is dangerous to undervalue the awareness of black children, even among those who are socially and economically deprived. Remember, they live with politics from birth, because they are at the receiv-

ing end of the system."

Referring to the political influence of these youths, the academic noted the role of the Committee of 81, an ad-hoc body of students, during the upsurge in the Western Cape:

"Seventy to 80 percent of the people obeyed their call to stay off work, while Government threats were ignored. This is a prefiguration of things to come. Threats from the regime are counterproductive—they simply steel people to prepare for the worst. Until the franchise is conceded, radicalisation is inevitable."

"Although education was the catalyst of the unrest in the Cape, the elimination of these grievances will not alleviate the tension, nor quell the anger."

"No concessions will act as a brake. Concessions merely lead to a heightening of aspirations and expectations."

Vincent Farrell, the chairman of the Teachers' Action Committee, which was formed in May to support the protesting students, pointed out to Duff that obedience among Blacks "is dead. Parents learnt in '76 that not even peaceful protest was a guarantee that your child will not get shot."

"Now they're saying, to hell with it, we might as well back the kids the whole way."

"So the days of sitting around, waiting for the white authority to uplift us, are over."

"We'll help ourselves, and we'll show the world that there are alternatives to throwing stones."

"We have no money, we have no guns. But 20 million people do have a lot of economic muscle."

An attorney, who is representing many of the Black student protesters detained by the police, remarked that one of the most significant aspects of the June 1980 upsurge was the forging of greater unity among Black students.

"There is also a new solidarity between students, parents and workers, and a total rejection of the kind of political activity which places reliance on concessions."

"One thing is certain: the students are being educated in weeks in matters it would normally have taken them years to assimilate." □

3. On July 4, members of the Muslim Student Organization in Paris occupied the Iranian embassy. They announced that they were protesting "against those who call themselves Imam Khomeini's supporters but who do absolutely nothing for our poor and our martyrs." They denounced Iranian foreign minister Ghotbzadeh for "undermining the revolution."

Iran: the Social Crisis and the Attack on the Universities

By Michel Rovere

[The following is the second of a three-part series on the situation in Iran and developments in the Iranian revolution. The first part, which argued that there has been a rightward shift by the Khomeini leadership in Iran, appeared in the July 21 issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

[This article will deal with events on the universities and the continuing economic and social crisis in Iran. The third article will discuss the contradictions of the Iranian national bourgeoisie and take up how revolutionary Marxists should approach the leadership.]

* * *

The attempt to bring the universities into line and to expel the principal organizations of the Iranian "far left" (Fedayeen, Peykar, and Mujahedeen) from the campuses was the second high point, after the new military offensive in Kurdistan, of the rightward turn taken by the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership beginning at the end of March. The clashes caused several dozen deaths and led to the arrest of several hundred students, particularly in Ahwaz.

While the "good faith" of certain very minor Islamic currents, which really wanted to "revolutionize" the university in order to put it at the service of the *Mostazafin*,¹ may have been abused or exploited, the chronology and detail of events leaves no room for doubt that this in fact was a sustained campaign against the left, orchestrated from the highest circles of the regime. The "Guide of the Revolution" Khomeini was involved in the campaign, as were the Revolutionary Council, President Bani-Sadr, and the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), although their degree of participation varied.

It began on March 21 with Khomeini's New Year (Now Rouz) "message to the nation," in which he announced that Iranian universities should be "Islamized."² In his speech, Khomeini explained that the university ought to be purged of all elements—professors, staff, and students—who are ideologically linked "to the West or the East."

In the two weeks preceding the first incidents that took place April 16 at the University of Tabriz, the leaders of the

Islamic Republican Party—such as Dr. Ayyad,³ and in particular Ayatollah Hadi Ghaffari, who is known for his diatribes against the left and is one of the recognized organizers of the bands of *hezbollahs*⁴—organized a series of public meetings in several Iranian cities around the theme of the "Islamic cultural revolution." These meetings called on the Islamic Student Organizations to mobilize and prepare to carry out the project, giving them advance assurance of support from the Islamic Revolutionary Council.

These speeches, which all refer to the Now Rouz message, were published and explained in the newspaper *Islamic Republic*, the organ of the IRP.

On April 16, in the context of this series of meetings, Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who is a former minister of the interior and an elected deputy of the IRP in the *Majlis* (parliament), held a meeting at the University of Tabriz. Incidents broke out between Islamic students and far-left groups, following the Ayatollah's speech, in which he violently attacked the left.

These fights served as the pretext for the occupation of the University of Tabriz by the Islamic *Anjomans* (councils). They demanded a "purge of the university."

The following day, to back up the occupation, a demonstration was organized in the city. The composition of this demonstration, as it is described in national communiqué number two of the Islamic *Anjomans* and the Islamic Student Organizations⁵ published in *Kayhan*, April 18,

3. Candidate of the IRP in the elections.

4. *Hezbollahs* (followers of the party of god) are the bands of unemployed and marginal persons who attack left-wing marches with cries of "There is only one party, the [hezb-e Allah] party of God".

5. Islamic students are grouped in the Islamic *Anjomans* and the Islamic Student Organizations, which are organizations linked to the IRP (the IRP created the Islamic *Anjomans* at the university). The Islamic Student Organizations includes, among others, elements of one of the most activist factions of the IRP, the paramilitary Mujahedeen Enqelab Eslami organization (Fighters of the Islamic Revolution). This far-right paramilitary organization—not to be confused with the Islamic-progressive organization, the Mujahedeen-e Khalq—has ties that extend into the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards). The Mujahedeen-e Khalq revealed that the campaign for "Islamization" and closing of the universities had been organized at a "secret" meeting of two hundred delegates from the Islamic Societies from universities throughout

illustrates what political forces launched this "Islamic cultural revolution":

"Ayatollah Madani, representing the Imam in Tabriz," and revolutionary organizations such as the Revolutionary Guards and the members of the Jihad for Reconstruction,⁷ supported this action."

In the same issue of *Kayhan*, another press release from the Islamic *Anjomans* and Islamic Student Organizations explains the political axes of the campaign launched by these organizations.

It shows that it targets the left-wing groups and that the proposed solution is not so much to "revolutionize" the universities as to "close" them, because they serve as a "base" for the far-left organizations:

In the situation where the slogan of "Death to America" is taken up by all Iranians, Imam Khomeini, using his knowledge of religion and God, has continually shown the revolutionary path to follow at each step.

Our Imam knows that the struggle against the "great Satan," America, is not possible unless all its internal bases are destroyed. That is why in his Now Rouz message, he stated that the university system, which has not changed since the shah's regime, remains a dependent, American-type system. . . .

In the universities, the presence of the shah and America is still felt today. That is why we have decided to change the university system. The truth should be told to Iranian Moslems. Since the Imam sent out his message and people have begun to consider a revolution in the universities, it was well known that the left-wing and right-wing groups would be against it because the university is their only base and they see that a program of Islamization would be their death. That is why these groups have called the Imam's message counterrevolutionary.

But we are ready for any attack. We have the Imam and the Islamic people behind us and we are not afraid. We believe that the only way to

the country in a building near the U.S. embassy. It was decided there that the universities should be closed for a period of two years, in order to clear out the political groups and carry out a cultural revolution.

6. This is the ayatollah who directed the activities of the "Khomeinist" sectors last December against the Azerbaijani national movement in Tabriz.

7. The new Iranian authorities have taken over the former "social" institutions of the Pahlavi regime, sometimes enlarging their fields of activity. The *mostazafin* foundations, for example, are the successor to the Pahlavi Foundation, while the Jihad for Reconstruction plays a broader but analogous role to that of the defunct regime's "Armies of Learning" and "Armies of Hygiene," with the addition of a campaign of public works and housing construction.

1. *Mostazafin* (the disinherited) is a name given to unemployed people, poor workers, and slum dwellers.

2. On the content of the Now Rouz speech, see the preceding article in the July 21 *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, p. 770.

After Tabriz, incidents broke out the next day, April 17, at several universities in Tehran, including the University of Science and Technology in northern Tehran and at an institute of paramedical studies, which the Islamic students tried to close down. The statement of the Islamic Anjoman at that institute, published in the April 19 *Islamic Republic*, explained, after the standard reference to the Now Rouz speech:

Muslim people, if you do not help us destroy the system reigning in the universities, others who call us reactionaries will expel us from the universities. This is because in the universities we Islamic students are characterized as reactionaries. We Muslim students demand that the authorities who think that revolution in the universities is a correct slogan should close them and study a program for Islamizing them. We ask the Muslim people to defend the Imam's message and not allow the defenders of the shah's regime, the Marxist-Leninist theoreticians, and the intellectuals who have come from abroad to turn back the revolution.

The Speech by Tehran's 'Friday Imam'

On Friday, April 18, a new escalation occurred, first with the speech at the main Friday prayer by Hojate'slam Sayad Ali Khomeini, the *Imam Jomeh*⁸ of Tehran, which led to new confrontations, followed by the Islamic Revolutionary Council's ultimatum in the evening.

Hojate'slam Khomeini, Khomeini's designated adviser on military questions,⁹ is linked with the IRP and the Students Following the Imam's Line at the American embassy. Moreover, he gave the closing speech at the May Day demonstration—called by the Students Following the Imam's Line, the IRP, the Pasdaran, the mostazafin foundations, the Jihad for Reconstruction, etc.—in front of the embassy.

His Friday, April 18, speech—large sections of which were published the next day in the IRP's newspaper, *Islamic Republic*—could not be clearer. "Our students do not want to remain under the influence of the enemies of Islam and humanity," the mullah's speech explains right at the beginning.

He followed this with a short paean in favor of increasing production and opposing strikes:

"Work is what can solve the problems. Those who today invite us not to work, or

to work poorly, are counterrevolutionaries. Anyone who incites people in the oil industry in the south or in the steel mills in Isfahan not to work, anyone who doesn't let people do their work in the villages, is a counterrevolutionary."

Then he comes to the subject at hand, the "Islamic cultural revolution" in the universities:

Today, there are groups that do not let people work correctly in the universities. They want to turn the universities into their base for organizing a movement against Islam, against the Islamic Republic, and to help our enemies abroad. From the beginning, our enemies have tried to organize a series of people against us, in the name of leftism. This is perfidious.

Mohammed came to purify the whole society.

As Imam Khomeini said in his Now Rouz message, the universities should be centers of education. . . .

The universities were built and function with the people's money. Therefore the people have the right to expect the universities to be Islamic, not anti-Islamic universities. It is intolerable for there to be counterrevolutionaries in the universities who were for Aryamehr [the shah] and who today call themselves leftists, who take over the universities under leftist slogans and try to interrupt all Islamic activities. . . .

Our students cannot tolerate that the universities in Tehran, whose funds come from the Muslim people, should serve for armed activities by groups that fight against the Islamic Republic, groups that set themselves up there and send people to Turkmenistan and Kurdistan. . . .¹⁰

The political groups that work against the Islamic government must leave the universities. If they do not, the people will go in and chase them out. This is a firm and final decision that Imam Khomeini announced in his Now Rouz message and that the Islamic Revolutionary Council and the president must apply.

Muslim students, I say to you that you are right to be dissatisfied, seeing photographs of Lenin and flags of communism with the hammer and sickle all over the universities. The people did not offer up martyrs and wounded in order to see such a thing. The people do not want these groups, and do not want their sons and daughters sympathizing with these groups.¹¹

Following the prayer, groups of hezbollahs went to the university campuses and there were bloody clashes with members and sympathizers of far-left groups who had mobilized there.

The same day, the Islamic Revolutionary Council, which met at the home of Imam Khomeini, ordered the students to leave the universities before the following Tuesday, because after that "the president of the republic may call on the people to evacuate them."

The bloodiest clashes took place the following Monday, April 21.

The centrist organizations, Pishagham (the youth group of the Fedayeen), Maoists of Peykar, and members of "Workers'

Voice" (a split from the Fedayeen) held a sit-in in front of the University of Tehran.

They then barricaded themselves off and tried to resist the attacks by the hezbollahs, several thousand of whom had come, armed with clubs, broken bottles, and knives, to "Islamize" and "purify" the universities.

These confrontations, and the ones that took place in the universities in the provinces (Rasht, Ahwaz, Shiraz), resulted in a total of several dozen deaths.

On Monday evening, far-left groups finally evacuated the University of Tehran, which Bani-Sadr entered the following Tuesday, leading a demonstration of tens of thousands of persons. While announcing that differing opinions would be respected and that he did not favor closing the universities, the president of the republic threatened all other opponents of the regime with the same fate as the student left. He explained that he would not hesitate to "call on 36 million Iranians to march on Kurdistan and the factories" (sic) in case of new disorders.¹²

"Those who are plotting should be warned that the government is stronger than ever, that it will win with the help of God, and will not allow anyone to substitute for it in making decisions." Barely making himself heard over the cries of the crowd, which yelled "Death to the Fedayeen" according to the *Le Matin* correspondent, Bani-Sadr concluded, "This day is one of reaffirmation of the government's authority."¹³

Contemporary history has provided several examples showing that the schools and particularly the universities in capitalist society can be the institution most quickly seized by the effects of a prerevolutionary or revolutionary crisis.

The phenomenon has also been seen in the colonial and semicolonial world. In these social formations, the intelligentsia and the student layers still differ considerably from their counterparts in the advanced capitalist countries. In the colonial and semicolonial world the student population comes from a much narrower social stratum, and they are called on in greater proportion to play a primary role in the administration of the state or the management of the economy. Nonetheless, we have seen the central role that student radicalization and struggles have been able to play at certain specific political conjunctures—including as detonators of broader social movements or revolutionary processes.

The most famous example is undoubtedly the May Fourth Movement that broke out among Chinese nationalist students in 1919. Launched under the dual mottos of cultural revolution and anti-imperialist struggle, the May Fourth Movement was

8. The *Imam Jomeh* (Friday Imam) is the clergyman who leads the main prayer. Khomeini succeeded Ayatollahs Taleghani—who died in September 1979—and Montazeri, who were members of the Islamic Revolutionary Council. Khomeini's sermon each Friday, broadcast nationally by television, is one of the major political events each week.

9. See "Rebuilding the Bourgeois State in Iran," by Michel Rovere, *IP/I*, July 21, 1980, p. 770.

10. References to the attitude of far-left groups in regard to the events in Kurdistan are found in several communiqués of the Islamic Anjomans.

11. *Islamic Republic*, April 19, 1980.

12. *Le Monde*, April 24, 1980.

13. *Le Matin*, April 23, 1980.

to mark both the start of the second Chinese revolution and the beginning of the formation of a Marxist workers movement in China.¹⁴

Since then there have been numerous examples in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and most recently again in Algeria and Korea, showing the importance of student struggles. The recent history of Iran is no exception.

The Iranian Student Movement Against the Dictatorship

The student movement played an important role in the struggle against the dictatorship. Suffice it to recall that the great popular demonstrations that were repressed in 1963 had been preceded by a major strike movement in the universities.

In 1977, it was the intelligentsia, then the universities, that set off the movement that challenged the regime. The repression of public meetings and demonstrations of students and professors by the shah's paramilitary gangs in November 1977 led to the first general strike of the Tehran bazaar, one month before the Qum demonstrations in January 1978.

After Qum, and especially after the Tabriz uprising in February 1978, the center of gravity of the struggle against the dictatorship shifted toward the petty bourgeoisie, the urban plebeian layers, and then the working class (beginning in September 1978, with the start of the general strike). But the universities continued to play an important role. We need only recall the importance of the student mobilizations during the months of October and November 1978, before the military cabinet of General Azhari was appointed, and during January and February, up to the insurrection. The universities—particularly the polytechnic universities in the capital and the University of Tehran—became veritable “liberated zones” during the last weeks of the Bakhtiar government. Not only could political forces (including religious groups) express themselves and organize, but striking workers who were forced out of their factories by the bosses’ lockout also came to the campus to hold their assemblies.

The Iranian student movement radicalized under the impact of both the crisis of

the university institution (exacerbated in Iran by the dictatorial nature of the regime and the effects that the partial industrialization of 1960-70 had on the educational system),¹⁵ and the Iranian and international political context (the struggle against the dictatorship, the effects of the imperialist defeat in Indochina, and the impact of the Palestinian resistance).

That explains why, despite the social origins of the students, the university became a bastion for the organizations such as the Mujahedeen, the Fedayeen, the Peykar,¹⁶ etc. The Muslim student campaign for “Islamization” of the universities and for an “Islamic cultural revolution” must be assessed in view of these facts.

No one, and no political group, denies the necessity for an overturn in the educational structures in Iran.

The Iranian masses did not make a revolution, at the cost of 50,000 deaths, only to overthrow a dictatorial regime, but also because they correctly see in the overthrow of the shah the possibility to radically change the conditions of their own lives. One of the very first demands—alongside the right to work, the right to land, improvement of material conditions, and the recognition of national rights—is the right to knowledge.

This is all the more clear if we look at the balance sheet of twenty years of the White Revolution: more than 60% of the people are still illiterate, a figure that exceeds 80% for women. That is the objective basis for the need for a cultural revolution, which must overturn the educational system (the maintenance of selection according to old criteria, for example, is an obvious obstacle to the rapid training of tens of thousands of teachers who could bring literacy to the countryside and the slums).

That does not, however, lead us to support any plan for a “cultural revolution”

that is proposed, especially when it is defined as an “Islamic cultural revolution,” and “Islamization” of the universities.

It is one thing to recognize that in face of imperialist domination, Islam has been seen by the masses of Iranians as the counterweight to the phenomena of partial acculturation engendered by imperialism, that it was the means, including for segments of the intelligentsia, for reaffirming a national identity that was being mocked and dishonored.

But that must not lead us to obscure the fact that Islam, especially an Islam as defined by Khomeini and the Shi’ite hierarchy, can represent what is *reactionary* and *retrograde* in the twentieth century.¹⁷ From the standpoint of the exchange of ideas, we can imagine what an “Islamization” of teaching in the social sciences would represent, not only from the point of view of defending Marxist ideas, but even in relation to modern bourgeois sociology or psychology. It would take the form of an actual *intellectual counterreformation*. Not to speak of the consequences this would have in the scientific disciplines.

There is above all the risk of increased sexual segregation, as the regime increasingly limits women’s access to certain jobs.

But even the discussion on the content of an “Islamic cultural revolution” remains quite abstract, given that the campaign waged both by the Islamic student groups and certain factions of the Khomeini leadership was centered on the slogan of “closing the universities,” a measure that could last as long as several years.

Closing the Universities: Political Censorship

It is impossible to view the slogan just on the basis of the forms of struggle (occupation), comparing it to the occupation and closing down of the “spy nest,” the American embassy in Tehran. Nor can we compare it to the occupation of factories or land.

This is true first of all because in Iran since the February 1979 insurrection, the university has not simply been a place

14. On May 4, 1919, a student demonstration took place in Peking to protest against the decision of the Treaty of Versailles to transfer to Japan the rights that defeated Germany had had over the Chinese province of Shondong. The student movement had begun two years earlier, through a “cultural revolution” and the demand that the language used in the university henceforth be the spoken language rather than the Mandarin written language. In the front rank of this “cultural revolution” was Chen Tu-hsiu’s magazine *New Youth*. It was through this magazine that preparations for the founding of the Chinese CP took place from 1920. See Lucien Bianco, *Les origines de la révolution chinoise*, NRF.

15. The crisis of the Iranian university system is related first of all to selection: in 1978, out of 300,000 new high-school diploma holders, only 44,000 could be admitted to the university. After a first competition to apply this quota, a second competition served to separate students by discipline. The most selective universities organized a third competition. Next came selection by money—between \$1,200 and \$6,900 per year at Melli University. The wages of teachers were such that they had to have a second or even third job. To this, of course, has to be added the dead weight of the dictatorship, the dulling of education through censorship, etc. The whole system, for example, produced scarcely half the 40,000 teachers needed every year! (See Robert Graham, *Iran: The Illusions of Power*; and Paul Balta, *L'Iran insurgé*.)

16. The next article will discuss in more detail the politics of these groups. The term “far left,” applied to them for lack of a better word, does not take into account that these different organizations represent quite varied programs and social bases.

17. Such a definition does not prevent us in any way from recognizing the historic contribution of Muslim civilization between the seventh and fifteenth centuries in our era, in the fields of science (algebra, medicine, and astronomy), the arts, philosophy, and even technology (irrigation). Along with China, Muslim civilization was in that era the most advanced in the entire development of humanity. This position will never lead us to give the slightest support to the campaigns carried out by the imperialist bourgeoisies against the “return to the Middle Ages” and Muslim “fanaticism,” which serve, as they have done since the beginning of colonialism, to give ideological cover to an imperialist policy. In face of imperialism, however cultivated it may be, we always defend the oppressed and exploited, whatever their ideas.

where the dominant bourgeois ideology is churned out.

It has become a center for political debate as well, a place for free expression, and the material base for organizing and propaganda by revolutionary groups, as well as workers organizations.

Unlike the centrist organizations (the Fedayeen or the Peykar), we do not believe that there is a risk of "fascism" in Iran and that the relationship of forces between the classes has deteriorated to the point that the university has become the "last bastion of freedom."

But it is also necessary to recognize that the Iran of the Islamic Republic is not the total paradise of civil liberties either. It is enough to take two examples, which concern freedom of the press and the right to demonstrate.

Everyone knows that all, absolutely all, demonstrations organized in the streets by the far-left organizations, even the Mujahedeen, have been physically attacked by bands of hezbollahs organized by the IRP or sectors of the Shi'ite hierarchy; including, for example, the demonstrations organized last January by the Fedayeen to support the occupation of the U.S. embassy, or the most recent assemblies organized for May Day.

While—so far—there is no massive repression by the regime against the far left the government has refused to recognize the legality of most of the organs, periodicals, and newspapers of these organizations. For three weeks the Pasharan and the committees in Tehran and other cities have again been arresting sellers of publications that do not have the official stamp.

The far-left organizations have no public headquarters. Even the Council of Islamic Shoras in Tehran had to fall back on the polytechnical university to hold meetings, after being evicted from an official building of the former regime that it had taken over.

Last, it should not be forgotten that the Islamic organizations, the Islamic Anjomans and the Islamic Student Organizations launched their agitation on the cultural revolution after they had suffered a defeat in the new elections for the university shoras, in which the "left" forces (Mujahedeen, Tudeh, Fedayeen, Peykar, etc.) won a majority in most of the institutions throughout the country. Consequently there can be no doubt that the slogan of "closing" the universities was indeed a slogan of political censorship, an attack on freedom of expression.

A Rightward Turn Without a Change in the Basic Relationship of Forces

How has the revolutionary situation in Iran developed since the outbreak of the second civil war in Kurdistan and the attack on the universities? Despite the seriousness of these attacks, we do not think that the rightward turn taken by the whole Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership,

has yet reached—nor can it in the short term reach—the point of a qualitative deterioration of the relationship of forces between the fundamental classes, that is, a stabilization, much less an ebb in the situation.

1. Among the peasantry, agrarian movements and land occupations have spread since last January. For example, in Qazvin, located 150 kilometers from Tehran, the small peasants have doubled their area of cultivation by occupying and redistributing the lands of the large landowners.

Similar activities are taking place in several other provinces of Iran, as in the cultivated zones around Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz.

The main obstacle to these land occupations becoming the rule and to a "whole-sale agrarian reform" being instituted remains the well-founded fear of military confrontations with the regime, and especially with the Pasharan, in certain sensitive regions. The Pasharan have been called to the rescue of the big landowners.

This is the case in the regions occupied by the non-Persian nationalities, in particular in Turkmenistan and Khuzestan, but also in the northern provinces bordering the Caspian Sea (Gilan, Mazanderan), where the influence of the clergy is traditionally weaker and more subject to challenge than in the other Persian provinces.

The Pasharan have intervened in Turkmenistan, where the agrarian question is directly tied to the problem of national oppression. They were able to make inroads against the movement of Turkomen peasant shoras, taking advantage of the sectarianism of certain centrist organizations (such as the Fedayeen) which tried to manipulate and capitalize on the peasant movement for their own narrow advantage and ended up allowing the Central Council

of Committees that had been constituted to become partially isolated.

2. Regarding the movement of oppressed nationalities, too, there is no retreat. Everywhere, fire smolders under the ashes. This is even the case in Azerbaijan, although there the national movement is taking a certain amount of time to reconstitute itself, in view of the way the Muslim People's Islamic Republican Party politically capitulated. The Muslim People's Islamic Republican Party is the formation controlled by Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, who, partly in spite of himself, found himself propelled to the head of the mass movement in Tabriz last December.

In Baluchistan and Sistan, which like Azerbaijan are still provinces that are off-limits to foreign travelers, a sporadic agitation goes on, aimed in the first place at the Pasharan and members of the Khomeini committees who regularly are subjected to military engagements, ambushes, or individual attacks.

In actuality it appears that in these two provinces, populated by impoverished nomadic tribes, great expanses of land are out of the de facto control of the central authorities.

This is not the case in Khuzestan (Arabistan). Khuzestan is the oil-producing province where the Arab minority is concentrated. After the May 1979 demonstrations in Khorramshahr which were fiercely repressed, large numbers of repressive forces (the army, the Pasharan, and the Khomeini committees) remain in the province. Several hundred activists or persons "suspected" of activism in the Arab movement are in prison. The commando group that seized the Iranian embassy in London did so to demand freedom for ninety-two of those prisoners. The political origins of

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those who seized the embassy is still not clear.

Alongside the appearance of the very small terrorist movements (it would be an illusion to think that these are the pure and simple creation of the Iraqi secret services, although the Iraqis are quite active in the region), the Arab nationalist movement has begun to reconstitute itself. In the industries, the nationalist opposition to the regime is combined with workers' demands and takes the form of reduced production, passive resistance, and sometimes sabotage.

Fearing demonstrations that could mark the first anniversary of the Khorramshahr clashes, the Iranian authorities intensified police surveillance. Thus, in Ahwaz, lists with identification photographs of known members of the far-left organizations were distributed to the members of the Khomeini committee, and more than 400 students were arrested in the same city following the "Islamic cultural revolution" clashes. Two of them, including a member of Peykar, were shot in reprisal after the occupation of the Iranian embassy in London.

The Tehran authorities, however, are still hesitant to go further in repressing the Arab nationalist movement. This is first of all because of the proximity to Kurdistan, which borders Khuzestan to the northwest, and especially because of the consequences that such an escalation could have on oil production and exports. No one in Tehran has forgotten the central role that the oil workers' strike played in overthrowing the Pahlavi regime.

The beacon of the oppressed nationalities in Iran obviously continues to be Kurdistan. This is first of all because for more than a month and a half the national struggle there has again taken the form of open civil war. And secondly, because of the special characteristics of the Kurdish national movement. These special characteristics include the importance of agrarian movements, the independent organization of the masses, the population's being massively armed, its ability to carry out long-term resistance to military intervention from Tehran, and the special features of the political organizations through which the Kurdish resistance is carried out.¹⁸ This all indicates that, despite the retaking of certain cities in southern Kurdistan (which became indefensible or defensible at too high a price for the civilian population), the situation is far from being as favorable for the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership as certain official statements would lead one to believe.

3. In the *working class*, the present situation in Iran is marked by continued high combativity and self-confidence, continuation and extension of independent organization by the workers, and accumulation of experience of struggles and work-

ers' control. A long road remains to be traveled, however, to fill the gap that remains between the level of combativity and the present level of political consciousness, particularly to lay the basis for a unified labor movement organized on a national basis that is independent of the state and the bourgeois formations. That is still the basic requirement for the working class to intervene on the political scene in its own interests and with its own proposals to solve the crisis.

Since last January, the shora movement has not fallen back. On the contrary, we have seen it spread geographically. The most striking step in this direction was the meeting of workers shoras from Gilan, which met in Rasht and brought together the representatives of several tens of thousands of workers, in a province where industry remains rather traditional (wood, paper pulp and agriculture-related industries). In Tabriz, the development and radicalization of the shoras in the main industrial units (a tractor factory and machine-tool factories) led to a political confrontation with Khomeini's local representative, Ayatollah Madani, who tried to impose an "Islamic" leadership on these shoras "from above" and tried to tie them to the IRP's wagon.

In Isfahan, the shoras, which are generally controlled by Islamic currents in this region, have tried, with the endorsement of certain religious authorities, to reactivate some small industrial units (brick-making and textiles).

In the Abadan refinery, on the Persian Gulf, the oil workers shora has de facto control over production and distribution, much to the displeasure of the minister in charge of petroleum affairs, Moïfar. He himself was nearly expelled from a meeting in a refinery. Every day the workers publish a list of oil shipments and their destinations (to avoid exports to countries such as the United States, Israel, or South Africa).

Elsewhere, various struggles have taken place and continue to take place, not always in the form of strikes. These struggles are sometimes over the closing of certain industrial enterprises (such as the Ahwaz steel mill) or over economic demands (such as distribution of dividends due the workers on the basis of the old imperial legislation aimed at giving the workers an interest in the profits of the enterprises).

The activity of the shoras, however, is still essentially on a "trade-union" level, in spite of the accumulation of experiences in workers' control, opening the account books, restoring plants to production, and discussion of plans for industrial reconversion. In particular, their level of coordination and centralization is quite low.

Today, in many cases, the main activity of the "natural leaders" of the shoras takes place outside the enterprises, negotiating in the corridors of the ministries oversee-

ing their enterprise (three-quarters of Iranian industry was nationalized last July) for payment of wages, delivery of raw materials and spare parts, etc.

Through these confrontations, the bourgeois class character of this government becomes more obvious every day for a whole layer of advanced workers, since the government is incapable of solving the crisis, breaking Iran's dependence on imperialism, or satisfying the demands of the workers.

But this has not yet led to the political understanding that the shoras can be something other than or more than instruments of control. There is little sense of shoras as the embryos of an alternative form of social organization and system of government, against the bourgeois government and the capitalist system, the cornerstone for forming a workers and peasants government.

This is partly due to the role of the political currents and organizations, such as the centrists, that do not really emphasize the political role the shoras can play, and that carry out a policy of dividing the workers' ranks, engaging in mutual denunciations with Islamic currents. Each, in effect, builds its own coordinating bodies of shoras or its own "workers fronts" alongside the others.

But there is also an objective reason for this slowness in the process of centralization, a reason that has nothing to do with any supposed backwardness of the Iranian working class.

There is a need today for a national assembly, where the delegates of the shoras of workers, white collar workers, and peasants could meet to develop a central platform of demands, independent of the state and the regime. But such an assembly would mean a test of strength with the Khomeini leadership.

Bani-Sadr's threats, when he announced that he would not hesitate to send "36 million Iranians" to purge the factories where disorders take place, the calls to battle for production, and the denunciations of agitation and strikes as counter-revolutionary in speeches by religious dignitaries, clearly indicate the kind of collisions and confrontations the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr leadership is preparing for.

The climate of police pressure that exists in the oil-producing cities in the south, the arrest and detention of four leaders of the shora at the Abadan refinery who had come to negotiate certain demands with the Tehran authorities, and the attacks perpetrated by the hezbollahs against the workers' contingents in the May Day actions of the Mujahedeen and Fedayeen show how the attacks on freedom of expression and democratic rights still weigh heavily on and partially constrict the possibilities for building the Iranian labor movement. These possibilities are further hampered by historical factors (such as the absence of even an embryonic independent

18. See *IP/I*, July 21, p. 770.

labor movement) and subjective factors (the policy of the centrist and Islamic populist currents).

But the whole forward movement of the Iranian working class and plebeian layers, which have not been defeated, continues due to the depth of the economic and social crisis.

The Economic and Social Crisis

Inflation is running at 50% per year.

More than 3.5 million are unemployed, which could increase by 800,000 this year simply from the effects of the accelerated rural exodus and the arrival of young people on the labor market.

There is a sharp drop in productive industrial investment.

Finally, hard currency income from oil may end up being between \$8 billion and \$15 billion, rather than the \$23 billion expected.

These few figures suffice to show the extent of the economic disaster in Iran.

Last January, Bani-Sadr, who was then only the finance minister, announced that in spite of the freeze on Iranian assets in U.S. banks (estimated at \$7 billion out of a total of \$12 billion), Iran would have no trouble rebuilding a safety cushion, setting aside about a billion dollars a month from the decrease in imports (which fell by two-thirds in one year).

Several weeks later, however, at the beginning of April, Oil Minister Moinfar announced a new "wildcat" increase in the price of Iranian crude oil, which was already one of the most expensive in the world, with a surcharge of two and a half dollars per barrel, which brought a barrel of light oil to about thirty-five dollars (thirty-three and a half for heavier crude).

In fact, all the figures indicate that the Iranian leaders' decision is directly linked to the fall in production, which is due both to technical factors (the absence of spare parts because of the blockade and the problem of keeping installations running after the departure of foreign technicians) and to political factors (sabotage and a fall-off in production due to the situation in Khuzestan, and the Iranian workers' anti-imperialist desire to limit exports of a nonrenewable resource, one that symbolizes more than any other the eighty years of imperialist dependence and pillage).

According to the report of the Iranian Central Bank¹⁹ concerning the first six months of the Iranian year extending from March 1979 to March 1980, the foreign currency income brought in by petroleum was \$9 billion less than the government's predictions. Even these predictions by the Islamic government had themselves been worked out on the basis of an already drastic fall in production, which was 6 million barrels a day under the shah and was to have stabilized between 2.5 million and 3 million barrels a day.

But in these first months, the quantity of oil exported fell continuously, decreasing from an average of 1.3 million for the first weeks of 1980 to only 700,000 barrels a day after April.²⁰ Even with the latest price increase, that level of production would only bring Iran between \$8 billion and \$15 billion (at the production levels of 700,000 barrels and 1.3 million barrels per day respectively) instead of the \$25 billion that Tehran was counting on.

Under the shah, oil exports represented 96% of total Iranian exports and thus hard currency income. Capital from this oil revenue was one of the main motors of the partial industrialization that has been going on for two decades.

The Collapse of Investments

In the domestic area, the official statistics of the Central Bank are also terrible.

For the first nine months of the Iranian year 1979-80, industrial production fell 26%, with the fall reaching 50% to 60% for the mechanical and metallurgical industries.²¹ In fact, according to other sources, out of 8,000 modern factories working on primary materials and import technologies, and which employed 25% of the industrial work force and accounted for 70% of production, production was running at 30% to 60% of capacity.²²

Even these estimates do not take into account construction, which was the number one industry in Iran and which has hardly started up again.

The fall of investments, both public and private, is dizzying.

For the same first nine months of 1979-80, the governmental development credits for investment in economic activity fell by 50% compared to the preceding year (more than half these credits were devoted to completing the Isfahan and Ahwaz steel mills).

Credits granted by the three major specialized industrial banks (the Industrial and Mining Development Bank, the Industrial Credit Bank, and the Development and Investment Bank), which serve private investors, fell by 90%.²³

An economic journalist describes the consequences of this veritable investment strike: "On the industrial boulevard leading from Tehran to Karaj, one loses count of the skeletons of factories that were to be new milestones on the road to the 'Great Society,' a road on which Iranians refused to follow their former despot."

Industrialists who have not yet seen their enterprises nationalized often shut down, caught between excessive indebtedness to banks and wage demands (the

minimum wage doubled in the last year). In other cases lack of raw materials leads to lockouts. It should be emphasized that the imperialist shares in enterprises were not nationalized.

The government itself sets its policies from day to day. It tries to complete certain industrial projects that have been started, such as the steel mills in Isfahan and Ahwaz, and the gigantic petrochemical complex at Bandar-e Khomeini, built as a joint venture with the Japanese Mitsui trust. That petrochemical complex represents a total investment of \$3.2 billion. In addition, the government has renegotiated with the Romanians and the Soviets over the completion of units producing production goods (machine tools). But that is about all.

There is no real plan for industrial reconversion. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), for example, is allowed to set up an exhibit of 6,000 to 7,000 parts out of the 170,000 used in the oil industry, so that the visitors, Iranian artisans and industrialists, can consider producing them (up to the present they have been imported). But in the automobile industry, the workers are still waiting for a reconversion plan that would make it possible for the seven different assembly plants to produce a single vehicle model that is low-priced and fits the needs of the people. But they see no results.

The consequences of the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr governmental policy, which does not want to and cannot break with the laws of the market, are particularly felt in two areas: inflation and the black market, and the blocking of the agrarian reform.

Speculation and the Black Market

Recently, violent incidents took place in south Tehran pitting housewives protesting price increases against shop owners. When the women began to overturn stalls and distribute the merchandise, the shop owners reacted with extreme violence and attacked them with clubs and knives. Several of the angry housewives were hospitalized in serious condition.

While the economic blockade has hardly affected food supplies for the Iranian urban market, and while there is no real scarcity, on the other hand price rises, speculation, and the black market are flourishing.

Theoretically, according to legislation in force under the shah, the prices of basic necessities are fixed and subsidized by the state and their prices cannot go up more than 10% a year. But almost no merchandise is available at these official prices. The "surcharge" varies from 40% to 300%. An example is meat, whose official price is 250 rials per kilogram, but which cannot be found at less than 600 rials. The same is true for eggs, theoretically fixed at 145 rials per kilo, but which really cost 200

19. *Middle East*, April 1980.

20. *Middle East Economic Survey*. *Financial Times*, March 27, 1980. *Middle East*, May 1980.

21. Source: *Tehran Times*.

22. *Expansion*, April 4-7, 1980.

23. Source: *Tehran Times*.

rials. The price of bread has gone from 80 rials to 140.

Who is responsible? Not the peasants, for whom agricultural prices are stagnant, but the middlemen, the bazaar, which feels it can act with impunity since the establishment of the Islamic Republic. The black market, or rather the "free" market, since it is not very secret, deals in eggs, soap, and detergent, as well as meat, flour, cigarettes, spare parts and automobiles, rice, vegetable oil, and fish.

Let's take the case of eggs, which are part of the basic diet. Consumption is 480 tons per day, a quarter of which must be imported from Holland (previously eggs came from Israel). In the last six months, 8,000 tons were imported, but only 3,000 were distributed through the regular, fixed price channels. The rest were sold under the table and in backrooms.

The most typical case is wheat flour. Iran annually produces 5.5 million tons of wheat and imports another million tons. This wheat is subsidized 10,000 rials a ton for distribution through the fixed-price market. In reality it turns up in the form of flour on the other end of the gulf, in Kuwait and Dubai, where it is sold at double the price.

The Khomeini neighborhood committees send checking teams out from time to time to verify prices, and the other day it was reported that a chic tailor in the north of Tehran had just received thirty lashes for selling a shirt a little too expensively.

But nothing is really done to fight speculation: the bazaar remains the best base of support for the regime and the Shi'ite hierarchy.

To get rid of speculation and the black market, and especially to end Iran's dependence in food, all the experts, including bourgeois experts, agree that it would be necessary to carry out a radical new agrarian reform that would include the redistribution of land, a remodeling of the policy on credits and fixed prices, and a major long-term effort in education, social assistance and technical aid to the peasantry.

The Vicissitudes of The Agrarian Reform

This is not the direction the government is moving in. In January 1979, even before the insurrection, some of the highest religious authorities in the country denounced the land occupations (in particular Ayatollah Taleghani).

After the establishment of the Islamic Republic, clashes took place in Turkmenistan when Turkomen peasants began to occupy the great estates stolen by rich Persians with the complicity of the shah's government.

The military offensive launched against the Kurds in August 1979 by the Iranian army and the Pasdaran began shortly after the first occupations of land and the establishment of several peasant shoras in Kurdistan.

During the same month of August, the

Bazargan government and the Revolutionary Council adopted a decree against the usurpation of agricultural lands, which called for returning all lands to their legitimate owners, as well as water resources, orchards and nurseries illegally occupied since September 1978.

In a second legislative act, the Bazargan government in September 1979 legitimized the shah's agrarian reform and fixed no maximum in landholdings (the shah's reform called for former landowners being able to keep no more than one village, a village being the unit of measure of the big land holdings). No new distribution of lands was projected.

Of course, after the shah's agrarian reform, the inequality among landowners remains very great.

According to the agricultural census of 1974, 9.5 million Iranian peasants must live on plots of less than ten hectares, which represent 33% of the agricultural lands, or 5.4 million hectares.

On the other end of the scale, 9,553 families (about 60,000 persons) possess 2.45 million hectares (properties greater than 100 hectares).

After the fall of the Bazargan government, and faced with the development of agrarian movements, the new deputy minister of agriculture, Reza Isfahani, began to trumpet that the government was immediately going to undertake a radical agrarian reform so that the land would "belong to those who work it."

A new plan for agrarian reform was worked out, with guidelines that remained quite moderate in comparison with other "green revolutions" carried out by bourgeois regimes. The idea was to redistribute lands that had been expropriated from big landowners who had been in collusion with the old regime, and lands that belong to the state. There was also to be a rather high upper limit on the land area that could belong to a single owner.

This plan for agrarian reform was actually amended further downward, in the direction of a compromise with the September law, because of the opposition of religious representatives from Qum and Mashad in the Revolutionary Council. If we consider the financial, economic, commercial, and family ties that link the bazaars to the big and middle-sized Iranian landowners, and if we are also aware that the Shi'ite clergy itself has always been one of the top landowners through the religious foundations (*waqf*, or religious endowments) we don't have to look too far for the reasons why this plan of Reza Isfahani was scratched.

Toward New Social Confrontations

The crisis of the Iranian economy, reinforced by the crisis of the international capitalist system, the partial blockade by imperialism, and the social instability in the country, further reduces the regime's maneuvering room.

After granting certain wage demands last year (such as raising of the low wages of the industrial working class and low level public employees), it becomes more obvious every day that this regime, which for social reasons is incapable of undertaking even plans for the "bourgeois-democratic" reforms (such as the agrarian reform) required by the objective situation, is less and less in a position to grant substantial concessions to the masses.

On the eve of the second day of the referendum on the Islamic Republic, the leader of the Islamic Republican Party, Ayatollah Beheshti, called for the "total redistribution of wealth in Iran, so that before the end of the year every Iranian will have the same income. . . . This must at all costs be the year of egalitarian distribution of all internal production and all other goods among Iranians."

Advancing to communism in one year! Unfortunately, these end-of-election-campaign speeches are far from reality.

The exodus from rural areas quadrupled last year, going from 380,000 (the average of the last three years of the Pahlavi regime) to 1.5 million, more than two thirds of whom squeezed into the slums of Tehran alone.

While the estimates coming from the government itself indicate that the number of unemployed persons is between 3.5 million and 4 million, only 176,000 unemployed persons are officially aided by government agencies.

The egalitarian distribution of the wealth, as practiced by the Islamic government, can be seen in a few statistics: last year 7 billion rials were spent for workers' housing and 4 billion rials went to unemployed persons. On the other hand, the total aid to industrialists was 80 billion rials. Industrial debts benefited from a one-year moratorium, while the banking reform and the lowering of interest rates represented another gift of 300 billion rials to investors.

But these stipends for the capitalists will not be enough to revive investments on a large scale. For that to take place it will be necessary to carry out sharp attacks on all the workers and toiling masses and try to deal them defeats that they have not yet suffered. □

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Bolivian Junta Tries to Crush Workers' Resistance

By Ernest Harsch

"Once again, a Latin American country is drowned in blood by those who think they can do whatever they want, and kill whenever they are pleased to do so."

With those words, the Revolutionary Party of Bolivian Workers (PRTB), one of the numerous political parties and trade unions resisting the July 17 military coup, began an appeal for international solidarity with the Bolivian people.

"Armed with tanks, planes, and all kinds of weapons, the army and their friends, the paramilitary groups, are trying to kill not only individuals, but a whole country," the statement said.

"The truth is that thousands are being killed, murdered, tortured, and taken prisoner just because they don't like to be treated like slaves or animals."

Noting that the new military rulers headed by Gen. Luis García Meza will be unable to "kill a whole nation," the PRTB added that "the people will not be able to defeat them either if we get isolated. That is history. *Bolivia needs international support to win this war.*"

So far, unofficial estimates place the death toll since the beginning of the coup at more than 1,000, as the military seeks to suppress continuing workers' resistance to the takeover.

Among those killed was Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party-1 in the June elections. According to the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB), which is in the forefront of the resistance to the coup, at least fifteen union activists were killed in La Paz, the capital, and another thirty in Santa Cruz, in eastern Bolivia.

Hundreds have been arrested. More than 500 political prisoners were taken to the Templaderani stadium outside La Paz and others are being held at the Bolívar stadium in the capital itself.

On the day of the coup, about twenty-five journalists were arrested, some of whom were later released. According to a July 21 Associated Press dispatch from La Paz, "One newsman said that while he was held he heard Communist Party deputy Simon Reyes screaming for his captors to kill him."

"The newsman said that as he was being led out of the detention area, he saw Reyes and the deputy's face had been disfigured by beatings." (Reyes had previously been reported to have been killed during a paramilitary attack on the COB headquarters on July 17.)

According to the journalist, one of the officials overseeing the beatings of the

arrested journalists had an Argentinian accent. In a statement issued in Paris, a leader of the COB charged the Argentine military junta with aiding the Bolivian coup.

In an attempt to undermine the opposition to the coup, the junta had Juan Lechín Orquendo, the arrested leader of the COB, appear on the government television station July 22 to call on workers to end their active resistance, so as to "avoid the shedding of blood." Col. Luis Arce, the new interior minister, confirmed that Lechín was being held in Section 2, the headquarters of army intelligence.

Despite fierce repression, the resistance is continuing. Reports from La Paz note nightly gunfire from various parts of the city. According to the July 23 *Washington Post*, the general strike that had been called by the COB and that had paralyzed La Paz for the first few days after the coup was ebbing. The report noted, however, that many businesses in outlying neighborhoods were still closed down.

The sharpest resistance to the coup has come from the mine workers in the southern provinces. According to the July 24 *Christian Science Monitor*, "Strikes, demonstrations, and armed conflict are part of the resistance. The important tin, copper, silver, and tungsten mines are closed."

"Whether the miners' opposition will be enough to bring down the military government or force it to alter course remains to be seen. But miners are angry that the military has once again brazenly seized power and thus sidetracked the democratic process."

Clandestine radio stations under control of the miners have denied government claims that resistance was crushed. According to one station, some 4,500 Indians in the silver-mining province of Potosí were marching to Catavi to link up with insurgent miners.

In carrying out their coup, the Bolivian generals were seeking to counter the growing political influence of the powerful COB, which was moving more and more into the forefront of the struggle for democratic rights and higher living standards.

They sought to justify the coup by referring to the results of the June 29 elections, in which Hernán Siles Zuazo, the presidential candidate of the Democratic People's Unity slate (which included the Communist Party), won the highest number of votes. Although Siles Zuazo is a bourgeois politician and former president of Bolivia, the military hierarchy has little confidence in him.

"We cannot permit the people of this country to vote for a man whom we disapprove of," the military high command stated. "Until the people learn what is correct and begin making the correct choices, we will have to shepherd them, for we, among Bolivians, know what is correct."

The generals' longtime allies in Washington, however, apparently do not think that García Meza and his colleagues really know what is "correct."

Although the White House generally tries to dissociate itself from such repressive coups (often while actually supporting them), in this case it went to the unusual extent of not only denouncing the coup but also declaring that it was sharply curtailing economic and military aid to Bolivia. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie personally condemned the coup at a July 25 news conference in Washington.

What the imperialists are concerned about is not the repression in Bolivia, but the possibility that the coup could backfire. At the least, it is likely to lead to even greater class polarization, at a time when political unrest is already sweeping through Central America and the Caribbean.

Bolivia, moreover, was to have played a central role in Washington's efforts to hammer together an Andean Pact force to intervene in El Salvador. The coup now makes the use of Bolivian troops in such a "peacekeeping" force politically unfeasible.

Washington's assessment of the coup is shared by the other members of the Andean Pact—the governments of Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. All four have called for a special session of the Organization of American States to review the human rights situation in Bolivia since the coup. □

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