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Workers Win Victory in Poland

**PLUS EYEWITNESS REPORTS OF
STRIKE IN GDANSK SHIPYARDS**



Gdansk shipyard workers carry strike leader Lech Walesa on their shoulders after winning demands.

El Salvador

**Junta Jails
Trade Union
Leaders**

Australia

**The State
of the
Labor Movement**

Martinique

**The Struggle
Against French
Colonialism**

A U.S. Beachhead in Somalia

By Ernest Harsch

Another ominous step in Washington's drive to increase its military presence in the Middle East was taken on August 21 through the signing of a major military agreement with the government of Somalia, a country in the Horn of Africa that borders the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

The agreement allows U.S. forces to use airfields and port facilities at Mogadishu and Berbera, and possibly other locations. Washington plans to expand the existing facilities, establish a weapons stockpile, and station an estimated 100 American military personnel in the country.

In return for the right to use the Somali facilities, the White House has agreed to provide the military regime of Gen. Mohammad Siad Barre with at least \$151 million in military, economic, and relief assistance over a two-year period.

This agreement is similar to other military agreements recently concluded with the governments of Kenya and Oman. In addition, the Pentagon is planning to expand its use of the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, is negotiating for facilities in Egypt, and has made arrangements for the use by American forces of the port in Djibouti, a small country just northwest of Somalia, at the mouth of the Red Sea.

Taken together, these various arrangements greatly increase Washington's logistical ability to rapidly intervene with American ground, air, and naval forces against revolutionary struggles in the region. They are specifically designed to provide staging and supply bases for President Carter's Rapid Deployment Force, which was organized soon after the beginning of the Iranian revolution.

The establishment of an American military beachhead in Somalia will also have important political repercussions in the Horn of Africa itself.

The agreement comes at a time when regular Somali military forces have stepped up their attacks inside neighboring Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry has charged that the provision of U.S. arms to the Somali regime would enhance "the aggressive intentions of Somalia, as well as [Washington's] own, in this part of Africa."

The Ethiopian fears are well founded. In late 1977, the Somali army invaded Ethiopia, with the aim of striking a blow against the revolutionary process that had been unfolding in that country since 1974. As a cover for this counterrevolutionary

attack, the Somali regime claimed to simply be supporting the oppressed Somali population in the Ogaden Desert region of Ethiopia.

Although Washington publicly sought to take its distance from the invasion, it actually encouraged it and provided Siad Barre with behind-the-scenes military assistance.

This attack on the Ethiopian revolution was defeated in early 1978, when tens of thousands of Cuban troops came to the assistance of the Ethiopian forces and helped drive the Somali army out of the country.

Since then, however, the Somali regime has continued to carry out numerous military provocations against Ethiopia, both through its aid to the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and through the direct infiltration of Somali troops. (Unfortunately, the Ethiopian regime's refusal to grant the Somalis in Ethiopia their national rights has facilitated this campaign, giving the WSLF and Somali regime a certain base of support in the Ogaden region.)

Since the beginning of the year, there have been reports of larger and more frequent clashes in the Ogaden. American officials have confirmed that much of the fighting on the Somali side is being carried out by troops of the Somali army.

The February 13 *Washington Post* reported, for instance, that American "official sources said regular Somali forces have been used in the area in the last two months." The August 12 issue of the same

South Korean Rulers Launch Press Crackdown

By Janice Lynn

With the August 27 "election" of military strongman Chun Doo Hwan as the new president of South Korea, the military's grip over the country was formalized.

Chun was endorsed as president by a conservative rubber-stamp electoral college. A direct general election is not required.

Chun has at his personal disposal the Capital Garrison Command and a 10,000-strong Special Force paratroop unit whose function is to guard against any coups and to repress worker and student protests.

In addition, Chun will rely heavily on the Defense Security Command—a mil-

itary intelligence body—and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency to ferret out any possible dissent within the army and among South Korea's workers and students.

Chun also holds the chairmanship of the military-backed Special Committee for National Security Measures that basically runs the country. This committee has initiated a major crackdown throughout the country resulting in the most extensive press censorship ever and the arrests of thousands of political figures and activists.

Some 172 weekly and monthly publica-

paper reported, "U.S. officials said there have been reports of multi-battalion action by Somali regulars in the Ogaden in recent weeks. . . ."

American reporters visiting the Ogaden with the guerrillas of the WSLF have found that American relief aid given to the Somali regime had been passed on to the guerrillas. "At two guerrilla camps," *New York Times* correspondent Christopher S. Wren reported in the May 26 issue, "100-pound sacks of American corn donated to Somalia by the United States were seen. . . ."

The U.S. House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, after hearing testimony from State Department and CIA officials, concluded August 28 that "despite its written and verbal assurance to the contrary, Somalia remains deeply and intimately involved in the armed struggle which continues to rage in the Ethiopian Ogaden."

As part of its standard operating procedure, Washington is denying any role in the Somali attacks on Ethiopia. It also claims that the U.S. military aid to the Somali regime is of a purely "defensive" character.

But the provision of military equipment and the establishment of a direct American military presence in the country can only be taken as a signal to Siad Barre of U.S. approval, an encouragement to continue—if not escalate—his aggressive stance toward Ethiopia.

It also raises a greater threat of direct American intervention. As the House subcommittee itself concluded, "New U.S. military commitments to Somalia could very well exacerbate the ongoing conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden [and] increase the dangers of U.S. involvement in the conflict. . . ."

The Pentagon's new bases in Somalia—as well as in Kenya, Oman, and other countries—are a deadly serious threat to all the peoples of the region, not only in the Horn of Africa, but throughout Africa and the Middle East. □

tions have had their registration cancelled. And in an unprecedented move, more than 250 journalists—about one-tenth of all those in the country—have been fired. A new “education” campaign for journalists has been initiated.

The intent of this campaign is clear. Publications said to be “obscene, vulgar, and instigating social confusion and creating a mood of class consciousness” have been banned. Any attempt to depict life in a way that reflects class divisions is forbidden.

There is concern that “communist ideology” might penetrate the younger generation if class divisions are emphasized, explained Lee Kwang Pyo, Chun’s hand-picked culture and information minister.

Dismissals have reached into the government-controlled television and radio stations and have affected prestigious intellectual publications and magazines published by established journalists, in addition to prominent dissident writers.

The criteria for the firings include journalists considered sympathetic to socialist ideas or lacking in anti-communist zeal; those with a record of criticizing the government; those who campaigned for freedom of the press during the mass uprisings last May and who demanded the lifting of martial law; and those considered to have close personal relations with either opposition or former government politicians.

Of course, big business interests have been left largely unscathed by this “anti-corruption” campaign.

“Business leaders have agreed to behave more moderately by avoiding the over-exposure of their wealth,” Culture and Information Minister Lee said, “but we don’t propose to take away their wealth.”

Television stations are forbidden to air programs that show the kind of lavish, luxurious life led by these businessmen. Exposure of these realities are what the military rulers fear will deepen the class consciousness of South Korea’s workers.

Chun’s authority also rests on a military alliance with the United States government, which has 40,000 troops stationed in South Korea. A recent statement by U.S. President Carter reassured the Korean military that Washington will continue its military support and that it has accepted Chun’s repressive hold on the country.

“We would like to have a complete democracy with full and open debate, free press and elected leaders,” Carter claimed in an interview with the *Boston Globe*. But, he continued, “The Koreans are not ready for that, according to their own judgement, and I don’t know how to explain it any better.”

In this deprecating manner, Carter chooses to ignore the hundreds of thousands of workers and students who demonstrated in cities throughout South Korea last spring for exactly these freedoms. They demanded an end to martial law, an

end to military repression, and called for free, democratic, elections.

Despite mild face-saving pleas from the U.S. State Department for “an end to some

of the more repressive features of the South Korean Government,” the South Korean military dictatorship is confident it can count on Washington’s backing. □

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Polish Workers Score Major Victory

By Ernest Harsch

As a great roar went up from the workers occupying the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, strike leader Andrzej Gwiazda announced August 30 that the Polish government had agreed to grant the strikers' "Demand No. 1"—the right of workers to form independent, self-governing trade unions.

It was a historic victory. For the first time in the Polish People's Republic—or in any of the bureaucratized workers states in Eastern Europe—workers had won the right to establish their own organizations, free from the direct control of the privileged bureaucratic caste that rules the country.

The next day, under the continued pressure of 350,000 workers out on strike around the country, the government agreed to make numerous other concessions to the workers—and to the Polish population in general.

The signing of the settlement between Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski and Lech Walesa, the most prominent strike leader and the chairperson of the Interfactory Strike Committee for the Gdansk region, was broadcast on national television August 31. The agreement touched on most of the points in the workers' list of twenty-one demands (see accompanying box).

In it, the government pledged to limit censorship (which had already been greatly eased during the course of the strike) and to allow greater access to the public media, including by religious groups. "Radio and television, the press and publishing houses will serve to express the multiplicity of thoughts and opinions," the agreement stated.

And in response to the strikers' demand for full information on the country's social and economic situation, the regime pledged that the press, individuals, and citizens' groups will be "entitled to examine public documents, particularly those concerning administrations and economic plans issued by the Government and its departments."

The government also agreed to meet, at least part way, many of the workers' economic demands.

Jagielski likewise indicated that the more than two dozen dissidents who were still in police custody for having supported the strikes would be promptly released. The three political prisoners who were specifically named by the strikers in their list of demands had already been freed, Jagielski announced.

With a settlement finally reached, the



strike leaders called on workers to begin returning to their jobs.

Summing up the workers' victory, Walesa declared, "We've gotten all that's possible in the current situation. It's what we wanted and dreamed of—we've got independent unions."

'Genuine Representatives of the Working Class'

Although the strikers raised numerous demands, the demand for "free trade unions" emerged as the central one. The workers were opposed to the undemocratic official unions and insisted on the right to form worker-controlled unions that would fight for the interests of the Polish working class.

"This crisis came about because the workers did not have real representation," Lech Walesa explained during negotiations on August 26. "We want free, independent, self-managing unions."

And responding to the regime's slanders that such demands were "antisocialist," Walesa maintained that the strike leaders were "not against the socialist system."

"We don't want to change the socialist ownership of the means of production," he said, "but we want to be the real masters of the factories."

If actually carried out, the agreement on the unions could open the way for the workers to become just that.

Noting that the existing unions had "not fulfilled the workers' expectations," the preliminary draft of the trade-union agreement provided for the establishment of "new self-governing trade unions that would be genuine representatives of the working class. . . ."

"In setting up the independent, self-governing unions, the Interfactory Strike

Committee states that they will observe the Polish Constitution. The new unions will defend the social and material interests of the working people, and they have no intention of playing the role of a political party.

"They accept the principle of nationalized means of production, which is the basis of Poland's socialist system."

The strikers agreed to recognize the "leading role in the state" of the Polish United Workers Party (the Communist Party) and to "not challenge existing international alliances," that is, Poland's close ties to the Soviet Union.

The existing strike committees are to form the nucleus of the new trade unions. In addition, the old unions, which have so far been rigidly controlled by the party, will continue to function.

The government agreed that the new unions could have their own publications, publicly express their views on key economic and social questions, and study "methods of representing the working people."

Moreover, the right to strike is to be "guaranteed" in a new trade-union law.

The government clearly hopes that it will be able to contain the impact of this concession, and that the new unions will refrain from challenging the bureaucracy's political control. Deputy Prime Minister Jagielski, the chief government negotiator, stressed that the new unions should limit their concerns to "questions of salary and social conditions."

But that is wishful thinking. The concerns of the workers encompass all of society.

That was shown by the issues that were raised during the course of the strike itself: the lifting of censorship, the freeing of political prisoners, an end to the persecution of people for their personal convictions, and the publicizing of all information on Poland's social and economic situation, so that everyone can take part in discussing remedies to the problems.

The workers have also directly attacked the material privileges of the bureaucrats who run the party, official unions, and state apparatus. They are demanding the abolition of special stores and family allowances for police and party officials, as well as all other privileges that are enjoyed by the authorities but denied to the working population.

Whether the government and party leadership wants it or not, independent unions that are democratically controlled by the workers themselves can provide powerful

vehicles through which the workers can fight for all of their rights, economic, social, or political.

They can help workers challenge the bureaucracy's undemocratic and parasitic grip on society, opening the way for the workers to take real decision-making powers into their own hands—and thus to rejuvenate the socialist revolution in Poland.

A Massive Strike Wave

Realizing the threat that independent unions could pose to their own privileged position, the bureaucrats did everything they could to avoid granting "Demand No. 1." But the strike wave had become just too powerful.

Workers in Poland have been walking off their jobs in large numbers ever since the government announced steep increases in meat prices on July 1.

After a brief lull in the strikes, the 16,000 workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk struck on August 14, to demand the reinstatement of a dismissed worker activist. The demands quickly escalated and support for the strike movement soon spread throughout Gdansk and the nearby cities

of Gdynia and Sopot.

The workers occupied their plants and elected strike committees. They also chose delegates to the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS), which was based at the Lenin Shipyard and which sought to coordinate the strikes in the heavily industrialized Baltic Coast region. Similar strike coordinating committees were established in Szczecin and Elblag.

The MKS in Gdansk was well-organized and democratically structured. All discussions were publicly broadcast to the workers and delegates occupying the shipyard. Delegates from other plants and cities tape recorded the proceedings and sent them home. A four-page strike bulletin, *Solidarnosc* (Solidarity), was published daily.

According to a report from Gdansk in the August 28 *New York Times*, "There are guards and crowd-control monitors with red armbands, couriers to keep up contacts with strike committees in other cities, a donations committee that has collected more than \$2,000 and a food committee responsible for bringing in dozens of milk cans and making hundreds of open-faced sandwiches of meat and vegetables.

"There was, until recently, a 'report

center' to receive complaints of police harassment on the outside. Now there is a press center, complete with translators for the growing corps of foreign journalists."

On August 26, the strikes began to spread further. In Wroclaw, an industrial center in the southwest, some 12,000 workers at the Patawag railroad plant walked off their jobs. Within a few days, another 70,000 workers in that city also struck, crippling fifty factories. The strike committees in Wroclaw quickly contacted the MKS in Gdansk and sought to coordinate their efforts.

In Lodz, the second largest city in the country, transport workers walked off their jobs, as did auto workers in Bielsko-Biala, workers at a naval equipment plant in Torun, steelworkers at Nowa Huta, rubber workers in Olsztyn, workers at a heavy machinery plant in Poznan, bus drivers in Krakow, transport workers in Koszalin, and workers at a truck factory in Rzeszow. At the giant Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw, which was the site of an earlier strike, workers formed a solidarity committee.

On August 29, the strikes spread for the

The 21 Demands of the Gdansk Strikers

[The following is the list of twenty-one demands being raised by the strikers in the Gdansk region, as promulgated by the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) representing more than 500 factories and about 200,000 workers. It has been taken from the August 29 *New York Times*.]

* * *

1. Acceptance of free trade unions independent of the Communist Party and of enterprises, in accordance with convention No. 87 of the International Labor Organization concerning the right to form free trade unions, which was ratified by the Communist Government of Poland.

2. A guarantee of the right to strike and of the security of strikers and those aiding them.

3. Compliance with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, the press and publication, including freedom for independent publishers, and the availability of the mass media to representatives of all faiths.

4. (a) A return of former rights to:

- People dismissed from work after the 1970 and 1976 strikes.
- Students expelled from school because of their views.

(b) The release of all political prisoners, among them Edmund Zadrozynski, Jan Kozlowski and Marek Kozlowski.

(c) A halt in repression of the individual because of personal conviction.

5. Availability to the mass media of information about the formation of the Interfactory Strike Committee and publication of its demands.

6. The undertaking of actions aimed at bringing the country out of its crisis situation by the following means:

(a) Making public complete information about the social-economic situation.

(b) Enabling all sectors and social classes to take part in discussion of the reform program.

7. Compensation of all workers taking part in the strike for the period of the strike, with vacation pay from the Central Council of Trade Unions.

8. An increase in the base pay of each worker by 2,000 zlotys [U.S.\$66 at the official rate] a month as compensation for the recent rise in prices.

9. Guaranteed automatic increases in pay on the basis of increases in prices and the decline in real income.

10. A full supply of food products for the domestic market, with exports limited to surpluses.

11. The abolition of "commercial" prices and of other sales for hard currency in special shops.

12. The selection of management personnel on the basis of qualifications, not party membership. Privileges of the

secret police, regular police and party apparatus are to be eliminated by equalizing family subsidies, abolishing special stores, etc.

13. The introduction of food coupons for meat and meat products (during the period in which control of the market situation is regained).

14. Reduction in the age for retirement for women to 50 and for men to 55, or after 30 years' employment in Poland for women and 35 years for men, regardless of age.

15. Conformity of old-age pensions and annuities with what has actually been paid in.

16. Improvements in the working conditions of the health service to insure full medical care for workers.

17. Assurances of a reasonable number of places in day-care centers and kindergartens for the children of working mothers.

18. Paid maternity leave for three years.

19. A decrease in the waiting period for apartments.

20. An increase in the commuter's allowance to 100 zlotys from 40, with a supplemental benefit on separation.

21. A day of rest on Saturday. Workers in the brigade system or round-the-clock jobs are to be compensated for the loss of free Saturdays with increased leave or other paid time off.

first time to the mining sector, as 20,000 copper miners in Rudna, Sieroszowice, and Polkowice in the Silesian region walked off their jobs. They immediately sent a delegate to the MKS headquarters in Gdansk.

Social Ferment Broadens

The strikers enjoyed widespread support among the population in general. In addition, active protest also began to spread to other layers. A letter criticizing government policies for bringing Poland to "the brink of catastrophe" was signed by nearly 200 prominent intellectuals. At a plant manufacturing fireproofing equipment in Koscian, managers also struck when their workers walked out, and some of them were arrested. Journalists in Gdansk have protested against attempts to censor their accounts of the strikes and reporters on the main Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, raised complaints against the chief editor.

The Communist Party itself has not remained immune from this ferment. Ac-

ording to a report in the August 24-25 Paris daily *Le Monde*, "Meetings called by the party in factories and workplaces to discuss the situation turned into explosions of criticism."

A discussion group called "Experience and the Future," which includes party and nonparty members, has called for democratization of the party's internal life.

Even some wings of the bureaucracy have become emboldened to sharpen their criticisms of the leadership of Edward Gierk. At a time when the party was escalating its slanders against the strikers, Tadeusz Fiszbach, the first secretary of the party in Gdansk, published a speech calling the strike leaders "honest men" and blaming the "frustrations of the population" on "too much centralization of decision-making," "planning errors," and "bureaucracy, especially in the unions."

All the government's attempts to intimidate the strikers, the threats of possible Soviet intervention, and the arrests of several dozen prominent dissidents failed to undercut the support for the strike.

Weakened in face of Poland's insurgent working class, the bureaucracy has been forced to give considerable ground.

However, the struggle between the Polish workers and the bureaucratic regime that rules in their name was not ended by the signing of the August 31 agreement and the return to work. As they have done in the past, the bureaucrats will do everything in their power to contain the workers' gains and eventually to begin whitewashing away at them.

But at the moment, the Polish workers are in a stronger position than they have ever been. They now have an opportunity to begin the vital task of building up their own organizations, harnessing their newfound strength, and reaching out to other layers of society that also want to see the establishment of socialist democracy in Poland.

Referring to the opportunities for building the new unions, MKS leader Florian Wisniewski declared, "We shall go forward like a thunderstorm across Poland, and we shall win." □

Inside the Lenin Shipyard

How the Polish Strikers Are Organizing

By Jean-Yves Touvais

GDANSK—Waiting. Everyone is waiting in an impressive calm. "We're going to win," they say. They're sure of their force, their unity, their rights.

There are several tens of thousands of them around the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, with their families. They are listening to the retransmission by loudspeaker of the discussions inside the factory. They are bringing money or food for the strikers, sacks full of potatoes or tomatoes. They are going to the gates, which are covered with flowers. Everyone kisses everyone. Everyone encourages everyone. The children are there too.

All around this immense shipyard a large crowd is waiting for the government to satisfy the demands of the 300,000 strikers in the region. A serious and silent crowd, eager for news.

From time to time, someone throws a batch of leaflets in the air. Everyone rushed forward. A little bit of shoving, but very quickly everything is back in order. Actually, everyone will be able to read these precious leaflets, even a little bit crumpled up, even badly printed by the sole machine in the factory that only runs off a few hundred copies. Once read, you give them to the person next to you.

Since August 23, the bulletin of the strike committee appears daily. In its first issue, the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS) writes: "We know that the govern-

ment is doing everything to isolate us. It is also hiding our strike. It wants to prevent any solidarity. It says that we are antisocialist elements, that our strike is political. What we want is to discuss economic problems, our rights. We are not against the regime."

A moderate tone, corresponding to the level of general determination. But, very quickly, as an MKS delegate explained to me, it is understood that these words are already behind the consciousness of the hour. "For us, the free trade union is the first demand. Then the political prisoners and all our rights. It's not a simple economic question. In the last analysis, if it was only a question of zlotys, everything would have been over a long time ago. But things have to change."

As soon as you discuss a little with these people, as soon as you set foot in the shipyard, that becomes obvious.

Extraordinary Organization

Not just anyone can enter. Only the factory delegations and reporters can get through the gates. The strike committee stands guard. Every visitor, after several checks, receives a pass. It allows the bearer to circulate freely in the factory. The MKS is headquartered in the offices of the Committee for Hygiene and Safety. Students from Gdansk serve as interpreters, and you can talk with everyone.

The welcome is always warm. Four hundred delegates are permanently there in a big conference room. Everything is clean. Not one cigarette butt on the floor. The pitchers are constantly refilled with water. A statue of Lenin is behind the stage. And on the table, among the flowers, sits a wooden figurine, undoubtedly made by a worker. It shows a laborer with two clenched fists.

Here is the democratic leadership of the strikes: a convention, meeting day and night. Each delegation has the name of its plant written on a piece of cardboard. There are daily shuttles between this room and the various factories. The general organization is extraordinary.

Ask anyone, and they will tell you how every striker can control this movement. For example, a young woman worker in a can factory in Gdansk, which employs 750 workers, 90 percent of them women, says "I've been here for six days, and the strike wasn't really decided until yesterday. First the director has proposed to meet the prefect and he designated three delegates himself, without any consultation. Obviously these discussions were useless. I came here, and when I went back we elected our committee. Twelve women workers, one per shop, elected by open ballot after discussion. Now there are two of us here, and we report back everything that happens twice a day. As for the

director, he's disappeared."

I ask her whether her factory was occupied. She shows me a mandate from the MKS: "We are continuing to work. What we produce is useful for the strikers. We have the permission of the MKS."

In fact, there are several plants like this. The trains that serve the urban concentration of Gdansk, Sopot, and Gdynia run every ten minutes. Often, you see locomotives decorated with Polish flags in a sign of solidarity. Some are on strike, but work so that the strike can last.

The Strikers and the Church

The loudspeakers regularly broadcast recordings from the day before. A mass presided over in the morning by the bishop of Gdansk is followed by most of the factory. Contemplation, simplicity. Old hymns are sung asking God for more freedom, more strength. Every evening a shorter religious service is held in front of the main gate at 5:00 p.m.

The support of the church and the pope's letter are highly appreciated. They are interpreted as unconditional support for the strike, whereas the sermon of the bishop of Gdansk on the morning of Sunday, August 24, is more moderate. He, of course, hoped for a victory, but warned against disorder.

A young delegate explained to me for a long time the role of religion in the strike, as he saw it. "I don't believe in God. I have my personal opinion. But I don't think the workers here want the church to have a political role. It's a moral support, an individual question."

We are walking quietly in the shipyard. The sun has come back out after two days of rain. The evening is soft. Here and there, men are sleeping on the grass, or discussing in small groups at the foot of scaffoldings. The hull of a big cargo freighter under construction is watching us. Immense, immobile cranes tear apart the sky. We go over a bridge. A group of workers waves to us.

"Here you see, the men are calm and relaxed," my companion says. "They are watching over their machines, their shops."

Everything is impeccable. You feel a quiet revolution, sure of itself.

All the delegates I asked confirmed his view of the church. They think that in the future the free trade union will play a large de facto political role, but they exclude this for the church. They only want everyone to be able to think and believe as they see fit.

"We are very happy with the declarations of the church. That's all," a delegate from another shipyard in Gdansk says to me. He represents 3,000 workers.

I ask the same question of two women delegates from the food industry, all of whose workers are women. The same answer: "The church can help us all the time." Do you think that one day the



Strikers at Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. Slogan in middle reads: "Justice and equality for the entire people."

religious leaders should be part of the government? "No, No!" It's unanimous. It's the workers, not the church, that should run things. "You, know, the Poles are very religious, but that has nothing to do with our rights."

"All the members of the party are the same. They can't represent us in the government!" Who then? "Our delegates, those from the free trade union!" The answer comes clearly and without hesitation. And the parties, are they necessary? "No, the free trade union will be enough."

And then, in the evening of August 24, around 8:00 p.m., the news is reported. The radio broadcasts the speech of Gierk to the party Central Committee. The change of prime ministers is announced. Outside, in front of the main gate, three or four thousand people are listening. They are commenting from time to time, amused. Sometimes the transmission is poor.

Strike leader Lech Walesa takes the microphone, and, referring to the microphone, says, "It's on strike too." Applause. No one believes that there's anything new in these discussions.

A delegate from the main shipyard explains to me, "You know, it's like fishing. You throw out your hook with the bait on it and wait. Gierk thinks we are stupid fish. He's wrong. We discussed his speech in my factory, shop by shop, and this is everyone's point of view: The speech, the changes—a lot of hot air! That doesn't change anything."

A woman worker from a fish canning plant says, "I think that the government is forced to accept our demands. We should perhaps make a few compromises, but not on the essentials. The most important thing is the free trade unions. We don't know the new prime minister. What's important is what happens here!"

The same sentiment at an electrical assembly factory that employs 1,500 work-

ers. One worker says, "We discussed briefly last night. The governmental commission should come here! It's waiting too long. It's beginning to get on our nerves."

The Most Important Thing Is the Free Trade Union

Sometimes the opinion is a little more moderate. Two delegates from a small cement-making factory (140 workers, 90 percent women) tell us: "I don't know the new prime minister, so I can't judge him. But I hope that Gierk is right that he is capable and that he is very familiar with the problem. He should respect us."

What is the main point that has to be satisfied? "The free trade union, of course!"

So they are waiting for the governmental commission, confident of victory. From time to time messages of solidarity are read. Delegates bring money for the construction of a monument in memory of the dead of 1970. A plan for it is posted on the windows of the MKS room.

The number of factories that go on strike each day is no longer counted. On August 24, twenty new delegations came to enlarge the central strike committee. Each delegation is applauded. "Soon there won't be enough room in this hall anymore," I am told.

A lot of hope is placed in solidarity from the other regions of Poland, especially from Silesia. On August 23, two workers from Tarnowskie Gory, representing committees in a dozen large factories in that region, explained, "We sent a personal letter to Gierk. If the government prolongs the strike in Pomerania [the Baltic Sea region where Gdansk is located], if it doesn't satisfy our demands, we are going out in solidarity September 1."

Another delegation from Swidnik (also in Silesia) reads an identical motion. "I hope that all the Polish miners will say the

same thing," my interpreter, a delegate from an electrical manufacturing factory tells me. But he adds, too, "We don't want a general strike. It would be too costly for Poland. By refusing to listen to us, the government is wasting \$37 million each day. But if necessary, the whole country will be on strike."

On the evening of August 25, at 7:30, the government makes contact with the MKS by telephone and proposes an immediate meeting. Lech Walesa demands that telephone communications be reestablished with the rest of Poland. No answer. Walesa goes to the general delegates assembly, which votes unanimously, "No negotiations as long as we remain cut-off."

At 9:00 p.m., a new phone call from the government. "The communications have been reestablished. Can the meeting be

held?" A new precondition from the MKS: "We want you to announce that the discussion will be broadcast over the radio. We also want twenty minutes on national radio and one hour on television. Two delegates from the MKS will negotiate these conditions."

The new prime minister accepts everything, and on the morning of August 26 the governmental commission will come to the factory to talk. The radio will rebroadcast the discussion throughout the region.

Late that night, an old woman worker tells me, "I'm very proud of the Polish workers. I know all of them here. They've been waiting for that for thirty-five years. One thing is sure: I wouldn't want to be in the same place as the new prime minister, because we are going to win."

August 25

Negotiations Publicly Broadcast

The Workers State Their Case

By Jean-Yves Touvais

GDANSK—They should arrive any minute now. For the last hour, a welcoming committee is lined up under the late summer sun. Yellow helmets trace a path through a dense and silent crowd. At the back is Gate No. 1, with its flowers and its flags.

It is 11:00 a.m., August 26. The workers of Gdansk have prepared a first-class welcome for the government commission. But the latter doesn't want any part of it. We soon learn that the commission, packed into a small van, is coming in discretely through Gate No. 2.

With Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Jagielski in front, it crosses the shipyard, but is recognized by the strikers who watch it calmly and happily.

The discussion takes place in a small room in the MKS headquarters. The reporters can take pictures through the big glass partition, while the delegates follow the discussion, which is piped out into the other room and throughout the shipyard. An example of public negotiations with little parallel in the history of the international working class, but which has almost become commonplace here. Secret negotiations would be impossible.

When the public transmission is halted due to technical difficulties, anger rises inside and outside the factory, and almost breaks down the doors of the meeting room. It is thought that the government has forbidden the loudspeakers. The deputy prime minister himself requests that everything be put back into order. He interrupts himself and begins again in a few minutes when the transmission—that is, workers' democracy—has been restored.

Everyone feels that the authorities are on the defensive, stammering, getting tangled up in technical details. Joy, even pleasure, brightens everyone's face. The minister patiently listens as the statements of the MKS are warmly applauded.

The delegates go straight to the point: "We want to discuss everything," says Walesa, the chairperson of the MKS. "Let's begin with the first demand, the free trade union!"

The minister hesitates. Then, finally, presents the resolution of the August 24 Central Committee meeting. He adds, "In a few days there will be new elections in all the plants of the region. If they show that the MKS has the majority, well, then it will be necessary to change the union." This is his answer, but he can only give his personal opinion. Actually, it is nothing new.

After the contributions of the various MKS members, the minister requests a ten-minute break that lasts one-and-a-half hours. In the end there will be agreement on the experts commission, which, without prejudicing the conclusions or committing anyone, is supposed to examine the other demands.

What this first public negotiation has revealed above all is the determination and level of consciousness of the strikers, a politicalization that is expressed perfectly by the members of the MKS Presidium. The demand for a free trade union is taking on a more and more political meaning here. This term is being used to indicate above all the hope of a progressive and conscious change, taken in hand by everyone.

Bogdan Lis, a strike leader, is very clear:

"We want all the workers' rights, at all levels. [Applause from the workers.] We want guaranteed freedom of activity."

Andrzej Gwiżdza, a member of the editorial board of *Robotnik* (Worker), elected to the MKS Presidium, adds, "Here the workers have shown that we are adults. The calm during the visit of the pope was one of the first demonstrations of this period."

"A new trade union independent of the state and of the government, with its own newspaper, is the only way to get the country out of the crisis. Of course, the economic situation is very complicated. The problems exist at different levels and the workers must be listened to everywhere. Who else can say who is right if not those who work? A new trade union will avoid a lot of errors. The government can't put off its answer indefinitely."

Strike leader Florian Wisniewski, an electrician, says that if the workers have this guarantee of control they can accept certain sacrifices. "We make unproductive investments. We spend our money badly. The workers, all the Poles, must be able to have what is necessary. Perhaps certain reforms will be difficult, but a free trade union and its control over all the economic activities of the government are the only guarantees of getting us out of this situation. We want all the economic decisions to be taken calmly and conscientiously."

Finally, and what most of the MKS delegates with whom I talked insisted on, the free trade union will have all the prerogatives of genuine workers' power.

Lech Walesa explains it using an example. He cites the case of a prefabrication plant that is producing at 50 percent capacity. "The government decided to build another one right next to it. It's absurd. The plant is useless. Maybe the Central Committee doesn't know that, but we workers see it everyday. The free trade union means control over economic decisions at every level, local, regional, and national. We need a new plan, and that's how we'll do it."

The main thrust of the slogan for a free trade union is the idea that the working class can take responsibility for its own affairs, that it can consciously take charge.

This is what the deputy prime minister heard on August 26. This is what all of workers' Poland is hoping for.

Lech Sobieszek of the MKS Presidium dotted the *i*'s, amid thundering applause: "The problem that we have been talking about here concerns all of Poland. We obviously want free trade unions everywhere."

Jagielski: "That's your point of view, not mine. Here we are talking about Pomerania."

Sobieszek: "Don't try to divide us from the rest of the country. If you do that, the strike will become a general strike."

August 26

Nicaraguan Capitalists Fearful of FSLN's Political Course

By Lars Palmgren

MANAGUA—Today, everyone is talking about the importance of the speech that Sandinista leader Humberto Ortega gave on August 23, during a huge rally called to celebrate the completion of Nicaragua's literacy campaign.

In his speech, Ortega replied to a campaign by four bourgeois parties demanding that elections be held soon. He stated that the first priorities of the revolution were to rebuild the country's shattered economy and to increase mass mobilization and organization.

"Democracy starts in the economic realm when social inequalities begin to weaken," Ortega stated, "when the workers and peasants can better their standard of living. . . .

"And in even more advanced forms, democracy means workers' participation in the administration of the factories, haciendas, cooperatives, and cultural centers."

Ortega concluded that elections probably would not be held until 1985. And then, he said, "They will be elections to establish revolutionary power, not to question it."

Most people that one talks to conclude that "the revolution has now entered a new phase." Exactly what is meant by that depends, of course, on whom one talks to.

It does not mean the same thing to Enrique, a twenty-year-old cadre in the July 19 Sandinista Youth, who just came back from the literacy campaign, that it does to someone like Carlos Gabuardi, the general secretary of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP).

"Well, that was that," is Enrique's comment on Ortega's speech. "Now, no one can doubt what kind of society we are building in Nicaragua. No one can doubt that this is going to be a state where the workers and peasants have the power and where the economy is organized to respond to their needs."

"Those who doubted before," Enrique continued, "do not have to do so any

longer."

When Enrique speaks, his voice is full of enthusiasm. He is happy.

In the COSEP office, there is neither enthusiasm nor much happiness.

As I arrive, two journalists from *La Prensa*, a bourgeois newspaper, also arrive. Repeating Enrique's words, they say, "That was that." But when they continue one can detect the hysterical tone in their voices.

"Now communism is here," they say. "Marxism-Leninism has taken over."

COSEP General Secretary Carlos Gabuardi seems to be a little calmer. But he really isn't.

"My impression is that we now have entered a totalitarian state," he says.

"As a matter of fact, the Ortega speech meant a corporate state, where one group takes all the power, excluding all the other Nicaraguans who participated in the fight against Somoza."

In his office, Gabuardi has a huge painting of Augusto César Sandino above his imposing desk. Sandino, who once said, "Only the organized forces of the workers and peasants can carry the revolution to its final objective," seems to smile a little at Gabuardi's statement.

Gabuardi said that at first he thought he had heard wrong when Ortega spoke about the elections. "But now," he said, "after the three new laws published yesterday, there is no doubt anymore."

One of these laws Gabuardi referred to deals with the electoral process. Its central point says, "Every nomination or designation of candidates for the general elections and their public campaigns is forbidden until they have been authorized by the electoral body that will be created in 1984. This does not hinder political activity—that is guaranteed in the Fundamental Statute and in the Statute of Rights and Guarantees."

The second law forbids the press to publish news about shortages of consumer products, which could encourage speculation. For that reason, all information on this subject must first be checked with a special governmental information office.

The third law says the same thing about information that deals with internal security, such as armed confrontations and attacks against leading members of the state.

The last two laws must be seen in relation to the role that the daily *La Prensa* has played in creating rumors about shortages of different common con-

sumer items and about armed confrontations throughout the country, especially in the north. Speculations of this type have been a weapon that *La Prensa* and the bourgeois opposition have used in their attempt to create discontent, which they can use politically against the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the government.

A joint statement from all the bourgeois parties about these new laws and about the Ortega speech has still not been published. It is known, however, that they have been meeting almost continuously since August 23.

Gabuardi has participated in these meetings. And what has been said by the representatives of the different parties is similar to what Gabuardi says.

Wilfredo Montalván, leader of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), for example, said in *La Prensa* the day after Ortega's speech, "If this pronouncement is upheld, then there is a military dictatorship that is being formed here."

Leaders of the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) and the Democratic Conservative Party (PCD) have made similar declarations.

All this indicates that the bourgeoisie now feels more excluded than ever from the possibility of influencing the revolutionary process. During the past year they have tried to use their economic influence to press the FSLN to make political concessions. Ortega's speech was an answer to that.

But the speech not only put an end to the bourgeoisie's illusions that it could gain some political power. It also announced a new economic plan.

The unofficial balance sheet of the first economic plan—the 1980 Plan for Economic Reactivation—shows that the participation of the private sector was by no means what had been expected and that the economic goals that were projected in the plan had not been achieved.

This means that the economic situation is still very difficult. Ortega warned, "We must not have any illusions that in the short term we will be able to have the material fruits that are created by the sweat of our working class. The economic program for 1981 is principally to consolidate the bases of this revolution."

"But," he continued, "at the same time our program for 1981, in spite of the difficulties, proposes fundamentally that we must satisfy the basic needs of the working people. Our economic process that is proposed in the 1981 plan will permit us

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to gradually end the dependent position the imperialists have put us in."

This is an indication that the FSLN and the government will, during the coming year, take a firmer stand against those proprietors who drag their feet in the rebuilding of the country.

During the last week workers led by the Sandinista Workers Federation have taken over factories when their owners failed to fulfill the workers' demands.

This offensive by the workers has been accompanied by some organizational steps. Comandante Mónica Baltodano, a top FSLN leader specifically assigned to working with the mass organizations, told me in an interview that she expected that the three trade unions in the Intersindical*

* The three trade unions in the Intersindical are the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), the Rural Workers Association (ATC) and the Inde-

would soon unite with two other trade unions—the Confederation of Trade Union Action and Unification (CAUS) and Workers Front (FO)—around a common program.

This would help differentiate unions such as CAUS and FO that—in spite of ideological differences, and occasional conflicts with the Sandinistas—are supporters of the revolutionary process from those such as the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN) and the Confederation of Trade Union Unification (CUS), which support the bourgeois opposition and their imperialist allies.

The kind of trade-union unity projected by Baltodano would be a big step forward for the working class. □

pendent General Workers Federation (CGT-i)—which has ties with the pro-Moscow Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN).

As Rumors of Insurgent "Final Offensive" Abound

Salvadoran Junta Jails Union Leaders

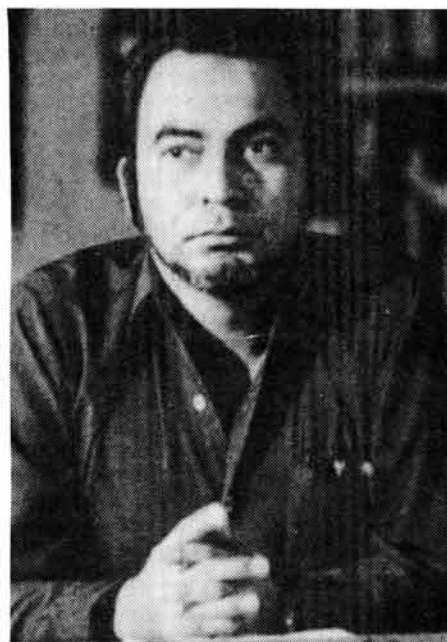
By Will Reissner

A strike by 1,500 electric power workers in five power plants in El Salvador was broken August 22 when government troops, backed by armored cars, seized the plants. The striking workers, who had blacked out nearly the entire country for twenty-four hours, were demanding the reinstatement of thirty-five union members fired for participating in an August 13-15 general strike.

Seventeen leaders of the power workers were seized by the troops and are now being held in jails in San Salvador, Santa Ana, and Ahuachapán. They face possible sentences of four years imprisonment. Among the prisoners is Héctor Recinos, general secretary of the powerful National Federation of Labor (CNT), which is made up of thirty unions with 50,000 members. Recinos, 34, is also a public leader of the United People's Action Front (FAPU), one of the mass organizations struggling against El Salvador's ruling military/Christian Democratic junta, which seized power in an October 15, 1979, coup. FAPU is part of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), which comprises all the major forces opposed to the junta.

The junta has carried out one of the bloodiest repressive campaigns in Latin American history in its attempt to remain in power. Since January 1, nearly 5,000 opponents of the regime have been murdered by the police, army, and rightist paramilitary organizations.

On August 19, the Salvadoran National Guard killed twelve agricultural workers



Jailed FAPU leader Héctor Recinos.

near the small town of Las Delicias, 14 miles north of San Salvador. Although the military claimed the twelve were guerrillas killed during an ambush of a government patrol, residents of the area disputed that version of events. They stated that the twelve, including one woman, were in fact local rural workers, not guerrillas. Witnesses stated that each victim had been killed with a shot to the head.

The scope of the government repression

is vividly illustrated by the weekly reports issued by the Judicial Aid Committee of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, which has been constantly monitoring and investigating the mounting death toll.

In its report for the week of August 1 to August 8, the archbishop's office listed 219 people "from the popular and progressive sectors of El Salvador" murdered for political reasons in that week alone. They included 120 peasants and agricultural workers, eighteen students, five industrial workers, three public employees, two high-school teachers, two journalists, and two small merchants. The occupations of the others were unknown.

The archdiocese also named the repressive forces responsible for the murders. According to its report, these broke down as follows: "105 murders committed by combined contingents of the armed forces (National Guard, National Police, Treasury Police, members of [the paramilitary group] ORDEN); 34 murders committed by the National Guard; 4 murders committed by the paramilitary organization ORDEN; 4 murders committed by the National Police; 53 murders committed by civilian agents; and 15 murders committed by the Death Squad." The remaining four murders were carried out by unknown assailants.

In addition to these murders, from August 4 to August 8 "the army and military security bodies illegally seized eighteen people," whom the church group listed by name. But the report stated that the military/Christian Democratic junta claims to have no knowledge of their whereabouts. These seizures brought the number of people illegally seized since the beginning of the year to 146.

Despite the fierce repression, the forces struggling against the junta continue to gain in strength. The junta's armed forces are unable to operate in a number of regions. The strength of the combined guerrilla forces opposing the junta is estimated at 15,000 well-trained men and women under arms. There have been recent operations of units of up to 500 guerrillas fighting in a single engagement.

In addition, the guerrillas have as many as 80,000 people in armed reserve detachments. These forces are responsible for defending their neighborhoods and protecting anti-junta demonstrations.

The junta, on the other hand, has approximately 12,000 full-time members of the armed forces and 75,000 military reservists, along with an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 members of the rural paramilitary force ORDEN. These forces are much better armed than the guerrillas.

As rumors of an impending "final offensive" by the guerrillas abound, the U.S. government has stepped up its military aid to the Salvadoran junta and to the armed forces in neighboring Honduras and Guatemala.

According to the August 22 issue of the

London *Latin America Weekly Report*, the U.S. government has been putting considerable pressure on the Honduran and Salvadoran regimes to settle the border dispute that has kept them at odds since 1969. "US officials are unhappy," the report stated, "about the way Salvadorean guerrillas have been using the *bolsones* [demilitarized areas along the border] as sanctuaries; they believe that until the border issue is settled, the El Salvadorean and Honduran armed forces will be unable to mount joint or even complementary actions against the guerrillas.

"At the same time," the report con-

tinued, "the US authorities have been stepping up military aid shipments to Tegucigalpa, largely in response to rumours of an imminent final offensive by the guerrillas in El Salvador. In the last three or four months, shipments of military hardware are believed to have reached unprecedented levels; local sources say that total US military aid to the Honduran armed forces this year . . . will far exceed the official figure of US\$5 m[illion]. Some say it may amount to US\$30 m[illion]."

There were reports that during the August 13-15 general strike U.S. soldiers in Salvadoran army uniforms participated in

military operations against strikers.

In addition, the August 26 issue of the Berlin newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* reported that, according to the FDR, five U.S. personnel were killed the previous weekend in a fight between guerrillas and government forces in the province of Morazán. If that report is true, it would mark the first known U.S. military casualties in the fighting in El Salvador.

The Pentagon has admitted that U.S. military advisers are training the Salvadoran armed forces in counterinsurgency methods. □

Arrests Fail to Deter Growing Protests

Philippines—10,000 Protest Government Control on Campuses

In defiance of nearly eight years of martial law in the Philippines, 10,000 students and faculty members have protested government attempts to tighten control over their campuses.

A demonstration in the capital of Manila July 29 demanded that a proposed Education Act of 1980 be scrapped. If passed, this bill would further curtail academic freedom and place autonomous state schools and colleges under supervision of the Education Ministry.

The demonstrators also protested tuition fee hikes and the continued prohibition of student organizations on campus.

The mass student protest followed a boycott of classes one week earlier. The students are also demanding the restoration of student councils and student publications and protesting low teachers' salaries, overcrowded classrooms, and the blacklisting of students critical of the school administrations.

The student demonstration reflects a recent rise of urban protests. At a Manila May Day rally, 30,000 workers denounced the Marcos regime and U.S. imperialism. They demanded a higher minimum wage, restoration of the right to strike, respect for the right to form unions, recognition of workers' civil rights, and nationalization of industries controlled by foreign capital. A series of strikes followed the May Day event.

On July 4, an anti-imperialist demonstration took place in front of the U.S. embassy in Manila—the first since 1972.

The July student militancy represented an impressive comeback following a recent crackdown by the Marcos dictatorship.

In early June, at least seven student leaders were arrested. Coupled with a one-week postponement in the start of classes, the government successfully prevented an independence day (June 12) rally from taking place in Manila. The students were planning the rally in opposition to a government-organized rally.

In Cebu City, however, an estimated 30,000 people turned out for a "Freedom Walk" that upstaged the administration's rally of 7,000.

In Cagayan de Oro, large crowds also showed up for a rally organized by a mayor opposed to the Marcos regime.

Following these June 12 events, the government quickly moved to prevent further protest actions and launched a wide-ranging series of arrests. By the end of June, some forty student leaders had been arrested in a continuing series of raids in Manila.

On July 15, Marcos ordered the arrest of eighty-seven additional people for alleged subversion.

Protests have also taken place in the provinces. In March, some 3,000 peasants from Lupi demonstrated to expose and resist the grabbing of their lands by the Marcos regime. A few days earlier some 2,000 people of Samal, Bataan, rallied to demand that the Bataan Pulp and Paper

Mills, Inc. recognize the workers' union.

More recently, 4,000 Kalinga villagers protested the government's Chico River Dam Project and the murder of one of their leaders. The Kalingas called for immediate cancellation of the project and withdrawal of government military units from the area. The homes and farms of 80,000 villagers would be affected by the dam.

September 23 is the eighth anniversary of the martial-law proclamation. There are reports of planned walk-outs on that date by trade unions and others demanding higher wages, to counter the effects of inflation. Marcos has reportedly approved an increase of 3 pesos in the minimum wage, but labor leaders are demanding that the basic wage be raised by 10 pesos. (One peso is equal to about U.S.\$0.14.)

On August 22, firebombs exploded in four banks and several government offices. A statement sent to Manila news offices by an underground group declared, "We have had enough of martial law." □

Eight Puerto Rican Nationalists Jailed

Eight Puerto Rican nationalists were convicted on conspiracy and weapons charges in Chicago July 30 after a trial that lasted only two days.

The eight are supporters of Puerto Rican independence who are accused of belonging to the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) of Puerto Rico.

On August 26 they were sentenced to eight years and 364 days in prison. Outside the courtroom supporters and relatives demonstrated against this travesty of justice, chanting anti-imperialist and proindependence slogans.

A total of eleven nationalists were arrested in Illinois on April 4 in the U.S. government's campaign to try to intimidate all those struggling for the independence of Puerto Rico. All eleven demanded that they be treated as prisoners of war and

tried by an international court. They refused to participate in the U.S. court proceedings.

On May 23, Haydée Beltrán Torres was sentenced to life imprisonment on questionable "evidence" relating to a 1977 bombing.

And on August 4, Mary Rodríguez and Luis Rosa were sentenced to thirty years in prison on charges of conspiracy and armed robbery. The judge also slapped on several additional six-month prison terms on "contempt of court" charges stemming from the chanting of Puerto Rican independence slogans in the courtroom.

In a particularly blatant display of bias, the judge who sentenced the eight nationalists lamented the fact that the law prohibited him from imposing longer prison terms. □

Australian Workers Fight Back

By Jim McIlroy

Militancy in the ranks of the union movement in Australia has taken a significant upturn in 1980 as the effects of the Fraser government's offensive against workers' living standards bite deeper.

Ever since the Liberal-National Country Party government under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser came to office in late 1975—following the constitutional "coup" that removed the former Labor Party government from power—Australian workers have experienced a relentless drive by the ruling class against real wages, against jobs, and against social welfare programs.

Following a period of relative quiet in the wake of Labor's defeat, 1979 in particular saw a sharp rise in strikes and other actions against Fraser and the employers. Highlights of that period included a nationwide strike against the arrests of union officials in Western Australia in mid-year and the fifty-one-day occupation of the Union Carbide petrochemical plant at Altona in the southern city of Melbourne in support of a demand for a thirty-five-hour working week.

This year has seen the further broadening and strengthening of union struggles, as well as a number of important victories by key sections of the work force.

Antiunion Drive Runs Aground

One victory has been the labor movement's ability to stymie one of Fraser's major aims: to break the tradition of the union closed shop among the blue-collar sections of industry. Fraser has been able to ram through stiffer antiunion legislation, largely because of the class-collaborationist policies of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) leaders. But he has so far been completely unable to use it successfully against any union.

Related to this antiunion drive have been numerous attempts to victimize union militants—particularly shop stewards who have played important roles in building up on-the-job union organization. In a landmark struggle at the end of 1979, workers at the Philip Morris tobacco plant in Melbourne staged a seven-week strike which eventually won the reinstatement of two sacked shop stewards. In one of the most vicious antiunion assaults for years, the company used cops and armed security guards to attack and intimidate the strikers. Despite this, the workers won out and prevented a company move clearly aimed at smashing union organization in the plant.

In another setback to Fraser's plans,

Government Aircraft Factory (GAF) workers at Fishermen's Bend, Melbourne, struck to win the reinstatement of a leading shop steward, Neil Marshall, in March. Marshall himself described the strike as "the longest ever at GAF and easily the best dispute in terms of the unity of the blue-collar unions."

Unity in Action

This unity of union action was perhaps best illustrated by the months-long industrial campaign launched by unions affiliated to the Victorian Trades Hall Council against amendments to the Workers Compensation Act that put restrictions on eligibility for payments for job-related accidents or disabilities.

A series of rolling strikes and demonstrations involving virtually every sector of industry—brought together by an issue which affected almost every worker in Victoria—forced the Hamer Liberal Party state government to back down on its amendments in early April. The "workers compo" campaign was probably the most sustained, cross-industry union fight ever waged in this country. It is one sign of the revival of class solidarity and militancy now surfacing throughout the working class.

Another landmark victory was won by Transport Workers Union petrol tanker drivers in Sydney against an attempt to

prosecute them under the Fraser government's infamous Section 45(D) of the Trade Practices Act—which bans "secondary boycotts," that is union embargos against companies during industrial disputes. The petrol drivers revealed the power of workers in a basic sector of the economy. They brought the oil companies, the Fraser government, and the Arbitration Commission—the bosses' traditional last line of defense—to their knees.

Wage Guidelines Broken

At the same time as this was occurring, an eleven-week strike by Storemen and Packers Union members in the wool industry (historically Australia's biggest export industry) broke through the restrictive guidelines imposed by the Arbitration Commission on wage rises outside the commission's fraudulent wage indexation system. Under this system, introduced by the Labor Party government in 1975, wages are supposedly increased in accordance with rises in the Consumer Price Index. In fact, the commission has given only "partial indexation"—resulting in a fall in real wages over the past five years.

More recently, in July, meat workers in Gosford, New South Wales, won a big fight for pay rises in the face of police and scab attacks on their picket line.

Struggles such as these show the way forward for the entire labor movement in winning wage rises outside indexation through determined industrial action.

The biggest development in 1980, however, has been the beginning of a large-scale fight against unemployment by the unions—essentially for the first time since the 1975 world recession. Unemployment is currently at an official level of 6 percent,

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and continuing to rise. Moreover, with the rapid introduction of new technology by employers as a means of reducing staff and saving labor costs, unemployment looks like it will be going through the roof in the next few years.

Focus on Thirty-five-Hour Week

In the face of this threat, a major campaign for a shorter working week—focused on the demand for a thirty-five-hour week—has begun on a wide front. Leading the campaign have been the metal industry unions, most importantly the largest union in the country, the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union, with 160,000 members.

Against a ferocious propaganda barrage by the employers and the Fraser government claiming "the country can't afford it," the metal unions have taken a clear stand in favor of the thirty-five-hour week as a means of sharing the available work around and creating thousands of more jobs.

At mass meetings around the country in late May, about 30,000 metalworkers voted overwhelmingly in support of an industrial campaign for the thirty-five hour week. Despite attacks from the employers, Fraser, and even ALP parliamentary leader Bill Hayden (who said it was "not time" for the thirty-five-hour week), this vote was supported by meetings of shop stewards and another round of mass meetings in June.

While the treachery of Hayden, ACTU President Bob Hawke, and other labor leaders has resulted in the withdrawal of some unions from the metalworkers' campaign, this fight is continuing—and winning success in some key industries (most recently, in the tobacco industry where workers have won a thirty-six-hour week).

Almost half of the work force, mostly in the white-collar area, already works less than forty hours. Moreover, essential industries like electric power are increasingly working a shorter week. Indeed, an important inspiration for the metal unions' campaign was the tremendous blow struck by power workers in Queensland who in April won a thirty-seven-and-a-half-hour week and simultaneously smashed reactionary National Party Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's antiunion Essential Services Act—which supposedly banned strikes in key industries.

The thirty-five-hour week campaign has since been taken up by power workers in Victoria and Western Australia (New South Wales already has a thirty-seven-and-a-half-hour week, with a thirty-five-hour week likely to follow in 1981.) Petrochemical workers in Victoria—including the pathbreaking Union Carbide workers—are continuing their fight to have the shorter week extended from the oil industry to their plants. In New South Wales, rail unions with a total membership of 37,500 have also launched a claim for

the thirty-five-hour week. And the South Australian branch of the ALP unanimously voted at its June annual conference to endorse the thirty-five-hour campaign.

In the metal industry itself, the focus of the campaign is now on the aluminum industry—in particular the Alcoa refinery at Pinjarra, near Perth, where the company has threatened to apply for deregistration of five unions involved in a struggle for the thirty-five-hour week. There is increasing pressure on the ACTU itself to take up leadership of a nationwide industrial campaign to win the shorter work-week across industry. This is one of the biggest challenges the ACTU has faced in the past decade.

'Guerrilla War' Against Auto Layoffs

Undoubtedly one of the most critical sectors for the thirty-five-hour campaign is the auto industry. The industry is facing a massive recession—especially evident in the mass lay-offs of auto workers in the United States and other leading imperialist countries recently.

In the State of Victoria, where the formerly right-wing-controlled Vehicle Builders Union (VBU) has come under the leadership of more militant officials, the union adopted the thirty-five-hour week as its key demand for 1980.

The urgency of the fight for the shorter week was underlined in late May when the Ford company announced it would sack more than 500 workers in Victorian plants. The union immediately organized a "guerrilla campaign" of industrial action which forced Ford to back off from its threat.

The culmination of this crisis in the auto industry has been the move by General Motors- Holden to close its Pagewood plant in Sydney, throwing 1,500 workers onto the unemployment scrapheap. Moreover, the jobs of up to 15,000 other workers in related auto component plants are also threatened.

Nationalize GM-H Pagewood!

A July 2 meeting of senior shop stewards in Victoria immediately responded by calling on the New South Wales Labor Party state government "to nationalise the plant and equipment at Pagewood so if G.M.H. are not prepared to build cars at Pagewood, the workers can use the plant to produce goods for the benefit of the Australian people."

In a special broadsheet distributed to auto workers around the country, the Socialist Workers Party 1980 Federal election campaign endorsed this call completely. (The SWP—the Australian section of the Fourth International—is running nine candidates in the elections, due later this year.) The broadsheet pointed out that the day-to-day running of the plant should be in the hands of Pagewood workers, and that a board of management should be elected to represent all working people, as unionists and consumers. The plant could



Ian Close/Direct Action
Laid off auto workers picket GM- Holden Pagewood plant to prevent cars and equipment from leaving plant.

also be used to produce "expanded numbers of badly needed public transport vehicles" or "cheaper and higher-quality cars with greater safety and pollution-control features," for example.

Unfortunately, the right-wing controlled leaderships of the New South Wales branch of the VBU and the State Trades and Labor Council succeeded in blocking any fight around such demands at Pagewood. The union tops are now merely aiming for improved unemployment benefits for the sacked 1,500.

However, the crisis at Pagewood has highlighted for many auto workers the urgent need to step up the fight for a thirty-five-hour week in the vehicle industry. A shop stewards committee has already been established in the Victorian VBU to organize such a campaign.

The question of adequate leadership is now clearly posed in the thirty-five-hour week campaign in the metal, auto, and other industries. The failure of many individual union leaderships as well as the central ACTU executive to launch an effective industrial campaign for the thirty-five-hour week—to which the ACTU is clearly committed by its last national congress—is holding back the full strength of the Australian union movement in this vital fight against unemployment.

This is closely linked to the utter failure of the Labor Party leaders to take up any sort of fight against Fraser on the political level.

Nevertheless, what the events of 1980 have emphasized is that Australian workers are not prepared to sit back and take it forever. The willingness to struggle is there; all that is lacking is a class-struggle leadership to take the fight against Fraser on to the next stage.

The series of victories won on the industrial level this year are the early stages of a large-scale fight-back. □

The Struggle Against French Colonialism in the Caribbean

[Although the Caribbean has been undergoing a process of radicalization in recent years—a trend seen most clearly in the victory of the Grenada revolution in 1979—the English-language press has had little coverage of developments on Martinique and Guadeloupe, two French-speaking islands in the Lesser Antilles.

In August, *Intercontinental Press/Intercom* talked with Gilbert Pago about the situation in those islands and about the impact of the Grenada revolution. Pago is a leader of the Groupe Révolution Socialiste (GRS—Socialist Revolution Group), the Antilles section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Question. Could you give us some background information about Martinique and Guadeloupe?

Answer. Martinique and Guadeloupe are two small islands ruled directly from France. Between them they have a territory of about 2,700 square kilometers and a total population of some 700,000. There are another 400,000 islanders who have been forced to emigrate to France in search of work.

At one time the French colonial empire in the Western Hemisphere included Quebec, Louisiana, Haiti, Tobago, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica, "French" Guiana, St. Pierre, Miquelon, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. Today only Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana, and the tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the south coast of Newfoundland, Canada, remain in French hands.

After World War II, Martinique and Guadeloupe were made "overseas departments" of France. In theory they have the same status as any of the departments of France itself.

Each island is governed by a prefect from France who has all the real power. The local assemblies on each island have no say whatsoever over major political questions. Their sole function is to distribute the departmental budget from France.

Q. How has the status of overseas departments changed the situation in the Antilles?

A. Becoming departments of France has created a whole new set of contradictions for the islands. Today the population has the same duties as in France, such as paying taxes. But we do not receive the same benefits. For example, social security benefits are lower than in France, not to speak of wages.

Governing the islands as overseas de-

partments and regarding the Antilles as "tropical Europe" does not change the reality that France is an industrialized country while the Antilles are underdeveloped and dominated. Some of the attempts to rule the Antilles in exactly the same way as metropolitan France have ludicrous results.

For example, each town in the Antilles gets an annual appropriation from France for snow removal. Of course, since it never snows, the appropriation is never used and is returned to France at the end of the year.

Similarly, every school budget includes an appropriation for heating the school in winter. Our children get the same "snow holidays" as children in France.

In our schools the children learn nothing about the history of the Antilles, but they do learn about "our ancestors the Gauls."

Our radio and television broadcasts come straight from France and have no Antilles character whatsoever. You turn on the radio and hear the announcer say "last night it snowed heavily," which has nothing to do with your reality. But you never hear Antillean music on the radio.

Another effect of the "departmentalization" process has been a big increase in the presence of French corporations in the Antilles. The French government's investments on the islands have been made for the benefit of the big French corporations, which send all their profits back to France, rather than using them for the local inhabitants.

In the sugar industry, which is the basis of the economies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, there are government subsidies for cane production. But all sugar refining is done in France, and then some refined sugar is sent back to the Antilles for local consumption. But the fact that it is refined in France means that it becomes too expensive for many people to buy. This also cuts the possibility of creating industries based on refined sugar on the islands.

If that were not bad enough, when sugar prices fall too low, production is cut back in the Antilles in order not to jeopardize the income of French sugar beet growers. This has a devastating effect on the islands.

The French government places no emphasis on basic food production. The result is that virtually all the daily food of the population is imported from France, which results in extremely high prices for the local population.

There has also been a big increase in investment in the tourist industry, which caters to wealthy Europeans and North Americans. But here too the industry is

dominated by French companies and the profits return to France rather than remaining on the islands.

The presence of all this French investment has tended to undercut the economic power of the local white- and mulatto-owned businesses, many of which have been forced into bankruptcy. In order to survive, the local business interests had to agree to become junior partners with French capital, in return for which they are allowed to retain their political power on the islands. Many of the local businessmen have been transformed into agents of the French corporations, selling French goods, becoming managers of French property, and so on.

Another very important effect of making Guadeloupe and Martinique into overseas departments has been the huge growth in the French civil service on the islands. The government bureaucracy has been swelled by 20,000 civil servants from France, who together with their families have a big impact on the Antilles.

These government workers receive a much higher salary than the Antillean working class and they get special benefits such as six months vacation in France every two years. They therefore constitute a social base favoring the maintenance of French rule.

At the same time, the influx of civil servants from France has had a very negative effect on the employment of local people in fields outside the government as well. For example, most of the better jobs in the French-owned supermarkets, tourist restaurants, hotels, and so forth are taken by the wives of civil servants from France.

Q. What is the situation of the workers movement on Guadeloupe and Martinique?

A. Before describing the current situation, I think it would be worthwhile to describe the history of workers' struggles in the Antilles.

The class struggle had its origins in the slave revolts that rocked the islands in the nineteenth century. Between 1815 and 1848, for example, there were more than a dozen slave insurrections in Martinique and Guadeloupe.

The slave insurrection of May 22, 1848, was, in fact, successful and led the Second Republic of France to ratify the abolition of slavery. The former slaves then became a mass of peasants. But they still faced problems of racism and continuous attempts by the former slave owners to reinstitute a situation of virtual slavery. In September 1870 there was another big insurrection over those very issues.

The early labor movement on the islands was strongly influenced by this radical tradition. The first union struggles broke out in the late nineteenth century and adopted many of the traditional methods of struggle of the slaves. Early trade-unionists did things like setting the plantations and the houses of the masters to the torch, marching from plantation to plantation across the country to gain the support of other workers, and so on.

It was in the same period that the first socialist ideas appeared on the islands, brought in by reformists of the Second International.

These Social Democrats developed some influence in the labor movement. But their main orientation was to use the mass of Black workers to back up the demands of mulattos in Martinique and Guadeloupe for more access to the political and economic control over the islands that was exercised by the white descendants of former slaveowners, who comprise 4 percent of the population.

The Social Democrats and mulattos looked to France to help them fight the power of the local ruling class, and they have traditionally pushed for "assimilation" into French society and for Martinique and Guadeloupe to become Overseas Departments.

As a result, the labor movement was never concretely linked to the struggle for independence from France.

So what is the situation today? Because of the huge levels of unemployment, reaching 45 percent of the labor force, workers who have a job in the industrial, commercial, or tourist sectors of the economy are considered very lucky, even though they are paid far less than they would get for the same work in France.

This heavy unemployment and low wages explain why the more skilled workers tend to emigrate to France.

Labor struggles generally focus on protecting jobs and fighting for a living wage. There have been big fights recently in the construction industry, among dock workers, in the shopping centers, hospitals, and among municipal workers.

There has, however, been little experience in Martinique and Guadeloupe with political strikes. This is due to the strength of the reformist trade-union leaders (Stalinists as well as Social Democrats) and the relatively weak level of revolutionary national consciousness.

Q. How big is the union movement in Martinique and Guadeloupe?

A. Union membership tends to fluctuate quite a bit. Most workers do not maintain regular membership in unions. Participation rises sharply during strikes and then falls sharply again when the strikes are settled. So it is hard to give absolute figures.

But there is big sympathy with the unions. During last April's strike, for ex-



French police in Antilles. An example of direct rule from Paris over "tropical Europe."

ample, about 10,000 workers marched in the streets in Martinique, which is a large proportion of the 25,000-30,000 workers on the island.

One of the problems is that the unemployed are not involved in the union movement. The GRS is waging a fight for the right of the unemployed to participate in the unions.

The biggest union federation is the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). The CGT is much more dominant in the labor movement in the Antilles than it is in France. The other union federations that exist in France, such as the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) and Labor Force (FO), have very little influence in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Unions that are not in the CGT are usually purely Antillean unions with no ties to any federation.

Q. What are the main forces on the left in the Antilles?

A. Each of the islands has its own Communist Party, and their influence in the CGT is very strong. The CPs have a long tradition in the Antilles. In fact, the CP of Guadeloupe claims to be the oldest in the Western Hemisphere, and there has been a weekly CP paper in Martinique since 1920.

The Stalinists have traditionally favored assimilation and "departmentalization." Today they remain opposed to independence, although significant pro-independence wings are developing within those parties.

In contrast to France, we do not have big Social Democratic formations. Although Social Democrats have had a presence in the trade-union movement, their past collaboration with the ruling class has been so obvious that they have lost a lot of their

influence in the more militant unions.

In addition to these forces, there is a new tendency that could best be described as "populist." This current has a very strong nationalist line, but is confused on the question of independence for the Antilles.

The "populist" tendency focuses on cultural questions and bases itself on the concept of "Négritude" espoused by the famous Antillean poet Aimé Césaire. Césaire, in addition to being one of the most famous poets of the French-speaking world, is also the mayor of Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique, and is undoubtedly the most popular politician in the Antilles.

Césaire calls for autonomy for the Antilles, but a significant wing of his party favors independence.

There are also a number of militant left parties in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Although they have had to confront powerful and well-organized reformist forces in the labor movement, their influence is growing steadily.

The militant left in the Antilles grew up under the impact of international and local struggles. Among the international struggles that encouraged its growth were the independence struggles in other French colonies such as Algeria and Indochina, the impact of the Cuban revolution, and the May 1968 general strike in France.

A new generation of fighters has also emerged from the struggles against the plunder of the Antilles by the French colonialists.

For a whole period the Maoist groupings have been the largest. But they are in a severe crisis, which stems from the crisis of Stalinism in China itself. Some former Maoists have been moving closer toward "bourgeois nationalist" forces. In Guade-

loupe, for example, they have a well-organized group that leads unions with considerable influence.

In Martinique the Maoists have turned toward economist populism. They are organized in the "La Parole au Peuple" (Let the People Speak) group.

Our organization, the Groupe Révolution Socialiste, was founded by some leaders who were expelled from the Communist Party of Martinique in 1969 for "Guevarism." These leaders had a following among high school students and important sectors of the working class.

When the GRS was founded in 1971-1972, it was not yet Trotskyist. Following a long internal debate on which political road to follow, the first congress of the GRS in December 1973 decided to seek membership in the Fourth International.

Our organization has about 100 members and a substantial number of sympathizers. The largest number are in Martinique, but the branch in Guadeloupe is very good, being totally made up of union activists.

In the past few years we had some problems that resulted in some losses, but now we have begun to grow again, especially since the April strike.

In fact, in the April strike, out of the 10,000 who marched in the union demonstration, the GRS contingent was 2,000-3,000. Our slogans included "French Troops Out of the Islands!" and "Hands Off Grenada!" And GRS members presided over the meetings held after the strike.

Another group, Combat Ouvrier, also calls itself Trotskyist. It was set up in 1972 by Antillean supporters of the Lutte Ouvrière group in France. Combat Ouvrier is stronger in Guadeloupe than in Martinique.

Q. What has been the impact of the Grenada revolution on Martinique and

Guadeloupe?

A. The Grenada revolution has had a big impact throughout the Lesser Antilles. As soon as the New Jewel Movement overthrew the dictator Gairy there were demonstrations on all the islands, organized by left groups, demanding recognition of the new government. For the first fifteen days not a single government in the region recognized Maurice Bishop's government.

In Dominica, where there was a dictator like Gairy—Patrick John—he responded to the demonstrations by outlawing publications and demonstrations. This was answered by a general strike, which succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorship.

In St. Lucia the left wing of the Labour Party campaigned in the July 1979 general election around the slogan of "Solidarity with Grenada." The Labour Party as a whole won 12 out of 18 seats, and the left wing won 7 of those. But now the right wing of the Labour Party is working with the conservatives to prevent the left wing from gaining control of the government.

In Martinique and Guadeloupe, Grenada had less of an initial impact than on some other islands, due to the language barrier. In addition, the GRS was the only organization that worked to organize a solidarity campaign with Grenada.

We believe that the Grenada revolution can have a very big impact on Guadeloupe and Martinique in the future. To understand the full impact, we have to look at the French arguments against independence for the Antilles, and how the experience of Grenada directly answers those arguments.

Today, as the world capitalist economic crisis worsens, it is becoming increasingly clear to people that the policy of assimilation with France has failed to solve the basic problems of the workers in the Antilles. Assimilation has not provided jobs,

a decent standard of living, or ended injustice or inequality.

As a result, ever larger sectors of the population are looking toward autonomy or independence. The French rulers try to counter this trend by continually stressing four points:

First, they argue that independence for such tiny territories will result in a decline in the standard of living to the level of Haiti or some other islands. Of course they neglect to mention that the governments of these islands remain puppets of imperialism.

Their second argument is that since Martinique and Guadeloupe are so small, they would simply be swallowed up by some other imperialist power. The French add that U.S. imperialism would step in if there was any attempt to carry out a social transformation like in Cuba.

The third French argument is that the islands do not have sufficient economic resources to allow for economic growth.

And the final argument is that independence would mean an end to French economic aid and to the whole social security system, as well as an end to the possibility to emigrate to France to find work.

These arguments have an impact. People worry that independence would result in a decline in the already low standard of living. The arguments hold special sway among the older sections of the population.

But the events in Grenada are a very powerful concrete example that will help us cut through these French arguments. Grenada is only 200 kilometers from Martinique. It has a Black population and a similar history. And many of the older generation in Grenada still speak French Creole.

So we can point to Grenada as an example of what an independent country—which is not a puppet of the imperialists—can do. This island, whose population and size are much smaller than Martinique and Guadeloupe, is defying imperialism and is attacking the causes of poverty.

Grenada is the *only* island in the Caribbean—except, of course, Cuba—that has been able to create new jobs in the last eighteen months. Grenada is the only island to have lowered the prices on sugar, rice, gas, bread, and other consumer goods. It is the only island where they have been able to decrease imports by stimulating local production.

We believe that the Grenadian example can and will inspire the struggle of the workers of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Already the French colonial government is blaming Fidel Castro and Maurice Bishop for fomenting strikes in Martinique and accuses Cuba and Grenada of intervening in the "internal affairs of France"!

Meanwhile, France has increased its troop strength in the Antilles to 16,000, which is a huge number considering the size of the islands.

These troops are not simply in the An-



tilles to deal with potential unrest in Martinique and Guadeloupe. You don't need 16,000 troops for that. They are there as part of the imperialist threat against the upsurge of revolutionary struggle throughout the Caribbean and Central America; they are aimed as much against the Grenada revolution as against the French Antilles.

The GRS has responded by organizing meetings and other activities demanding the withdrawal of French troops and hands off Grenada.

We feel that concrete solidarity campaigns organized in the Antilles labor movement to support and defend the Grenada revolution and the revolution throughout the Caribbean will help Martinique and Guadeloupe move toward independence and socialism.

Q. What kind of contact do you have with other left groups in the Caribbean?

A. We have quite a lot of contact with groups in Dominica, Antigua, Monserrat, St. Lucia, Grenada, and other islands. In 1974-75 we helped organize a defense campaign for Desmond Trotter, a political activist who was facing the death penalty on Dominica. This campaign was active on all the islands, including Trinidad. In 1975 we found a lawyer for Desmond Trotter. That lawyer was Maurice Bishop, whom I first met in Barbados in 1975 in connection with that campaign.

I should mention that the French, British, and Canadian sections of the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party in the United States also participated in the international campaign to save Desmond Trotter's life.

This campaign was successful, and during last year's general strike Trotter was freed from prison.

Two days after the Grenada revolution, I

visited Grenada. Since then I have been back several times to follow the progress of the revolution, and other GRS members have also visited Grenada.

Another example of the kind of solidarity work we do was our activity in support of the general strike in Dominica. The GRS was active in organizing solidarity work in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Through fishermen we were able to send the strikers food, megaphones, and other supplies.

In connection with this campaign, many members of the GRS were arrested by the colonial government for participating in demonstrations, participating in an occupation of the radio station, and so on. These trials are coming up soon.

We feel that by having a strong section in the Antilles, the Fourth International has an important opportunity to participate in the Caribbean revolution in a big way. □

Arrests, Police Surveillance, Slander

China's Democracy Movement Under Attack

By Yip Szenei

[The following article is taken from *Zan Xun* (Combat), published in Hong Kong by the Revolutionary Marxist League, one of the two groups comprising the Chinese section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

The present "democracy movement," which dates from the 1978 reversal of the verdict on the Tiananmen incident,¹ is now being suppressed by the bureaucracy and the Public Security Bureau in every province.

The more open and organized section of this movement is represented by "people's publications" in more than a dozen cities throughout the country, such as the *April 5 Forum* and *Peking Spring* in Peking; the *Voice of Democracy* in Shanghai; *The Shore of Bohai* in Tianjin; *The Sound of the Bell* in Wuhan; *Wanderers* in Changsha; *Voice of the People* and *Road of the People* in Canton, etc. The majority have already been compelled to stop publication (*April 5 Forum*), been dispersed (*Peking Spring*), or have gone underground. The lucky ones have been able to maintain their existence by halting the public sale of

their periodicals.

Plainly, the present blow against the democracy movement is orchestrated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee under the direction of Deng Xiaoping. In a speech universally accepted as authentic (at a January 16, 1980, cadre assembly called by the CCP Central Committee), Deng made a clear and direct assertion of the party's policy toward the democracy movement. Soon afterward, Deng's speech began to be quoted frequently and extensively in "commentaries" and "features" in the *People's Daily*.

Deng Xiaoping said:

At the present time there is a trend of thought in our society, especially among some young people, that we should pay special attention to. For example, take last year's goings on at "Xidan Wall";² can we call this lively and active? What would have happened if this had been allowed to develop totally without restrictions? There is no lack of examples on the world scale. And there is no lack of examples in China. Don't imagine that not much disturbance can result from this, and that the matter can be treated lightly. A minority can destroy our great work.

He particularly emphasized problems among the youth: "There are now, especially among the youth, people who doubt the socialist system, who even say that

socialism is not as good as capitalism. We certainly want to energetically correct this kind of thinking." He spread the blame further, saying that units of party members and cadres were creating problems:

There are some among the masses, some party members, and even some party cadres who are not very clear about how much we have really accomplished since the crushing of the Gang of Four. They feel the rate of progress is too slow, not satisfactory. Because of this dissatisfaction they do not have very much confidence that the political line we have adopted can be realized, that the Four Modernizations policy can be achieved.

"Doubter of the socialist system" and "counterrevolutionary element"—these are the bureaucracy's labels, to be stuck on anyone who criticizes or opposes them.

In this way, Deng Xiaoping simply and directly equates the "democratic faction" with a "destructive force":

We have already said that there still exist destabilizing elements. There still exist organizational and ideological remnants of the Gang of Four. We cannot underestimate the power of these remnants, or else we will commit a serious mistake. . . .

There is [also] the so-called democratic faction, the so-called dissidents, those kind of people, who openly oppose the socialist system and the leadership of the Communist Party. They are of exactly the same type as Wei Jingsheng.³ We

3. The editor of *Tansuo* (Explorations) magazine in Peking, Wei was arrested in the spring of 1979 and quickly became China's most famous dissident. He was tried in a semisecret proceeding in October 1979 and sentenced to fifteen years in prison.—IP/I

1. On April 5, 1976, a mass demonstration in Peking's Tiananmen Square commemorating the death of Premier Zhou Enlai and voicing anti-government sentiments was dispersed by Mao Zedong's troops. In November 1978 the Peking City Committee withdrew this "verdict" and declared the participants to be revolutionary heroes.—IP/I

2. The center of the democracy movement has been at a wall on Xidan Street just off Tiananmen Square in Peking. Known as "Democracy Wall," it was until recently regularly plastered with oppositional *dazibao* (big character wall posters) and served as a rallying place for the democracy forces.—IP/I

should also not underestimate them. Their banner is pretty clear. Even if they sometimes also say they support Chairman Mao and the CCP, their essence is opposition to the CCP's leadership and to socialism. . . .

We want to look very clearly at the general tendency and true aims of this so-called democratic faction and these so-called dissidents. We don't want to be naive.

In addition you have anarchist elements and extremist individualist elements, etc., who are destructive of social order. These are all destabilizing elements.

Although these several types of people are not the same [Deng refers here to the constituency of "factionalists," "new-born robbers," "ruffian bands," "criminal lawbreakers," and "counter-revolutionary elements who coordinate underground activity with overseas forces and Taiwanese spies—Yip], they have something in common. They could gather together and rise up, transformed into a destructive force that could cause no small turmoil and losses.

In the recent period, the charge of "disrupting unity and stability" has served as the CCP bureaucracy's most inspired rationale in settling accounts with most dissidents, both inside and outside the party. This was precisely the reason given at the Fifth Plenum of the CCP Central Committee [in February 1980] for the purge of the "New Gang of Four" (Wang Dongxing, Chen Xilian, Ji Dengkui, and Wu De). The bureaucracy is skilled in manipulating the masses' feeling of opposition toward the pointless and unprincipled factional fights of the time of the "Great Cultural Revolution," using this sentiment to strike its blow at the democracy movement.

Deng Xiaoping further said:

The experience of the Great Cultural Revolution has already proven that we cannot advance under conditions of turmoil, we can only move backwards; we cannot progress without first having order. Under the present situation in our country one could say that without unity and stability we would have nothing; everything, including democracy and the Double Hundred policy,⁴ would be empty talk. We have already gone through ten years of bitter times. More disorder? The people could not bear it. They would not permit it.

He urged the bureaucrats at the provincial level to step up the reinstatement of bureaucratic "law and order":

Some comrades in a minority of areas are too soft on these people. Certain areas apply policy so leniently that they cannot keep a rein on things. If we tolerate these persons—the remnants of the Gang of Four, counterrevolutionary elements, and other criminal types—the people will be very dissatisfied with us. Recently, we adopted a policy, struck a blow; but this is still only a first step. We must continue on a determined offensive against every variety of lawbreaker, so as to energetically protect and consolidate a healthy, stable social order. We must learn to use and use well the weapon of the law.

He went on to warn party members

4. The "Double Hundred" policy refers to the slogan first raised by Mao in 1957: "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom. Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend."—IP/I

against sympathizing with the democracy movement:

CCP members, cadres, and especially senior cadres must take a firm stand in this struggle against every kind of criminal element. They must keep their banner clear. In absolutely no case will we permit any propaganda for including counterrevolutionary elements in freedom of speech and press, or freedom of assembly and organization. Nor will we allow anyone to establish contacts with these people behind the back of the party. We refer here to the establishment of sympathetic contacts. . . . [This] has actually happened.

Let me give an example to show my point. Some of these secret publications are very nicely done. Where did the paper come from? What printing plant did the printing? Certainly I don't suppose these people have their own printing plant. Aren't there party members in the plants that print these things? That means that party members support these people's activities, and possibly not a small number of cadres as well. We must explain clearly to these party members that their position is extremely wrong and dangerous and that if an immediate and fundamental correction is not made the party will have to take disciplinary action.

Deng Xiaoping declared that suppression is the only solution:

Speaking frankly, toward this kind of problem, at this time, we should act severely and not leniently. Chaos is too great a danger to mince words with. A nation cannot function without direction. Our legal action against these elements must be strict and harsh or we will not be able to correct the youth.

At the time the democracy movement first appeared, quite a number of people considered that the CCP would gradually permit the establishment of socialist democracy, and not a few people harbored great hopes in Deng Xiaoping. Now Deng Xiaoping's true position has been openly and clearly stated. There can be no doubt that Deng is no "democratic reformist" of any kind. He is the genuine leader of the CCP bureaucratic caste.

Not a New Policy

Actually, the attitude of the Central

Committee and of Deng toward the democratic movement has been one of hostility from the very beginning.

The democracy movement was not suppressed when it first appeared; but this was not because there was any section of the bureaucracy that truly stood for socialist democracy. It is because the masses, after the fall of the Gang of Four, fervently hoped to be able at the same time to abolish or reduce the extreme repression of the Gang of Four era. At that time the relationship of forces was not favorable for the bureaucrats to carry out a quick suppression. But they opposed the masses winning democratic rights, and that is their true attitude.

The Tiananmen Square incident was formally rehabilitated by the Peking City Committee of the CCP on November 19, 1978. Four days later, a wave of *dazibao* (big character posters) criticizing Mao Zedong swept through Tiananmen Square. But just four days after that, the CCP promulgated its slogan for "unity and stability," and the big character poster current went into decline.

The December 1979 issue of *Dong Xiang* (The Trend) magazine, published in Hong Kong by former CCP cadres, gives this reason for the decline of the *dazibao*:

Just as this spontaneous mass democratic movement was approaching its peak, a document from the CCP Central Committee was transmitted to the basic units, shortly after which the big character poster wave started to decline.

The main content of this CCP document was said to be: The main task now is to carry out the Four Modernizations, for which we need unity and stability. It is wrong for the *dazibao* to point to Mao Zedong by name. Mao Zedong's contributions are very great. Without Mao Zedong there would be no New China. If the masses are angry, we can allow them to let off steam; don't repress them. Don't agitate this contradiction or it will only result in antagonism. Problems must be solved slowly, one after another.

The November 28 and 29, 1978, issues of the *People's Daily* reprinted speeches



April 5, 1976 demonstration at Peking's Tiananmen Square.

given respectively by Deng Xiaoping and Li Xiannian to foreign guests. Their content paralleled that of the Central Committee document referred to above. Early in December, the *People's Daily* also published several reports on the study of Deng's and Li's speeches by various units in Peking. Furthermore, the December 2, 1978, *New York Times* reported that Radio Peking had appealed to the people not to join any marches for democracy and to stop criticizing Hua Guofeng.

This threatening stance by the bureaucracy had some effect. According to a report in *Dong Xiang*, some democracy movement activists immediately canceled a public meeting that was then in preparation. On November 30 the United Press [a Japanese news agency] correspondent in Peking also reported that most of the leading organizers of the actions in Tiananmen Square in mid-November had not appeared in public after November 29.

But this "cold front" did not last long. At the beginning of January 1979 the masses again undertook public actions on the third anniversary of the death of Zhou Enlai. Most of those who took part in the various assemblies, marches, and speeches during this period were destitute peasants, educated youth who had been forcibly sent to the countryside, and unrehabilitated victims of false and unjust charges throughout the Peking area.

On January 8, hundreds of peasants in typical North China peasant dress, unfurled a banner reading: "Against Hunger, Against Repression; For Human Rights, For Democracy." Together with an additional several hundred youth from Peking, they staged a two-hour march through the Peking City area shouting "We want freedom! We want democracy!"

The well-known human rights activist Fu Yuehua, who is a member of the China Human Rights League, was one of the key organizers of this action. She was secretly arrested ten days later by the Peking Public Security Bureau. In November of last year she was sentenced to two years imprisonment.

The demands of these demonstrators can be seen in the January 23, 1979, sit-in at Tiananmen Square by educated youth from Yunnan Province on China's Southwest border:

"Representatives of the 580,000 youth sent to the countryside in the Xishuangban-na area arrived in Peking January 6 to complain of the harsh living conditions and the bureaucratic work style of the authorities in their area. Up to this point there has been no satisfactory reply from the government. Because they could not wait any longer they undertook the sit-in movement, drawing support from the city masses for their demands." (Agence France-Presse, January 23.)

Most of the "people's publications" in Peking district first appeared during this period. Initially, they mainly reprinted

dazibao from Democracy Wall, but later developed "editorial boards" and began to write articles directly for publication.

What attitude, then, did the CCP bureaucrats adopt toward these actions? The mayor of Peking (at that time, "chairman of the Revolutionary Committee"), Lin Hujia, labeled these newly established groups as "underground organizations" and the people's publications as "illegal publications."

As soon as these criticisms were made public, the democracy movement made an immediate reply. On January 27, seven people's publications or organizations in Peking published a joint statement denouncing interference with free speech and demanding that the Peking City Committee respect democratic rights in exact accordance with the constitution. The China Human Rights League (this organization fell silent after the arrest of Fu Yuehua) declared: "The publications and organizations of Xidan Democracy Wall have done nothing more than implement their constitutional rights."

Two days later a "Forum on Democracy" was called in Tiananmen Square by six people's publications. One of the speakers said: "We must seek democracy through struggle. The whole population must demand democracy, not just the minority we have today. On this question the people of China must understand that in most cities in the country there is a democracy wall like the one in Peking."

In various other big Chinese cities—for example, Wuhan in Hubei Province, Tianjin in Hebei Province, Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, and Canton in Guangdong Province—"Democracy Walls" have appeared.

Deng Xiaoping Leads the Offensive

This situation did not last long before the movement came under attack and repression from the bureaucrats.

There were at least two events that spurred on the bureaucrats in their decision to take high-handed repressive measures.

On February 17, shortly after Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States, the CCP dispatched 250,000 troops to invade Vietnam. This war resulted in great losses for China. (The January 5, 1980, *New York Times* quoted a Western diplomat as saying that Chinese officials "now admit" that the invasion was "a real disaster.") The Chinese people did not welcome this war. According to a report in the March 12, 1979, issue of *Newsweek*: "Antiwar dazibao spread to virtually every important city in China. . . ."

This plainly enraged the CCP bureaucracy. Deng Xiaoping, in a speech at the March 16 "Celebrate the Victory in Punishing Vietnam" rally at the People's City Hall, said: "In order to use troops against Vietnam we could not give equal consideration to other important problems. For



Democracy Wall

example, the problem of democracy. They think that democracy should exist in order to serve the Four Modernizations policy. Some people's actions are 'too much,' especially the demands raised by the dazibao on Peking's Xidan Democracy Wall."

After this the *People's Daily* and *Workers' Daily* began to publish extensive articles branding "human rights" a slogan of the capitalist class.

Deng Xiaoping's speech immediately elicited a response from the democracy movement. Wei Jingsheng made a sharp criticism in an editorial in the March 25 issue of *Explorations* magazine:

Deng Xiaoping is attempting to exploit the faith that people placed in him in the past in order to oppose the democracy movement. He grasps at any sort of charge to lay at the door of the democracy movement. This is an attempt to foist on the democracy movement the responsibility for the powerlessness of the Hua/Deng political system to save China's economy and production. Once again they are making scapegoats for their own policy failures.

Four days later, Wei Jingsheng was arrested on various charges, including leaking "classified military secrets" and "national betrayal."

The Educated Youth

Another of China's movements is that of the educated youth who are demanding to be allowed to return to the cities. This movement has already undergone a vigorous development in Shanghai. The February 10, 1979, *Liberation Daily* reported that on February 5 educated youths in Shanghai held a massive sit-in protest on the railway tracks there, blocking the trains to Nanjing and Hangzhou for almost twelve hours and halting sixty scheduled runs.

Shanghai City Secretary Yan Youmin denounced these educated youths for posing "unreasonable demands," blocking traffic in a busy city area, damaging public property, and even attacking public offices, scolding and beating cadres, blocking the way of trains, thus resulting in serious consequences."

From these two events we can see the direction of the democracy movement's

development: toward greater and greater conflict with the bureaucracy's policy.

On March 29, 1979, the Revolutionary Committee of Peking stepped to the fore in the counterattack, passing a six-point public notice. The sixth point read:

An absolute prohibition of any form of opposition to socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the CCP, Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, the leakage of national classified information, or violation of the constitution or law breaking, taking the forms of banners, posters, big character posters, small character posters, books, periodicals, pictorials, photographs, or whatever.

The publication of this notice (April 1) coincided exactly with the eve of the third anniversary of the Tiananmen Square incident. Throughout the anniversary days, various forms of warning "notices," directed against "troublemaking" by the activists of the democracy movement, were extensively circulated through the Security Bureau and Revolutionary Committee networks to various major cities of the country. (For example, on March 29 on Niu Street, Xuanwu precinct, Peking City, they searched the place where the *April 5 Forum* is edited.)

This series of threats did seem effective in most cities—except in Peking. According to a report from the Peking correspondent of the Hong Kong magazine *Zheng Ming* (Contention):

"Several youths climbed high up on Democracy Wall in Peking. Taking several traveling bags with them, filled with piles and piles of people's publications, they began from their heights to sell their periodicals. Below them hands grasping money reached up competitively toward the wall. That was this year's April 5 afternoon—a marvelous sale for people's publications in front of Democracy Wall."

While this was going on, several young people made speeches. The size of the mass turnout for the April 5 anniversary activities virtually put a stop to any action from the bureaucracy. Their response was limited to sending some Public Security Bureau personnel to Tiananmen Square early in the morning to read out the "notice" that had been issued a few days earlier.

'The Four Insistences'

At this point the CCP press began to publicize "The Four Insistences." That is to say, that the people's democratic rights would be permitted only within the confines of accepting an "Insistence on socialism, insistence on the dictatorship of the proletariat, insistence on the leadership of the CCP, and insistence on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought." These "Four Insistences" were later formally passed at the Second Plenum of the Fifth People's Congress held in June 1979.

In May and June, "Democracy Walls" throughout the country—with the exception of Peking—were banned one after

another. Despite this, however, the appearance of people's publications went through a rapid expansion. People's periodicals were started in more than a dozen cities, and several cities had more than one. In Peking there were more than ten.

From the beginning of July, however, secret police from the Public Security Bureau began to halt the printing and distribution of "people's periodicals" in several cities, as for example in Tianjin and Wuhan.

The Revival of Mass Action

In October 1979, the bureaucratic caste launched a broad and rapid assault on the democracy movement. This was prompted by the resurgence of mass mobilization in early October, similar to the events of January 1979.

The January wave was demobilized as a result of the bureaucracy's arrest of activists (i.e., Fu Yuehua, Ren Wangding) and its skillful procrastination in replying to the people's demands. But in this period the bureaucrats really do not have a positive solution to the problems, so the masses continually re-raise their demands.

On October 1 (National Day), some 300 or 400 people staged a demonstration to protest a recent police closing of an art exhibition held by a group of independent artists. The demonstration was organized by four people's publications. During their march the demonstrators shouted: "Respect the constitution!" and "For political democracy and artistic freedom!" Speeches were delivered at the front of Tiananmen Square, demanding that the police admit they had been wrong and calling for a guarantee for democratic rights and freedom for the arts.

On October 8 a demonstration was called by an organization named the National League of Worker, Peasant, and Soldier Appealers. Two days later, while the demonstration was taking place, most of the "appealers" were forced to board special vehicles and it is said they were returned to the places they came from.

On October 10, about 2,500 students at the People's University held a four-hour sit-in, under the leadership of the Student Union, to denounce the People's Liberation Army's forcible occupation of their campus hostel. This action later escalated into a boycott of classes. During the demonstration the students displayed a banner reading: "Enforce the National Law: Against Special Privileges for the Army."

This action by students at the People's University was echoed by another group of students several thousand miles away. By the end of October a "confrontation" had broken out between students and the administration at the Sichuan Economics and Finance College.

All these actions clearly reflect the fact that the masses are attempting to win their rightful power through a series of increasingly large and courageous actions.

That is something that the bureaucracy cannot accept.

The Attack

On October 7, during a press conference for foreign correspondents, Hua Guofeng declared that democracy "would create nothing but social turmoil" for China. His statement was answered five days later in a critical wall poster signed "Mu Wen."

On October 8 the Revolutionary Committee of Tianjin demanded an immediate closing of *The Shore of Bohia*, a people's publication there that had just published its first issue.

Soon after, on October 16, Wei Jing-sheng was sentenced to fifteen years in prison by the People's Intermediate Court of Peking. Wei's sentence aroused great dissatisfaction.

Unfortunately, there was no immediate and effective reaction from the democracy movement. It was said that the *April 5 Forum*, the most important of the people's publications in Peking, took a hesitant attitude. On one hand it accepted the conviction as legitimate, while criticizing the heaviness of the sentence. On the other hand it failed to organize any immediate defense action to counter this blow from the bureaucracy. (For example, it rejected a proposal from a group of law students at Peking University who volunteered to organize a legal appeal for Wei.) This course of action could only be taken as good news by the bureaucracy.

In any case, there were some protest actions against the judgment, although they were all of limited size. Apart from some criticism in *dazibaos*, there was one demonstration, in the form of a "Poetry Appreciation Assembly," on October 21 in a public park on Peking's West Side. That was the only mass action that took place around this issue.

On November 11, as the *April 5 Forum* people were selling copies of Wei Jing-sheng's testimony in his own defense, police from the Public Security Bureau seized their publications and arrested their members. Two days later, the organizers of the class boycott at the People's University were also arrested.

During this period there was stepped-up interference with people's publications across the country by the Public Security Bureau, even arresting people who were only selling them. For example, two members of *The Sound of the Bell* group in Wuhan—Qin Yongmin and Xiong Hanming—were arrested.

A Critical Test

By November 28, the bureaucrats felt confident enough to launch a frontal assault on the democracy movement, bringing the legal system to bear. During the Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Fifth People's Congress, "representatives" charged that "illegal acts are carried out" at the Xidan Democracy Wall

in Peking. This was meant to give a lead for the Peking City Committee to do something about the problem. Not long after, "Democracy Wall" was removed to Yue Tan Park in a distant suburb.

From then on, the CCP press opened an attack on "anarchistic thought." Recently the propaganda has insisted that it is not only the "leftism" of the Gang of Four that must be opposed, but rightism as well.

All of the above constitutes the background for Deng Xiaoping's January 16 speech.

For some time, foxy Deng has been publicizing his support for leniency and democracy. Until as recently as November 26 he was even saying that he supported the continued existence of Democracy Wall in Peking. (It was a few days after that when the Executive Committee of the National People's Congress attacked the Democracy Wall.)

Deng's January 16 speech reveals his hypocrisy for all to see.

At the end of February 1980 at the Fifth

Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP, the bureaucrats even went so far as to raise a motion to remove the "Four Great Freedoms" from the constitution. (Freedom to speak out; freedom from unjust arrest; freedom of debate; freedom to post dazibao.)

Under these circumstances China's democracy movement faces an extremely difficult situation. There have not, thus far, been any mass arrests. But in many areas the Public Security Bureau's secret police have long carried out a widespread and strict surveillance of the people's publishing movement activists. Having been forced to abandon all open public activity, the people's publications must now struggle just to maintain their existence.

In mid-April there was a report that the bureaucracy in Kaifeng, Henan Province, had mobilized attacks on the people's publications in that city. The April 14 Hong Kong *Zhong Bao* (Central Daily)

carried a dispatch from Kaifeng reporting:

"Members of the people's publishing group 'The Anonymous Society' have been compelled by local officials here to attend a study class beginning March 26. This class, which is still continuing, involves some seventy to eighty people. The leader of the Anonymous Society, Mu Zhangqing, was forced to join the class on March 26. At 11:40 that morning, however, he attempted to commit suicide by lying down on a railroad track. It is not known if he survived."

This incident was confirmed by Reuters in a May 5 dispatch from Peking. The dispatch also reported the recent arrest and trial of one of the editors of *Hua* (Flower), a people's publication in Shanghai.

One could say that the democracy movement that appeared at the end of 1978 has now entered a new situation where it will face its most serious challenges and tests. □

DOCUMENTS

KOR Declaration on the Polish Strike Wave

[The following statement was released on July 11, during the initial Polish strike wave sparked by meat price increases, by the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), the Polish dissident organization with the closest ties to the striking workers.]

* * *

On July 1, large price increases for meat and certain pork products went into effect. In a July 2 newscast, the vice-chairman of Spolem¹ officially announced that the increases would affect only a portion of the items whose prices had gone up the day before. Then on July 4, in certain areas of the country almost all items whose prices had gone up three days earlier were back at their former prices in the factory cafeterias,² and in certain stores. However, in the cafeterias and stores in other areas, the new price increases remained in effect.

During the following days—and up to

the present—the price gyrations continued. For example, on July 1 the new price increases were introduced in the factory cafeteria at the Huta Warszawa steel mill. On July 3, between 7 a.m. and noon the old prices were in effect but between noon and 2 p.m. the new prices were in effect. Then, beginning at 2 p.m. on July 3 and throughout the whole of July 4 the old prices were back in force. And from July 5 to the present the new prices have been applied.

On July 9 the central leadership of the party and the economic managers met in Warsaw. The price increases were reaffirmed, but for fewer products than the vice-chairman of Spolem had announced (two cuts of meat, bacon, certain poultry items and certain brands of canned meat). They announced that next year there would be increases in the so-called old plan pensions,³ a substantial rise in family allotments, and an increase in the lowest wages.

The officials rescinded the price increases, then reintroduced them, and then

reduced them. And they promised wage increases. All this took place under pressure from the workers' protests and their demands—backed up by strike threats and by strikes.

Right now we have information on strikes in fourteen workplaces:⁴ the Huta Warszawa steel mill, the FSO auto factory in Warsaw, the Z.M. Ursus [tractor] factory near Warsaw, WSK Mielec, WSK Swidnik [two factories that make aircraft and communications equipment], the POLMO [auto parts] factory in Tczew, the POLCOLOR Zelow plant in Piaseczno near Warsaw [which manufactures television tubes], the ZELMOT plant in Warsaw, the Rzeszow construction combine in Dabrowa Gornicza, the slaughter-houses in Grudziadz, department K-1 of the Gdansk shipyards, Warsaw's Rosa Luxembourg plant, the KAMET plant in Poznan, and the Cegielski [heavy machine] factory in Srem.

In five of the workplaces the workers demanded that the price increases be rescinded; in eight workplaces they demanded wage increases; in another (the FSO auto plant) they demanded wage increases and lower prices. Wherever the workers de-

1. Spolem is the name of the cooperative that controls most of the food stores throughout the country.—IP/I

2. In certain workplaces, the cafeterias also sell basic necessities, such as meat and pork products. They charge the prevailing prices that are set through the normal distribution network. Generally, the cafeterias are better stocked than the public network in order to head off any

possible worker dissatisfaction. It was the increase in prices of certain products sold in these cafeterias (especially bacon and pig's knuckles) that sparked the July 1, 1980 protests.—IP/I

3. These are pensions on which payment began before the new pension law—following the 1970-71 strikes. They pay about half what the pensions granted since then pay.—IP/I

4. This list was compiled on July 11. It only includes information received and confirmed by KOR as of this date. Since then, the number of known strikes has skyrocketed.—IP/I

manded wage increases, management began to grant them.

In three departments of the Z.M. Ursus factory, workers commissions were established. Management gave a written promise not to carry out any reprisals against the strikers. The workers are demanding cost-of-living clauses in their pay.

Strikes are continuing throughout the country. In our July 2 declaration we wrote:

"The Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR, expresses its full solidarity with the strikers and supports their demands. We particularly support their demand for cost-of-living clauses in their wages. . . .

"The most effective form of workers' struggle—which is in the interests of workers and the entire society and is above all the least dangerous form for the whole country—is self-organization within each workplace with democratic elections for independent workers' representatives, who can, in the name of all the workers, put forward the workers' demands, carry out negotiations with the authorities, and lead workers' actions in a responsible, but resolute manner. The workers must be conscious that only united action can lead to positive results. Above all, the authorities must not be allowed to begin any kind of persecution against strikers or real or supposed workers' leaders."

The irresponsible investments policy of the 1970s and the agricultural policy that led to the crisis in the supply of agricultural products created a real economic catastrophe. The pricing system, which runs contrary to all economic laws, but has been maintained for decades, is another factor responsible for the crisis. But this system can only be changed within the framework of a radical change in the entire economy. The present economic system is irrational, it holds back progress, wastes human effort, and undermines the worker's morale.

They criticize the factory workers, saying that they work badly, that they are lazy, that they don't utilize their workday. But all this stems from the fact that people do not want to work because of the system of rewards⁵ and the functioning of the entire economy. It is not the workers' fault when raw materials are unavailable or a factory shuts down because the electricity is cut off. The Polish United Workers Party [the Communist Party] tries to get society to take responsibility for the party's own errors and inabilities and its own misunderstanding of the economic processes.

5. If the workers fulfill the goals outlined in the general production plan they receive a bonus. Nevertheless, the authorities still largely resort to "ideological stimulants" (such as honor lists), which the workers couldn't care less about and even try to avoid.—IP/I

A change in the pricing system would only be acceptable if it were one small link in a radical economic reform. The basic cause of the crisis is the policy that the government of the Polish People's Republic has carried out over the years—a policy of making decisions without consulting society. And instead of carrying out needed economic reforms they resort to day-to-day patchwork measures. The negative results of such a policy weigh heavily on society—especially on the most deprived layers.

Immediate action must be taken in order to save the country from catastrophe:

1. There must be radical changes in the economic system and the way in which decisions concerning the entire society are made. The Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR, does not take a position on the direction this reform should take. We are convinced that only a country-wide discussion can decide this. Undoubtedly, such a discussion will take into account the proposals for reform that have been formulated over the years by the independent social institutions. The governmental program of reforms and a timetable for implementing them must also be clearly formulated. If not, we will respond to the government's day-by-day measures with day-to-day protest actions by different social groups.

2. Given that the immediate cause of the present tension is the situation of the food market—especially the market for meat—we must put a stop to the policy that brings about the individual farmer's bankruptcy (the principal food producers). Private ownership of land must be guaranteed with freedom to buy and sell land. All forms of agricultural production (family farms, cooperatives, and state farms) must be dealt with in the same way, as regards supplies, sales, prices, credits, taxes, and the right to recourse to justice. A fair share of livestock feed and other materials related to agricultural production must be reserved for individual agriculture—more than is now provided.

3. But this change in agricultural policy will not lead to increased deliveries of food products to the market and government authorities will not be able to ensure a sufficient supply of meat in the stores at normal prices. Therefore "commercial prices"⁶ should be abolished and broad rationing of meat and meat products should be introduced. That is, ration coupons should be issued and prices should return to their pre-July 1 level.

4. All data on the economic situation must be published—especially data on the foreign debt and an accounting of the

6. "Commercial prices" were introduced in a certain number of stores in 1977. It was the government's way of circumventing its commitment made after the June 1976 general strike not to raise prices. In theory, these special stores are supposed to sell better quality meat and pork

imports and exports of meat (overall production, individual and collective consumption, and foreign trade).

5. It is especially important that the coming discussions and negotiations take place in a calm atmosphere and that the results reflect the real viewpoints of all social groups. The authorities must understand that they cannot avoid negotiating with society. What atmosphere the negotiations take place in depends on the authorities: whether in a calm atmosphere or in the midst of an increasingly determined struggle.

The Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR, in line with its aims, stresses the need to reestablish the rights of citizens. These rights were guaranteed in the "Charter of the Rights of Man" that was ratified by the Polish People's Republic. If the authorities observed these rights, the conditions would be created whereby agreement could be reached on the most pressing economic, political, and social reforms.

- Workers assemblies must be allowed to elect workers commissions, employee associations, independent trade unions, and other forms of representation that can defend the workers' interests.

- Citizens must be able to organize, to fight for their rights, and to propose and implement measures aimed at bettering society.

- To facilitate this, the "Decree on Assemblies and Associations" must be changed.

- The Labor Code must be changed—and in particular, Article 52/1 that allows a worker to be fired for going on strike must be rescinded. The right to strike must be guaranteed by law.

The conditions for a countrywide discussion on the present situation must be created. Aside from the purely economic issues, there is the sweeping censorship and the monopoly over the mass media (press, radio, and television) that not only prevents society's real opinions from being expressed, but also prevents experts from making their positions known if those positions are considered inconvenient. This means that society as well as the authorities are deprived of any real control over the country's situation and those people who are familiar with the economic and social problems cannot make their proposals known to either the authorities or their fellow citizens (and the latter are the most important). Such a situation does not facilitate coming up with solutions and only increases the danger of catastrophe.

- Independent experts must be given

products. But, in fact, these are the only stores where meat and pork products can be found (except on special occasions like Christmas Eve when the bureaucracy "makes a special gesture"). The prices in these commercial stores are 100 to 150 percent higher than in the regular butcher shops which do not even receive adequate supplies.—IP/I

access to the mass media, and the positions taken by workers assemblies and independent organizations must be published. Prosecution of independent publishing houses and newspapers must be stopped.

- Pre-censorship of the press must be abolished and a new press law should be passed that will establish the necessary sanctions to protect military secrets and private individuals.

- Repression of people for independent social and political activity must be stopped.

- The powers of the militia [police] and security services should be reduced.

- Independence of the courts must be

reestablished.

- All political prisoners must be freed immediately.

These are the minimum preconditions for beginning a real countrywide discussion on the present situation and for arriving at an understanding between society and the authorities. The Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR, addresses itself to society as a whole, especially to the workers assemblies so that they can support these proposals and put them forward in their negotiations with the authorities.

We should not be satisfied simply with a partial retreat in the price increases, or with additional pay raises in only the most important workplaces. These concessions

by the authorities will not improve living standards, especially among the most deprived sectors.

It is not solely our standard of living that is at stake. It is also very important to halt the disintegration of the government and society. The authorities' irresponsibility does not relieve us of our responsibility towards our country.

Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR

P.S. The Committee for Social Self-Defense, KOR, in accordance with its aims, will come to the aid of anyone who suffers reprisals for participating in strikes.

Jacek Kuron: The Polish Workers Must Organize

[The following article by Jacek Kuron, a central leader of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) in Poland, was written before the most recent strike wave broke out in Gdansk. It was published in a French translation in the August 20 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*. The translation from the French is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

A strike wave is spreading over Poland. Overnight we have been thrown into a turn that we may not be able to carry through. What are the specific features of the situation? How will it evolve? What can the regime do? What can the opposition do?

For the fourth time in Poland's recent history, the workers are showing that they are capable of smashing the monopoly of decision-making exercised by the party and the state. But for the first time there have not been street demonstrations, battles with the police or army, or party committee headquarters burned down.

The workers are formulating their demands. One strike follows another. This form of protest seems to conform to the slogan put forward by the KOR: "Establish Committees Instead of Burning Them Down!"

In a July 2 declaration, the KOR called on the workers to organize themselves in the factories and to avoid any kind of action that would make it easier for the regime to intervene. But this form of struggle also has its shortcomings. The demands that each body on strike formulates remain by necessity local demands, and are limited to the specific enterprise.

While the previous big workers' actions articulated the aspirations of all of society, the present movement speaks only in the name of the workers. Initially, it especially benefits the strongest, that is the best paid.

The metalworkers at WSK, whose wages are as high as 6,000-7,000 zlotys per month,* got raises of 1,000 zlotys, while the Zyradow textile workers, who earned around 3,000 zlotys per month got increases of only 120 zlotys.

Worse still, the only effect of the wage hikes is to increase inflation, which hits hardest at those who have the lowest pay, starting with pensioners.

Moreover, not all the strikes have unanimous support: When the housekeeping staff of a hospital in Lublin went on strike, many people were scandalized by the act. But what can these underpaid women do? Quit their jobs?

The economy of the country is falling apart. Only an immense effort by everyone, accompanied by a deepgoing reform, can save it.

The price increases for meat, along with the increase in production norms in the machine tool industry, provided the impetus for the current movement. But the real reason for this strike wave has to do with the obvious economic failure and the lack of any confidence in the regime's ability to provide a remedy.

Full of the bitter experience of the past, the regime does not dare to either crush the strikes by force or attack the strikers. From this one might conclude that the strike does not necessarily represent a big threat. But even if the strikes have died down for the time being, in autumn—when inflation has eaten up the raises and the promises for more meat supplies have not been kept—there will be a new outbreak of strikes. The workers' anger will be greater, and their distrust of the regime will also be greater, if that is possible. The regime, meanwhile, will be even weaker. At that point there will be a greater possibility that one side will run out of patience.

*One thousand zlotys equal US\$33.00.

Of course, this might still happen this summer. On the other hand, it may be delayed until winter. You cannot forecast social movements with a stopwatch.

No one should conclude from this that I am opposed to the strikes. As a member of the Committee for Social Self-Defense, I took part in writing the declarations that expressed our complete solidarity with the strikers. The strikes are necessary: Through them the workers become a social force.

The very fact that a group of workers formulates its demands and chooses spokespersons, even without a strike committee, provides a lesson in common action, a first step toward independent trade unions. There were strike committees in several big plants and in a good dozen smaller ones. Three sections of the mechanical workshops of the Ursus plant and a cooperative workshop for the blind in Lublin elected workers commissions, which are supposed to become permanent. In Lublin the rail workers strike committee continues to function, even though the strike is over, and is preparing for elections of a new factory council.

The demands of the strikers are local because the strikes are local and the structure of working-class oppositional circles is very weak. Nonetheless, political concerns are raised. They can have consequences for all of society. Nearly all the strikers are demanding written guarantees that they won't be punished. From the vantage point of an incipient workers movement, this is a form of struggle for the right to strike.

As a rule, all the groups of strikers in the Lublin region and in certain other regions are demanding a raise in family allotments to the level that the functionaries of the security forces and police get, which are four or five times higher. This kind of demand goes beyond local limits. It aims at changing the social policy and is an attack on the privileges the whole system

is based upon.

The workers at the Stalowa Wola steel mill are asking to be reimbursed for their union dues. The Lublin rail workers announced the dissolution of the enterprise council and demanded new elections (they were to have taken place on August 19).

We can see that with the strikes the process of organizing the workers is beginning. To the extent that the wave continues, the willingness of the workers to go out on strike gives them real strength in our political life.

Weakness of the Regime

Our rulers took their time in facing up to the state into which they had brought the economy. Nevertheless, the oppositional circles and some of the most eminent experts sounded the alarm a long time ago. Finally the people in power seemed to understand the situation a little bit. They launched an austerity program—as usual at the expense of society—which would have made it possible to repay the Western loans, and thus acquire new ones.

In general terms this program consists of a sharp reduction in imports, which would have the effect of causing a considerable decline in production, layoffs, and price increases coupled with wage freezes. The second part of this program collapsed barely two weeks after it was adopted by the parliament.

The regime retreated, allowing it to avert catastrophe for the time being. But it has limited maneuvering room. It has cranked up its printing presses to print more money, but this kind of wage increase threatens to incite the population to increasingly violent demonstrations that are openly directed against the regime.

But the regime no longer has any trump cards to play:

1. It has brought Poland to a crisis in which not only is there no hope for improvement, but where, on the contrary, a decline in living standards seems inevitable;

2. The regime has no authority whatsoever, not to speak of moral authority. With the exception of Gomulka's regime in 1956 and 1957, no Communist regime in Poland has ever enjoyed moral authority. But the present regime has also exposed itself as administrators. No one still believes that it is capable of carrying out its functions. Even those in power seem conscious of this. The open allusion to the threat of a Soviet intervention shows that.

3. The middle and lower layers of the apparatus are scandalized by the inability of their chiefs to impose order, by their fear of the masses, and their indecision. Raised in the spirit of the iron fist, the apparatus is demanding a settling of accounts with society. This could happen quite rapidly if the constantly frustrated leadership, or at least a portion of the leadership, loses its head and follows its desires. Whatever way they carried that out, the revolt would then

be inevitable with the consequence of a national tragedy.

Those economists, sociologists, and technicians who are close to the "establishment" have for some years been calling for a deepgoing economic reform, decentralization of the administration, and a strengthening of mechanisms of the market. In the present situation that type of reform would, for many social groups, bring with it a decline in their standard of living. For those social groups to accept such a result, they would have to agree with the reform.

The technocrats, who are conscious of this situation, are calling for a national discussion. But such a discussion requires some prior democratic reforms such as freedom of expression and freedom of organization, if only to carry out negotiations.

There is no other road for the leaders of Poland. The Poles have often shown their capacity to make sacrifices when they felt these were necessary for the common good. But too often the rulers have abused their confidence, too often Poles have been lied to and deceived. The rulers are correct in now fearing that by taking the road of democratization they could awaken forces that they will not be able to control. The step is undeniably risky.

If they don't take it, however, the consequences from their point of view could be even worse. The day will come when the workers will no longer be satisfied with formal concessions. When that happens large scale uprisings would be inevitable.

Will the regime take the risk of democratization? I fear that they won't. For as long as the Polish People's Republic has existed, it has only known how to reward prudence, at all levels of its hierarchy. All those who took any risk whatsoever, who made a courageous decision, who came out for any program of reforms or for one faction of the regime against another, have been certain losers. The sidelines are filled with "revisionists" and "dogmatists," "liberals" and "iron-handed functionaries," "cosmopolites" and "nationalists." The only ones who remain at the summit, the only ones who rule are those who never advanced any position, made any decision, took any risk.

I do not believe that they are capable of presenting a program of reforms that would satisfy society. On the contrary, I am convinced that the Poles themselves, against the will of the regime, can resolve the crisis and take the road of democratization.

The Role of the Opposition

The opposition must be the initiator of such a movement. We have a certain degree of influence in workers circles, and we can expand that since they need help, information, suggestions. It is our duty to help the workers to organize themselves in independent institutional groups, workers commissions or unions, or to take over the

state unions, as the Lublin rail workers will probably soon do.

In Poland there is a whole network of small-circulation factory publications. They should become independent workers' newspapers. By demanding a cost-of-living bonus, the workers will be led to organize themselves for negotiations, and the authorities will be forced to yield on that.

Even more important, to defend their positions, the authorities will have to agree to a national economic discussion. Whether or not they then decide to put forward a program of economic reforms, the democratic opposition circles must propose such a program, seen as an element in a much broader program of democratization. The peasant and independent workers movements, the groups of experts, the Society for Scientific Studies, and all other independent institutions must play a part in working it out.

It seems clear to me that any attempt at social improvement will, in the present state of things, require sacrifices. I am not being inconsistent: prices cannot be established by referendum. To rise up against the price increase would deal a blow against the functioning of the economy, assuming of course that there is someone who wants to improve it.

By contrast, wages must be the subject of prior bargaining (especially when the standard of living falls). But the main task of the democratic opposition is to transform the economic demands into political demands.

We must keep in mind that the Soviet Union and its armies still exist. But we can legitimately suppose that the rulers of the USSR will not embark upon the adventure of an armed intervention of Poland as long as the Poles refrain from overthrowing a regime that is docile toward the USSR. Therefore, we should refrain from this for now. The program for today is for a society that is democratically organized in professional associations and cooperatives, that are economically and locally self-managing. For a time these will have to coexist with our totalitarian state and party apparatus.

That apparatus will do everything it can to destroy our democratic organizations. It will sabotage their decisions. It will try to compromise and corrupt their activists. It will use intimidation and blackmail. We will have to defend ourselves and take back, inch by inch, the terrain controlled by the apparatus. In other words, the self-managing organs will have more and more tasks to fulfill. We can lead them to good ends if we have the willingness of all of society to act.

This, then, is our new situation. It may be too much for our forces. Our time is extremely limited. Unless we Poles organize ourselves, and if we stick to purely economic demands, catastrophe could become inevitable. □