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***POLAND: 35 YEARS OF STRUGGLE FOR
WORKERS' DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM***

WOMEN IN REVOLUTIONARY GRENADA



HALT U.S. INTERVENTION IN EL SALVADOR!

Halt U.S. Intervention in El Salvador!

By Will Reissner

Evidence continues to mount that U.S. military forces are taking part in Salvadoran army operations against the insurgent workers and peasants of El Salvador.

Despite the reign of terror waged by the military/Christian Democratic junta, with nearly 5,000 opponents of the regime murdered since January, the government has been unable to crush the liberation struggle.

Instead, opposition forces, organized into the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), have steadily increased their political and military strength. In May the military struggle against the junta took a major step forward with the formation of a Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) to coordinate the operations of the four main guerrilla organizations.

The growing strength of the guerrillas has been acknowledged by the U.S. military attaché in San Salvador, the capital. The Pentagon's response has been to increase the U.S. military commitment to the ruling junta.

According to four of the top leaders of the DRU, interviewed in August by the Mexican daily *Uno más Uno*, U.S. military advisors are now working with the Salvadoran army down to the company level. This intervention, "which began in the countryside . . . is now spreading to the capital," the DRU leaders stated.

During the August 13-15 general strike, there were reports of U.S. advisors in Salvadoran uniforms coordinating operations against strikers in San Salvador.

On August 20 the Salvadoran army carried out house-to-house and block-to-block searches of San Salvador's northwestern suburbs under the command of officers who spoke English and issued orders to Salvadoran troops through interpreters.

Héctor Oqueli, a representative of the FDR, stated in an August 25 speech in the Caribbean island of Grenada that the CIA-backed American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) is also active in El Salvador organizing government paramilitary units.

With the growing strength of the guerrilla organizations, according to the DRU, the departments of "Chalatenango, Cuscatlán, San Vicente, La Unión, Usulutlán, and many other areas have become zones of permanent war, zones where the army must move in contingents of 2,000-2,500 soldiers" to avoid being decimated by guerrilla units. Guerrilla forces are also active in the departments of Sonsonate

and Morazán.

The DRU leaders pointed to the presence of U.S. warships off the Salvadoran coast as further evidence of Washington's readiness to intervene more directly in El Salvador if the revolutionary forces seem on the verge of overthrowing the present regime.

That regime is, in fact, the creation of the U.S. government. "Washington's ambassador here, Robert Whyte, is the real ruler" of El Salvador, the DRU members explained.

Following the July 1979 victory of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) over U.S.-backed dictator Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Washington began looking for ways to avoid a "second Nicaragua" in El Salvador. The State Department encouraged the October 15, 1979, military coup that overthrew the hated dictator Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero.

The officers who carried out the coup claimed to be reformist and promised to carry out desperately needed social changes. The State Department hoped that this would undercut the growing strength of the Salvadoran revolutionary organizations.

The junta's "reforms," however, were really directed against the Salvadoran masses. The much vaunted agrarian reform program, for example, was used as a vehicle for the military occupation of the

countryside and the institution of a reign of terror against peasant organizations.

Despite Washington's hopes, the present junta has not been able to stem the tide of revolution in El Salvador. As a result, the U.S. government has been actively exploring other options for maintaining imperialist domination in that country.

Because of the deep opposition among the American people to U.S. military intervention abroad—which has come to be known as the "Vietnam syndrome"—the Pentagon has been looking for other vehicles through which to launch a large-scale military intervention in El Salvador.

Among the options under consideration are a military "peace-keeping" force from the Organization of American States or the Andean Pact countries, and action by the armies of El Salvador's neighboring Guatemala and Honduras.

The possibility of U.S.-backed intervention by Guatemalan and Honduran forces is receiving the most attention at this time. The U.S. government has stepped up its military aid to those armies. In addition, Washington is reported to be putting considerable pressure on the Honduran and Salvadoran regimes to settle their longstanding border dispute so that they can engage in joint operations against Salvadoran guerrillas operating in border areas.

The leaders of the DRU have called for activities in solidarity with the Salvadoran people and in opposition to any foreign intervention in El Salvador.

The international workers movement must respond to this appeal by becoming actively involved in solidarity with the struggles of the Salvadoran people. A central axis to this solidarity work must be to demand an end to all U.S. aid to the ruling junta and opposition to any U.S.-backed military intervention in El Salvador. □

Krivine Launches Fight to Appear on French Ballot

By G.K. Newey

Despite undemocratic ballot requirements, Alain Krivine will be the presidential candidate of the French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) in the elections scheduled for May 1981.

Krivine is running on a platform stressing the need for workers' unity in struggles against the capitalist government and its austerity programs. He also calls on all working-class candidates to agree before hand that in the second round of the elections, they will step down in favor of whichever candidate from a workers' party gets the highest vote in the first round, so as to bring down the Giscard d'Estaing government.

Krivine also ran for president in 1974. Since then, the election law has been

changed to make it much more difficult for candidates other than those of the four largest parties in France—two bourgeois parties and the Communist and Socialist parties—to appear on the presidential ballot.

While in 1974 a candidate needed the signatures of 100 elected officials in order to be placed on the ballot, the current law requires that a candidate be nominated by 500 elected officials. Moreover, these signatures must now come from at least thirty departments of France, with no more than fifty from any single department.

The new law also places a number of administrative obstacles in the way of collecting the required signatures.

Despite the severe obstacles placed in

the way of Krivine's candidacy, the LCR has launched a big campaign to secure the needed signatures. In the words of the LCR's weekly *Rouge*, this campaign "requires an unprecedented mobilization of all LCR members, all its sympathizers, and all democrats who, while not sharing our ideas, feel that our current should have the means to express itself."

Krivine has also issued a letter to elected officials in France asking that they support his right to make his views heard in the election and the right of the French people to consider those views.

Teams throughout France have already begun visiting city halls to seek the support of mayors and town council members. □

How Bolivian Military Crushed Resistance

When the Bolivian military seized power in a July 17 coup, it moved quickly to put down working-class resistance. That resistance was strongest and lasted longest among the country's militant tin miners.

A recent report in the August 29 London *Latin American Regional Reports* provides evidence of the massacres that the army carried out in finally crushing resistance in the mining towns. According to the article, "eyewitnesses have confirmed that regular units of the Bolivian army carried out a brutal massacre of unarmed civilians in the mining region around Caracoles earlier this month. At least 900 people from the area have disappeared."

Caracoles was, along with Viloco, one of the last mining areas to fall to the military, holding out until August 4, when troops attacked with tanks and heavy artillery, backed up by aerial bombings.

The report states that according to reliable sources, "many of the local miners, who attempted to defend themselves with rocks, sticks and dynamite, were killed during the offensive; after the town had fallen, the army proceeded to sack the area, torturing and murdering numerous survivors of the raid."

The troops carried out "a night of savage violence. Children were badly beaten; youths were forced to lie down on broken glass while troops marched over them; and women and children alike were brutally raped."

The Bolivian soldiers then looted the area and massacred livestock. As many as 900 civilians were taken off in army trucks. Their whereabouts are still unknown. □

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Free Unions Open New Stage in Polish Workers Struggle

By Gerry Foley

The agreement the Polish government was forced to sign with the Baltic port strikers on September 1 dealt a staggering blow to the totalitarian rule of the bureaucracy. The changes it ushered in were so great that the fall from power of party chief Edward Gierek seemed almost incidental.

The political meaning of the workers' victory was highlighted by the freeing of the jailed leaders of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) at the insistence of the strike committee.

In a September 1 dispatch, *New York Times* correspondent John Darnton described the reaction of one of those released, Jacek Kuron, a prominent and longtime socialist opponent of the privileged Polish bureaucracy:

"At a news conference in his crowded apartment this evening, Mr. Kuron . . . wearing a new T-shirt with the legend 'Solidarity' inscribed across the front, said their release had come about only because the workers demanded it. . . ."

That was the way the workers saw it too, as *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Jonathan Spivak noted September 2. Spivak quoted the reaction of a fifty-five-year-old shipyard machinist in Gdansk, who said: "This is what we fought so hard for. The unions will give us the possibility to control illegal action by the government and preserve our rights."

The fighting organizations built by the workers emerged from the August battles as established institutions with a democratic internal life.

In Gdansk, the new free trade union, headed by the leaders of the Interfactory Strike Committee (MKS), opened its public headquarters.

"These rooms are empty of furniture but full of hope," MKS leader Lech Walesa announced. "I am looking forward to the local authorities giving us a bigger headquarters."

Working-Class Leadership

As Walesa welcomed reporters into the new union offices, he also announced that the eighteen other elected members of the MKS presidium have quit their jobs to become full-time union organizers.

A new working-class leadership is coming out of the strikes.

The authority Walesa has established was described by correspondent Siegfried Kogelfranz in the September 1 issue of the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*:

"The question was put to Walesa why he became the leader of the uprising. He



Strike leader Lech Walesa carried by workers after announcement of victory.

asked the workers to answer it themselves. A chorus arose: 'Because we trust Leszek.' 'Because we'll never let him down, no matter what happens.'"

Kogelfranz wrote: "Walesa is a real tribune of the people. He is surrounded by the enthusiasm of the people. The workers follow him unconditionally."

The agreement between the MKS and the government specified that the independent unions were not to form a political party. The unions are not political organizations as such. But as the strike itself showed, organizations thrown up by the struggles of the Polish workers around any issue rapidly begin to take up general political questions, and become the focus of all sorts of grievances against the bureaucratic caste by the whole people, who have no other voice or advocate.

In contrast with the authority enjoyed by the strike leaders, the bureaucracy that governs the country is totally discredited. Spivak noted, "Open disdain for the party and the government apparatus is met everywhere."

The free unions already seem to be spreading and becoming democratic tools for the workers to defend their interests in major industrial and population centers.

In the city of Wroclaw in southwest

Poland, a free union has been formed. It held its first public informational meeting, addressed by Jerzy Piorowski, head of that city's joint strike committee.

The chairman of the Wroclaw official union, Stanislaw Domagala, responded by trying to play down the importance of the new organization. He was quoted over local radio as saying that he did not think that the official unions would wither away: "Our membership might decrease but we are not concerned with numbers."

Silesian Miners' Strike

But the illusory character of Domagala's hopes was shown by the Silesian coal miners' strike that was gathering momentum just as the government was being forced to meet the demands of the Baltic workers.

The 300,000 striking miners raised additional demands that in some respects went further than the twenty-one points in the agreement with the Baltic strikers. They demanded and won abolition of the official state-controlled unions in the Upper Silesian area.

According to *Le Monde's* correspondent Bernard Guetta, the agreement stipulates that the independent unions will get money out of the funds of the local official

unions to establish a headquarters of their own.

The Silesian miners strike completed the rout of the bureaucracy.

The coal miners have the greatest social weight of any section of the Polish working class. Coal is the country's most important resource and export product, and the government has concentrated its best efforts on developing production in these mines. The miners were paid double the average wage of Polish workers.

The miners strike also pointed up an even more fundamental contradiction of bureaucratic misrule than its inability to develop balanced planning and to supply sufficient quantities of basic necessities to the workers. The Silesian strike was not over wages or the increase in food prices. It was over safety and the workers' right to live like human beings.

In order to increase production, the bureaucracy instituted a system of shifts to keep the mines going twenty-four hours a day. It also forced the miners to work long hours, including Saturdays.

The result was that the rate of accidents increased dramatically. The signing of the agreement between the miners and the government took place under a black banner commemorating the victims of an accident that happened September 1 in the Halemba mine, where eight miners were killed and eighteen injured.

On the facing wall, was a banner with the slogan: "We demand free unions independent of the party and the government."

Polish radio and television crews were present at the ceremony. The miners like the Baltic workers, had insisted on negotiating publicly with top government officials. The state negotiating team was headed by Deputy Prime Minister Alexandre Kopec.

The Silesian strikes also showed that the way is now open for all sections of the working class to raise their specific grievances. Press reports indicate that numerous local strikes are now under way throughout Poland.

Gierek Goes

By the time he was replaced as party head on September 6 by Stanislaw Kania, Gierek was completely used up as a political figure.

In 1970, when he himself replaced Wladyslaw Gomulka as CP chairman, Gierek had been obliged to make a face-to-face accounting to the insurgent workers occupying the Adam Warski shipyards in Szczecin. In 1976, he confronted a nationwide general strike. After that, the ground trembled constantly under his feet.

Polish officials stated that Gierek was replaced because he had suffered a heart attack. The credibility of this explanation needs to be weighed against the use of a nearly identical explanation for the replacement of Gomulka during the strikes ten years earlier.

Whatever the facts, however, ten years such as those during which Gierek presided over Poland could wear out the health of any Stalinist bureaucrat terrified of the workers!

The privileged caste as a whole is now confronted with a crisis for which it has no answer. Gierek himself tried both repression and concessions, as well as raising the spectre of a Soviet invasion. But he failed to achieve any solution.

How the Bureaucracy Lives

Just before Gierek's ouster, revelations of corruption concerning his protégé, Maciej Szczepanski, damaged the entire bureaucracy in the eyes of the Polish workers, not merely one clique or faction within it.

Szczepanski was not only one of the more notorious high livers in the parasitic bureaucracy. He was also one of its main censors, as the September 4 *Le Monde* reported:

Polish radio and television have become unrecognizable. This change in tone began to appear in the wake of the Fourth Central Committee Plenum on August 24, which removed the chief of propaganda, Jerzy Lukaszewicz, who was expelled from the Political Bureau and from the Central Committee Secretariat, and the head of the state Radio-TV Committee, Maciej Szczepanski.

Szczepanski's departure seems to have been greeted with particular jubilation in radio and television circles, where his dictatorial methods and dogmatism were not greatly appreciated.

Moreover, after this guardian of "prole-

tarian morality" and "proletarian right thinking" was ousted, some of the things that censorship was designed to cover up started coming to light.

Szczepanski was said to have ten lavish residences at his disposal. One was a sheep farm, another a "forester's hut" equipped with a million dollars worth of furnishings. They also included a five-room villa with a glass-bottomed swimming pool and four prostitutes in attendance, a hideaway on a Greek island, a pig breeding complex, and a privately owned slaughterhouse business with 400 customers. In his office he reportedly had a film room with some 900 pornographic videotapes installed.

Szczepanski was also said to have raked off a million dollars from a deal between British and Polish television and deposited the money in an account of his own in London.

In a September 4 dispatch, *New York Times* correspondent Darnton reported: "An editor at a major [Polish] newspaper expressed concern in an interview yesterday that the Szczepanski affair could create unrest among high party officials who have accumulated their own riches and privileges."

The *New York Times* seemed to think that this editor had a point. Darnton noted that the Polish editor had explained that officials could become nasty if they got the impression that their lavish living standard was in danger. The editor said: "We have to watch out for the well-connected,

Kremlin Blames 'Antisocialist Elements'

Responding September 1 to the victory won by Polish workers, *Pravda*, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper, denounced "antisocialist elements" in Poland that it claimed are trying to take advantage of economic difficulties for "counterrevolutionary aims."

The *Pravda* commentary was signed by Alexei Petrov—a pseudonym used for important pronouncements. It charged that the "antisocialist elements" had links with "subversive centers" in the West and were trying to destroy the ties between the Polish Communist Party and the working class.

Tass, the Soviet news agency, charged September 3 that "forces hostile to Poland" are trying to stimulate "negative processes" there. Although Tass used the device of quoting from an article in the Polish party newspaper *Trybuna Ludu*, its own commentator argued that capitalist forces were hoping for "anti-Socialist changes" in Poland.

"Anti-Socialist forces in the country do not cease their subversive activity," the article asserted. In Moscow's view, it is the Polish workers who are the "antisocialist elements."

Moscow has also signaled its approval of the selection of Stanislaw Kania to replace Gierek as the head of the Polish Communist Party. On September 6, Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev sent Kania a warm message of congratulations.

"In the conditions of struggle for the consolidation of socialist gains," Brezhnev said, "you display a principled attitude, courage and high consciousness of the communist duty."

Brezhnev added that Kania was known "as a man who stands firmly on the positions of proletarian internationalism and the inviolable friendship of the Polish People's Republic with the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist states."

Brezhnev is obviously hoping that Kania will be better able than Gierek to stem the workers' upsurge in Poland.

the big managers and ministers who have all these things. They feel threatened."

Threatened for Good Reason

Of course, these parasites feel threatened. They have all along. That is the reason for the total censorship and suppression of all independent political life. It is why in 1970 striking workers in Gdansk and Gdynia were hunted from the air by helicopter like packs of wild dogs, shot down, and buried secretly at night in plastic bags.

It is why the leaders of the 1976 strikes were deprived of their livelihood and hounded by the police.

But now the bureaucracy as a whole is on the run. The workers are building their own organizations. And there is a surging, irrepressible demand for public discussion of the facts of life in "People's Poland."

The masses in Poland are focusing genuine working-class anger at the real "anti-socialist tendencies" in the society. For example, John Vinocur reported from Gdansk in the September 2 *New York Times*:

The buzz phrase of the past week, repeated by Poles in a good dozen conversations, was 'Red bourgeoisie,' a formation so seemingly incongruous that it made not a few foreigners feel uncomfortable. But it kept coming back. A taxi driver taking visitors to the union's new offices used it to describe the residents of some substantial looking private houses along the way. He voiced no complaints with Marxism, just what seemed to him like its perversion.

It is Stalinist officials such as Szczepanski who are the real admirers of the capitalists, obviously, since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

The government's acceptance of the Baltic workers' demand for the loosening of censorship only opened the battle for freedom of the press and public discussion.

Nonetheless, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for such a discredited regime to hold back the swelling demands of the masses to know the truth and the long-thwarted desire of self-respecting Polish journalists to inform them of it.

For example, during the strike twenty-five journalists signed a petition protesting censorship of their reports.

"There is a general news hunger now," Darnton reported in a September 3 dispatch to the *New York Times*. "Poles, accustomed to lining up for meat and other staples, are now lining up at news kiosks."

A former government official joked: "I'm furious. Today I had to spend an hour reading *Zycie Warszawy* [the Warsaw daily]. There was actually news in it. I used to get through it in five minutes."

The workers have learned in their struggles that they need a free and honest press and public discussion in order to determine who their real defenders are and to be able to come to grips with the problems they face.

Some false friends have already begun to be exposed. Respect for the Catholic hierarchy was deeply shaken when Cardinal Wyszynski tried to use his influence to get the workers to stop the strike short of

unwontedly modest stance for the head of a Stalinist CP.

"I am not so sure that our party needs what is usually termed a leader. I am deeply convinced that my obligation



Brezhnev and Gierek in May 1980, before Gierek's usefulness came to an end.

victory.

Under totalitarian Stalinist misrule, the church gained some credibility as a defender of human rights and values, which were ignored or mocked by the bureaucracy.

But the workers no longer need the church's solace. They are demonstrating their power to take on the big problems of the society and raising real hopes immensely greater than anything the church has to offer.

It is to the new workers organizations that the masses are now looking for salvation.

Even the new Communist Party head, who got his stripes as one of the regime's chief cops, had to recognize, in his own way, that neither he nor the party as a whole has any authority.

In his first speech as party head, Kania promised democracy and satisfaction of the workers economic demands. After this program was achieved, he said, "the workers shall again say, 'Our Party,'" Thus, he had to admit what everyone in Poland knows, that the workers do not consider the CP their party.

Kania was also obliged to assume an

should above all consist in insuring that the collective wisdom of the people should function."

The truth is that Kania cannot claim to be the leader of the Polish workers without arousing overwhelming scorn.

The great battles of August and the first days of September have shown who the real leaders of the Polish workers are—those who led them in struggle, those who organized them to fight for their interests and those of the entire society, those who are leading them forward in the fight for genuine workers democracy and socialism. □

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35 Years of Struggle for Workers Democracy and Socialism

By Gerry Foley

Behind the power of the 1980 Polish strikes lies three-and-a-half decades of struggle by the Polish workers and toilers against bureaucratic misrule—coming on top of a much longer tradition of revolutionary struggle against capitalism and foreign domination.

The immediate roots of the conflict in Poland today lie in the aspirations of the Polish workers to have a say over the decisions that affect their lives and living standards.

Capitalism has been overturned in Poland, making possible big strides in the social and economic betterment of the Polish people. But a privileged bureaucratic caste—not the Polish working class—governs and makes all political and economic decisions. The guiding precept of this caste is to hold onto its political power in order to preserve its special access to material benefits and pleasures. The result is gross inefficiency and mismanagement, glaring social and economic inequality, and totalitarian political methods.

This state was created in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, during the military occupation of the country by Soviet troops.

Moscow's initial aim, as it was in the rest of Eastern Europe, was to establish a capitalist buffer regime with friendly ties to the Kremlin, similar to the one that exists today in Finland. To do so, the Soviet occupiers tried to crush the tremendous working-class struggles for social change that were sweeping Poland in the wake of the country's liberation from Nazi occupation. They used brute force in the attempt to stop and turn back the Polish workers' fight for socialism.

But the imperialists were not interested in the live-and-let-live deal that Stalin was banking on. Washington was already moving to counter the post-war revolutionary upsurges around the globe. The Cold War policy of "containment and roll-back" of the "Soviet menace" was in full swing. The leaders of world capitalism did not want a Poland—even a capitalist Poland—that was allied with Moscow.

Within Poland itself, the Soviet authorities found the reviving bourgeoisie conspiring behind their backs with the capitalist governments of the United States and Western Europe. A small-scale but vicious civil war opened up, in which desperate anticommunist and anti-Russian terrorists assassinated thousands of Communist Party activists and pro-Soviet Polish government officials.

In reaction to this capitalist offensive,

the Kremlin was compelled to strike against the Polish bourgeoisie. It was forced to allow mobilizations of the Polish workers to overturn capitalism and lay the basis for a collectivized economy.

Although this process was carried through in a carefully circumscribed manner—under bureaucratic control and without a popular revolutionary upheaval of the Polish masses—the state that was established nevertheless advanced the historic interests of the Polish working class.

Abolition of Capitalism

The elimination of the profit drive and the nationalization of the major means of production made possible Poland's rapid recovery from the ravages of the Second World War. Education and health care was greatly expanded. The economy developed considerably, so that today Poland is among the most industrialized countries in the world.

The old Poland was melted in a crucible and out of it came a vastly expanded and better educated working class and a larger layer of intellectuals and students. For the first time, the national culture and traditions created by the prewar Polish revolutionary struggle could permeate the entire nation.

Contrary to the Stalinist slander that opponents of the regime are "antisocialist," the revolutionary opposition looks back to the profound social changes of the late 1940s as the basis of their hopes for building a truly free and abundant life for the Polish people.

This is clear in the writings of the most influential dissidents, even though the repellant hypocrisy of the parasitic bureaucracy led them to incorrectly characterize it as a new social class. For example, in their 1964 "Open Letter to the Members of the University of Warsaw Sections of the Polish United Workers Party and the Union of Young Socialists," Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski* wrote:

Under these conditions, the productive relations based on bureaucratic ownership assured rapid economic development and, thanks to this, possibilities of progress and a better life opened up for the other classes and social strata—perspectives for improvement within the framework of the bureaucratic system itself.

Industrialization opened the way to a better life for the broad masses of the underdeveloped

**Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out, (1964-1968)*. (New York: Merit Publishers, 1968). Available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. US\$1.25.

country via the passage of vast numbers of people from the materially, socially, and culturally most disadvantaged classes to the higher classes and strata: from the peasantry to the working class, from the peasantry and the working class, thanks to the expansion of education at all levels, to the ranks of the technical cadres, office workers, intellectuals and technocrats.

The social progress of the masses and the elimination of rural overpopulation and unemployment were also accompanied by the improvement of the cultural level of the people, medical care, social services, education, etc. Thanks to this, and despite the terror and coercion, the bureaucracy found numerous and enthusiastic supporters in all sectors of society. Since its rule enjoyed popular approval, its ideologues and propagandists could effectively impose its hegemony on the entire society, because the industrialization carried out under its leadership served the interests of the society as a whole.

A Party Made in Moscow

The political figures at the helm of the new Polish workers state, however, were among the most uninspiring who have ever presided over a process of great progressive social changes.

The new Communist Party that was rebuilt under Moscow's tutelage during the war was devoid of any heroic tradition or political principle. There were few survivors of the prewar CP, which had been disbanded on Stalin's orders in the late 1930s; most of its leading figures were executed in the USSR at the end of the Moscow Trials in 1938. Those who survived, such as Wladyslaw Gomulka, owed their lives to the fact that they had been in prison at the outbreak of the war in the part of Poland that was occupied by Germany and not the Soviet Union.

Gomulka was allowed to play a leading role in the period of coalition with bourgeois parties, when some sort of national cover was needed. However, he was purged—along with 370,000 other Polish CP members—during the trials staged by Stalin throughout Eastern Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s to liquidate all the leaders who were suspected of putting their loyalty to their own peoples above their loyalty to the Kremlin.

Boleslaw Bierut, a prewar member of the Soviet secret police, presided over a period of massive Stalinist repression. The Communist Party was a pliant instrument. It was a totally corrupt assemblage of prewar Social Democrats and pro-Moscow loyalists married under the shotgun of the Soviet Army.

The carrying out of Poland's industrialization by a parasitic bureaucratic caste

began creating extreme contradictions from the very beginning. There was enormous waste. Consideration for the human and social needs of the workers took a backseat to the privileges and prerogatives of the bureaucracy. Arbitrariness and irrationality bred demoralization among layers of the masses. Theft and cheating as a way of life was the moral standard set by the example of the ruling bureaucracy.

Explosive Contradictions

The contradiction between the growth of a powerful and well-educated working class and mismanagement by corrupt bureaucratic dictators, and between the heroic traditions of the Polish national struggle and the dismal spectacle of a servile regime subordinate to Moscow, became violently explosive. After the death of Stalin, it became impossible to contain.

The surfacing of these contradictions quickly took on a powerful and massive character. In 1955, the steelworkers at the huge Nowa Huta complex near Krakow refused to vote for a resolution condemning a poem protesting the conditions of life under Stalin.

The student magazine *Po Prostu* became an organ of the opposition among intellectuals, its circulation shooting up toward 150,000.

In February 1956, the prewar Polish Communist Party was rehabilitated. In mid-March the first public references appeared to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech admitting some of the crimes of Stalin. A flood of articles followed, criticizing various aspects of life under the Stalinist regime.

The spotlight came on the low wages and high production norms, youth unemployment, and the miserable conditions of young people coming from the rural areas to work in the new industrial plants. The privileges and abuses of power by the bureaucracy began being subjected to criticism.

One of the most dramatic statements appeared in the April 22, 1956, issue of *Nowa Kultura*. It spoke for the generation that had grown up since the war.

Michel Bruck wrote that he had stopped believing in Poland when he discovered the anticommunist motives of the leaders of the 1944 Warsaw uprising, in which his brother died. At the age of fifteen he had lost his faith in God when he became a Communist:

The new ideology gave me faith in the world and a reason for living. Those were my happiest years. I fought for this ideology. . . .

However, they gave us some instructions that were wrong and obviously detrimental to the party's policy. I was convinced that somewhere, among the higher circles, there was some enemy giving these orders. But I thought that it would harm the party to make my criticisms public. That made it possible for me to tolerate a lot of difficulties. . . .

Now I am eighteen years old. . . . It is now proven that the dictatorship of Stalin was a

reality and that history had been falsified. . . .

I can't change my faith a fourth time. . . .

I am ashamed of my older comrades. I am ashamed for the entire party, for all those who waited for the bandwagon and then jumped on it. I am ashamed for all those who consciously or unconsciously assisted this evil. I am ashamed for you, you petty bourgeois, you ministers, you well-fed journalists, you writers who did not want to see the conflicts.

I am ashamed for you, and above all, I am ashamed for myself. I am ashamed of my stupidity and my credulity.

Poznan Rebellion

In June 1956, the Polish working class went into action against the bureaucratic regime for the first time and began to show what it was capable of.

The workers at the Stalin Steel Fabricating Plant in Poznan in western Poland refused to accept a continuation of low wages and speed-ups. They marched to the center of the city under the slogans "bread," "lower prices," and "higher wages." Along the route, they were joined by workers from other plants. They began to draw the rest of the population behind them.

By the late morning of June 24, a third of the population of Poznan had gathered in front of the city hall. As the mass mobilization became more general, political slogans began to be raised: "We want freedom!" "Down with the false communism!" "Down with the Russians!"

A group of demonstrators attacked the prison, disarmed the guards, and freed the prisoners. Another group stormed the radio station.

A crowd gathered to attack the secret police headquarters. The Stalinist security forces opened fire. Fighting spread through the streets. The insurgents captured some police stations. A number of the troops sent in to crush the rebellion turned their weapons over to the masses.

Since the uprising remained confined to one city, the government was able to put it down militarily, but the regime was deeply shaken.

The Stalinist press opened a campaign of vilification against the Poznan insurgents:

"Enemy agents have provoked street disorders. . . . The organizers of this action, an extensive and well-prepared splitting operation, will be punished with the full severity of the law. . . . The Poznan provocations were organized by enemies of the fatherland."

In a matter of weeks, however, the mounting pressure forced the bureaucracy to eat its words. But the changes did not come easily.

On October 18, Soviet troops and Polish army units under the command of the party right wing had begun to move on Warsaw to head off those sections of the bureaucracy who were turning to the only Polish leader with any political authority—Wladyslaw Gomulka.

Gomulka's rise to power at the October 19 party plenum took place within the context of a revolutionary situation. In response to the threat from the Kremlin, the Warsaw CP city committee set up a communications network outside the regular party channels. Weapons were concentrated at the headquarters of the party factory sections so that they could be quickly distributed to the workers. The Zeran auto workers were armed, and they took up positions to defend the capital.

A week after the event, Jan Kott wrote in *Przegląd Kulturalny*: "There is no longer any doubt. During that feverish night, the real master of our country and of Warsaw was the revolutionary working class. And the youth once again found a common language with the working class. . . . The workers of Warsaw stood guard."

Gomulka threatened to touch off an armed uprising if the Soviets and the right wing tried to keep him from taking power. His speech to the October 19 plenum, published the next day, exploded the Russian and Polish Stalinist slander campaign against the Poznan workers:

The working class has just given the party and government leadership a harsh lesson. By resorting to the weapon of strikes and by demonstrating in the streets on that Thursday of last June, the Poznan workers shouted loudly: "Enough! This can't go on! We have to get off this wrong road." When they went into the streets, the Poznan workers were not demonstrating against People's Poland or against socialism. They were protesting against an evil widespread in our social system from which they also suffered. They were protesting against deviations from the fundamental principles of socialism that is their ideal. . . .

The working class is our class; it is our invincible power. The working class is us. Without it, that is, without the confidence of the working class, none of us can represent anything but themselves.

The clumsy attempt to present the Poznan tragedy as the work of imperialist agents and provocateurs was politically very silly.

Agents and provocateurs can always be around working. But in no case can they determine the attitude of the working class. If the agents and provocateurs could incite the working class to action, the enemies of People's Poland, the enemies of socialism would find their task greatly facilitated; they could easily achieve their objective. But this is not the way it is.

Thus, through a convicted "enemy of the people," the Polish CP leadership had to acknowledge the charges raised by the workers against the Stalinist bureaucracy and to promise that they would begin to really rule as the workers' representatives rather than as the usurpers of the political power that belonged by right to the workers themselves.

A Political Education

The Polish workers, who had very few illusions in Stalinism from the start, began to go through an incomparable political education in the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This process has continued



WARSAW, October 24, 1956: Poles rally against threat of Soviet intervention.

from the 1956 upsurge through successive struggles and revolutionary upsurges up to the recent strikes.

In the December 5, 1956, issue of *Trybuna Ludu*, the leading Polish economist Oskar Lange was allowed to offer the following explanation of Stalinism:

Stalinism was engendered by the weakness of the working class, by the waning of its revolutionary energies, by the fact that petty bourgeois and peasant elements were able to outflank the working class, as well as by the specific conditions of isolation resulting from capitalist encirclement and the absence of solid traditions of democratic government laid down by an earlier bourgeois democratic revolution.

Lange went on to point out a road for eliminating Stalinism in Poland:

In Poland a social force that demands socialist democracy, the working class, was consolidated in the course of the industrialization, as well as a new intelligentsia that was born in this period and developed rapidly.

The experiences of a vital working class movement are still living and fresh, as well as the traditions of creative intellectual life preserved by the old progressive intelligentsia. These have enabled the working class and the intellectuals to resume their political activity. The popular origins of most of the intelligentsia have enabled them to find a common language with the working class. . . .

The role of the working class as the essential

force in the democratization process is shown clearly by the mass movement for workers councils, in which the working class can express its demands and become the master of the factories and of the entire country. The workers councils movement is the irrefutable proof of the proletarian and socialist character of the democratization that is developing in Poland.

The impact of the 1956 events in Poland was reinforced that same year by the antibureaucratic revolution that began to unfold in Hungary. The Hungarian workers began to form factory councils and demand political rights and independence from Moscow's domination. The Kremlin sent in troops to smother the revolt.

In the November 4 issue of the Polish

student journal *Po Prostu*, immediately after the Russian invasion of Hungary, Romand Zimand explained the international implications of the struggle against Stalinism in Poland:

When they talk to us today about the unity of the international workers' movement, we must reply:

We need unity as much as we need air to breathe. But not unity with the Stalinists, not unity at any price, that is, at the price of truth and revolutionary honor. The kind of unity we need is unity against imperialism and against Stalinism, unity based on the resurrection of the world communist movement.

Any other kind of unity means defeat. . . .

The experience of all of us, and the experience of our defeat in Hungary in particular, proves that the capitalists always benefit from Stalinism. The survival of Stalinism in our ranks is the surest guarantee of imperialist victories. The relationship between the entry of the Soviet army into Hungary and the [British and French] attack on Egypt proves this.

The 1956 upsurge against Stalinism also brought to the surface Marxist positions on the national rights of oppressed peoples.

In the January 13, 1957, issue of *Nowa Kultura*, Andrzej Mandalian wrote:

Lenin's "Notes on the National Question" is as much if not more of a mindboggling document for Communists as his famous "Letter to the Congress" [known as "Lenin's Testament"].

As regards nationalities policy, Stalinism found its fullest expression in great power chauvinism. Given the economic and cultural backwardness of certain countries, and their multinational structure, Stalinism developed a whole hierarchy of chauvinisms and lesser nationalisms, which it used as a prop for its power. . . .

Our movement of renewal was directed against Stalinism. But its specific character lay in the fact that it was directed first of all against the chauvinism of the Stalinist system and based itself on, among other things, the profoundly patriotic aspirations of the population for a normalization in the relations among states and for sovereignty.

An intense, rich, and illuminating political discussion took place that had a deep impact on the Polish masses.

There was also a rich organizational experience, going from struggles in the party and legal mass organizations to insurrection and the first forms of a nationwide uprising.

Nonetheless, the 1956 upsurge failed to destroy the Stalinist bureaucratic hold. The new leadership of the bureaucracy, led by Gomulka, was able fairly quickly to break the momentum of the struggle and begin to demobilize it.

The massively expanded Polish working class went through an experience in 1956 very similar to that of the vanguard workers in the immediate postwar period. Workers councils arose after the war, particularly in the Silesian coal mines. But they were progressively circumscribed and integrated into the bureaucratic union structure, and finally abolished. Lacking a

political leadership with a program for establishing workers democracy throughout the society, the workers could be relatively easily divided, tied down, and worn out by the bureaucracy.

This also happened to the workers councils that arose in 1956. But the bureaucracy continued to talk about a big role for such bodies for a number of years.

The most political of the dissident publications, *Po Prostu*, was the first to be suppressed. It was abolished in 1957. The critical publications were suppressed one by one, but the last survived until 1963. Thus, for seven years a relatively frank discussion of the problems of the society took place in mass-circulation publications.

Simmering Protest

Rearguard resistance continued until 1966 at the University of Warsaw, when the students organized a public meeting to commemorate the "Polish October" ten years earlier.

At the University of Warsaw, a vanguard was able to draw the lessons of October and its failure to overthrow the bureaucracy. Out of this experience came the most developed analysis of Stalinism and program for overthrowing the bureaucratic dictatorship and establishing workers democracy that has appeared in any workers state since the destruction of the Leninist opposition led by Trotsky in the Soviet Union. Its authors consciously based themselves to some extent on the tradition of the Left Opposition. And there was at least one survivor of the prewar Polish Trotskyist movement, Ludwik Haas, in this milieu.

This analysis and program was expressed in the "Open Letter" written by Kuron and Modzelewski, two leaders of the Communist youth organization on the campus. They gave the following explanation for the defeat of the October upsurge:

In Poland, the bureaucracy held onto its power by peaceful means. How was it able to do this?

The outcome of revolution is decided by the struggle between the two basic social classes: the working class and the bureaucracy. The Poznan events showed quite clearly that these are the two principal forces involved. The hegemony of the working class as the most powerful and consistently antibureaucratic force in society is the precondition for the victory of the revolution.

However, in order for the working class to be able to play the leading role, it must be conscious of its own goals and formulate them into a political program. As a class fighting for power, it must organize its own party (or its own parties).

What has been called the October Left, which was made up in large part of the natural leaders of the workers, the youth and the intellectuals, could have been the embryo of the political vanguard of the working masses. The left differed from the liberal tendency essentially in its propositions with regard to the Workers' Councils, in which it saw a base for a new relation of production and the framework for a new political regime.

But it was a heterogeneous current. The Left did not differentiate itself from the technocratic current in the Workers' Councils (the demand that the Councils run the factories did not go beyond the limits of the technocratic program); nor did it differentiate itself from the liberal wing of the bureaucracy in national politics. It did not set itself off clearly from the general anti-Stalinist front as a specifically proletarian movement.

In this situation the Left was clearly incapable of formulating its own political program, of organizing agitation for it among the masses, or of forming parties. This is why the Left was incapable of transforming itself into an independent political force and of avoiding becoming merely a leftist auxiliary of the liberal wing of the bureaucracy in power.

Kuron and Modzelewski were jailed, but the ferment continued among the students.

In March 1968, the banning of Adam Mickiewicz's nineteenth century nationalist play *Forefather's Eve III* sparked mass student demonstrations. Kuron and Modzelewski, released not long before, were seen as political leaders of the movement. They were rearrested and jailed once again.

In a statement to the court in January 1969, Modzelewski described the origins of this student movement and the role he played in it:

After we got out, we found ourselves in this milieu of activist university students. We knew many of these people before. There was no idea of forming an organization.

As in any university milieu, there were various discussions. We did find one thing new. There was a lack of understanding of the Marxist theory of society. We proposed discussion of various theoretical questions. . . . We were interested in the question of the national traditions, productive and unproductive labor, the problem of utopia in Marxist theory, the question of the role of the working class. . . .

A section of this activist youth came from intellectual families, often families who represented the prewar Communist tradition. . . . There were many activists of the Communist Youth disillusioned with that organization but seriously thinking about socialist theory. These youth acutely felt the gap between the theory and the reality. A third layer were youth from rural backgrounds who suffered from bad material conditions and arrived at nonconformist positions as a result of these conditions.

Our first activity after getting out of prison was the issuance of a leaflet on Vietnam. . . .

This leaflet appeals to patriotic and internationalist values. It is a statement of principles. . . . It begins by listing the number of participants in demonstrations of solidarity with Vietnam in various Western cities. Then a question mark is placed after the name of Warsaw, [a reference to the bureaucracy's ignoring of the 1967 Vietnam International Solidarity Week].

In 1968, the political conditions had not yet ripened for a new general upsurge against the bureaucracy. So, isolated, the students were crushed. The regime launched an anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual campaign to intimidate the intelligentsia and widen the gap between them and the workers.

Despite this temporary blow, 1968 marked the complete exhaustion of the moral credit of the bureaucratic leadership that rose to power in 1956. This leadership had been seen twelve years before as fighters against bureaucratic abuses and for the national rights of Poland. But by 1968 it had totally stifled the workers councils and banned the greatest of the Polish nationalist classics. It ordered Polish troops to participate in the 1968 Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia to crush a movement similar to the Polish October.

This leadership that had admitted the truth about the Poznan rebellion in 1956, and promised to always tell the truth to the Polish people, engaged in one of the vilest campaigns of slander against Jews and students in European history.

The illusion that any wing of the party could bring about lasting reform received a further battering.

1970 Workers Uprising

By 1970, the illusions in the economic reforms were also shattered. The workers had seen in 1956 what could be gained through struggle. In the following three years, their real wages increased by 30 percent. But the economic program the new leadership adopted to deal with the failures of the old Stalinist economic policies failed to bring any solutions.

In fact, by trying to move toward a "more flexible" market economy, the Gomulka leadership came increasingly into conflict with the working class. Inequalities increased. For example, the pressing need for housing was supposed to be solved by "savings plans."

In 1970, the government's policy of raising the prices of food sparked a workers' revolt qualitatively broader and deeper than the Poznan uprising.

Striking workers in Gdansk, on the Baltic coast, burned down a local headquarters of the Communist Party—and sang the *Internationale*. A strike committee in Szczecin took over virtual control of that port city for several days, assuming the responsibilities of municipal government bodies. Strikes and demonstrations spread to Lodz, Poznan, Wroclaw, Katowice, Elblag, and Krakow.

One reason for the extent of this rebellion was that the government did not retreat so quickly. The price rises were an integral part of its economic plan. The food price increases were coupled with the lowering of prices for consumer durables such as television sets and automobiles. The government wanted to stimulate the sale of the latter as part of its plan for developing "market socialism!"

In its desperation, the government finally resorted to massacres of the workers in Gdansk and Szczecin, killing hundreds. In response, the workers at the Adam Warski shipyards in Szczecin barricaded themselves in. They armed themselves and prepared for a siege.

In the face of a threatened explosion, Gomulka fell. The new party leader, Edward Gierk, was obliged to go and discuss directly with the workers in their fortress.

It was one of the most politically concentrated confrontations in history. A whole panoply of issues were raised and thrashed out with the top figures in the bureaucracy. An unprecedented process of political education took place within the space of a few hours. Gierk obviously felt intense pressure:

Comrades, if you want to know about this shooting incident, leaving aside how all this happened, you know how it happened, right? . . . I have already said we condemn such things. . . . That is one of the reasons that I am here, so that we can come to an understanding, right?

I am not afraid of you comrades, I am not afraid, since you know what I am, right, a worker. If we workers can't reach an understanding, who can?

One of the workers delegates said:

We are talking frankly. . . . Maybe Comrade Gierk won't believe me. Well, I am not going to try to count up the corpses, because it's hard to tell how many were picked up in the street. They tell us that there were only seventeen in Szczecin (shouts of outrage).

"I'm sorry, I probably got that figure from *Glos* [the local paper] (shouts of outrage). So, I won't dwell on the bodies. But there certainly were some. People fell. Bullets whistled. Now what is disagreeable about this is that we are the ones who paid for the bullets that were fired at us with the money earned by our toil. That's very hard to take. How can a class turn against itself. We have a party don't we?"

The food price increases were rescinded, but the new government had no alternative economic policy. It struggled to stave off the inevitable by frantic foreign borrowing and by chasing after export markets in the capitalist countries. It made the fundamental error of banking on a steady expansion of export markets in the capitalist world. It failed to anticipate the capitalist crisis, becoming the victim of its own class-collaborationist illusions.

However, it was finally able to divert and break up the independent workers organizations that developed in the 1970 strikes. In doing this, the bureaucracy played on the gap that had developed between the workers and the students and intellectuals, and which was deepened by the post-1968 repression. No opposition press developed, and no general political activity or ferment. The workers were relatively isolated.

Nonetheless, the 1980 strikes have shown that a layer of experienced worker activists has remained since 1970. Since that time, for example, yearly collections have been carried out in the yards to commemorate the victims of the massacres. And one of the initial demands of the strikers this year was the erection of government expense of a statue in honor of these martyrs.

By 1976, the government felt that it could no longer put off food price increases. But the attempt to raise them touched off the first national general strike in the history of Poland, sparked by the action of the workers at the Ursus auto plant near Warsaw. The government dropped the price increases. But it went on a concerted campaign of reprisals against the militant workers.

This time, however, the convergence that failed to take place in 1968 and 1970 did develop. The intellectuals and students rallied to defend the workers and built organizations to support them and politically extend their challenge to the bureaucratic regime.

One of the most dramatic expressions of this convergence was an open letter to the worker victims of repression written by Jerzy Andrzejewski, one of the best-known Polish authors:

You must know that at a time when you are being slandered by the press, radio, and television; when the media are trying to mislead public opinion and divert its attention from the real problems of the crisis. At a time when you are being accused of antisocial activity, destructive anarchism, and even thuggery, there are people in Poland who can distinguish truth from falsehood.

These people see you persecuted workers not only as the protagonists of the present cause, but, and above all, as the fighters for genuine socialist democracy and social freedoms, without which all freedom perishes, the life of the society becomes dominated by lying rhetoric, the life of the nation is threatened, and individuals are stifled.

Out of the defense of the persecuted workers in 1976 grew a whole series of opposition organizations and publications. The new opposition press reached a circulation of tens of thousands, achieving a de facto semilegal status. One of these publications was the independent workers paper *Robotnik*.

A loose political vanguard developed that is far more extensive and politically conscious than any that has yet emerged in any bureaucratized workers state. It represents decades of political experience—symbolized by figures from Jacek Kuron to the seasoned workers leaders who got their test of fire in 1970.

The victory of the 1980 strikes opens up possibilities for the rapid development of the kind of political leadership that could lead the Polish people to the achievement of the objectives for which they have fought for two hundred years, the achievement of their national ideals and of workers democracy.

Poland stands as an example that the development of planned economies cannot be kept forever in the straitjacket of bureaucratic misrule, that the workers can and will take control of the societies built in their name, that they will establish a society of freedom, justice, and equality in which all the creative potential of humanity will be liberated. □

Why Washington and Wall Street Fear Polish Struggle

[The following article is taken from the September *International Socialist Review*, monthly magazine supplement to the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

As they opened their fall campaigning, both James Carter and Ronald Reagan sought to wrap themselves in the flag—the Polish flag. But as the Democratic and Republican candidates praised the heroic struggle of workers in Gdansk and Szczecin, their smiles were even more strained than usual. For they know all too well that the strike victory in Poland is no help to them in their job of convincing American workers to accept austerity, sacrifice, and preparations for war. No help at all.

"The working men and women of Poland have set an example for all those who cherish freedom and human dignity," Car-

ter said in Tusculum, Alabama. But just let some working men and women in this country try it.

Last year shipyard workers in Newport News, Virginia, struck for nearly three months for the right to a union of their choice—the same key demand as in the Polish shipyards. Club-swinging police and attack dogs were unleashed to disperse their pickets and invade their union headquarters. The Newport News workers finally won union recognition and a contract. But it was no thanks to Carter, who never offered so much as a word of support.

Nor has either Carter or Reagan proposed applying in this country the economic terms of the Polish strike settlement. Summing these up, the *Wall Street Journal* said the agreement "paved the way for nationwide, automatic cost-of-living increases and committed the govern-

ment to costly improvements in health services, increases in the availability of day-care centers, more liberal maternity leaves for working mothers, and perhaps, the eventual lowering of retirement age for workers."

In capitalist America, such demands are "inflationary" and impossible, according to both Democrats and Republicans.

As for the Polish workers' methods in winning these gains—a mass political strike against the government, occupation of shipyards and factories, common bargaining among hundreds of factories in different industries, and open negotiations broadcast to thousands of workers—most are prohibited by law in these democratic United States.

The Polish workers are also fighting for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, for an end to privilege, and for complete public information about the economy so that workers can decide investment policy and how the national income is divided.

If such demands were placed before Carter, Reagan, or any capitalist employer, they would unhesitatingly protest, "This is communism!"

And they would be right.

The big-business news media and politicians feel they must profess sympathy for the Polish workers, because they know that's the heart-felt sentiment of all American working people. By posing as champions of the Polish strikers, the U.S. rulers hope they can blunt the full impact and example of this working-class struggle.

They twist it to try to reinforce anticommunism by falsely identifying the repressive Stalinist bureaucracy as Marxist and communist. But the more the facts about Poland become known—what the strikers are doing, saying, and fighting for—the more such efforts fall flat. As Flora Lewis of the *New York Times* conceded in a September 2 column, "the workers were, in effect, demanding more socialism," not less. Can anyone pretend that the aspiration of the Polish workers is to hold a giant auction and sell off the publicly owned mines, shipyards, docks, steel mills, factories, and railroads to private capitalist owners?

The fact is that the Polish workers have set the most powerful example yet in any industrial country of how to fight back against the capitalist austerity drive. How can this be, in a country where capitalism was overturned in the years after World War II?

The nationalized and planned economy in Poland has made possible great advances in industrialization, modernization, and living standards. However, political

Draft Agreement on Independent Trade Unions

[The following are excerpts from the draft agreement announced August 30 between the Polish government and the Interfactory Strike Committee in Gdansk, as printed in the August 31 *New York Times*.]

* * *

The activities of trade unions in Poland have not fulfilled the workers' expectations. Therefore, it is considered useful to set up new self-governing trade unions that would be genuine representatives of the working class.

We do not dispute anyone's right to stay in the old union, and in future there might even be cooperation between the two unions.

In setting up the independent, self-governing trade unions, the Interfactory Strike Committee states that they will observe the Polish Constitution. The new unions will defend the social and material interests of 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.

They recognize that the Polish Communist Party plays a leading role in the state and they do not challenge existing international alliances.

They strive to give working people appropriate means of control, to express their opinions and defend their interests.

The Government commission states that the Government will guarantee the free-

dom and independence of the new unions in both structure and organization.

The existing strike committees will turn themselves into founding organs of the new trade unions. The new trade unions should have a real opportunity to publicly express an opinion on key decisions that determine the living conditions of working people, the principle under which the national income is divided into consumption and investment, how the social consumption fund (health, education, culture) is divided, the basic principles of income and wage policy, especially the principle of automatic wage indexation in conditions of inflation, long-term economic plans, and investment policy and price changes.

The Government guarantees that it will insure that the provisions are carried out.

The workers' committee will set up a center for study of social affairs whose aim is to analyze objectively the situation of the workers, the living conditions of working people and the methods of representing the working people. It will carry out expert analyses on indexing prices and wages and will propose forms of compensation. It will also publish the results of this finding and the new unions will have their own publications.

The right to strike will be guaranteed in a law on trade unions that is being prepared. The law will determine the condition under which strikes are organized and proclaimed, methods for resolving conflicts and responsibility for infractions of the law. □

power is in the hands of a Stalinist bureaucracy modeled on that in the USSR—a bureaucracy that maintains its own privileges by preventing the workers from democratically controlling economic decisions.

Bureaucratic mismanagement, waste, and inefficiency have led to economic stagnation, shortages, and inflationary pressures in Poland. Rather than turn to the organization and knowledge of the workers to deal with the problems, the bureaucracy sought a way out in huge loans from the capitalist banks. Poland's debt to Western banks has soared from \$760 million in 1971 to \$20 billion in 1979.

The Stalinist bureaucrats based their plans on the assumption that the world capitalist economy would thrive and expand for decades to come.

They counted on repaying the loans by steadily increasing exports to the West.

But world capitalism was hit with recessions in 1974-75 and 1979-80. Poland's export markets shriveled. Western banks demanded repayment, with interest in full and on time. The New York bankers and the Warsaw Stalinists agreed on where the money could come from: out of the living standards of the Polish workers. Food subsidies would be cut and prices of necessities raised. The privileges of the Polish bureaucrats would, of course, be safeguarded and even increased.

In Poland just as in New York City, just as at Chrysler, just as around the world, Washington and Wall Street demand that workers sacrifice so that the banks can continue to profit. And the Stalinist bureaucrats act as a transmission belt for the pressures of world capitalism, just as the trade-union bureaucrats in New York and in the United Auto Workers are acting to transmit and enforce capitalist demands for worker givebacks.

This was most baldly admitted in an article in the business section of the August 31 *New York Times* under the headline: "Strikes in Poland: The Risk for Western Banks." It stated that "both the Communist authorities and the capitalist bankers recognize a convergence of interest in stability—so much so that one Western banker who asked not to be cited by name said that if the Russians actually did intervene in Poland, the nation's creditworthiness might actually increase."

Behind a facade of sympathy for the Polish workers, a *Times* editorial August 24 also signaled the real attitude of the U.S. rulers. It began by noting that what's happening in Poland is a "genuine revolution by workers." It observed that the strikers "have already formed workers' councils, the embryo of a parallel government," and pointed to the crucial role of such councils—called soviets in Russia—in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

"Recurrently, from the days of the Paris Commune in 1871 to the Hungarian Revolution in 1956," the *Times* editors continued, "workers have sought social regen-

eration through committees that owed little to cafe intellectuals." It even threw in a few kind words for Rosa Luxemburg, the famed Polish revolutionist.

Then the clincher: "What the Baltic workers are doing now in that tradition is a brave, proud and, alas, probably hopeless gesture," the *Times* said. "... In present circumstances, Washington can do little to help the Polish strikers."

To its mass audience of students, teachers, and white-collar workers, this editorial tries to convey that the cause of the Polish workers is noble but hopeless. To its ruling-class audience on Wall Street, in the government, and in the capitalist "think-tanks," the real message will be clear: *This movement in Poland is the movement of our historic class enemy.*

When the *Times* says it's too bad we can't "help" the Polish strikers, its capitalist readers are immediately reminded of how they "helped" the Paris Commune—by drowning it in blood. Of how they "helped" the Russian soviets—by sending nineteen foreign armies to try to crush them. Of how they "helped" Rosa Luxemburg—by arranging for her murder.

The message is: We the capitalists can't give that kind of help in Poland today.

Heavy Fighting in Kurdish City of Mahabad

Heavy fighting was reported August 30 in the Kurdish city of Mahabad between forces of the Iranian central government and Kurdish guerrillas fighting for their national rights.

Mahabad had been the one city spared in the Iranian government attacks against Kurdistan that were resumed last April. It served as the headquarters for the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and other Kurdish organizations that are demanding the right of the Kurdish people to control their own affairs. More than 30,000 Kurdish refugees had fled to Mahabad following attacks on their cities and towns.

The Kurdish towns of Sanandaj and Saqqez had already been occupied last May after Kurdish guerrillas withdrew following a month of heavy fighting and destruction.

According to the August 26 Paris daily *Le Monde*, foreign reporters are not being allowed to visit Kurdistan and telephone communication with most Kurdish cities has been cut.

Le Monde also reported that government forces have ordered the Kurdish population to switch off their lights every night to avoid attacks from Iraqi forces. The Iraqi regime, fearful of the Iranian revolution, has carried out military operations against Iran, in collusion with Washington and pro-shah Iranians who are now based in Iraq.

These Iraqi military operations have been on an increase. On August 27, Iranian forces used ground-to-ground missiles

We're not in a strong enough position in the world to do it. So we had better hope the Polish government and Moscow can do the job.

The gains won by the Polish strikers are grim news indeed for world imperialism, no matter how much the capitalist media try to pretend otherwise. The Polish workers have set an example for their brothers and sisters around the world of how to use working-class power. They have told the world that workers must see into every aspect of the economy and make the decisions, that's the way to solve economic problems.

The Polish struggle shows the true face of Marxism and communism, a face that will be attractive to American workers. It will help break down anticommunist prejudice, not heighten it. It makes it harder for Washington to get workers to support the draft and the war drive, harder to whip up hatred against the workers states.

Like the rising working-class struggles from El Salvador to South Africa, Poland shows that capitalism's day has passed. Stalinism, which once looked so powerful, is in decline. The future lies with the workers of the world. □

for the first time to repel a heavy Iraqi artillery barrage at Qasr-e Shirin, on the border between the two countries.

Pars, the official Iranian news agency, reported that the August 27 attack had been on a "new scale" and that fighting had broken out all along the border.

Similar confrontations were reported on September 6 and 7. The Iranian border towns of Mehran and Dehloran were shelled by Iraqi forces, and Iraqi air attacks were reported at Nasrabad and Qasr-e Shirin. Iranian Air Force planes shot down an Iraqi helicopter that had crossed into Iran.

Tehran radio reported heavy fighting between Iranian revolutionary guards and Iraqi forces. □

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Agent Helped Plan Greensboro Massacre

By Steve Craine

[The following article appeared in the August 29 issue of the U.S. socialist news-weekly the *Militant*.]

* * *

GREENSBORO, N.C.—One of the key planners of the Klan-Nazi murder of five antiracist demonstrators last November 3 was a Greensboro police informer. Two days previous to the murderous action, police provided him with a last-minute revision of the march route of the anti-Klan protest where five members of the Communist Workers Party (CWP) were gunned down in cold blood.

Information about the police agent's role in the killings was disclosed August 3 by the Greensboro *Daily News*.

The story broke the day before testimony began in the trial of six Klanners and Nazis charged with the killings. Although he was on the scene of the killing and the cops knew he played a crucial role in mapping the assassination, informer Edward Dawson was not among those arrested.

Revelation of his role follows the exposure of a federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agent, Bernard Butkovich, who functioned in the Nazi organization and who participated in a planning meeting for the November 3 assault.

Dawson, the local police agent, has been active in the KKK here since 1964. He has held the post of chief security guard and, at one time, was grand dragon of the racist outfit.

According to the *Daily News*, Dawson has admitted that he helped plan and organize the Klan's presence at the CWP demonstration. This admission leaves little credibility to police assertions that they did not have advance knowledge of the slated killings.

The *News* also reports that in addition to working for the local cops, Dawson has been on the FBI payroll. It is asserted that he was dropped by the FBI in the early 1970s when the secret police agency was allegedly curbing the illegal activities of its hirelings.

In 1967, Dawson did nine months in jail on charges stemming from a racist shooting in a Black community in neighboring Alamance County.

Two days before the November 3 murders, Dawson, identifying himself as a member of the KKK, requested and received a copy of the CWP's parade permit from police headquarters.

According to an official police department report, the officer he asked for the

permit "had doubts as to whether he should release a copy." He checked with the city attorney's office and then gave it to him.

The police are apparently trying to use Dawson as their out in explaining why no cops were present at the demonstration when the Klan and Nazis arrived and began shooting. The police report asserts that a Klan source advised them that they planned to confront the antiracist demonstration at the end of their march, not the beginning.

The killers, too, are trying to use Dawson as their out, asserting that he had assured them no serious violence would occur.

One Klansman told the *Daily News* that Dawson had told them they "wouldn't be able to get near the commies. He said there would be more police than you could shake a stick at. . . ."

Like the cops, the Klanners now insist that the plan was to go to the end of the march and just heckle. Instead, they said, Dawson led them to the beginning of the march.

The KKK and Nazis have not yet explained why, if they simply intended to heckle, they came so heavily armed.

Or why they agreed to start the caravan hours before the four-mile anti-Klan march could be expected to reach its destination.

Or why, if they were surprised to find themselves at the formation point of the march, they were able to so quickly and efficiently carry out their deadly barrage.

Meanwhile, in the courtroom, the details of the organized mass murder are coming more into focus.

In the initial nine days of testimony, a

series of witnesses—cops, media people, community residents, and demonstrators—have provided their own pieces of the picture.

Testimony has established that the first shots came from one of the lead cars in the racist caravan—perhaps the one Dawson was in. A number of men got out of their cars, took guns from car trunks, and methodically fired into the crowd.

Witnesses also agree that until the Klan caravan arrived, the demonstration was peaceful and relaxed, with adults and children singing, playing the guitar, and just milling around.

Greensboro *Daily News* reporter Winston C. Cavin testified that when the Klan caravan arrived, the occupants of the first two cars were shouting "epithets, threats, and profanity." He said the word "nigger" was used several times, along with such threats as "We're going to get you," and "We're going to get your ass."

Laura Blumenthal, a TV reporter, identified one of the defendants, Coleman Blair Pridmore, as one of the group that attacked the demonstration with sticks immediately after the signal shot was fired from the front of the caravan.

"It was a hideous fight—to hear sticks hitting bodies," she testified. "I don't believe I'll ever forget the look on his [Pridmore's] face during the fight."

She testified that heavy gunfire from the rear of the caravan followed the fighting.

All six of the Klanners and Nazis on trial have been identified by at least one witness. Several more of their associates have been indicted for the killings but have had their trial postponed until the present one ends.

About half the participants in the murderous attack have not been indicted.

The defense claim that they shot in self-defense has already been undermined by testimony that there was no obstruction to the flow of traffic and that all the cars involved could have left the scene at any time. □

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Women in the Grenada Revolution

By Merle Hodge

[The following article is taken from the August 2 issue of the *Free West Indian*, a weekly newspaper published in St. George's, Grenada.]

* * *

What kind of women will the Grenada revolution produce?

Will the new Caribbean woman be born out of developments on this little, controversial island—developments which began years before March 13, 1979, with the political culture inaugurated by the New Jewel Movement?¹

In today's Grenada, women are singled out as a category of nation-builders. National issues are addressed to "workers, farmers, women, youth and students." Public speakers preface their offerings with the salutation "sisters and brothers."

The courageous role of Grenada's women in the long and dangerous struggle against the Gairy regime is a chapter of Caribbean history that is yet to be fully documented.

But the list of fallen heroines officially recognised by the people of Grenada has, at the time of writing, grown to four. Women now outnumber men in the pantheon of national heroes of Grenada.

The two latest additions are the fatalities of this year's Butler-Strachan day on June 19. Laurice Humphrey, 23 and Laureen Phillip, 13, were killed by a bomb that was meant to wipe out the entire leadership of the country and whoever else happened in its path.² They have joined two other women honoured this year at the first festival of the Revolution, two fighting NJM women who died in separate, tragic incidents.

Many women were involved, under the Gairy regime, in the clandestine production and distribution of the NJM party paper. They risked their lives and safety by hiding the printing machine in their

homes, typing the stencils or carrying bundles of the paper innocently concealed in the market baskets to be delivered at secret destinations.

Heroines of the Revolution

Edith McBain was a part of this network, hiding bundles of *New Jewel* at her home and placing them on appointed buses, which took them to contacts in the countryside. She died under the wheels of one of these buses, in a freak accident.

Scotilda "Scottie" Noel, an organiser of women and small farmers, was a foremost personality of the NJM struggle. She had just been persuaded to give up some of her important activities in the northeast to serve at the Women's Desk set up by the People's Revolutionary Government. She came for discussions which finalised her appointment to the post. On her way back home, she was killed when the car in which she was travelling plunged into a rocky river bed.

Among the honours paid to Scottie, were the naming of the *Scotilda*, a ship purchased by the Government for the transporting of agricultural produce to other Caribbean islands, and the establishment of the Scotilda Memorial Fund for the building of day-nurseries.

The violent and wilful deaths of sisters Laurice and Laureen have produced a reaction in Grenada that could never have been calculated by the setters of the bomb.

The role that these two women have played in death is perhaps more dramatic than the impact of any single event in the recent history of this island.

The majority of the casualties of Butler-Strachan day were women, attesting to the already high level of women's participation in the political life of the nation. The involvement of women and children in what is elsewhere seen as "politics" is reflected in the very mixed composition of crowds at rallies and other such gatherings.

In the first traumatic moments of the attack, it seemed certain that this would spell the end of mass political manifestations in Grenada, and surely the withdrawal of women and children from what had suddenly turned into a deadly dangerous affair.

But, far from it. Far from intimidating the "weaker" sex, the bombing has catapulted women in Grenada into a new consciousness, a new militancy.

Defiance, Not Fear

Injured women, interviewed in hospital

the same night of the attack, expressed defiance rather than fear.

Asked whether she was not frightened by the explosion, one woman scornfully answered, "Afraid for what? I pick up a bottle. . . . I got ready to fight."

An 18-year-old woman, recovering from a broken leg, told reporters: "That still can't stop me from going to rallies. For as long as I have strength, I going."

So much for women being scared away from political affairs. The historic nationwide marches of June 20, the day after the attack, brought out more women than ever.

Thousands of people marched in solidarity all over the island. In all of these marches, women were a strong and vocal presence—not only the stalwarts, but women who had never marched in their lives, bank clerks in crisp uniforms and stiletto-heeled shoes, matronly middle-class women, flocks of schoolgirls with books in their hands.

In the St. George's demonstration, marchers helped to support a young woman fresh from hospital, her knee and ankle having been badly injured in the bombing, but herself determined to be part of the solidarity march.

Women Join Militia

Women flocked to the recruiting centres set up immediately after the bomb attack, aimed at increasing the ranks of the people's militia. Reports are that the majority of new recruits are women.

Ironically, on June 1, barely two weeks before Butler-Strachan Day, the National Women's Organisation (NWO) had launched a campaign to step up the participation of women in Grenada's national life. One aspect of this campaign was to be the recruitment of more women for the militia.

The NWO, the umbrella organisation of the NJM women's groups, has set its members certain goals for the six-month period June to November 1980.

The steady progress of this campaign has now been dramatically accelerated by what is seen as the martyrdom of two women and by what women recognise as the indiscriminate aim of counter-revolution.

Some of the objectives of the programme are summed up in these slogans launched on June 1: "Organise all women," "Educate all women," "Build services for women," "Create work for women and raise up national production."

The vanguard NJM women's groups have been charged with the task of organising Grenadian women into a "solid revolutionary force."

Education and Mobilization

They have begun a programme of education for women through film shows, panel discussions, talks and cultural shows and through active collaboration with the Centre for Popular Education, Grenada's adult

1. The New Jewel Movement (NJM) seized power during a popular insurrection on March 13, 1979, overthrowing the old dictatorship of Eric Gairy.—IP/I

2. On June 19, a bomb exploded under the speakers' platform at a mass rally in St. George's, the capital of Grenada. The rally had been called to commemorate Uriah Butler and Alister Strachan, two Grenadian national heroes. Although Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other top Grenadian leaders who were on the platform escaped injury, dozens of demonstrators were wounded and Laurice Humphrey and Laureen Phillip were killed. On July 21, after this article was written, fifteen-year-old Bernadette Bailey also died of wounds she received during the June 19 bombing.—IP/I

education programme.

Members of each group are selected to attend a current health education training course set up by the Ministry of Health and the Women's Desk. These trainees then act as health educators for their group and their community, tying in with the government's approach of developing a system of primary health care in the communities.

Another of the goals set by the NWO is to have every child in school. Women's groups are engaged in house-to-house work aimed at identifying all children not in school and trying to solve the problems which keep them out of school.

The provision of day care for pre-school children, like many other development projects in Grenada today, is being organised at community level specifically by the NJM women's groups. In their house-to-house work they also gather information on how many children need day care, and seek to raise funds to set up day nurseries. Community projects, such as the provision of training personnel to run the day care centres, get assistance from government.

"To undertake community improvement projects which would directly benefit women," is yet another of the NWO's goals. Members are asked to investigate the needs and wishes of women in their communities.

They follow this up by organising their sisters in projects such as the erection of stand-pipes, the improvement of local health facilities, the testing of children's sight and hearing, providing electricity to villages without it, improving roads, community centres and other community facilities, establishing pre-primary schools, and helping single women and old people to repair their homes.

In all these projects the pattern is for the community to assess its needs and provide voluntary labour and whatever materials it can muster through fund-raising activities. This is to be matched by government assistance with materials.

This development has led to an interesting resurgence in Grenada of a Caribbean institution that is called by different names in the various islands. In Grenada it's known as the "Maroon"—the practice of community workers gathering to help a family in land-clearing, harvesting, house repairs, etc., to the accompaniment of eating, drinking and general festivity.

The last remaining objective of the six-month campaign also ties in with developments on the overall national scene.

Grenada is in the initial stages of a land-reform programme which will entail the establishment of farming co-operatives on idle lands bought or leased from owners. Women's groups have been asked to "help create work for women while raising production through co-operatives." They also assist in the current process of identifying idle lands in each area.

The NWO will also spearhead the organisation of women into farming, and agro-industrial and handicraft co-operatives.

Concrete Gains

Measures taken at governmental level, in the interest of women, include the formula of a much-needed maternity leave law which has been put out for discussion before it is passed later this year.

Other measures are equal pay for equal work and a hard line taken against "sexploitation" of women in employment, which was rampant under the Gairy regime. The government is also moving to establish a national commission on women.

The new woman of Grenada will be the product of a changing education system which is geared towards equal educational exposure for girls and boys and a more conscious attack, through education, on the roots of sexual stereotyping than is evident anywhere in the English-speaking Caribbean.

FSLN Strengthens Ties to Other Parties

'Revolutionary Patriotic Front' Formed in Nicaragua

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has strengthened its links with three smaller Nicaraguan political groups through the formation of the Revolutionary Patriotic Front (FPR), announced July 23. In addition to the Sandinistas, the FPR includes the People's Social Christian Party (PPSC), the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), and the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN).

According to the FPR's founding document, signed by leaders of the four groups on July 23, its principal aims are "to support the democratic and patriotic policy that the Government of [National] Reconstruction is carrying out" and "to defend, consolidate, and press forward the Nicaraguan revolution, in order to ensure socio-economic transformations on the basis of people's democracy and national liberation."

While the FPR "recognizes the vanguard role that the FSLN carries out in the revolutionary process," it also upholds "the participation in the leadership of this process of all the patriotic and democratic sectors of the country." The document also expresses support for "the free expression and diffusion of thought, freedom of religion, freedom of mobilization, and the freedom of political association and recruitment."

Other points of the FPR's platform include the following:

- A commitment to "common effort to fully achieve the fundamental human right to employment, housing, education, health, a dignified life, and social progress";

The education system is aiming too at a greater involvement of the young in their community's life and their country's development.

Already, the young are having an impact on decision-making in the country through their very conscious, very vocal and very active student councils and youth groups. In these organisations there is no question of girls taking a subservient role—quite to the contrary.

Increasingly, the extra-curricular activities of older girls and boys in Grenada include voluntary community work and para-military training.

Today's motto for Grenadians—young and old, male and female—is "tool in the right hand, gun in the left" . . . production and the defence of the revolution.

The woman of the Grenada revolution is prefigured by the schoolgirl who, with equal confidence, will take up the shovel or the gun. □

- Support for "strengthening the Sandinista People's Army, the Sandinista Police, the organs of state security, and the Sandinista People's Militias—institutions of the revolutionary state that defend the homeland and the revolution from the threats of external and internal enemies";

- Support for the 1980 Economic Reactivation Plan. Further economic measures are also urged, such as a tax policy "under which each citizen pays according to their economic ability" and the completion of a "comprehensive, democratic, antioligarchic, and anti-imperialist agrarian reform"; and

- A call for "the total eradication of bureaucratism in public administration and of other defects inherited from the old regime." This should be done while "guaranteeing the [job] stability of state employees who distinguish themselves by their honesty and efficiency."

The groups that joined the FSLN in the Revolutionary Patriotic Front had already been collaborating with the Sandinistas for some time. The PPSC and PLI—radical petty-bourgeois parties based mainly among white-collar workers and professionals—supported the FSLN before the July 19, 1979, victory over Somoza. Leaders of both groups held important posts, especially in the labor, health and social welfare ministries.

The pro-Moscow PSN had a long history of anti-FSLN sectarianism to overcome, but in recent months it has worked closely with the Sandinistas in the trade unions and in the Council of State. □

'A Government That Doesn't Lie'

By Renfrey Clarke

[The following article is taken from the August 6 issue of the Australian socialist weekly *Direct Action*.]

* * *

MANAGUA—Nicaragua's capital is a small town compared with most Latin American cities, having a population of only about 400,000. It is a pleasant spacious place, but for a sobering reason; in 1972 the city centre was levelled by an earthquake which killed at least 18,000 people.

Much of the international relief aid sent to Nicaragua was stolen by the dictator Anastasio Somoza, with the result that little more was done to rebuild the centre of Managua than to clear the devastated city blocks of debris.

Now, Managua citizens travel through open fields of rank tropical grass to reach the few earthquake-proof office blocks which survived, or to attend the demonstrations held almost weekly in the now-isolated Plaza de la Revolucion.

Beyond the city centre, the houses of the wealthy have long since been rebuilt. Many of them, however, now carry the red and black banners and name-plates of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), having been expropriated from their *somocista* owners for use as public buildings.

To the east of the city centre the crumbling walls and rubble-heaps reappear. These are the working-class districts bombed relentlessly by Somoza's air force throughout the final weeks of the insurrection last year.

Here one sees few of the graceful ferro-concrete arches and wrought iron fittings of the wealthy suburbs. For many inhabitants of the *barrios orientales* the only building materials available have been scrap timber and rusted iron sheeting, tarpaper, and cardboard. The floors are of trodden earth.

The *barrios orientales* are also where the red-and-black FSLN flags are thickest, in streets where concrete pillars beside the roadway carry metal plates commemorating neighborhood martyrs, and the spray-painted slogans remain on the walls: "Sandino lives!"

* * *

An early foray was an expedition to buy groceries. Most inhabitants of the poor barrios shop at the open-air markets, sprawling slums thick with dust or mud. The stalls are ramshackle affairs and swarms of flies hover about the food—something which does much to explain why, under Somoza, nearly half the child-

ren born in Nicaragua died before their fourth birthday.

I went instead to one of the state-owned supermarkets which the Government of National Reconstruction has been setting up. Extending the network of such stores is a priority of the Sandinistas not only for reasons of public health, but also because of the need to control the prices of basic commodities and to limit speculation.

The store I went to contained a modest bookshop, and there I received an unexpectedly forthright lesson in the political character of the Sandinista Front. Alongside the writings on "Sandinism" were low-cost editions of agitational works by Lenin—"The State and Revolution," "Left-wing Communism," "On the Trade Unions," and others.

In a country where publishing facilities are limited, and paper expensive, it is significant that these writings of Lenin had been published by the National Secretariat of Propaganda and Education of the FSLN.

* * *

Most people in the advanced world have some mental image of how farm laborers live in Latin America. My own conception of the housing provided for workers by estate-owners was drawn from the wooden shacks once lived in by slaves in the American south.

The reality is far worse. I visited the living quarters provided for workers on a former Somoza estate near Managua.

I was shown a barn-like building, without windows, smelling of dust and rotting fruit. On each side of a narrow aisle were two tiers of bare wooden compartments, perhaps two metres square and one and a half metres high. In each of these boxes, I was told, lived a whole family of farm workers.

These peasants were relatively well off, I was assured. This was a coffee-growing estate, where workers were more or less permanently employed; in cotton-growing areas, where the work is seasonal, the accommodation is even more basic.

It is hardly surprising that these conditions exist when farm laborers in U.S. imperialism's backyard are forced to compete for jobs at only a dollar a day.

Since Somoza was expelled, the estate I visited has been run as a state farm by INRA, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform. I was taken there by a group of INRA workers, including an accountant, technical staff members, and a doctor, who were carrying out voluntary labor on what would have been their day off.

The latrines I saw had been built since the insurrection, I was told; before that the 120 workers and their families simply used the surrounding forest. With no water supply but the run-off from tropical storms, a deadly biological cycle was completed. Under Somoza most of the children born on the estate died early, weakened by a horrifying array of internal parasites.

In coming to the estate the INRA staff hoped to discuss with the workers, and above all to talk to the women. As it happens most of the workers are absent, having gone to Managua to spend their pay. But a small group of women meet nonetheless, airing their hopes and grievances to the women from INRA.

The discussion quickly focuses on the issue of childcare. The women currently performing the work are incompetent, it is argued; there are no suitable premises and few items of furniture.

If the women of the estate can find volunteers to be trained in childcare, the INRA staff members indicate, courses will be provided for them. In addition, INRA will find beds and chairs, and fit out a suitable room as a childcare centre.

The INRA staff insist that the main impulse behind this work has to come from the women of the estate themselves. But these poor peasants have no experience of calling meetings, of compiling agendas and framing resolutions.

One of the most outspoken of the women says she would be prepared to organise a meeting, except that she is illiterate.

Eventually, they decide on a date for a general meeting to discuss childcare. For the INRA staff, it is another small triumph in their work of popular organising.

Then, with the discussions over, it is time for the educated cadres to prove their commitment—joining the peasants in the exhausting toil of digging a garbage pit.

Roughly half of Nicaragua's population share the lot of the people on that estate, living as rural laborers or poor tenant farmers. The improvements the revolution has so far brought to the lives of the rural poor may seem limited on the face of it to an outsider, but they weigh heavily with people who have never before known such a thing as a government concerned for their welfare.

And every advance in consciousness of the masses of rural poor sends shock waves through Nicaraguan society. Behind the wealth of most of Nicaragua's capitalist families there are estates like the one described—or worse.

For example, I was told that the FSLN is waiting for an opportune moment to expose the atrocious conditions on the vast cotton estates owned by Alfonso Robelo, the right-wing politician who is the hero of Nicaragua's "liberal" bourgeoisie.

* * *

La Prensa, the daily paper of Nicaragua's embattled capitalists, carried a re-

port recently of the "fiesta" with which the U.S. embassy here celebrated July 4.

Anywhere else in Central America, the festivities would have been attended by a train of officials from the local puppet government.

Nicaragua is different. Members of the Junta of National Reconstruction "celebrated" July 4 not at an embassy cocktail party, but among the workers at a dairy products factory on the outskirts of Managua.

Every Friday evening, junta members and other government leaders take part in a televised program known as "Face the People." The format is simple: The country's leaders turn up, and anyone who cares to is free to fire questions or criticisms at them.

In past months, these meetings have mostly been held at neighborhood halls in poor residential districts. Now, they are more and more being held at workplaces, a change which has enhanced the already high political level of the debate.

The union hall at the "Perfecta" factory is already crowded when the government delegation arrives. On the walls are Sandinista banners, along with posters depicting Engels, Lenin, and Fidel Castro. As well as junta members Daniel Ortega and Sergio Ramírez, the minister of labor, the minister of industry, the vice-minister of agricultural development, the minister of domestic commerce, and the head of the social security system have all come to represent the government.

The workers are articulate and have extensive political experience; they address probing questions and obviously expect serious answers. Is it true, one of them asks, that INRA, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform, discriminates against privately owned dairy plants like this one in supplying milk? The plant could process a good deal more milk if it were available.

Encouraged by the FSLN to stand guard over the productive process, these employees are thoroughly familiar with the workings of their plant, and know exactly what its capacity is. Here, at least, the capitalists would have a hard time sabotaging the work of national reconstruction.

What is the government doing to aid the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador, a worker wants to know. Daniel Ortega, dressed in combat fatigues, expounds the FSLN position: The government gives its whole-hearted political support to the revolution in El Salvador, but believes that the best way Nicaraguans can aid the struggle in neighboring countries at present is through consolidating their own revolution.

Ortega is a key figure in the Sandinista government, serving both in the junta and in the national leadership of the FSLN. Frowning above his Zapata moustache, he fields a direct personal question: Why is it that junta members live in former Somocista mansions and have themselves driven about in Mercedes-Benz cars?

Ortega explains that his personal weapon is an Israeli-made machine pistol captured from Somoza's National Guard; the car he uses is a Mercedes-Benz seized from a Somocista businessman.

The point is not the origin of these goods, or their character as prestige items, but the use to which they are put. Mercedes-Benz cars provide safe and reliable transport for revolutionary leaders; does the questioner propose that they be given back to the Somocistas?

As for the houses—the Sandinista leaders lived as guerrillas for as many as 20 years, and would certainly not object to living in ordinary workers' shacks. But there is counter-revolution about, and government leaders live under threat of assassination; in solid houses with spacious yards, they can be effectively guarded.

Another questioner is visibly angry. When Sandinista police recently conducted

a sweep through his neighborhood, a friend was arrested for having a pair of boots of the type issued to literacy campaigners. Is everyone to be arrested who has boots in their house?

Sergio Ramírez, a burly, vigorous man in his late 30s, takes up the complaint. The Sandinista police are fundamentally different from Somoza's thugs, Ramírez points out; the Sandinistas are fighting to ensure the rights of ordinary citizens, not to deny these rights. At the same time, the Sandinista police are very young, and up to a point, the population must bear with their inexperience.

Moreover, "delinquents" are posing a serious problem for the government. When Somoza's regime collapsed the population seized thousands of weapons, and the police files on criminals were destroyed. The criminals are still around—now armed with machine-guns. Vigorous measures have to be taken against them.

It is a lucid, eloquent reply—Ramírez after all is one of Latin America's finest novelists—but one senses that the workers are unsatisfied. The Sandinistas now recognise that the early morning house-to-house searches were a mistake, creating much antagonism and resulting in the laying of few criminal charges.

In a more jocular mood, a worker demands to know how he can change his name. He was baptised Anastasio, the name of successive Somoza dictators.

Now, with the meeting still in full swing, my group has to leave. But we continue listening to the discussion on the radio.

By the time the meeting winds up with the singing of the Sandinista anthem, it has occupied three hours of prime-time radio and television.

Audiences for these programs are said to be massive. It indicates a confidence among Nicaraguans that when this government speaks to them, they are not being lied to. □



Televised "Face the People" program at dairy products factory.

Renfrey Clarke/Direct Action

Castro Salutes Mexico's Resistance to Yankee Blockade

In response to an invitation by Cuban President Fidel Castro, a delegation from Mexico headed by President José López Portillo visited Cuba from July 31 to August 3. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans turned out in Havana's Revolution Square August 2 to express their solidarity and friendship with the Mexican people.

The August 10 issue of the Cuban English-weekly *Granma* gave extensive coverage to Portillo's visit, reprinting in full the speeches of both Castro and Portillo at the Cuban-Mexican friendship rally.

Castro reviewed the history of Cuban-Mexican relations and cooperation. After the triumph of the revolution, Castro recalled, one of the first visitors was former Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas. Castro also pointed out that Cárdenas had come to Cuba's defense following Washington's 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

"In the difficult early years," Castro continued, "when the whole imperialist plot against Cuba was taking shape, along with the attempt to isolate Cuba, and not only isolate but also destroy the Revolution, Mexico was the only state which did not break diplomatic relations with Cuba and firmly opposed all aggressive agreements against us," Castro said.

Castro praised Mexico's courageous and exemplary stand against Washington's effort to isolate Cuba in the Western Hemisphere. He pointed out that this stand has continued to this day.

"In the wake of the Peruvian embassy events," Castro explained, "the imperialists organized a ferocious slander campaign against our country and, along with the publicity campaigns, they quickly instrumented threatening military maneuvers against Cuba, which were to include landings at the Guantánamo naval base. At precisely that time, three months before the visit was to take place, as an evident gesture of friendship and solidarity with our country, President José López Portillo announced his visit to our country."

Castro also praised Mexico's decision in the 1930s to nationalize its oil, despite all the pressures from the British, U.S., and other big imperialist powers. Mexico was the first of the oil-producing countries to do so.

"We remember how irritated imperialist reaction was," Castro recalled.

Referring to Mexico's recent discovery of new oil deposits, Castro emphasized the policy of the Mexican government in developing "Mexico's oil resources primarily in the interests of Mexico and other developing countries, but never for the energy needs of powerful industrialized countries, at whose head, of course, is the United

States."

Since the discovery of the new Mexican oil deposits, the U.S. government and energy trust have exerted political and economic pressure on Mexico in pursuit of privileged access to the oil at below world market prices, as well as to the lucrative profits that could be made in bringing the potential wells into production.

Castro explained how, "through its international policy but also geographically"—with a border of hundreds of miles with the United States—"Mexico is on the front

Cuba and Mexico together. We will not stand for any harm being done to Cuba because we would look upon it as harm to ourselves."

Portillo repeated this theme in his speech to the August 2 rally. Speaking of the need to defend self-determination in Latin America and the Caribbean, Portillo stated: "This cyclonic Caribbean has been the itinerary of every empire, some in flow, others in ebb, but every empire has come here, they have penetrated us and we have thrown them out, they have returned and



August 2 Cuba-Mexico friendship rally in Havana. Portraits of José Martí and Mexican national hero Benito Juárez in background. *Granma*

lines of defense of the sovereignty and the interests" of peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Castro pointed to the importance of Mexico's support to "the heroic struggle of the Nicaraguan people." He described how Mexico, with considerably fewer resources than the United States, had offered considerably more aid to Nicaragua than has Washington.

Castro also pointed to the Mexican government's opposition to the military dictatorship in El Salvador and its support to the struggle of the people of Belize for independence from Britain.

Castro then talked about the need to develop to their fullest the economic relations between Mexico and Cuba.

"We will not stand for any harm being done to Mexico," Castro said, "because we look upon it as harm to ourselves."

Upon Portillo's arrival in Cuba, he was presented with the José Martí Order—an honor named for the great nineteenth century Cuban fighter against Spanish colonial domination. Castro pointed out that Mexico had provided refuge for Martí, as it had done for the July 26 Movement in the period before the launching of the guerrilla campaign in the Sierra Maestra in the late 1950s.

In accepting the award, Portillo declared, "Martí's causes are the causes of

we will throw them out again."

A joint Cuba-Mexico communiqué issued August 3:

- condemned all forms of colonialism and neocolonialism in the Caribbean and Latin America;

- expressed satisfaction over the victory of the Nicaraguan people and reaffirmed their willingness to provide needed aid and solidarity;

- condemned the constant and systematic violations of human rights in El Salvador and demanded respect for the right of the Salvadoran people to decide their own destiny without foreign intervention;

- supported the efforts of various Caribbean countries to consolidate their independence;

- condemned the military coup in Bolivia; and

- pointed to the need for an end to the economic blockade of Cuba and a halt to the violations of Cuban air space.

Portillo also reaffirmed the backing of the Mexican government for the unconditional return of Guantánamo naval base occupied by Washington against the Cuban people's will.

Castro and Portillo also signed new agreements to facilitate economic relations, trade, and cooperation between Cuba and Mexico. □

WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN FOR AID TO NICARAGUA



Whatever Happened to That U.S. Aid Package?

Remember that \$75 million aid package the U.S. government was supposed to be sending to Nicaragua? Promises about this aid have been coming from the White House and the State Department for about one year now, but the Nicaraguan government has yet to see a cent of the money. And it seems that the odyssey of this fabled aid package is far from finished.

Of course, some things are more important than others, and Washington has to pick its priorities with care. For instance, President Carter says that within days of any revolution in the Persian Gulf area he can have two divisions of combat-ready troops on the ground there, with more to follow. But it took him nearly four months before he got around to asking Congress to appropriate some aid to help reconstruct Nicaragua's devastated economy.

Carter finally urged Congress to approve a \$75 million package—\$70 million of which was a loan. Most of the aid was earmarked for the private sector.

Now it was the turn of Congress to drag its feet on approving this meager aid

proposal. It took Congress six months to act on the package, and in the process several amendments were added placing further restrictions on the use of the aid and setting political conditions for giving the aid to Nicaragua.

The most important condition was that the White House was required to certify that the Sandinista government "is not aiding, abetting or supporting acts of violence or terrorism in other countries."

U.S. arms shipments and U.S. advisers are pouring into El Salvador to back up the murderous junta there. The dictatorships in Guatemala and Honduras are also receiving substantial U.S. aid against the masses of workers, peasants, and student youth struggling for democratic rights and social progress. And the U.S. Congress has the gall to warn *Nicaragua* against supporting "acts of violence or terrorism in other countries"!

Nevertheless, this is the latest pretext for holding up the promised aid to Nicaragua. According to a September 5 article by *New York Times* correspondent Juan de Onís,

"the Defense Intelligence Agency has reportedly contended that field reports do not permit a clear judgment that Nicaragua is above suspicion of shipping arms to guerrillas in the region."

The signing of the aid agreement, which was originally scheduled for early August—three months after it was approved by Congress and signed by Carter—has now been postponed. Carter's aides are blaming right-wing Republicans for obstructing the package. According to de Onís, the aid package "now faces the risk of becoming an election year casualty."

Of course, if it wasn't an election year some other excuse would be found. The Sandinistas may not get any aid from the government that is fundamentally responsible for four decades of dictatorial rule, the death of tens of thousands of Nicaraguan patriots, and the devastation of the Nicaraguan economy. But they are certainly getting a fine demonstration of how the division of labor in the United States between Democrats and Republicans and the President and Congress works. □

U.S. Banks Put Squeeze on Nicaragua

New York's Citibank is "the type of bank that will try to squeeze the last drop of blood from a pigeon," says Alfredo César, head of Nicaragua's state finance corporation.

Citibank and two other large U.S. banks are blocking efforts by the Sandinista-led government to renegotiate payments on the country's foreign debts contracted during the Somoza dictatorship. Almost 90 percent of US\$500 million debt is due for full repayment in December. The Nicaraguan government has proposed to repay the principal over a period of at least twelve years.

According to *Latin American Weekly Report*, the sticking point in the negotiations has not been repayment of the principal, but the debt-service payments. Citibank has insisted that Nicaragua devote 30 percent of its income from exports this year to interest payments. The Nicaraguans have refused, saying that anything above 15 percent would conflict with the social and economic projects needed to reconstruct the country.

Eight dollars out of every ten in loans contracted by Somoza were from U.S. banks. Citibank alone loaned \$70 million to Somoza.

The sabotage by U.S. bankers of the negotiations between the Nicaraguan government and 115 foreign banks is part of imperialism's efforts to put the squeeze on the Nicaraguan revolution. Until the debt is renegotiated, the Nicaraguan government cannot obtain needed short- and medium-term loans on the private international capital market. This makes it more difficult to finance the social and economic projects that the Sandinistas are carrying out to improve the living conditions of Nicaragua's workers and peasants.

In this situation, the Nicaraguan government has been limited to loans from international financial agencies and foreign governments.

This drives home the importance of demanding that the major world capitalist powers copy revolutionary Cuba's example by providing aid to reconstruct Nicaragua—free of charge, and with no strings attached.

Results of Literacy Campaign

Nearly half a million Nicaraguan workers and peasants have been taught to read and write during the course of the five-month-long literacy campaign organized by the Sandinista government. Nicaragua's illiteracy rate has been reduced from 50.2 percent—among the highest in Latin America—to about 12 percent, second only to Cuba. The revolutionary government hopes to reduce illiteracy to 4 percent within the next three years through ongoing educational projects.

The literacy campaign was carried out by some 180,000 full-time *brigadistas*, and 40,000 part-time "urban literacy guerrillas." Total cost of the campaign was \$20 million, half of which was met by foreign aid.

The World Council of Churches and the government of the Netherlands gave the largest single contributions—US\$2 million each. Another \$250,000 came from the West German Social Democratic Party, and \$600,000 came from the German Protestant charity *Brot für die Welt*. The U.S. Agency for International Development donated seventeen four-wheel-drive vehicles, and the Soviet government loaned Nicaragua two helicopters and gave two tons of pencils and paper.

Afghanistan—A Revolution Misled

[The following two interviews on Afghanistan are taken from the July-August issue of *MERIP Reports*, published in Washington, D.C., by the Middle East Research and Information Project.

[The first is with Feroz Ahmed, an editor of *Pakistan Forum*. As a supporter of the Afghan revolution, he visited that country in 1979 on the invitation of the Afghan government.

[The second interview is with an unidentified Afghan Marxist. It originally appeared in the March-April issue of *Pakistani Progressive*, and was edited and excerpted by *MERIP Reports*.]

* * *

Question. Could we begin by asking your assessment of the April 1978 revolution in Afghanistan?

Answer. We in Pakistan were quite surprised. We knew about the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), better known there as the Khalq.¹ We knew that there were leftist formations in Afghanistan, but we had no idea that they were so well organized, or in a position to stage a coup d'etat. At first they appeared to be well organized and secretive. We learned that they had formed cells within the army, at the very top level, who were willing to act on the orders of the party. But the timing, as we found out later, was not planned.

Now, with all the difficulties, many people say, "Well, if they were not ready, if they did not have a mass base, why did they act?" As you must have noticed, there wasn't any mass unrest when this thing took place. And, as we realize now, the Khalq Party did not have a broad mass base either. They were forced to act because the government of Daoud Khan was getting very close to the Shah of Iran and the West. SAVAK had become pretty active in Afghanistan, and Daoud was trying to carry out a purge of the leftists in the government.

A major leftist leader, Amir Akbar Khyber, was assassinated. His funeral was turned into a demonstration where from 15,000 to 30,000 people turned out—very impressive considering the politics of Afghanistan, where there is no tradition of mass rallies. Daoud, feeling threatened, arrested most of the PDPA leadership. The cabinet was to decide the fate of these

people: Obviously there would be executions. The choice was either to let themselves be slaughtered, or to act to seize power.

They could not have succeeded had they not done some work in the army and had they not had organization, discipline and some command structure. A progressive political force in that situation should not have done anything differently. The problems came later.

The party had many cadres, in the civil service, in the army, capable of running ministries and departments. The shortage of competent cadres was not a very big problem for them. On that point, I think they were pretty well situated.

Q. It has often been said, though, that they lacked cadres in the countryside.

A. Yes, this is correct. This party was an urban phenomenon; politics had been confined mainly to Kabul. Both factions of the PDPA, the Khalq and the Parcham, are urban-based, and Parcham almost exclusively so. Khalq had made some attempt to go into the countryside, but not with much success. A lot of the cadres of rural origin were school teachers, trained in the urban areas, who went back to the countryside as teachers. When they were recruited in the Party, they were brought back into the city.

It is very ironic that their links with the rural masses were very weak, they didn't have cadres among the masses, they didn't have mass mobilization of the rural area, but they recognized that their main problem was breaking what they called feudalism. This meant land reform, abolition of usury, and changing a number of cultural and social practices, zeroing in on those things which directly affect the rural population without having the wherewithal of implementing it.

When land reforms were announced and implemented, it was mainly by city people: party cadres, government functionaries, youth organization people. They were going out in the countryside and demarcating the lands, telling people this land belongs to you. They had a lot of difficulty. The masses didn't know them. What would happen after they left to go back to the cities? A feudal system is very entrenched, and is all-encompassing. It is not just a question of ownership, it's a whole system in which credit, patronage, all these things are tied up. If you break one major link, then the whole chain gets upset, and you must be ready to handle all the problems

arising out of the disturbance you have made.

The Khalq Party was not in a position to do that. Many peasants were not convinced that they should have land. I can't say that this has been the reaction of the majority of the peasants; there has been a lot of enthusiasm about the land reforms which I have witnessed. But some young people who went out in the countryside to carry out land reforms later told me that sometimes they would go and give a document to the peasant and say "This land belongs to you." The peasant would be embarrassed and say, "No, how can we do that? This is *khayanat* [usurping someone else's right or property]." Many peasants *did* feel it was their right to have the land, but what after they get the document? They had been dependent on the landlords for management, for seed, for implements, for marketing credits. When the landlords struck back, there was nobody to protect the peasants. And the same sort of thing is repeated with the implementation of other reforms.

Abolition of usury was a very popular measure: Millions of Afghani peasants and city people were indebted to money lenders, their properties were mortgaged. When the government issued its proclamation writing off debts and ending usury, this had a liberating effect and was welcomed by the people. But the Party and the government were not able to mobilize the people against the reaction of the vested interests and usurers. They relied on state power rather than on people's power.

You change the whole equation of power by carrying out land reform, and abolishing usury. You must have people's power to sustain that kind of change. The PDPA did not lack support. I am witness to that. In the early months of the revolution there was massive support for the Khalq Party, anywhere from 80 to 90 percent of the people. And what they were doing was in the interests of the people. What went wrong was the failure of the Party to comprehend the contradictions in the rural sector, to understand their own social structure in order to mobilize the masses and contain the counterrevolution.

Q. What is the reason?

A. I think there are a number of reasons. First, the party was fairly young, formed in 1965. Only 13 years later they took power. Second, this was an extremely backward country where politics were confined mainly to the royal family, to an urban elite, with a delicate kind of relationship between the central power in Kabul and the peripheral power of the rural aristocracy. There had been only a brief period of legal political parties. There wasn't any great tradition of holding mass rallies and mass education. Politics was confined to a very select group of people.

Third, we're talking about a society

1. Khalq (people) is a popular term for the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. It is also the name of one of the two main factions within the party.—IP/I

that's overwhelmingly agricultural and nomadic and where tribal structure still persists. With this kind of revolution you are trying to take the state to places where it did not exist before. In the process you alienated a lot of people who enjoyed a kind of regional or tribal autonomy.

Among the factors which determined this shape of the Party—its youth, its urban and elitist bias—was the character of their political education. In a certain way it was quite impressive, but it was based almost entirely on the available texts of Marxist-Leninist classics in Persian and Pushtu, and translations of works by Soviet scholars. There has been very little indigenous analytical work, a real dearth of analyses of the concrete social and political situations in Afghanistan.

Unless you know your country very well—know the geography, the political complexity, the social structure, the class structure, the political dynamics—things are going to be very difficult. This party did not know that much about its own rural society. In fact, some peasant workers across the border in Pakistan looked at developments with great frustration, because they had tremendous experience in working among the peasants. They used to say, "If only they would leave this area to us for three months, we'd show them how land reforms are carried out." They had the experience of mobilizing people, of taking the people along.

Another phenomenon is that in a number of third world countries you have political parties which have very nice sounding names and claim to adhere to a certain ideology, fighting for national lib-

eration, or Marxism-Leninism. Their pronouncements sound fine. One assumes that if they say all these things, there must be a very high level of political consciousness, a total acceptance of the ideology, its values, its esthetics, its ethical code. But, in reality, we have a very schizophrenic kind of situation. In their self-development they have not internalized the values that are associated with the given ideology, such as socialism. They talk about a collective interest, collective property, collective awareness, and yet you find that collective ideals have not really sunk in. Traditional ideas are so strong that even when the very future of the revolution is at stake they cannot curb tribal or individualistic instincts. Factionalism and individualism have done great damage to the Khalq Party. The individual ambition of some Party leaders did irreparable damage to the revolution and to the Afghan people.

The majority of Afghans are Pushtuns, and among them, in some areas, tribal structures may have vanished, but the values still persist. One of the values among the Pushtuns is what they call *badal*, the vendetta. If somebody has harmed or killed one of your family, a brother, a father, or son must dedicate the rest of his life to taking revenge. And if there is no one in the immediate family, then some relative must do it. If there is no near relative, then one of the villagers should do it. But you must redeem yourself with a vendetta.

This *badal* was so highly valued among the leaders of the Khalq Party that once they got power a lot of them became trigger-happy, and they thought that this was their opportunity to settle old scores. I

know of a number of instances in the countryside where state terror was unleashed against people simply because some Party members were on a vendetta.

Q. There have been a lot of purges within the Party. Would you explain this in the same manner?

A. There have been some political differences. The PDPA, soon after its formation in 1965, divided into two factions: Khalq was led by Nur Mohammed Taraki, and the Parcham faction by Babrak Karmal. Babrak and the Parcham people characterized their revolution as a national democratic revolution. They felt that they should have a broader alliance of patriotic and non-Marxist forces, and that the immediate tasks of the revolution were not socialistic, so they must form a broader alliance. They also thought it was necessary to cooperate with Daoud Khan, when he took power in 1973. Khalq was not in favor of cooperating with Daoud Khan and probably was not amenable to forming broader alliances.

There were also certain personal differences, which often took a political coloring later on. One of the differences, political and personal, centered around the role of Hafizullah Amin. Amin had been a student in the US and returned to Afghanistan after the PDPA had been formed. He was not among the top leadership, and was not a member of the Central Committee that was elected in 1965. When the differences between Taraki and Karmal were emerging, Amin supported Taraki at a critical point, and Taraki depended a lot on Amin.

Amin was a very intelligent person, an organizer, a very shrewd politician. Amin was assigned the job of working in the army, and there he created a lot of cadres. Even outside the army, a lot of civilian cadres whom I know thought very highly of Amin. So Amin had created a very strong position for himself within the Khalq faction. When the two factions merged again in 1977, they had developed along different paths for a period of time. New members had joined each faction; a number of people had been promoted. Amin was in the top leadership of the united party, without being really accepted at heart by Babrak and some other people.

After Taraki, Babrak and others were arrested, Amin had a golden opportunity. He had the contacts in the army. It depended mainly on his presence of mind and his wits whether he called the shots or just let it go. Amin acted. He ordered the cadres in the army to seize power. Amin felt that everybody who was now sitting in the government owed their power to him. It was he who organized these cadres in the army on behalf of the Khalq faction; it was he who ordered the seizure of power. Had he not done that, everybody would have been wiped out. He considered himself to be the real heir to power.



Peasants celebrate land reform. But early enthusiasm for revolution soon waned because of regime's bureaucratic approach.

I do not have the facts, but one can speculate as to what may have happened then, a few months after they had taken power in April. In July a purge started, mainly of the Parcham faction. First, Babrak Karmal was not only a ranking leader of the party, but a respected, veteran politician, probably the top-notch parliamentarian in the country. He was shoved off as an ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Others from the Parcham group were appointed ambassadors, some were demoted.

Then the Amin group cooked up a conspiracy story, that the Parcham people were plotting to overthrow Taraki. A number of people were arrested, like Abdul Qader, one of the military leaders who staged the coup in April, 1978. He was incarcerated, along with Sultan Ali Keshtemand. The whole Parcham faction was eliminated; only Suleiman Laiq was kept, for ceremonial purposes, and he too was removed later on.

Q. Could you help to clarify the relative positions of Taraki, Amin, and Karmal in the Afghan state apparatus from April 1978 through December 1979?

A. After April 1978, Taraki was President of the Revolutionary Council, Prime Minister, and Secretary-General of the Party. Karmal was First Deputy Prime Minister and Vice-President of the Revolutionary Council. Amin was Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. In July and August 1978 the Parcham was purged. Karmal was demoted and sent out as ambassador to Prague. Amin then became, in effect, the number two man in the regime, without a change in his official titles. But all the while he was consolidating his position. Then, at the end of March 1979, Taraki relinquished the post of Prime Minister to Amin. On July 27 Amin also became Defense Minister and Secretary to the Central Committee of the Party. Meanwhile, Watanjar was removed as Interior Minister, and later he and others in the Afghan "Gang of Four" who supported Taraki were purged. By the summer of 1979 Amin controlled the whole state apparatus.

Q. What was the Soviet Union doing through all of this?

A. Afghanistan had always been very crucial to Soviet security. Afghan governments have always been friendly to the Soviet Union, and more under Soviet than Western influence. Things were going very well for the Soviets. I don't believe they had any part in staging the 1978 coup.

When the Khalq took power they said, look, we are not only friendly to the Soviet Union, but we are also socialists. We are your ideological buddies. So the Soviet Union was faced with a fait accompli and had to support them; it gave economic aid, and as the insurrection started, military



Noor Mohammed Taraki

aid. While the Soviet Union was committing itself to the survival of this regime, developments within the government and the Party were not to its liking.

Karmal and the Parcham faction were closer to the Soviet Union than the Khalq faction. Amin was mainly responsible for this first dagger in the heart of the revolution, the purge of July and August 1978. The Soviet Union apparently carried on with business as usual. Amin and the Khalq faction purged the Parcham, and the Soviet Union continued to help them.

As Amin grew more isolated he became increasingly more repressive, carrying out purges within the Khalq, overreacting to the resentment in the countryside. The Soviet Union and every other sympathizer with the Afghan revolution were quite disturbed by these things. And yet, the Soviets had to continue supporting Amin.

Then came the overthrow of Taraki in September 1979. On his way back from Havana, Taraki stopped over in Moscow for consultations with the Soviet party leaders. He reportedly concurred with them that the Party must start a campaign of reuniting: the Parcham people should be taken back; the decimation of Party ranks must stop; the insurgency must be handled more sensibly. When Taraki tried to remove Amin, Amin overthrew him. If the accounts now being published are correct, Taraki died on October 8 or 9, after being overthrown on September 16.

For three weeks it was clear that Taraki could not survive. And yet, nobody was able to save him. Could it be that the Soviet Union was forced to support this regime and any leader that came to power within the party unconditionally? Because what followed has jeopardized Soviet interests and the Soviet image very much.

Q. We can assume the Soviets knew the score in Kabul throughout this period?

A. I have no doubt at all. They had advisers working closely with the Khalq

leadership. I think it must have been quite apparent to anyone in Kabul. Let me tell you about the experience I had, when I visited Kabul in March 1979 as a journalist, at the invitation of Taraki. While I was there, he had no time to see me. All the time he was off performing ceremonial functions, cutting ribbons, that sort of thing.

Now, Amin was also busy, but he was busy piloting various rules and decrees through the Revolutionary Council. There was a politbureau meeting at the time. Yet Amin gave me a full hour of his time. I wasn't at all prepared to do an interview with Amin. His retinue came complete with tape recorders and photographers and I said, "No, I am not going to take the interview." I was still hoping that I would be able to interview Taraki. So I told Amin I would like to have an informal chat with him for my own education, to use in my write-ups. Amin was not very pleased that I did not take a formal interview, but I talked with him for one hour. I realized that he was a very ambitious man, who wanted to be seen as a strongman.

The way he fielded the questions was very condescending. I thought about him and what he told me: that this was a proletarian revolution completely, that he didn't share power with anybody. My God, he was proud of the fact that they were not sharing power with anybody, that they had such a small base. They should have been disturbed that they didn't have anybody to share power with. And this guy was priding himself in the fact that the Khalq faction alone was ruling, and that was the proof of proletarian power. The Khalq Party represented the proletariat! I was quite amazed.

I was very impressed, negatively, by my meeting with Hafizullah Amin. When I came back to Pakistan I did not write about my real impressions of Amin, but I told my close friends. Everybody wanted to know if I had met Taraki. I said no, and I had to explain why. I told them Hafizullah Amin was the real ruler, not Taraki. And I told them that Amin was consolidating his power, placing his people in the important positions in the secret service, police, army, party, everywhere. And I said, "You will see that Amin will overthrow and kill Taraki." On March 21, I said this to my colleagues in my office. In September it happened.

I could also see how the consolidation of Amin's power was narrowing the base of the revolution and alienating the people from the party and the government. I could see this negative correlation: the ascent of Amin and the descent of the revolution. So when Amin came to power, and people asked me what I thought would happen to Amin, my impression was that Amin would not last for more than a few months.

Q. How was Amin eliminated and how

did this fit into the Soviet intervention?

A. It seems clear that the Soviets did not want Amin to be killed. From their perspective, this would only undermine the legitimacy of their intervention and lend credence to Western propaganda which claimed that they went in, overthrew a legitimate government, shot the president and installed their own puppet. But given Afghan traditions and the widespread hostility towards Amin, the Soviets were concerned for his safety. According to one story, they assigned a Soviet general to insure his protection. When Afghan troops and tanks arrived at Amin's residence, the forces assigned to protect him were overwhelmed. The Soviet officer, Lieutenant-General Victor Paputin, Soviet Deputy Minister of Internal Security Affairs, was recalled immediately to Moscow to answer for his failure. He is said to have committed suicide on his way home.

This immediately complicated the story. But it does not mean that the Soviet intervention was unilateral. The Parcham and the majority of the Khalq wanted to overthrow Amin. In that sense the Soviet intervention was welcomed by many. But the story legitimizing the intervention had to be changed. Babrak Karmal has put out at least two quite different stories himself.

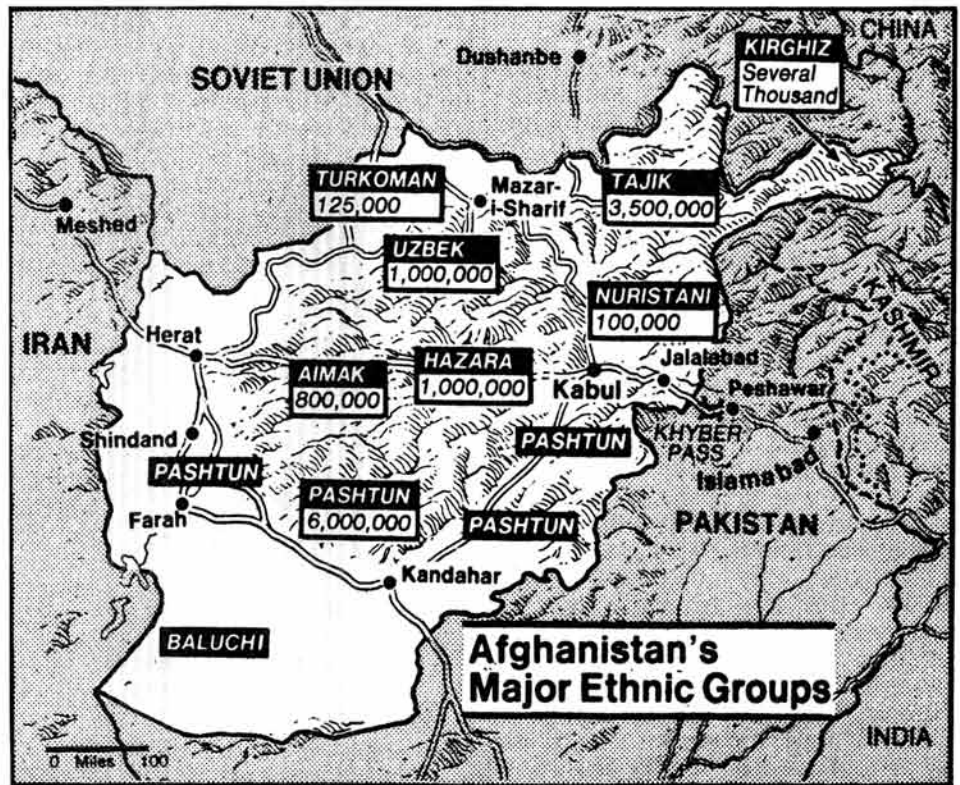
The first claimed that Babrak had arrived in Kabul two weeks before the intervention, a secret meeting of the Central Committee of the PDPA was held, it was decided that Amin was a tyrant, and Amin was removed as President. Then the new government headed by Karmal invited the Soviet troops to come in.

Later on it was said that the Soviet intervention was a result of invitations from the government of Amin. There is more basis for this story than the other, since Amin had asked for more Soviet involvement and it had been the Soviets who had held back. But obviously the propaganda war has been lost decisively here.

Q. Soviet advisors have reportedly taken a very prominent role in the day-to-day operations of the government. Is that your impression?

A. I don't know the latest situation. You must understand what has happened during the last two years. The Party has been decimated. A lot of people have been liquidated physically, and factionalism still persists. There must be great demoralization, and I would imagine there is a real dearth of reliable people for many offices. With the coming of the Soviet troops, the alienation has increased and so there are even fewer people to trust. When you trust fewer and fewer people, you are likely to take more and more into your own hands.

Q. In the Western press there has been a parallel suggested between Afghanistan and Viet Nam, on the grounds that the



fighting has been very favorable to the rebel forces.

A. I don't know exactly what the military situation is now, but I imagine that it has worsened, because the presence of foreign troops is never liked by the local people. The counterrevolution, the right-wing opposition, the archreactionaries, they have found some legitimacy. Now they can say that they are fighting for the liberation of their occupied homeland. They have probably acquired considerable sympathy and support among the Afghan masses. Also, there is a continuous supply of military goods, financing, and other things coming from across the Pakistani border.

Before the Khalq government began to do things wrong, or to handle the reforms wrong, a Pakistani-planned infiltration and sabotage operation had already begun, as early as middle of 1978. The first base for training, the first camp for training Afghan rebels, was established only a couple of weeks after the revolution. The infiltrations began a few weeks later.

Q. Who was behind it?

A. Pakistan, China, reactionary Arab governments, and possibly the United States. At first the US was not visibly involved, but it is more active now. The Chinese have been active right from the first day. Arab reactionary governments have given recognition and aid. In that sense the counterrevolution has become stronger, and the Khalq government is in a very shaky position. But, and I would say this categorically, it is not Viet Nam.

Even in the event of a military defeat of the regime, it would not be a Viet Nam. The only parallel is this: There are foreign troops.

In Viet Nam you had an unpopular, puppet regime that suppressed the rights of people, protected the vested interests of a handful of people, and prevented reforms. What you had in Afghanistan was a well-intentioned government with a progressive ideology, with a program of reform and progressive measures, wanting to bring about enlightenment in their society, to return the land to the peasants, to have mass literacy, to free the women from their shackles. It was a progressive government, and nobody has misread that. The Afghan people have not misread that. Given an opportunity, with the insurrection subsiding, you would find that the cadres still have enthusiasm, they still want to go out and carry out the reforms which would benefit the masses.

You also have to look at the other side, at the insurgents. In Viet Nam the freedom fighters were fighting to end feudal oppression and exploitation, to bring about justice in the society, to develop an independent economy. Who do you have fighting in Afghanistan? I don't know if Western people can understand the term "ultrareactionary." They are not fascist in the Western sense; they are medieval. They kill their hockey team. They're absolute barbarians. They are opposed to the regime because it was bringing about literacy. They are opposed to literacy, they are opposed to the abolition of usury. They don't even pretend to stand for anything enlightened, anything good for the people.

They don't even claim it. Land reforms are bad, and un-Islamic, literacy is bad and un-Islamic, abolition of usury is bad. You know, usury is condemned in Islam. The Khalq government had abolished usury; they had done something very Islamic, and yet these people opposed the abolition of usury. These are medieval people, who are criminally exploiting the name of Islam.

Q. How would you say Islam as a political force has affected the situation in Pakistan and has that been influenced by developments in Afghanistan and Iran?

A. In Iran there was an Islamic movement, religious leadership of the masses against a tyrannical regime, giving them legitimacy, a moral sanction, justifying the struggle, and articulating the struggle against oppression and exploitation in Islamic terms. Especially in Shi'i Islam there is a belief in the righteousness of the oppressed, and the virtue of fighting the oppressor. It had a very liberating influence.

In Pakistan it was exactly the opposite of this—the pseudoreligious parties using the name of Islam to justify oppression and military dictatorship. So when the people of Pakistan hear about the movement rising in the name of Islam, or religious leaders leading that movement, they become very suspicious. There is very little sympathy for the Iranian revolution in Pakistan. When they see bearded mullahs leading the country, they are immediately reminded of the corrupt ones, the champions of oppression who have sold themselves for a few bits to the military dictator. They have a very bad image of mullahs, and the masses of Pakistani people hate the mullahs, the political mullahs especially.

The Pakistani people sympathized with the Afghan revolution and were opposed to the rebels who were using the name of Islam. When the Iranian leadership made pronouncements in support of the Afghan reactionaries, this simply reinforced the Pakistani people's prejudice against the Iranian revolution. So you see there are three neighboring countries, and Islam is having a very different influence in each.

Q. Prior to the revolution, was there any progressive current within Islam in Afghan politics?

A. Hardly. There has been a very reactionary current, which is identified with the name of Mullah Shor Bazar. He led the rebellion against King Amanullah in the 1920s, with British help. They carried out massacres, and tried to undo all the reforms and the progress which had been made under Amanullah. They even ripped out the railway tracks that had been laid. They broke the printing shops, because they thought education was bad.

One of the successors to Mullah Shor

Bazar is one of the leaders of the present rebel alliance, Sibghattollah Mujadidi. He may be an American citizen. He was in Washington and announced the formation of his organization here, in the US. Then he went to Pakistan. He has not been in Afghanistan for a long time. These people have a tradition of collaborating with imperialism, working with the vested interests within their own country, against modernization, against reforms, against any popular measures. There hasn't been any progressive religious movement in Afghanistan.

Q. What has been the impact of the events in Afghanistan on the left in Pakistan?

A. When the Khalq revolution took place, the left in Pakistan was overjoyed. They were seriously demoralized by the failure of the mass movement in Pakistan and the execution of Mr. Bhutto.² There was gloom and anguish in Pakistan. All of a sudden—this was five or six weeks after the high court had passed the verdict against Bhutto—came the Afghan revolution. There was a feeling of great solidarity from the masses of people, not only the left. The centrist People's Party—right from the village-level cadre to the central committee—was mostly sympathetic to the revolution. It was a source of strength for us. Even those representing the different nationalities in Pakistan—the Pushtuns, the Baluch, the Sind—this was one thing which united the left, center and the nationalists.

Q. What is their assessment of subsequent developments?

A. It is crystal clear that the trouble in Afghanistan was initiated by the Pakistani regime, and then compounded by the mishandling of Hafizullah Amin and the Afghan government. Both of these factors, I would say, are very important. But, in the long run, it is always the internal factor that is more important.

When the Soviet troops came, that step was welcomed in Pakistan. The lines are drawn. On this side you have Zia ul Haq, the Afghan rebels, imperialism, the Chinese, who are all perceived as enemies of the Pakistani people. On the other hand you have the Khalq regime, supported by the Soviet Union. Because the Soviet Union supports the Khalq, and is opposed by Zia and his supporters, the Soviets are viewed as friends.

Q. So the role of China and the reactionary Arab governments in supporting the insurgency in Afghanistan has also been

2. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the head of the Pakistan People's Party, was prime minister of Pakistan from 1971 to 1977, when he was overthrown by a military junta headed by Gen. Zia ul-Haq. Bhutto was sentenced to death the following year and executed in April 1979.—IP/I

affecting politics in Pakistan?

A. There had been, as far as the Arab countries are concerned, some sense of brotherhood, particularly with Saudi Arabia. People tended to respect the Saudis as the *pasban-i haram*, the guardians of the holy places. But their role became so transparent when Bhutto was executed and people realized they supported Zia ul Haq, the enemy of the people. A lot of Pakistanis who have worked in Saudi Arabia have told their relatives and friends things that shake their confidence in the Saudi's brand of Islam. With their alliance with Zia ul Haq and the Afghan rebels, they have lost any popularity they had in Pakistan.

Sympathy with China was of a patriotic nature. China was a friend of Pakistan, an enemy of Pakistan's enemy, India, and an enemy of the Soviet Union, which was friendly with India. China was seen as a revolutionary country which stood up for oppressed nations and peoples. There was a very positive image of China in Pakistan. At the ruling class level, they saw China as a friend, without ideologically sympathizing with it. But the masses first were attuned to China as a progressive, popular regime, a revolutionary society. The Pakistani left was ideologically impressed by China. It was very comfortable to be a pro-Chinese leftist in Pakistan, and most of the left in Pakistan was pro-Chinese, but no longer so.

Q. Was your political formation also sympathetically disposed towards China?

A. I was not a classic pro-Chinese. I was nonsectarian; I was never anti-Soviet. But the internal developments in China impressed me, and I thought that we had more to learn from the example of China, a poor Asian country. The model of their development I found very impressive. But later on I was very much disturbed by their foreign policy. I think I am fairly representative of the trend in Pakistan now, which is very critical of China.

Q. These events which have shaken the whole region—the revolution in Iran, the revolution in Afghanistan—what is their impact on the political balance of forces in Pakistan today?

A. I think that the counterrevolution in Afghanistan has strengthened the right in Pakistan and it has adversely affected the left. The region of Pakistan where the left is most influential are the regions which border Afghanistan. And in these very regions these hoodlums, these criminals and murderers, masquerading as Afghan liberation fighters, have been let loose. They side with the right-wing elements, with the landlords against the peasants.

Q. When you say "side with the landlords" it is not clear how persons coming from the outside, living in a separate camp

and so forth, are able to have a direct impact.

A. First of all, they are there in large numbers. You see, these people are not trapped in camps. They move around and they've got guns. They are going into business. Some of them have brought their cattle, their sheep. They are competing with the local people for grazing grounds, for housing. Some of them brought a lot of money with them, and real estate prices have shot up in Peshawar. They are the only ones who can afford to buy a house in Peshawar these days. They speak the same language—a slightly different dialect, but essentially the same language. They belong to the same nationality, the same ethnic group. They mix with the local population, they carry guns, they try to intimidate the local people. There have been many armed clashes with the local people. The biggest of them took place in a place called Pishin, in Baluchistan province, where there was a gun fight between local people, local political cadres, and these *gusanos*. They were forced out of that area.

Q. Is there any effort to clean out some of these other areas?

A. You see, now they are a mass force, and the Pakistani political parties are all banned, with no right to issue statements, no political rights. And these people are allowed to operate politically. It's like if in the United States you ban all political parties and let Cubans come and organize politically, or the Mexicans come and have parties and headquarters and hold press conferences. It's that kind of situation in Pakistan. The Pakistani political parties have no right to engage in politics. A dozen Afghan rebels groups have their headquarters, they are holding press conferences, their people are carrying arms where Pakistani citizens have no right to carry arms.

Q. Surely then the mass of the population in a number of regions in Pakistan has a very immediate material reason to be opposed to the Afghan rebels, whose presence is disrupting their own society and in many ways making life more difficult for them.

A. Yes. There have been more than a dozen places where there have been armed clashes—in Zhob, in Quetta, in Parachinar where two of the Afghan base camps are, and in the Kaghan Valley. There a number of places in the frontier provinces, and the tribal belt adjoining the frontier province, where there have been clashes, and the local people have been publishing appeals in the newspapers to the government, "For God's sake, take these people off our backs," telling how they are taking over their homes, their women, their grazing grounds, how they are intimidating them with their guns. They have been unwel-

come, right from the beginning.

Poor Pakistanis have no employment opportunities, and these people come and they are paid money every day, food and rations and cash allowances, and then guns. So it is not just the Afghan rebels who are seen as reactionaries. Even some of the people who were forced to leave as real refugees—Hafizullah Amin did create real refugees, refugees who fled from real state terror. But there is no sympathy for them. And especially when the rebel groups say that they have captured 70 percent of the country and 80 percent of the country. Then the Pakistani people at once retort: "Then why don't you go back to Afghanistan if 80 percent of it is liberated?"

All of their claims are mostly exaggerated or completely false. The claims of liberation and also the government claims of refugees are highly exaggerated. In Pakistan you have a crooked government, a government of free looters, plunderers, crooks. Like Zia ul Haq—I am using this word with utmost care—he is a crook.

Q. It has been claimed that there is a connection between the developments in Afghanistan and the very sharp rise in heroin in the United States, and particularly in New York City today.

A. I don't have any concrete evidence on the Afghan side; I know only one thing. A lot of these early so-called refugees who came from Afghanistan and crossed into

'The Resort to Arms Was the Final Mistake'

Question. What were the circumstances leading to the April 1978 Communist takeover in Afghanistan?

Answer. There was lack of unity within the upper class because of the nature of Afghan society after 1955. The royal family gained control of the state machinery through the large infusion of foreign aid. The bureaucracy became the center of economic activity both through direct employment and by providing connections to do business. Given the fact that revenues were largely not derived from local sources, the state did not have to take into account the demands of the local classes. The landowning class, the merchant class, and the intelligentsia were not allowed to develop political organizations.

Though the coup of 1973 was a continuation of the power of the monarchy, it was sitting on an institution which was out of its control. By bringing in junior army officers to the top ranks, the coup essentially disrupted the bureaucracy.

By paying lip service to a number of reformist and outwardly left-oriented programs, the regime alienated its traditional allies in rural Afghanistan. The land reform, which on paper limited landownership to 100 jerbis (50 acres) was a crucial

Pakistan were criminals: usurers, smugglers, and opium peddlers. And they are engaged in narcotics traffic on the Pakistani side.

Q. What do you think is the major task ahead for the Pakistani left?

A. I think the challenge to them is great, not only of solidarity with the Afghan revolution, but also of fighting their own rulers who have lost legitimacy completely. The army itself is no longer seen by the people as a necessary institution; it is seen as a burden. The mass of people are opposed to the government and they want to struggle and yet we have not succeeded in mobilizing this discontent of the people: it is economic discontent, it is political discontent, it is ideological discontent. Yet a commensurate response has not developed. It could very well be a lag period. It may take some time for things to come together. But certainly, if the army does not retreat, if it does not hold elections for Parliament, then the confrontation will be very serious. And that would have a tremendous effect on that entire region. Pakistan is strategically very important: it borders India, Iran, Afghanistan, China; it is close to the Soviet Union; it is at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. I'm sure if an upheaval takes place there, outside powers are not going to keep their hands off completely and let things develop their own way. So there are grave dangers involved as well. In that sense I think the responsibility of the left is even greater.

step in that direction.

Q. When was this land reform introduced?

A. On paper it was in 1976-77. Although the law stipulated compensation for land acquired, the reform totally froze patterns of economic interaction regarding land. The merchant class was already acutely aware of the fragility of state institutions, and large amounts of capital had begun to flow out of the country around 1973.

Q. What was the land and social structure in the rural areas in the 1960s and 1970s?

A. There was an extreme degree of inequality in land ownership. Afghanistan had over 15,000 villages with an estimated population of 13.3 million. Out of this just over 1 million owned land or herds. A significant degree of mechanized agriculture emerged between 1964-76. Access to tractors was limited by the minimum requirement of 100 acres of land owned or controlled by the purchaser and one-fifth of the price of 500,000 Afghani* required

*Afghanistan currency. US\$1 equaled 90 Afghani in 1964, and 50 Afghani in 1975.

as down payment. Most of these tractors went to five of the 18 provinces—Kandahar, Helmund, Balkh, Pakhtia, and Ghazni.

In this period we see the development of the local market, and its integration with the regional market. Northern Afghanistan, by this time, was producing sugar beet and cotton, most of the latter being exported. Mechanization brought increased wheat production.

The pastoral nomads along the Russian and Chinese borders were also integrated into the national market and travelled 1,300 kilometers to cater to the rising demand for meat in the urban centers. The demand for labor-intensive commodities such as fruits also rose, especially since Iran became a major importer of Afghan products. Prices in Iran were considerably higher than in Pakistan, the traditional importer of such products. The emergence of Iran as a food and labor-importing area accelerated the capitalization of agriculture and resulted in further concentration of landholdings.

Q. Is the export of workers a new phenomenon in Afghanistan?

A. At least since the 1840s the dispossessed peasantry has been integrated into a long-distance migratory network in the Indian subcontinent, until the 1960s when the Pakistan government put a stop to it. Migration was essentially seasonal. Most areas in southeastern Afghanistan had hundreds of migrant laborers in British India, and later in India and Pakistan. One of the most interesting contributions of Taraki was a novel describing the migrant worker and what was essentially seasonal labor gangs in British India. The labor force falls into two categories. First, nomads who have lost their herds and form the rural proletariat. Second, small landowners and peasants who can no longer make a living from their land. The second category now forms the bulk of the seasonal migrant force.

Since 1973 the direction of labor flow has shifted from the subcontinent towards the Persian Gulf—Iran, but more significantly, the Arab countries. The migrants were remitting large sums of money and land-

ownership was undergoing tremendous fluctuations in this period. By this time the rural elite had invested their resources in sons, who were joining the bureaucracy.

Q. Can you talk about industrialization and urbanization?

A. Industrialization is virtually nonexistent in this period. In 1977 we had 174 units of industrial production which employed a total of 36,743 male and 1,462 female workers all over Afghanistan, including the gas fields in the north and the fertilizer factories.

Urbanization, therefore, has been largely restricted to the growth of the bureaucracy, concentrated in Kabul. The size of the civil service in the 1960s was about 60,000. This was achieved primarily between 1955 and 1963, the same period as the peak flow of foreign aid into Afghanistan, Russian and American. In that period less than 100 students were graduating from college annually and were immediately being absorbed into the bureaucracy. After 1963, the number of graduates regularly increased while the number of opportunities fell. In 1977, 14,562 students graduated from high school. Out of these roughly 80 percent were not finding jobs; only 2,609 students went on for university education.

More significant is the composition of the student body and the bureaucracy. From the 1860s, Persian-speaking Kabulis dominated the bureaucracy. Beginning with the 1930s, but especially from the 1950s onwards, rural participation increased. In 1977, more than two-thirds of the university population were living in dorms. They came from rural areas.

Q. What was the role of the merchant class? What was its relationship to the state?

A. Since 1929 it provided the bulk of state revenue, until it was replaced in this role by foreign aid in the 1950s. The merchants were concentrated in Herat, Kandahar, and Kabul. The class as a whole came to the fore with the creation of the National Bank of Afghanistan in 1934, which was given monopoly privileges over the import of essential items like sugar, petroleum, gas, and over the export of

things like Karakul pelts and carpets.

Q. Did the Marxist movements arise from within the reformist intelligentsia?

A. It was essentially through the intelligentsia. A number of its members participated in earlier democratic movements. Babrak Karmal was a leader at Kabul University while he was a law student. He was jailed for six years for participating in the movement for democratic demands.

Q. To what extent was the rise of a socialist tendency in Afghanistan a result of external influences, and to what extent was it a product of the situation in Afghanistan?

A. We have to differentiate the ideological proclamations from the social content. The content itself was very Afghan. The structures were built up using existing kin, ethnic, and linguistic ties. But the ideological message was derived from foreign sources.

Q. When the Khalq and Parcham parties emerged after 1965, what other major political organizations existed outside the state apparatus?

A. There were the Afghan nationalists (Millat) demanding the northwest of Pakistan. There were several Persian-speaking anti-Pushtun groups. A Maoist group emerged from the descendants of Dr. Mahmoodi.

Q. Can you tell us something about the class and ethnic background of the army?

A. In the nineteenth century, the Shiite and Persian-speaking region was very prominent in the army. From the 1940s the army tried to recruit graduates of the urban high schools. Around 1946-65 urban Afghanistan had become a source of discontent, so recruitment shifted to the rural areas. There was a very dynamic relationship between the central state and the rural power structure, which was not always in opposition, nor always in alliance.

Q. What about the ranks?

A. Till 1963, most of the areas which had fought in the 1929 civil war on the side of the man who became king were exempt from conscription. Northern Afghanistan was heavily recruited. The regions of Kandahar and Jalalabad were also recruited. After 1963 the state gradually started recruiting from the areas previously exempted but earlier privileges were not completely removed. For instance, the state did not force the issuing of identity cards for these regions.

Q. What is the validity of the statement that the Pushtun nationality has continually dominated Afghanistan?

A. The royal family was Pushtun ethnically, but none spoke Pushtu. The lan-



Soviet armored personnel carriers in Kabul.

guage of the bureaucracy remained Persian and the Pushtuns saw the state as Persian rule over them. The first time the state really became Pushtun was in 1978.

Q. What was the extent of Pushtun participation in the state apparatus?

A. Initially, given the location of high schools in Kabul and the small number of Pushtuns in Kabul, the movement of Persian-speaking people to upper echelons of the bureaucracy was very great. A significant number of Pushtuns were also incorporated throughout but their participation was not on their Pushtun basis. To protect the image of a "civilized" ruling class, most of the Pushtuns who came to Kabul up to the 1960s became Persianized.

Q. What impact did sources of foreign aid have on the domestic scene?

A. Daoud was in the process of getting significant sums from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, as well as some from Libya. So in place of the US he was trying to bring in the Gulf and oil-rich countries, i.e., the Islamic lobby. But that required a rapprochement with Pakistan.

While Daoud did not want to sever relations with the Soviet Union, in order to ensure the flow of aid from the Islamic countries he had to make changes in the bureaucracy. He dismissed a number of officers who had popularly been associated with the left and started curbing local left forces, which he thought were his creation.

In 1955-56, the opposition Daoud faced was very weak and did not have significant foreign backing. In June 1977, after uniting with Parcham, the Khalq Party openly circulated rumors all over Kabul that in case Daoud decided to attack them, they would respond.

Q. Did Daoud know of the presence of Khalq officers in the army?

A. Oh, yes. But he had been the past master at making alliances and then turning on his allies. This time his allies got the better of him because of other problems—unemployment, repression and discouragement of political organizations of other classes and forces which could have led to a social democratic phase. The most crucial step in this direction was getting rid of Hashim Maiwandwal, who had been Prime Minister from November 1965 to October 1967. Subsequently, he emerged as one of the major leaders of the opposition. In 1973 he was jailed, accused of attempting a coup. Later it was announced that he committed suicide, although he probably died under torture. Maiwandwal represented the kind of force which could have made an alliance with Daoud, but at that point he was no longer there.

Q. What were the immediate factors

which precipitated the Communist takeover in April 1978?

A. Mir Akbar Khyber, editor of the PDPA newspaper, and a member of PDPA's central committee, was assassinated. A huge funeral march took place. A large number of women also turned out. Despite warnings by the state, most leaders of the PDPA, including Taraki and Karmal, delivered strong speeches at the grave site. The same evening Daoud arrested the first batch of PDPA leaders. Hafizullah Amin was arrested the next morning but by that time he had passed on the plan for the coup to the army officers.

Within 24 hours a group of army officers from the 15th Brigade, located about 15 kilometers from Kabul, marched on the Republican Palace and the airport with 10 or 15 tanks. Some young officers took over the air force and started bombing the palace. Two divisions which resisted were wiped out. Taraki claimed that there were 236 casualties. Rumors place it as high as 5,000. It was a bloody battle, but brief.

Q. What was the nature of the Khalq's reforms, and what steps were taken to implement them?

A. There were essentially three types of reforms. One cancelled all peasant debts acquired through usury. The second one eliminated brideprice and reinstated the symbolic but paltry sum payed in early Islamic times. The third was the land reform. The maximum amount of land allowed per family was 30 jeribs (15 acres) of good quality land. Confiscated land was redistributed free to the local peasantry—sharecroppers who had been working on the land, landless from the same village, and then landless from neighboring villages. Most of the implementation, with some irregularities, here and there, was accomplished. In the abolishment of usury the effectiveness was much less. And when we come to brideprice, the degree of tension must have been phenomenal. The effectiveness of the latter was not very significant.

Q. What do you think led to the failure of the Afghani Revolution, in spite of its well-intended reforms?

A. First, the nature of the party which came to power. It was neither a collection of professional revolutionaries, nor did it have an adequate awareness of the realities of Afghanistan. Most had joined as a result of the general, society-wide discontent, but none of these forces had any precise plan of action. They were capable of taking over the city of Kabul, which is quite easy, but to control the rest of Afghanistan was beyond them.

The principal mistakes were: (1) the strong degree of financial and ideological dependence on the Soviet Union, (2) an obscured vision of the realities of rural Afghanistan, and the rural classes, (3) lack

of a clear program of action among the Party leadership, (4) lack of discipline, and the degree of corruption within the Party, since most of them had personally been underprivileged before coming to power, and (5) total lack of control over their immediate families, who exploited their kin ties to the leadership exactly as members of the royal family had done.

Never was the bureaucracy so unrestrained, because there was never so much underwriting of its position from abroad. As soon as strong resistance began, Afghan rulers of previous periods would have to contend with very strong forces since they had to maneuver within the class structure. This time Soviet bombers were there to defend the socialist revolution, but the revolution wasn't socialist. It wasn't a revolution. They started with a strong base of support of about 80 percent of the population, but they effectively disrupted that base and turned it into very strong hatred that will take years of conciliation to overcome. I think that the responsibility has to be shared jointly by the PDPA leadership and the Soviet advisors. There is no way in which the hands of the Soviet advisors can be washed of this whole affair.

Q. What led to the erosion of popular support?

A. The majority of Afghans were overjoyed, and for a couple of months there was no opposition, except from the rural elite. But the revolutionary forces which existed were not mobilized.

I think the alienation of the population started in Kabul. The regime started putting a tremendous number of people in jail. Part of the land was redistributed but the other things went to Party members. The houses seized from the comprador bourgeoisie, the large merchants, or the old bureaucrats became private residences of the new bureaucrats. Cars seized from landowners and bankers were used by the sons and daughters of the new bureaucrats.

Secondly, there was a very strong show of force by the state when rural discontent began. If two people fired on them, they bombarded the whole village. The resort to arms was the final mistake.

Q. Amin seems to have really gained effective power in late spring or early summer of 1979 when he became Prime Minister.

A. No. He made all key appointments and was in charge of the Secret Service from the very beginning. Within three months of the coup, Amin had obtained control of the Ministry of Defense. Even before that, through 1976 and 1977, Amin was in charge of the heavy recruitment from the army. The break between Parcham and Khalq came precisely because Amin was not willing to share information

regarding Khalq membership in the army.

Q. So Taraki's elimination in September 1979 represents not a change of effective policies but the removal of an element which would have brought changes in Amin's policies?

A. Yes. Taraki was a restraining hand and an eventual authority of appeal for more orthodox Khalqis who were adhering to the traditional Leninist path of separation of the Party and the State. There had been agitation on their part. A number of *shabnameh* (night letters) had been circulated by them demanding that Taraki divorce himself from Amin and take over state institutions, or resign.

Q. Do you see any differences between the Parcham and the Khalq wings of the PDPA in terms of their social background, their ideology, or their programs?

A. It has to do with the ethnic/linguistic identity on the one hand, and the class background of the Parties on the other. The royal family, though historically Pushtun, was no longer participant in Pushtun culture and was totally based on a Persian milieu. In the earlier phase, all educational institutions were controlled by Persians, as was Kabul University. By the 1970s, the graduates from rural areas who spoke and were proud of Pushtu were bringing back the language as an effective means of establishing their identity. The Khalq Party used that cultural discontent and translated it into Party membership. The Parcham Party did agitate for the issue of Pushtunistan, having a network across the border with the National Awami Party in Pakistan, but was socially not part of the Pushtun milieu. Most of its members were urban and Westernized. They came from established bureaucratic families, including a significant part of the top membership. Ideologically, the differences were not that great.

Q. We do hear, for instance, of Parcham's opposition to some of Amin's harsher measures.

A. Yes, but they were affected by those measures. They intimately knew members of the class those measures were aimed against. It was not an opposition to measures that affected the social existence of the peasantry but to those affecting the urban milieu, particularly the intelligentsia.

Q. Why do you think the Soviets moved in when they did?

A. The main reason was the fragility of the regime both due to its internal weaknesses and due to the opposition. Amin's family was becoming established at the top as the key decision-making unit, with himself at the core. It would probably not have collapsed within a month or two, but the discontent certainly would have



Afghan guerrillas.

spread. The Russians didn't particularly like Amin, but they were even more frightened of what might replace him unless they took things into their own hands.

Q. Can you distinguish between various tendencies in the opposition?

A. In rural Afghanistan it is basically taking a cultural form based on the historical ability of Afghans to resist earlier penetrations, and is reinforced through poetry, songs, ballads. In the urban bases it has taken a democratic form. For the moment the pressure of the regime is directed against the latter. Some of the earlier figures of the period of democratic struggle have been resurrected in *shabnameh*, which are widely circulated. And, of course, there is a degree of class resistance from former landowners, bureaucrats, the religious elite.

The Islamic groups represent a number of diverse social tendencies. There is the petty bourgeois, educated Islamic right—the Hizb-i-Islam—which sociologically has exactly the same composition as the Khalq Party. It had been nurtured by Bhutto's regime in Pakistan for use against Daoud.

Secondly, there is the more established religious aristocracy, which comes through the movement of Mujadidi: theological in nature but having fundamental links with the former royal family. Its members are scattered all over the world, but especially in the US and France.

Thirdly, there is the group of Sayyid Ahmed Gilani (National Front of Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan), which represents the more moderate wing around which merchants, the disaffected intelligentsia, and a significant section of the rural elite are coalescing. While also Islamic, it represents a more liberal force.

There are various other smaller groups representing other tendencies in the coun-

try. Most of these groups are structurally similar to the Khalq and Parcham. Probably the most urbanized ideological force is the Hizb-i-Islam, which also has a considerable degree of military training.

Q. But, numerically, Gilani's group is supposed to be the largest.

A. Yes. He was the leader of the Qaderi order in Afghanistan, which gives him some stature. However, in rural Afghanistan there has been very strong resistance to the type of Islamic fundamentalism which they propose. In some rural areas, the local leaders of Hizb-i-Islami were very clearly insulted and told to pack up and leave—that the peasants had never followed mullahs and did not intend to follow them now, and that they had their own institutions to deal with the situation.

Q. Babrak Karmal's regime has made some conciliatory statements and gestures, and at least talked about some compromise with the opposition. Why the lack of success in such attempts?

A. The release of political prisoners eased the situation with respect to the urban scene and reassured the families of the bureaucracy and the intelligentsia. The regime has reinstated a number of old bureaucrats from the periods of the monarchy and Daoud, and given them positions of influence. These were the people who were not ideologically dependent on the old regimes but had technical ability. So there seems to be a desire to check the total lack of restraint regarding the bureaucratic process.

The lack of success stems partly from the total dependence of the regime on the Soviet Union and partly from the strong hand of other powers in the politics of the region. The Western camp has found a perfect issue in Afghanistan for its rhetoric. The pouring in of some money and some arms will keep the upper stratum of the Islamic opposition fairly rich with bank accounts in Europe and the US.

However, the presence of the Soviet Union also disrupts the internal process of conciliation. Conciliation is capitulation when an army of 60,000–100,000 enters a peasant country which has practically no means of defense against the sophisticated war machine.

There is also the effect of regional politics. The Afghan peasantry has witnessed a successful mass Islamic revolution against a superpower in Iran, and a very reactionary type of Islam in Pakistan backing these Islamic groups. The combination makes it very difficult for people to associate with the regime. In addition, the last two years have brought about a total disruption of the rural economy, so that people are being forced to recreate patterns of solidarity that had been more or less undermined previously by economic and political processes. □

What Alternative for Czechoslovakia?

By Petr Uhl

[The following document is by Petr Uhl, a leading Czechoslovakian civil rights activist and Marxist dissident. For his role as a leader of the civil rights movement Charter 77, Uhl was sentenced in October 1979 to a five-year prison term, which he is serving in the notorious Mirov prison fortress.]

[This document was written in 1978 and circulated within Czechoslovakia in samizdat form. It is part of an essay entitled, "Program for Self-Management," to be included in Petr Uhl's book *Le Defi* (The Challenge), scheduled for publication in France later this year.]

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Unless I add an introduction focusing on some of my political ideas on the nature of the social system in Czechoslovakia and its possible evolution, my views on independent forms of social organization will not be entirely clear. These political ideas will be developed in greater detail in a work that I am co-authoring, which is not yet finished due to other pressing activities. Certain parts, moreover, have been outdated by the events of the past two years.

Some of my comrades and I hope that the political development of Charter 77 and the evolution of the situation in Czechoslovakia itself will allow us to express our ideas publicly.

Given the condensed character of these notes, the risk of erroneous interpretations can be counterbalanced by a certain familiarity with the intellectual heritage of the still weak revolutionary Marxist movement that is now struggling to defend its right to exist in Czechoslovakia.

1. From an economic point of view, the social system we are living under could be defined as bureaucratic centralism, and from a political point of view we could call it a bureaucratic dictatorship. This system is based on the revolutionary destruction of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois political system.

Nevertheless, the social revolution was not carried to its conclusion; it was deformed, basically through the influence of Stalinism. In the political and economic realms, it presses down on workers more than capitalism and bourgeois democracy ever did. Capitalism and Stalinism, which are experiencing a temporary stability, do, in fact, have certain features in common: They control social production. They administratively organize both labor and social life in its entirety. They maintain

workers in a social position in which they suffer alienation and are politically and economically expropriated.

But despite these similarities, the foundations of the capitalist system and the system of centralized bureaucracy are entirely different.



PETR UHL

2. The principal class contradiction lies between the ruling centralized bureaucracy, based on the bureaucratic hierarchy, and the various classes and strata that form the working population.

3. The basic social contradiction lies in the conflict between the nature of labor on one hand and the forms of control over the means of production and the distribution of the social product and consumer goods on the other.

Decisions concerning the productive forces, the means of production, investments, and consumption are made by a small layer of bureaucrats at the top, who rest on a hierarchical bureaucratic structure, while the workers, who produce the wealth, are completely removed from any decision-making. There is thus a conflict between the social nature of labor and the dominant position of the social layer that makes all the decisions concerning labor.

(There are several different theories on this. According to one of them, the bureaucracy is an organic whole that functions as an overall exploiter, running the state-owned—that is, non-socialized—means of production as a collective owner.)

4. A coherent analysis of the social

relations (the relations between different social groups in the economic, social, and other realms) throws light on the two pillars on which the bureaucratic dictatorship rests, totalitarianism and centralism. It also highlights the system of authority (the relations of domination and subordination and the forms of paternalism). But it would be superficial and dangerous to confuse the totalitarianism of a Stalinist bureaucracy with a dictatorship produced by entirely different social and productive relations.

5. In Czechoslovakia, the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship and bureaucratic centralism were established on the Soviet model. As is the case throughout the Soviet bloc, the bureaucratic center in Czechoslovakia is subordinate to Moscow, where the regime expresses not only the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, but also the interests of the various national bureaucracies.

The Czech bureaucracy and its center do not simply follow orders from above; despite differences and frictions, current relations are based on collaboration. The Soviet army in Czechoslovakia is only an instrument of last resort, and does not exercise a direct influence on policies.

6. From a historical perspective, we can consider the period through which all the peoples of Eastern Europe are now passing as a transitional phase between the overthrow of capitalism and the emergence of socialism, the first phase of communism. The dead-end of Stalinism, which has been accompanied by a violence unequaled in the history of humanity, is not a road that other countries of the world must necessarily travel.

7. The dilemma confronting the bureaucracy—and one of the sources of the crisis of bureaucratic rule—is the contradiction that exists between the need to maintain the status quo, which guarantees maintenance of the bureaucracy's dominant position, and the need to make social changes imposed by society's development, especially in the economic and cultural spheres. Such changes are necessary if the bureaucracy is to resolve the growing economic and social contradictions. They are thus vital to the maintenance of the bureaucracy's central control and power.

8. The system of bureaucratic centralism cannot be reformed within the framework of its own institutional structures. (These institutions include, in particular, the apparatus of the Communist Party, the unions, the affiliated organizations, the youth groups, the national committees and representative bodies, the government and

the presidency, the bureaucratic structures of economic management, the police, the army, the courts, the education system, the mass media, the censorship apparatus, etc.)

Minor reforms within the existing framework have a certain significance, among other reasons because they encourage the development of critical attitudes and opposition tendencies and because they provide the semblance of a structure that is independent of the state. But by themselves, such reforms have definite limits, since all democratic or liberal reforms in the economic, political, and cultural spheres run up against the system's antidemocratic foundation and threaten the bureaucracy's authority.

That is why the bureaucracy curtails—or forcibly suppresses—those reforms that could provide a solution to the basic social problem. Thus, any attempt at reform contains within itself a revolutionary dynamic, in that it unmasks the illusory character of a reformist approach and fosters the emergence of a revolutionary consciousness.

9. Although their pace and depth vary from country to country, contradictions are sharpening in all spheres of social life. At a certain point, all the countries of Eastern Europe will confront the need to overthrow the dictatorship of the bureaucracy.

Even if the destruction of bureaucratic rule takes several months, the social transformations will radically affect all political institutions, in some cases by overturning the existing institutions, in others by destroying them completely. That is why it is correct to call this political transformation a *revolutionary process*.

10. The antibureaucratic revolution is above all a political revolution.

Freeing economic development from bureaucratic shackles will have important effects on the relations of production and will complete the revolutionary process begun in 1945-48, that is, it will complete the socialization of the means of production. However, this transformation will not destroy any class, because the bureaucracy cannot be described as a class, but a social layer. The revolution thus cannot be defined as a social revolution.

This process will also be a cultural revolution—above all in its effects, a cultural revolution that will change relations between people and the relations between people and things.

11. A revolution necessarily presupposes violence, but that does not mean brutality or terror if the revolution is well organized.

Revolutions do not happen as a result of the exhortations of revolutionaries or the indoctrination of the masses. They happen when the people are determined to wrest power from the hands of those who hold onto it by force and confront the violence through which those in power keep the whole society under oppression—an oppression of incomparably greater violence

than the violence the oppressed will use.

Revolutions happen when the people can no longer accept the "normal" degree of oppression, a point usually reached when the rulers have no more solutions to social conflicts, when those conflicts affect the interests of the broadest layers of the population, and when the ineffectiveness of the rulers is combined with brutality and terror.

The role of revolutionaries is to show the masses the best way to move forward. They can do this, for example, by trying to limit the use of revolutionary violence as much as possible and by firmly resisting the application of brutality and terror. But even if these are necessary for the victory of the revolution, they always carry the danger of degeneration within the revolutionary movement itself.

12. There are many variants that the revolutionary process can take, both within the country and internationally. The antibureaucratic revolution in Czechoslovakia can only hope to win if it does not remain limited to the confines of this country, and if it becomes a part of the world revolution.

13. History has shown that the tendency toward self-organization is inherent both in the anticapitalist revolution and in the antibureaucratic revolution, even though self-organization is not the sole framework for reorganizing social life. This tendency toward self-organization was seen during the prerevolutionary developments of 1968-69. And it will appear in the coming antibureaucratic revolution in Czechoslovakia, even if, at the same time, a parliamentary system or an entirely different form of government might also appear and become dominant for a time.

14. Parliamentarism signifies the domination of a leadership—directorates, presidium, political bureau, etc.—of one or several political parties. It does not pre-empt the development of direct forms of democracy, which are the means for achieving individual and social emancipation and an end to alienation.

A system of generalized social self-organization—and not only on the economic level—will make possible the development of direct and indirect forms of democracy.

A system of indirect (i.e. representative) democracy would be based on councils of workers and others, which are linked and coordinated with each other and joined together in a Supreme Council. It would replace the current system of legislative representation and executive authority. It would be a system of producers democratically organized on a territorial basis.

Many proposals have been put forward to prevent the bureaucratization and degeneration of such a system. These include the principle of immediate recall, the right of minorities to play an active political role, the rotation of posts, and a system of payment for representatives.

Indirect (representative) democracy would be reinforced by elements of direct democracy: referendums at the national and local levels, opinion polls whose results must be respected, the direct control of various affairs by organizations, and so on.

But a system of social self-organization is not an end in itself. It can only be advanced insofar as it guarantees an uninterrupted growth of direct democracy that predominates over the representative elements of democracy.

A system of self-organization thus presupposes political pluralism: political parties that would take something of the form of political clubs or movements and that would make their platforms known, but which would not dominate society as they do under the bourgeois democratic system.

15. Organs of self-organization in the workplace—strike committees, rejuvenated trade unions, workers councils—would first emerge in the crisis preceding the revolution. These bodies would then have to coordinate their activities with those of workers in other enterprises—on a regional level for trade unions—so that organs of self-organization playing a general social role could emerge.

The workers, and gradually other social strata, would have to take control of the entire military apparatus and rebuild it, based on the economic structures of the country. In this way, the professional army and police would be abolished.

Finally, it will be necessary for the organs of self-organization to go beyond the economic realm—in which they would be involved in organization and perhaps in the co-management of production—to become the centers of political power, with the goal of eventually destroying that power and allowing the appearance of more varied forms of social initiative.

16. The motor force of the new revolutionary strategy is to be found in society's contradictions: the already mentioned conflicts between parliamentarism and self-organization on the political level, and between technocratic and democratic tendencies on the economic level; the conflict between nationalist and internationalist conceptions; the differences in the systems of value and choice (particularly in relation to consumption and ecology); differences over questions of jurisdiction; problems of particularism between various groups of associated producers; and so on.

17. The road toward the future depends not only on the response toward living conditions and on the international situation, but also on the daily activities of each one of us. And that in turn is linked to our own abilities, our own understanding, and above all our own determination and desire to change the social conditions in which we live.

Our present social consciousness is a determining factor that will influence the course of future developments. □

French Fishermen Conduct Militant Strike

By Janice Lynn

Since early August, French fishermen have been conducting a militant strike that began in Boulogne, the country's main industrial fishing center.

Some 25,000 fishermen are locked in battle with the French government, which is refusing to grant their demands.

Involved in the strike are fishermen employed on the large commercial trawler fleets, as well as independent fishermen who have their own small fishing craft. The trawlermen are demanding that the government ban layoffs by the fishing fleet owners, and the independent fishermen are demanding higher diesel fuel subsidies from the government. In the past year, the cost of fuel has almost doubled.

The fishing fleet owners are trying to reduce crew sizes from twenty-two to twenty on the deep-sea fishing trawlers, and to eighteen on others—contrary to the provisions of the 1975 contract.

The August 22-28 *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, described the arduous working conditions of the trawlermen:

"In most cases, they put in a ten-hour day. The prescribed six hours rest is often cut in half. They remain at sea—away from home—twenty-four days out of the month. All this for wages of around 4,000 francs [about US\$956] per month."

On August 13, the country's fishermen threw their support behind the Boulogne trawlermen. For more than a week, nearly all of France's fishing ports, commercial ports, and even pleasure harbors were blockaded.

Then on August 21, the government used navy tugboats, equipped with water cannons and tear-gas grenades, to smash through the fishermen's blockade at the strategic oil port of Fos-sur-Mer (thirty miles west of Marseilles). The fishermen reimposed their blockade and twice more—on August 23 and 27—the navy broke through. The government also used tear gas and water cannons against fishermen blockading the second largest oil tanker port at Antifer.

The largest shipowning company, Compagnie Generale Maritime, estimated it lost \$1-1.5 million during the first week of the strike. France's largest port, Le Havre, claims to be losing \$1.2 million a day.

But the French government refuses to even discuss the fishermen's two main demands—higher fuel subsidies and no reductions in crew sizes. Instead, on August 27 the Cabinet vowed it would keep open France's oil and commercial ports.

France's two main trade-union federations have condemned the government's brutal use of force against the fishermen. On August 27, Georges Seguy, head of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), threatened to extend the fishermen's strike to dock workers, other sailors, and transport workers, if the government continued to use force against the fishermen.

The other main trade-union federation, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), urged the fishermen to continue their blockade "without fail and in unity." The CFDT represents 55 percent of the unionized fishing fleet employees, and 52 percent of the independent fishermen.

The article in the August 22-28 *Rouge* points out that one weakness in the strike has been the lack of a joint trade-union call by the two main union federations, whose leaders place factional considerations above the interests of the workers.

The strike has won some union support. Tugboat operators and dock workers participated in a twenty-four-hour solidarity strike August 25 called by the CGT that succeeded in re-closing the port at Fos.

In spite of the fact that France is bordered by three seas and has more than 1,925 miles of coastline, only a little more than half of the country's fish needs are met by the French fishing industry. The government wants to cut the number of commercial fishermen down to around 8,000 and increase the country's reliance on imported fish, most of it frozen.

Rouge comments on these government plans. "Dismantling the fishing industry would have serious consequences for jobs

all along the coast. [The French fishing industry accounts for at least 100,000 jobs.] Do the plans of the capitalists aim to transform the maritime coast into an area strictly devoted to the tourist trade, similar to what they did several years ago in the mountain areas?

"The defiant response of a trade, whose traditions of struggle and unionization have been rather weak (especially among the independent fishermen), shows that the government will have a hard time trying to carry out its plans."

On September 2 the striking fishermen spread their protest to Paris. Almost 1,000 strong they marched through the city streets as union leaders met with government officials.

As we go to press, the striking trawlermen were to be voting on whether to accept the compromise worked out between their union leaders, the trawler owners, and the government. The terms of the agreement were not available.

Although the agreement won the support of CFDT leaders, the CGT rejected it and urged the trawlermen to vote against it. Merchant sailors in the CGT held a solidarity strike with the striking fishermen September 3 that successfully affected all French Mediterranean ports.

In a September 3 television broadcast, French Prime Minister Raymond Barre warned that the country faced a period of "much political agitation," echoing the government's fear that the fishermen's strike may only be a foretaste of things to come.

If the fishermen reject the agreement, the government fears the strike could quickly spread to other industries.

The militancy of the French fishermen can serve as an example to other workers in France who also are being threatened with layoffs and face rising energy costs—part of the capitalists' worldwide offensive to make the working class pay for the anarchy and decay of their economic system. □



Angry French fishermen storm police barricades at September 2 Paris demonstration.