

Intercontinental Press

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Vol. 18, No. 40

October 27, 1980

USA \$1

UK 40p

British Labour Party Left Wing Makes Big Gains at Conference

**REPORT FROM
BLUEFIELDS:
FSLN Grapples
With Problems
of Nicaragua's
Atlantic
Coast Region**



Above: Typical housing in Bluefields, on isolated Atlantic Coast.
Below: Billboards announce literacy and health campaigns.



Assassins Strike at Jamaican Leaders

By Ernest Harsch

Just a week after Prime Minister Michael Manley announced that the general elections in Jamaica would be held on October 30, a top government official was assassinated by right-wing terrorists.

Deputy Minister of National Security Roy McGann was shot and killed early on the morning of October 14, along with one of his bodyguards.

McGann's death brought to nearly 500 the number of Jamaicans who have been killed since the beginning of the year in an orchestrated campaign of right-wing terror—backed by the U.S. government—to oust the Manley regime. Much of the violence has been directed against supporters of Manley's People's National Party (PNP) or against residents of Kingston's large working-class slums.

The McGann murder, however, has added a new element to Washington's destabilization plan—the selective targeting of key government and party officials. McGann was the first government official ever to be assassinated in Jamaica.

Just a week earlier, on October 7, Manley himself was the victim of an abortive assassination attempt while he was campaigning for the PNP. On the same day, in a separate incident, Minister of National Security Dudley Thompson was also shot at.

The attack on Thompson, who is a leading figure in the left wing of the PNP, has followed an especially vicious propaganda campaign against him by the pro-imperialist Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) and the right-wing *Gleaner* newspaper, both of which have accused Thompson of being a tool of the Cuban government.

Much of the right-wing violence in Jamaica has been carried out by armed JLP thugs.

The assassination attempts and the JLP's terrorist actions are designed to heighten the sense of insecurity among Jamaicans and to intimidate supporters of the PNP regime. The aim is to dissuade voters from casting their ballots for the

PNP, as well as to prepare the groundwork for a possible proimperialist military coup.

This effort to topple Manley is directly backed by Washington, which is hostile to the Jamaican government's close ties with Cuba and to some of the social measures that it has carried out. To replace Manley with an openly proimperialist regime, the National Security Council earlier this year put into action a destabilization plan, similar to the one that led to the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile in 1973. American reporters, citing sources within the State Department itself, have confirmed the existence of the plan.

At least fifteen CIA agents are known to be operating out of the U.S. embassy in Kingston, making it the largest CIA station in the Caribbean. Many JLP leaders, including party head Edward Seaga, have close ties with U.S. government and business circles. Seaga, who has promised to ease restrictions on foreign companies operating in Jamaica, has received large amounts of money from U.S. sources for the JLP election campaign.

In conjunction with the frequent attacks by JLP gunmen, there have also been an increasing number of terrorist actions involving police and military forces.

In late September, for instance, a high school teacher was murdered by JLP thugs in the Jones Town section of Kingston. Rather than going after her murderers, the police began harassing the students at the high school, and troops even staged a show of strength by descending by helicop-

ter onto the playfield. The National Union of Democratic Teachers condemned the murder, and also the "widescale intervention and harassment by the Security Forces into the Jones Town Community, which is a PNP stronghold."

The story was similar at the Nyerere cooperative farm in East Hanover, where most of the farmers are PNP supporters. After the farmers informed the police of a series of attacks by local right-wingers, which began in mid-August, the police and troops started staging daily raids on the farm, kicking down the doors of houses and beating up youths and members of the local defense guards.

Such incidents point to the very real danger of a right-wing coup. There has already been at least one abortive coup attempt, in late June, when twenty-six officers and soldiers were arrested, along with several ultra-right political figures.

The attempts by the JLP and sectors of the military to intimidate the population has not prevented PNP supporters from mobilizing in the streets. Some of the election rallies for the PNP have been quite large. When Manley announced the dates for the election at a rally in Montego Bay October 6, an estimated 150,000 persons turned out to hear him.

The Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ), which is supporting the PNP campaign, held a series of rallies in Kingston, Lucea, Savanna la Mar, and other cities to begin mobilizing opposition to a possible coup. At one large rally in Kingston on September 28, WPJ General Secretary Trevor Munroe declared that any coup attempt would be met by an "all-island uprising."

The people of Jamaica are today fighting for the right to choose their own government, free from imperialist intervention. In face of a concerted American drive to deny them that right, they now need the widest possible international solidarity.

U.S. hands off Jamaica! □

South Korean Students Protest Repression

By Janice Lynn

Despite the continuing repression in South Korea, popular opposition to military rule has not been crushed.

The October 10 Paris daily *Le Monde* reported that for the first time since the May insurrection in Kwangju—in which some 200,000 people demonstrated for an end to martial law and for the restoration of democratic rights—a demonstration was held October 8 in Seoul, at the Hankuk Theological Seminary. The demonstration was preceded by a religious mass commemorating the hundreds of victims who were massacred by the army in Kwangju.

The demonstration was broken up by police, 146 students were arrested, and the seminary was closed.

In the October 15 *Christian Science Monitor*, correspondent Mike Chinoy reported that demonstrations have also taken place in the southern city of Taegu.

And on October 17, some 500 students demonstrated at Korea University in Seoul, one of the largest universities in the country. They distributed statements accusing President Chun Doo Hwan of brutality in putting down the Kwangju uprising, and condemned the U.S. and Japanese governments for backing the Chun dictatorship. More than 500 riot police quickly swooped down on the campus, and arrested several dozen student leaders.

In Kwangju, *Monitor* correspondent Chi-

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noy reported, a secret trial is being held at an army base outside the city, involving 172 persons accused of participating in the May demonstrations.

Repeated protest rallies are held outside the army base where the trials are held.

The 172 have been charged with offenses ranging from disturbing public order to sedition. Most of those facing lesser charges have already been convicted and given jail terms of up to twenty years.

Thirteen of the defendants, all prominent Kwangju citizens, have been charged with sedition. They are accused of maintaining clandestine links with South Korean opposition figure Kim Dae Jung. Kim was sentenced to death September 17 on frame-up charges of "fomenting" the mass rebellion in Kwangju.

The thirteen defendants include Myong Ro Kuen, a professor of English at Kwangju's Chonnam National University; Oh Byong Moon, a former dean at the same university; the president and secretary-general of the Kwangju YMCA; two priests; and several well-known lawyers and academics.

Like Kim, the thirteen are accused of inciting the population of Kwangju to revolt, and face death penalties. This is all part of the South Korean generals' attempts to warn the country's people that if such respected figures can be given death sentences, then they should think twice before raising their voices in opposition to the regime.

Chinoy reported that armed soldiers continue to patrol the streets of Kwangju, military checkpoints are still stationed at the entrances to the city, and the network of police informers has been greatly expanded with an ongoing round-up of suspected dissidents.

"But beneath the surface," Chinoy stated, "Kwangju is bitter and tense. Posters hailing President Chun's recent inauguration were repeatedly defaced, and eventually had to be protected by armed guards. Copies of the government's just-published Constitution have been torn from local billboards."

Articles in this new constitution, which is to be put to a nationwide referendum October 22, confirm its undemocratic nature. The current National Assembly and all political parties are to be dissolved. A "special committee on national security measures"—dominated by the military—is to govern South Korea until a presidential election later next year. The president is not to be elected directly but rather by a 5,000-member electoral college.

The trial in Kwangju is not the only sign of the regime's continuing campaign to eliminate political opposition and consolidate its hold on power.

In recent weeks, several hundred young dissidents have been tried secretly in Seoul for participating in protest rallies last spring.

Kim Tae Hong, the former president of

the Korean Journalists Association, was arrested October 9 on charges of sedition and violating martial-law decrees.

Government sponsored "purification" committees have been established in factories, shops, churches, newspapers, and offices throughout the country. They are charged with rooting out all "impure elements." Thousands of people have been

forced from their jobs, expelled from schools, or detained as "hooligans" and sent to "reeducation" camps.

An international campaign in solidarity with Kim and all other victims of the repressive South Korean regime is essential to the defense of democratic rights in South Korea. □

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Intercontinental Press (ISSN 0162-5594). Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York each Monday except the first in January and the third and fourth in August.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y.

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Intercontinental Press specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, Black, and women's liberation movements.

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To Subscribe: For one year subscriptions in the U.S. or Canada send \$35.00 (41.00 Canadian dollars) to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for rates on first class and airmail.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia: Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208, Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to Socialist Books, P.O. Box 3774, Auckland.

Write for subscription rates to all other countries.

Subscription correspondence should be addressed to Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Please allow five weeks for change of address. Include your old address, and, if possible, an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408 Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408 West Street, New York, N.Y.

British Workers Push for United Action Against Tory Attacks

By Brian Grogan

LONDON—The decisions of the British Labour Party conference, held in Blackpool in early October, marked a change in the political climate in Britain. A major left-wing advance there sent Labour's right wing and the Tory press into paroxysms of fury. As the mass-circulation *Daily Mirror* headlined: "Fury as Benn and the left take over." [Tony Benn is the most prominent leader of the left wing in the Labour Party. See accompanying interview.]

It is somewhat of an exaggeration to say that the left wing took over the party. But the conference decision requiring members of Parliament to be reelected by the party before each election, and the decision to widen the franchise for electing the leader of the party, do raise the possibility of the left program that was adopted being implemented by a future Labour government.

Tony Benn accurately summed up these victories as "the rank and file beginning to control the party as opposed to the parliamentary leadership controlling the rank and file."

Left Program Endorsed

Decisions of a far-ranging character were adopted. The conference voted:

- To campaign for a thirty-five hour workweek with no loss of pay, and to resist all plant closures.
- To nationalize important components of British industry, and to renationalize any state-owned firms sold off by the Tories to private enterprises.
- To withdraw completely from the European Economic Community (EEC), the Common Market.
- To abolish the House of Lords, the unelected upper chamber of the British Parliament.
- To demand a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament and a massive cut in military spending.

What added to the meaning of this radical program was the accompanying constitutional changes. Although the attempt to get the writing of the Labour election manifesto taken out of the hands of the party leader was defeated, and adoption of a new procedure for electing the party leader was blocked by the right-wing trade-union leaders, the best that the right could come up with was another conference in January. This will be the third party conference in nine months. The debate in the unions, which had already been widespread before the latest conference, will now explode.

The decisions taken at the Labour Party conference will be seen by militants as a signal to fight back against the twin scourges of massive unemployment and galloping inflation that have been foisted on the working class by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Tory government. Militant workers will now expect significant backing from the Labour left and will see a good chance of imposing their demands on a future Labour government. A fightback on a broad scale now emerges as a real possibility.

The working class was initially stunned by the Tory onslaught, especially by the dramatic increase in unemployment. The number of jobless surpassed 2 million in August, for the first time since the 1930s. This was an increase of more than 20 percent in three months.

Major sectors of the work force, as in cars and steel, have been unable to overcome the misleadership of the trade-union tops and have been unable to fight back effectively against job cutbacks, closures, and short working time. Wage increases for major sectors of the working class have been held to less than half the current rate of inflation.

But it is now clear that the unemployment weapon has failed to break the combativity of the working class. A new mood of resistance is developing. That is what this Labour Party conference expressed and will tend to reinforce.

The Trades Union Congress (TUC—the central labour federation) had met a month before the Labour Party conference and adopted a similar radical program. But on crucial questions it managed to look both ways. It took a position both for and against wage restraints under a future Labour government. This wait-and-see attitude reflected the uncertainty of the TUC bureaucracy as to whether Thatcher's 2 million unemployed had seriously weakened union organization and combativity in the plants.

The TUC leaders remember how former Labour Party Prime Minister James Callaghan lost office in 1979 as a result of massive trade-union action against his austerity program, and they were not about to back Callaghan and the Labour Party right wing if the combativity of the workers was intact. The fight over democracy in the Labour Party reflected the refusal of the workers to tolerate another five years of austerity imposed by a Labour government.

The indecision of the trade-union tops, the tactical blunders of the Labour right

(threatening to split the party, refusing to attend leadership meetings because of the dominance of the left, etc.), and the greater rank-and-file participation in the Labour Party conference as opposed to the TUC meeting, enabled the real feelings of the working class to be expressed.

Working-Class Victories

A number of developments have shown that the working class, when given a correct lead, is not only prepared to fight, but also can win.

The first indication of this has been the victory over the proposal of the bosses to sack 178 dockers—the first step in attacking thousands of additional jobs. The bosses wanted to tear up a 1972 agreement under which they had been able to cut several thousand jobs in return for a guarantee of permanent employment for the remaining work force.

But in face of this aggressive action by the bosses, a national docks delegate conference was convened. It decided upon all-out national strike action, and forced the bosses to back down.

A less clear-cut but nonetheless important victory was also won by British Oxygen Company (BOC) workers. BOC has a near monopoly on supplying industrial gases to British industry. Faced with a threat of major redundancies at the Hackney plant in east London, which is known for its militancy, BOC workers put out a national strike call. Again the bosses retreated.

Two other struggles should be mentioned. The occupation by the work force of Gardner's, the second largest engineering plant in Manchester in the industrial Northwest of the country, against the redundancy threat to 590 workers has been decided upon. This could become a focus and inspiration to other factories faced with redundancies and closures.

In a second struggle, "lagers" (thermal insulators) have been engaged in a fourteen-month strike at the Isle of Grain power station over a vicious wage-cutting attack by the bosses. The "lagers" have led a determined struggle and have spread their fight to other disputed sites through the use of flying pickets. These current actions are in defiance of the new Tory antiunion laws that outlaw flying and mass pickets. The lagers have now determined on a national strike if the dispute is not soon resolved.

Developing Crisis for Tories

This new mood inside the working class

is causing big political problems for the Tory government. The Tories have deliberately made the economic crisis worse. The bosses have vigorously backed this policy, which has begun to hurt them, on the understanding of the need to rapidly create large-scale unemployment as a way of decisively breaking the organization of the workers in the plants.

The other element of the Tory strategy had not been successful either. This was the determination to make an example of the steelworkers. A crushing defeat of this carefully chosen target, they reasoned, would be ideal preparation for taking on more organized sections of the working class—notably the miners.

But a crushing victory was not achieved. Instead, this previously non-militant group of workers struck solidly for thirteen weeks and, although not achieving their full demands, settled for a 16 percent rise. The initial offer had been 2 percent.

Accordingly, the Tories have been forced to back off from any head-on confrontation with key sectors of the working class. Thus the massive 30 percent-plus wage claim of the miners is likely to be granted in large measure.

This has encouraged the miners to mobilize against any attempt to pursue the threat of pit closures. In South Wales, the area most effected, miners leaders have been touring the pits generating support for all-out strike action in the eventuality of any closures. Other groups of workers are watching this development closely.

This weakness of the Tory government is what Thatcher has been trying to overcome with the unemployment weapon. But this seems not to be working, and calls for a U-turn are being heard from all quarters.

A recent opinion poll conducted by the National Opinion Polls revealed that 51 percent of respondents thought that unemployment, not inflation, was the key issue facing Britain. But the government has sought to justify its policies by insisting on the need to fight inflation as the main priority.

A whopping 65 percent of those polled thought the Tories "were doing a bad job in tackling unemployment." Labour now holds an 11 percent lead over the Tories in the opinion polls—enough to give a landslide 150-seat majority to Labour in a general election.

Any serious fightback against the Tory attacks will throw the Thatcher government into complete crisis and open up the way to a major advance in the British class struggle. Such a possibility was reinforced by the Labour Party conference.

Emergence of Left-Wing Alternative

The significance of the Labour Party conference was heightened by the emergence of a left-wing alternative to Callaghan that coalesced around the figure of Tony Benn.

Benn was a member of the Callaghan



The Labour Party's stand against nuclear weapons in Britain comes in the context of a growing protest movement in the streets.

cabinet in the last Labour government, which presided over a tripling of unemployment to 1.5 million and cuts of more than £8,000 million in welfare services. However, after leading the fight for constitutional change at the Labour Party conference in 1979, Benn has steadily distanced himself from the record and policies of the last government.

Prior to this year's conference, Benn publicly campaigned for the changes that the conference adopted, and he coupled them with a left program—the so-called Alternative Economic Strategy (AES). This program was adopted in its essentials this year by the TUC and then by the Labour Party Conference. It was Benn who moved the party's National Executive Committee proposals that were summed up at the beginning of this article.

Benn has actively sought support in the unions. His most enthusiastic supporter is Arthur Scargill, left-wing leader of the militant Yorkshire miners, recently elected to the TUC General Council, and almost certain to be the next national leader of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Scargill has accompanied Benn at a number of major rallies.

In addition, Benn has spent a year meeting with regional committees and district officials of the 1.2-million-strong Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW). This has culminated in his participation in rallies with the left-wing presidential candidate in the AUEW, Bob Wright.

Benn, moreover, is the undisputed choice of the constituency parties—the local branches of the Labour Party that are based on individual membership and that are dominated by the left.

As a supporter of abortion rights for women, Benn played a prominent role in the successful campaign to defeat restrictive legislation earlier this year. At the Labour Party conference, Benn came out in favor of self-determination for the Irish people and a "policy of withdrawal" of British troops.

Benn's strategy appears to be to capture all the activists committed to extraparliamentary actions as part of his battle to win union backing for his leadership bid. Such a bid now becomes a serious option with the decision to extend the franchise beyond the narrow confines of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The direction in which Benn will be able to take this left wing depends on the evolution of the class struggle. Benn is by no means committed to mass action and is not prepared to contemplate anything other than parliamentary methods to bring down the Thatcher government. His whole perspective is based on a program that will be implemented by the next Labour government after the Tories have been allowed to run their natural course.

Indeed, at the very heart of the AES is the class-collaborationist proposal for solving unemployment through import controls. The whole thrust of his politics is to "save Britain from the Tory wreckers."

Such an approach is inimical to the independent mobilization of the working class.

But a fight alongside the Benn supporters is the best policy for socialists to adopt today. For the decisions of the Labour Party conference will help to blow Benn's strategy to smithereens.

The call for unilateral nuclear disarmament has been made in the context of a developing mass action campaign to prevent the basing of U.S. cruise missiles in Britain. A mass demonstration and lobby marched to the Labour Party conference as a way of influencing the deliberations of its National Executive Committee.

The issue of nuclear weapons is wracking the industrial unions and is becoming decisive in the division between left and right. Tens of thousands of demonstrators are expected to take to the streets against nuclear weapons on October 26.

Similarly, the vote of the Labour Party conference to campaign for a thirty-five hour workweek and to resist all plant closures also comes in the context of real struggles on this issue.

Trade-union demonstrators will rally outside the Tory Party conference on Oc-

tober 10 demanding the "right to work." The construction section of the 2 million-strong Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) has called a one-hour strike at building sites to coincide with this protest.

A national demonstration against unemployment has been called by the Labour Party for the northern industrial city of Liverpool on November 29. Meanwhile, the TUC is calling a series of regional conferences to discuss action against unemployment. It is in this context that the Gardner occupation is taking place.

Mass action against the government's welfare cuts is also developing. A national conference has been called by the Labour-led London Borough of Lambeth for November 1. This is likely to attract several thousand delegates from the Labour and trade-union movement. The platform motion is for complete resistance to the Tory cuts, including through industrial action and civil disobedience.

The main leader of this movement, Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight, received a standing ovation for his call to action at the Labour Party conference. The delegates backed Knight against attempts by

the Labour conference leadership to reject support for the Lambeth conference. When the delegates were given the opportunity to back mass action, the will was clearly there.

Finally, support for women's rights is growing in the unions and the Labour Party. Last year the TUC, in an unprecedented action, gave its support to the struggle against attempts to restrict the right of women to abortion. It sponsored a demonstration of 40,000 in London in October 1979. Now, the TUC has decided to call a conference for November to discuss the fight for affirmative action.

It is in this context of growing joint action against the Tories by the Labour Party and the trade unions that Benn has made his move. This opens tremendous opportunities for socialists who place the fight for such united action in the center of their activity. This is the best way to ensure that the Tory attacks—which will intensify in the next period—are answered, and to prevent continuous retreats from eventually taking their toll on the combativity of the working class.

October 9, 1980

Interview With Tony Benn

The Labour Party 'After 20 Years of Silence on Socialism'

[The September 25 issue of the British weekly *Socialist Challenge* featured an interview with Tony Benn, the most prominent member of the Labour Party left. The interview, conducted by *Socialist Challenge* writers Pat Kane and Hugh Richards, sheds further light on the important developments in British politics discussed in the preceding article. Below are excerpts from that interview.]

* * *

Question: What do you think of the chances of success on the three issues on democracy at the Labour Party conference?

Answer: I'm not in the business of counting the votes. One thing that I'm pretty sure about is that if the delegates who come to the conference—the trade union and constituency delegates—had an absolutely free vote themselves on all these issues, there would be overwhelming support for the three changes. I've little doubt about that.

But, of course, it's not quite as simple as that. You're dealing with the way the trade union vote will be exercised. My own belief is that this argument has been won in the minds of active people, but that is not the

same as saying that it will produce an immediate electoral victory for those who hold that view.

Whatever happens at conference we mustn't get hyped up on Blackpool 1980. The campaign for democratic reform will take a very long time.

Mandatory re-selection seems the most likely issue to succeed, since it has been going on now for nine or ten years. The other ones are in an earlier stage of development. They will all be won before the decade is out, and I would think before the next five years are out.

Q: What effect do you think this will have on the party itself?

A. I don't believe institutions of themselves solve problems, because institutions without analysis, or without campaigning or all the rest of it, can become empty vessels.

But if you have, as you do have within the Labour Party, a genuine socialist party that has been trying to get out for a long time, then if the institutions are blocked this is never reflected on the parliamentary side, or indeed on local government. If you can clear the blockage out of the way

the party would be what it is, a genuine socialist party.

I've never had any doubt that it does contain the genuine instrument for socialist transformation in Britain.

That is the way that clears the blockage, but what comes through the pipe depends on what there is at the active end of the party.

Q: Do you support the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee?

A: The Liaison Committee was set up in good faith, and it took us 2½ years to set it up.

In 1970 the unions didn't want to know the Labour Party, the parliamentary party, after all the things that had happened. Finally, we got it set up in February '72, nearly two years after the election, and I think that the original concept of the Social Contract—the phrase has come to mean wage controls—but the original concept was of a joint programme for the transformation of our society by collaboration between the unions and the Labour Party.

1. Trades Union Congress (TUC), the central union federation.—IP



Tony Benn: His fight for leadership of the Labour Party is widening the opportunities for revolutionary socialists.

There was never any reference to wages in it, and even in the October '74 manifesto there was a phrase which I drafted myself which said that the Social Contract is not solely nor primarily about wages, it is about a change in society.

As the manifesto was ditched and reversed by the Labour government so increasingly we got back to the old scenario, that it was all due to the trade unions, and the thing ended up with a rigid 5 per cent pay norm.

But there is no reason why that should be the case. As Bob Wright² said, people would make all sorts of sacrifices for socialism but not for our present social structure. I think that's quite right.

It's a pity the term Social Contract has been lost because in its original formulation it was absolutely correct. It is an essential element for another Labour gov-

2. Bob Wright is a left-wing official of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, currently challenging incumbent right-wing official Terry Duffy for the top position in the AUEW.—IP

ernment in its work of transformation. Without it you are in difficulties, and I wouldn't like to see the Labour Party and the trade unions become separated.

By that I don't just mean contacts between Cabinet members and the TUC General Council. It has to be an integration of activities right down the line to workplace branches and all the rest of it. The relationship has become very centralised and that's one of the strange reasons why the trade union leaders are supporting the Parliamentary leaders against the rank and file.

Q: There's a move to democracy within the Labour Party. Shouldn't that also apply to the trade unions?

A: I think the two go side by side. Frankly, unless you win the argument in every trade union as well as in the Labour Party you'll be frustrated when it comes to the exercise of the vote at the Labour Party conference.

I think that process is already underway, and it will intensify and become more

urgent if at this year's conference it appears that the trade union vote is being used to frustrate democracy in the party.

The paradox is that the trade union block vote would be used to prevent the trade union influence from being exercised on the Labour Party. The trade union leaders who vote against the changes will be voting to neutralise and negate the influence of trades unionism on the Labour Party—the very opposite of what it would appear to be.

Q: You have spoken at meetings on the role of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee in the Labour Party.³ Can you say what your position is on that.

A: The great weakness of the left has been its traditions. Both outside and even inside the party there has been a great splinter activity: the Women's Fightback, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory,⁴ and so on. What to me was extremely pleasing was that the left suddenly realised that you can't win if you're fighting in penny-packets. You've got to come together.

All of a sudden, and very much to my surprise, there was the development of the Mobilising Committee in May.

When the Militant tendency⁵ came in to the Mobilising Committee, which I think is important, all of a sudden it began to come alive. This is the process of building the general coalition of the left, with the women's movement, the black groups, the ecological groups, the peace movement and so on.

It will be needed first of all within the Labour Party and the labour movement, and it then becomes the launching pad for carrying this outside the Labour Party to win support. It would be a terrible pity if this process were to be brought to an end by the Blackpool conference. It's a process that has to be encouraged if it's going to continue. I think it will continue.

What would be the ingredients of a new common programme between the unions and the party? These would be the policies which have emerged from the trade unions and the party, which have been very radical from '72 onwards and are much

3. The Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy is a coalition of left-wing and socialist organizations that support greater democracy in the Labour Party.—IP

4. Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, formed by socialists in the Labour Party to campaign for Labour candidates and urge socialist policies, was one of the initiators of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.—IP

5. Supporters of the socialist weekly *Militant* in Britain are active in Labour Party constituencies and the Labour Party Young Socialists. They have been the target of red-baiting attacks by Labour Party right wingers and the capitalist press in Britain.—IP

more radical as a result of the experience of the past six years.

Q: Perhaps we could take an example of that. The TUC General Council's composite which was adopted with the support of the Engineering Union and the Transport Union included the demand for a 35-hour week without loss of pay . . .

A: That has been emerging for some time, and even the engineers' strike last summer, which the AUEW was drawn into, was about hours. It wasn't successful, but it was about the right issues.

I think this will emerge very strongly and I don't believe the formulation of another manifesto—particularly if it is drawn up the way we want, a rolling manifesto that goes before two conferences before it is put to the public—I don't think it could fail to demand that element in it.

Q: Obviously, between now and 1984 the trade unions won't sit back and wait.

A: No, they won't. But on the other hand I don't take the view, and you may not agree with me about this, that there is a short-cut by the exercise of industrial muscle that will carry you forward to socialism without the process of persuasion. I think you have to defend the trades unions and the public services in their individual battles, and then teach from it and learn from it and win a majority.

I don't see the answer to this as lying in the transfer by the exercise of industrial strength alone without persuasion, because I'm not sure that such a victory—were it to be possible to achieve it—would have paved the way for the sort of support that would be needed to carry through the alternative socialist strategy.

Q: You mentioned earlier the necessity of extending the Labour Party back into the grassroots. Do you think that Labour Party supporters in the factories and the shop stewards committees should actively campaign as a party in support of events like the dockers' strike?

A: Very strongly. I think there is a slightly artificial division between what's called parliamentary politics and grassroots industrial politics. We must have both.

I've never believed that change is triggered off at the top. Change always begins at the bottom and permeates through to the top.

The votes in the House of Commons indicate what is going on, but they don't actually determine the way issues develop. Insofar as the Labour Party has become an electoral organisation through revisionist leadership, to that extent it has failed in its historic purpose.

The combination of industrial and community activity and struggle with a process of persuasion that leads to a parlia-

mentary majority is the historical method by which the labour movement has advanced in the past and the way in which it has to do so in the future.

Q: You spoke about a regroupment and unification of the left in the party. What would be the basis of this?

A: The party isn't only interested in democracy, but it has reached the point—and I have myself, where I've lost interest in producing policy statements and getting them through conference and then finding that they're not done. Until there is some credibility restored to the policy-making process, policy as such becomes just a cluster of resolutions.

But I am very pleased that this year the conference should be dominated, as it is, by the whole question of Cold War, rearmament and all the rest.

I think what's happened in Poland is relevant here. To take it at its lowest, if I were asked what was the best defence strategy for Britain, by comparing the siting of Cruise missiles here, targeted on Warsaw, with the development of the democratic movement and the trade unions in Poland, there is no doubt that the latter would be a better defence strategy. I think all these things are coming together.

I don't know what the conference will actually decide but I imagine that it would reinforce and deepen the basic arguments that were set out at the one-day conference at Wembley.⁶

If that became real, and if that were advocated in the House of Commons by the parliamentary spokesmen, which it is not, and if that were in the manifesto, and if we won an election, and that were done that would be a tremendously significant change.

So the policy arguments plus democracy taken together, and campaigned for vigorously by the Mobilising Committee, represent the best hope we have at the moment for the Labour Party to revert to what it is all about and what it was meant to be about.

Q: Apart from Cruise, what issues should be campaigned around?

A: A return to full employment and how to achieve it. It means dealing with the multi-nationals and a much stronger policy on the International Monetary Fund.

If you look back on the IMF episode, the idea that four years ago the pound might have been weakened when one of the factors that is wrecking our economy is the strong pound by returning to the gold standard, which is what we've really done; the weakness of that Cabinet in facing

that pressure is inexplicable, except in that a majority of that Cabinet really agreed with the IMF.

When we look back on 1976, if we had told the IMF to go away, I don't think it would have had the will or the capacity to damage our economy. We would then not have had the winter of discontent and we might still be in power. We would have been in a position to mobilise an awful lot of public support.

My criticism of the last Labour government, and I was in it and I am responsible for what it did in that general sense; my criticism is not based on the fact that it couldn't necessarily do more in parliament—it didn't have a majority—but we didn't even argue that case.

We never went to the public and said: "We are under threat from the EEC [European Economic Community] here, on our food policy, on our industrial policy, we're under threat from Chrysler there, we've got the bankers round our neck, NATO is pushing us to bump up our defence expenditure, we want enough people to support us in the election to see that we have enough power to see that that doesn't happen." The argument was absent.

To come back to the question about how you get rid of the Thatcher government—after 20 years of silence on socialism you can't short cut it by industrial muscle. You've got to tackle the real argument, which is that these arguments have to be injected into the public consciousness and then you have to build support. That support is there.

The trouble is at the moment the media won't allow an alternative to be presented, because they're afraid it would be too popular. One of the greatest tributes that Fleet St. pays to the Labour left is that it spends so much time trying to confuse, to divert. Because they know in their hearts that if we could get this across there would be support for us. And there would be. □

Correction

The article "Chinese Regime Continues Swing Away From Mao's Policies" in the September 22 issue of *Intercontinental Press* erroneously reported that the August-September meeting of China's National Peoples Congress was the first since 1975. Actually, there were two previous sessions of the Fifth National Peoples Congress, one in February-March 1978, and another in June-July 1979.

6. The overwhelming majority of delegates to a one-day Labour Party conference May 31 voted to oppose deployment of nuclear weapons in Britain.—IP

Iranian Prime Minister Condemns Iraq's Aggression

By Janice Lynn

Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Rajai strongly denounced the Iraqi invasion of Iran before an October 17 session of the United Nations Security Council.

"I have come here straight from the front," Rajai said. "The spectacle of the dead and the wounded would have moved the most heartless of men. I saw that spectacle with my own eyes: the land-to-land missiles which struck the city of Dezful demolished a large part of the city and many of the courageous population perished."

Rajai exposed the Iraqi regime's pretext for launching its aggression against Iran. "The true aim of the Iraqi regime and its masters is not to gain a few kilometers of territory," he declared. "What they are trying to achieve is to throttle the revolutionary movement of the Iranian revolutionary people."

In an appeal to the people of Iraq, the Iranian prime minister said, "We will not only expel the aggressor but we will allow the friendly, fraternal people of Iraq to become aware of the tyrannical and dependent nature of Saddam Hussein's regime."

"They will then be able to deal a lethal blow to American imperialism," he continued, "American imperialism which directly or indirectly has been helping the Baathist Government of Iraq."

Rajai also condemned the U.S. spy planes recently sent by Carter to the Saudi Arabian monarch and charged that the information gathered by the planes on Iranian troop movements was passed on to Iraq.

"We are here to expose what is happening in our country," Rajai explained.

"We know that many revolutionaries have already come here to the Security Council, and have asked that the rights of their peoples be defended."

"But in the final analysis, it is always the peoples themselves who have defended their rights by fighting the aggressor with their own hands."

Rajai confirmed that the Iranian people were committed to defending their revolution and would continue to fight in order to determine their own future.

With Rajai's visit to the United Nations, the Carter administration began to shift its public stance on the war, acknowledging after almost five weeks that the Iraqi regime was, in fact, the aggressor.

In an October 17 interview with the Associated Press, President Carter indicated that Washington "would like to see any invading forces withdrawn." He also

stated that "the dismemberment of Iran or the carving out of a part of Iran to be separated from the rest would not be in our interest."

It has become clear that Washington is increasingly worried about the repercussions of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's miscalculation.

This concern was spelled out by *Le Monde* correspondent Eric Rouleau in an October 19 article published in the *New York Times*. After describing the Iraqi regime's military miscalculations, Rouleau wrote:

"... the morale and combativeness of the Iranian population have reached a level comparable to that prevailing during the uprising against the Shah. In this area also, Baghdad miscalculated: not only did Iranians not revolt against the Islamic regime, they have joined forces with the Government to oust the invader. . . . Everywhere, residents of all political opinions and ages are resisting the Iraqis. . . ."

"The longer the war continues, however," Rouleau warned, "the greater the likelihood that the population will become more radical, because among other factors of the mounting influence of leftist parties which are participating in guerrilla warfare against the Iraqis. This could alter the balance of power among the various ideological factions in Iran once the war is done."

This is what now has Washington and its imperialist allies worried and explains the shift in public statements and the stepped-up military buildup in the Middle East.

The Iraqi regime and Washington military analysts totally misjudged the depth of the Iranian revolution and the fierce resistance of the Iranian masses in combatting the Iraqi attacks.

"It's a people's war as far as Iran is concerned," Georgetown University professor Thomas Ricks, a frequent visitor to Iran, told the *Christian Science Monitor*. He cautioned against "measuring a country's ability to defend itself on the basis of militarily effective units." Vietnam, he said, showed the folly of such an approach.

"This is a people's war then, in the same sense as Vietnam, and for that reason it's a political as well as a military conflict," Ricks said. "And I don't think Iraq can stand against that."

The depth of popular support for the Iranian revolution makes it more difficult for Washington to intervene, but it also means that the stakes for imperialism are extremely high.

More than sixty American, British, French, and Australian warships are now ominously poised in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Washington has secretly begun using military facilities in Oman, located on the southeast tip of Saudi Arabia, to resupply its naval task force. And U.S. military equipment continues to be dispatched to Saudi Arabia.

Prior to the Iranian prime minister's visit to the UN, Washington officials began a concerted propaganda campaign aimed at making it seem as if the U.S. government was willing to make a fair offer to Iran in exchange for the fifty-two American hostages. But this phony "spare-parts-for-hostages deal" was aimed at diverting attention from the real issues.

"Spare parts is your issue, not my issue," declared Iran's chief delegate to the UN, Ali Shams Ardakani. "Our boys are fighting with what they have."

Ardakani reminded reporters that it was because of Washington that Iran had been held hostage by the former shah for a quarter of a century. It was the CIA engineered coup in 1953 that restored the bloody monarch to the throne.

In fact, Washington has been stepping up its threats against the revolution.

"Since the fall of the shah they have not stopped plotting against us," Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr told *Le Monde's* Eric Rouleau.

"Every time we were on the verge of a way out, they started provocations to torpedo a solution," he said of the hostage crisis.

Iranian Prime Minister Rajai pointed to some of the latest actions: the spy planes sent to Saudi Arabia; Washington's support to the Jordanian and other governments that are aiding Iraq; and the U.S. fleet assembled in the Arabian Sea.

Rajai said that ending these actions would be "a great sign of good will of the U.S. government." □

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Iranian Masses Organize to Defend Revolution

By Janice Lynn

The essential factor in Iran's ability to hold off the Iraqi drive thus far has been the massive mobilizations by Iran's workers and toilers in almost every part of the country. Seeing the Iraqi offensive as a direct attack on their revolution, the Iranian masses have organized to repel the counterrevolutionary invasion.

Reports from socialists in Iran indicate that neighborhood committees have sprung up in the cities and that workers *shoras* (committees) in the factories have become actively involved in organizing for defense of the revolution.

Mobilizations in Khuzestan

In the southern province of Khuzestan, where the bulk of the fighting is concentrated, the socialists report that mobilizations by the residents in those cities have been the major factor in preventing the Iraqi invaders from occupying any of the urban centers. The people are fighting with anything they can get their hands on—homemade grenades and molotov cocktails, and rifles and other weapons that were seized after the February 1979 insurrection.

Along with the *pasdaran* (revolutionary guards) and the Iranian armed forces, the residents are defending their cities. And they are helping in whatever other ways the can—digging trenches or distributing medical supplies and food. Women and children have also taken up guns to repel the Iraqi invaders.

Local defense councils are organizing teams of civilian fighters. They have been reinforced by volunteers from other areas of the country.

"In cars and pickup trucks and on motorbikes, thousands of small armed militia groups headed toward the front," *Time* magazine correspondents said in the October 13 issue. "Civilians organized convoys of food, clothing, medicine and fuel. As each newly formed battalion set off, townspeople showered it with flowers and made it pass under a copy of the Holy Koran—a Persian tradition aimed at exorcising evil."

The Iranian socialists reported that, contrary to reports in the capitalist media claiming that residents in the cities of Khuzestan have all fled, it was precisely the fact that the masses did not flee but stayed to help defend their revolution that held off the Iraqi offensive. The only layers of the population that did seem to have left were the wealthy landowners and capitalists.

Television broadcasts in Iran confirm

that the Arab population in Khuzestan cities is armed and is participating in the fighting against the Iraqi forces, the socialists said.

One member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) in Khuzestan reported that television broadcasts from Iraq are beamed into the province. But, he said, the style of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's television appearances reminds people of the ex-shah. Since they have no desire to have another dictator like the shah ruling over them, the people of Khuzestan have no love for Hussein.

People are aware too of the repression in Iraq, which is especially directed against the largely working-class Shi'ite Arabs in southern Iraq as well as against the Kurds in the north.

Ayatollah Sobeir Khagani, the principal religious leader of the Arabs in Khuzestan and a supporter of the Arab struggle for autonomy, has called on the Khuzestan Arabs to defend their country against the Iraqis.

The Arab peasants in the villages of Khuzestan have also been cooperating with the Iranian army. They know that a defeat for the Iranian revolution would mean that the gains made since the revolution—the establishment of village committees, peasant shoras, and the beginnings of land reform and land distribution—would all be reversed.

This is why many of the big landlords in Khuzestan welcomed the Iraqi invaders—they hoped some of these gains of the peasants could in fact be reversed. Iraqi television broadcast films of these landlords celebrating when the Iraqi forces first attacked, and showed them collaborating with the Iraqi invaders. Twenty-one of these same landowners were executed following the Iranians' recapture of the territory. The fact that they were big landowners was a detail conveniently omitted in the capitalist press accounts.

Factory Shoras Mobilized

Iranian socialists reported that many factory shoras have taken on specific tasks in defense of the revolution. In several factories workers patrols have been organized to prepare for Iraqi attacks. The shoras stepped up their defense activities following an October 6 Iraqi attack on several Tehran factories in which several workers were killed.

Workers are going through military training, and shoras are sending workers units to the front to fight. In some cases shoras have begun discussions on how to

plan out production so that the needs of the country, especially at the war front, can be met.

At the Iran National Auto Factory—one of Iran's nationalized industries—the socialists report that discussions have been taking place about the need for the workers to take control over the factory. Before the Iraqi invasion, the shora had uncovered an embezzlement scheme. Former owners of the factory who earlier had left the country were selling needed auto parts for scrap, in collaboration with some of the factory's current managers. In light of the need to increase production during the war period, the shora began discussing ways to prevent further sabotage of this sort by the capitalists. The workers began to consider how they could establish control over production themselves.

Neighborhood Committees

Neighborhood committees have begun to spring up in the working-class districts of South Tehran to carry out necessary tasks in defense of the revolution. It was reported in Tehran that 341 new committees were in the process of being formed. Besides organizing militias and arms training, the committees are discussing ways of ensuring equitable food distribution. There are not yet any serious food shortages. Food is not being rationed, but there is rationing of fuel.

Socialists reported that neighborhood committee representatives go door to door seeking volunteers for arms training. Nightly neighborhood patrols are organized to stand guard against Iraqi attacks. The committees also ensure that lights are kept off in the neighborhoods as a preventive measure against Iraqi air raids. Neighborhood residents have been mobilized to place sandbags around strategic installations.

Independent Initiatives

The accounts from Iranian socialists indicate that what is happening in Iran is a further deepening of the revolutionary process. The committees that are spontaneously forming, the kinds of discussions that are taking place in the factory shoras, and the widespread sentiment against hoarding and profiteering by the capitalists—especially in time of war—will not be quickly forgotten.

These independent formations and the anticapitalist discussions taking place can help move the revolution forward.

Especially important are the popular militias that are being formed, and the

military training that the workers are organizing. Despite the government's initial attempts to try to rely solely on the Iranian armed forces—even releasing from prison some former army officers and air force pilots if they agreed to fight the Iraqi offensive—volunteers continually arrive at the front and there is increased pressure for massive arms distribution.

The army itself is quite different from the one that existed before the revolution. "The Iranian army is being commanded largely by officers who were just captains a year ago," the October 15 *New York Times* noted. "Most officers above the rank of major were purged after the Shah left Iran. . . ."

Socialists in Iran reported that there is a deep polarization taking place within the armed forces. They said that rank-and-file soldiers are coming to the fore, taking initiatives and carrying out the heaviest fighting. Meanwhile, those layers of the upper echelons still left in the army are already beginning to disintegrate.

This is part of the mobilization process that is pushing the working masses forward—in the army, neighborhoods, and factories.

The neighborhood committees, many of which had become dormant following the February 1979 revolution, have now been reactivated, with new leaders emerging from the struggle. The mobilizations are so great that the government has not been able to exert any real control over them, nor over the independent initiatives the committees have begun to take. The government has been forced to ride with these committees in order to successfully repel the Iraqi attacks.

Even the right-wing pressure that was being exerted against the revolution has been neutralized within Iran. It is much more difficult to speak out against the revolution with a vigilant population wary of plans for an Iraqi-aided and U.S.-inspired coup aimed at restoring a repressive monarchy in Iran.

Sectors of the middle classes that had become increasingly hostile to the revolution also appear to have been pulled in behind the vast upsurge against the invasion.

Some of the leftist groups that had been hostile toward the regime have also rallied to counter the Iraqi attacks, most notably the majority wing of the Fedayeen.

The pro-Moscow Tudeh Party has likewise come out behind the war effort to repel the Iraqi invaders.

The response of the Iranian Arabs in defense of the revolution is important for all of Iran's working people. By attacking the Arabs' fight for national rights, however, the Tehran government had divided the revolutionary forces.

The Iranian revolution, by moving to grant the Arabs and Kurds their full rights as nationalities, can construct an impregnable barrier to the Iraqi regime's counter-

revolutionary drive and any further attacks by imperialism.

The general sentiment throughout Iran is one of no compromise with imperialism. Iranian socialists noted a headline of an

HKE Action Program to Combat Iraqi Attacks

The Iranian Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) has issued a proposal for how Iranian working people can best combat the military attacks from Iraq and the threats from U.S. imperialism.

In the September 30 issue of the HKE newspaper *Kargar*, the HKE explained how the Iraqi attack is in response to the effect the Iranian revolution has had on the masses of workers and toilers in the region, who have been inspired by the revolution.

It listed a five-point action program "that can inspire the entire oppressed of the Middle East against imperialism and Zionism."

1. Military mobilization for defense of the revolution.

"The victory of the socialist revolutions in Vietnam and Cuba have shown that the social power of the toiling masses can overcome the superior military strength of U.S. imperialism," the HKE stated.

It called for strengthening the neighborhood committees, for military training to be provided by the pasdaran, for military units to be created in the factories, and for the formation of an army of 20 million.

In order for women to participate in defense of the revolution the HKE urged that services such as child-care centers, public laundries, and cafeterias be provided. Peasants and the young activists in the Jihad for Reconstruction (which is active in the villages) should also be organized to participate in the military mobilization and should link up with the workers shoras, the HKE said.

2. Mobilization of productive forces throughout the country.

The HKE called for the nationalization of all major industries and pointed out that the local capitalists, as agents of imperialism, are engaged in sabotage of production. The socialists said that workers control should be established through the unity of all workers shoras, in order to plan out production for the war needs.

The HKE also called for land to be distributed to the peasants. "The peasant who owns his own land is totally different than the peasant who works for a landlord," the HKE wrote. "The former fights to defend his land and country. The latter has no interest in fighting for a landlord who is allied with the imperialists."

The HKE also called for the formation of

editorial in a London newspaper sold in Tehran. Bemoaning the Iranian masses' surprisingly firm determination to repel the Iraqi regime's attacks, it read: "Never Attack a Revolution." □

a single bank, whose books would be open to representatives of the workers and peasants shoras.

3. The equitable distribution of consumer goods and supplies for the front.

"The rich and upper classes who enjoy better financial resources can purchase basic consumer goods at high prices and will cause lines and black markets," the HKE wrote. "As a result, the working people who are the backbone of this revolution will face hardships."

The HKE called for the rationing of basic goods and their distribution through ration cards. This, they said, should be organized by the neighborhood committees in collaboration with the shoras in the factories that produce these goods.

The shoras should also propose a distribution plan to ensure that the war front is supplied.

4. Defense of the revolution through recognizing the national rights of the oppressed nationalities.

"In the West of our country live our brothers and sisters of the Arab, Kurdish, and Azerbaijani nationalities, who are all too familiar with imperialism's suppression of their rights during the Pahlavi autocracy," the HKE stated.

The HKE called on the government to recognize the national and cultural rights of the peoples in these areas and for the unity of all the oppressed against imperialism. The HKE pointed out that by recognizing the national rights of the oppressed nationalities, a blow will be dealt to the right-wing regimes in the region that, one way or another, base themselves on the national oppression of their own people.

5. No compromise with imperialism.

The HKE called for an uncompromising anti-imperialist foreign policy, pointing out how the occupation of the U.S. "spy den" dealt a blow to the imperialists' conspiracies against the Iranian revolution.

The HKE explained how "the victory of the insurrection in Iran, the victorious revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, the struggles of the oppressed from Palestine to South Africa, the struggles of the U.S. workers, and the heroic Polish workers" do not make the imperialists bolder, but in reality weaken their position.

"Thus any compromises with imperialism must be rejected." □

Statement of the Fourth International

Defend Iran Against Iraqi and Imperialist Attacks!

[The following statement was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on October 3 by majority vote.]

* * *

The Iraqi invasion of Iran is a new attack on the Iranian revolution. It serves the interests of imperialism, which aims to weaken and eventually crush the revolution through the imposition of an openly pro-imperialist regime of counterrevolutionary terror.

Washington, London, and Paris—while professing “neutrality”—are building up their forces in the region under cover of the Iraqi attack, and are threatening direct military intervention (if they estimate they could get away with it) under the pretext that their “economic interests” are threatened. Carter has reinforced the military machine of the Saudi dictatorship, which has aligned itself with Iraq, in preparation for a possible widening of the attack on Iran. Significant American, British, and French naval forces are concentrated at the mouth of the Gulf.

Any direct imperialist military intervention, under any pretext including that of defending oil supplies, would be nothing less than an armed attack on the Iranian revolution, just as the American raid at Tabas was.

Revolutionary Marxists in Iran and throughout the world condemn the Iraqi military offensive, and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Iran. We denounce the maneuvers of Washington, London, and Paris, demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the imperialist naval fleets, condemn the sending of imperialist arms to Saudi Arabia, and warn against the danger of further imperialist actions. “Imperialist Hands Off the Iranian Revolution!”

Iraq has provided sanctuary for officers and soldiers loyal to the old Iranian monarchy, trained and organized under the leadership of Oveissi, Palizban, and Bakhtiar. They are trying to form a “white army” supported and armed by imperialism, capable of intervening in Iran.

In any coup attempt, this counterrevolutionary force in exile would team up with plotters within the Iranian army, and within the rest of the state apparatus inherited from the shah’s regime, who have important networks of support among the large property owners of the cities and countryside. Only a section of these plotters were uncovered in the foiling

of preparations for a coup last July. In this regard, those in Iran seeking closer ties with imperialism may try to utilize the Iraqi attack to explain that for “military reasons” (arms supplies) it is necessary to normalize relations with imperialism.

Revolutionary Marxists call for and help mobilize the workers and peasants of Iran to militarily defend Iran against the Iraqi invasion. We fight alongside the Khomeini regime against any attempt by imperialism, Iraq, or the Iranian counterrevolution to overthrow it. As long as the masses of workers and peasants are not yet capable of replacing the present capitalist regime with one of their own, any overthrow of the Khomeini/Bani-Sadr government by these forces would signal the beginning of bloody terror, the reversal of the gains of the Iranian revolution, and the crushing of the masses.

Military defense of the present Iranian regime does not mean political support for it or for the institutions of the Islamic Republic, which remain capitalist. In fact, the orientation of the present regime has undermined the most effective military defense of the revolution, including in the following ways:

- It has attempted to preserve the military hierarchy of the old army, which has shown itself to be a breeding ground for military plots and preparations for a counterrevolutionary coup. A purge of all reactionary officers by the rank and file could only strengthen the war effort.

- It has attempted to block, including through the use of troops, the right of self-determination of the oppressed minorities, especially in its bloody military assault on the Kurdish people. This has weakened the unity, against imperialism and imperialist-backed attacks such as that of Iraq, of all the revolutionary peoples of Iran. A firm stand in support of the right of self-determination of the oppressed nationalities would not only generate great enthusiasm from the majority of Iranians who are non-Persian, it would also undermine further the threadbare Iraqi claim to be their saviors and boost the Kurdish resistance to the Baathist regime in Iraq itself.

We support the call for the “army of 20 million.” This will be most effective in defending Iran if the enthusiasm of the Iranian people is awakened through the formation of democratically organized militias by the organizations of the toilers, and the establishment of rank-and-file committees in the armed forces as occurred in the February 1979 insurrection. This

would help block any coup plots by their monarchist officers.

Further steps to defend the gains and deepen the Iranian revolution can be made through developing the independent organization of the toiling masses through the workers shoras and the peasant committees and through the extension of their rights in the factories and on the land, and their rights of expression and organization. The satisfaction of the needs and demands of the workers and peasants, including self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, can only raise their revolutionary commitment and readiness to fight against all counterrevolutionary attacks.

The Baghdad regime has used as its pretext for its attack on Iran the 1975 treaty between Baghdad and the shah. But this treaty itself signaled a turn by Baghdad towards collaboration with the shah. The shah agreed to stop all aid to the Kurdish rebels in Iraq in return for the division of the Shatt al-Arab waterway and renunciation of Arab sovereignty over three islands in the Gulf seized by the shah in 1971. This agreement had far-reaching consequences. Iraq also agreed to halt its “subversive” propaganda in the Gulf emirates and toward the Arab minorities in Iran, to cut the flow of arms to South Yemen and then to the Dhofar rebels fighting against the sultan of Oman, and to stop aiding the rebels in Baluchistan. At the same time Iraq began to open up its economy to foreign capital.

The net result was a growing pattern of collaboration between the Iraqi regime and the shah. Numerous Iranian oppositionists who had sought refuge in Iraq were handed over to the shah’s executioners. Finally, as the revolt in Iran assumed mass proportions in October 1978, Iraq expelled Ayatollah Khomeini as a token of goodwill to the shah.

Baghdad’s objectives in the present war are to contain and weaken the Iranian revolution, to overthrow the Iranian government if it can, and to increase its own power in the region. These objectives are presently supported by imperialism. The Iraqi regime feels directly threatened by the possible spread and deepening of the Iranian revolution. Its example can be contagious, and not only among the Shi’ite majority in Iraq. Since the overthrow of the shah, Baghdad has taken some distance from the USSR and has sought closer relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. If the declared objectives of the agreement between Iraq and the Gulf

states is opposition to the Camp David agreements, it is obvious that the major question for all of them is opposing and containing the Iranian revolution.

At the same time, Iraq hopes to take advantage of the weakening of Iranian military power to increase its own role in the Gulf. Imperialism's attitude to this possible outcome of the Iraqi attack was reflected by the *Wall Street Journal*, which wrote, "With revolutionary Iran creating so much tension in the Middle East, Washington would clearly welcome any role that the Iraqis might play in stabilizing the Persian Gulf."

The solution of the real problems faced by the Iraqi masses—in a country which despite the oil boom has been incapable of

overcoming underdevelopment and where the Baathist regime exercises a ferocious dictatorship against the masses, including the religious and national minorities—is not to attack the Iranian revolution, but to support it and extend it to Iraq through the overthrow of the Baathist dictatorship.

The initial hopes of both Baghdad and imperialism for a swift Iraqi victory were thwarted, thanks largely to the mobilization of the Iranian masses against the Iraqi attack. The designs of imperialism in the region can be countered by urgently raising as widely as possible the demands:

Iraqi troops out now!
Imperialist hands off Iran!
Full support for the efforts of the Iranian masses to defeat the hand of reaction!
Defend the Iranian revolution!

Under Pressure of Independent Workers Movement

Rifts Widen in Polish Bureaucracy

By Gerry Foley

The pressures building up on the Polish Communist Party were indicated by the conflicts at the October 4-6 Central Committee plenum, which was held immediately following the national warning strike called by the new independent union confederation.

The final session reportedly went for twenty-two straight hours. Eight members of the Central Committee were removed, including those most directly linked to ousted First Secretary Edward Gierek and those who became objects of particular hatred and scorn among the masses during the August-September strikes.

Among those dumped were propaganda chief Jerzy Lukaszewicz; trade-union official Jan Szydlak; former head of the central planning commission Tadeusz Wrzaszczyk; former Deputy Premier, Tadeusz Pyka, who represented the government in the initial negotiations with the workers; and Maciej Szczepanski and Eugeniusz Patyk, who are under investigation for corruption.

Apparently it was no easy matter for the party leadership, most of whom are guilty of similar crimes, to carry out even this minimal house cleaning. A shifting of votes back and forth was reported. And the new propaganda head, Jozef Klasa, said that he could not remember what the final vote was because it came at 6:00 in the morning.

"Even Warsaw radio admitted that the meeting was 'heated.'" *New York Times* correspondent John Darnton reported in the October 7 issue, "and in an unusual step excerpts from some of the 74 speeches

were released as the acrimonious debate was going on."

The official Polish press agency, PAP, explained:

"The speakers talked openly about all the things that for years have been a topic of private conversation among Poles," namely, "economic mismanagement, the lying propaganda, phony well-wishers, palatial ceremony, the courtier's mentality and other features that offend the nation's common sense, dignity and sense of justice."

The antagonisms among the top personnel of the bureaucracy were bitter and deepgoing. For example, Gen. Mieczyslaw Moczar denounced "two-faced politicians who would kill their best friend in order to protect their own position."

Moczar should be an expert on the ruthlessness that reigns in the inner sanctums of the bureaucracy. He is a veteran Stalinist. During the Second World War, he was a commander of Polish partisan units that were formed under Soviet direction. In 1963, he conducted an anti-Semitic and anti-intellectual campaign modeled on those of the Great Purger himself.

The general enjoyed some popularity in the post-1956 period as a representative of the wing that favored greater independence of the Polish bureaucracy from the Kremlin. However, what he stood for was simply Polish national Stalinism, similar to the Rumanian national Stalinism of Ceausescu.

In eclipse since the 1968 witch-hunts, Moczar is trying to make a comeback as the destroyer of corruption in the party. As the chairman of the Supreme Control

Commission, he has been building up extensive files on personal graft that he can now put to good use to further his ambitions. At the plenum, he argued, "The workers' lack of confidence in the party is simply the result of the dishonesty of a certain group." Moczar was effusive in his praise for new First Secretary Stanislaw Kania.

Klasa, the new propaganda supremo, is a protégé of Moczar. At his first press conference, he described the general as a "party institution," who always comes to the fore when democracy is the strongest.

The demagogue Moczar represents at bottom an increasingly prominent tendency in the decaying Stalinist regimes—authoritarian reactionary nationalism. This trend gains strength as the historic ties of the ruling Stalinist parties to Marxism and proletarian revolution wither away. This is the consequence of the bureaucracies' need for some new rallying cry, some new justification for their power.

However, there seems to be a clear understanding among the Polish masses that changes in personnel at the top will not solve their problems. Even the controlled press was obliged to note this.

"Government television today broadcast man-in-the-street comments that pointed to the general public attitude," Darnton reported in an October 7 dispatch to the *New York Times*. One worker said: "This is the last renewal I take part in. Whatever we say, nothing changes."

On the other hand, the divisions in the CP offer opportunities for the antibureaucratic movement. One of the factions, led by Tadeusz Fiszbach, first secretary of the party organization in Gdansk, seems to be trying to ally itself to some degree with the independent unions. In excerpts of his remarks given by PAP, Fiszbach was quoted as saying:

"The independent unions are more and more regarded as one of the guarantors of stabilization of our public life. Although our party did not create them, these organizations offer us the best chance today to find the conditions for involving the vital forces of the nation actively in public life."

Fiszbach described the new unions as "autonomous self-defense organizations of people who think that they have the right to demand that the party tell them the truth."

In the face of the deepening crisis of bureaucratic rule highlighted by the factionalism at the plenum, First Secretary Kania offered some concessions to the masses. He repeated promises of more democracy and an improvement in the supply of consumer goods.

While retreating, however, Kania tried to hold the ranks of the bureaucracy together and prepare for a counterattack. He warned of the dangers posed by "anarchy" and "antisocialist forces," laying down a justification for the regime resorting to

force if it finds its grip on power slipping irretrievably:

"We will patiently strive to regain the confidence of the people. But at the same time we will remain firmly on guard against anarchy and any actions aimed against internal order or the principles of socialism. . . .

"Poland is, and will remain, a member of the socialist commonwealth, a faithful ally of the USSR."

With regard to the independent unions, Kania said:

"We are well aware that a section of the workers place their hopes in the new trade unions. We will cooperate with all efforts that help to realize the aspirations of the workers. But it is no secret that various opponents and outright enemies of socialism also place their hopes in the new unions."

Kania went on to say:

"The dramatic conflicts, the prolonged crisis, that our country is experiencing have aroused hopes in the anti-Communist centers that they will be able to take advantage of all this to change the relationship of forces in Europe."

Extensive excerpts from Kania's speech, including all the above quotes, were featured in the October 7 *Pravda*. So, the

Kremlin was able to use the Polish CP leader's own words to present a picture of the situation in Poland that could be used to justify Soviet intervention later on.

Kania's speech was run in conjunction with a long speech by the top East German bureaucrat, Erich Honecker, which presented a contrasting picture of stability, progress, and confidence in Poland's western neighbor. So, the Soviet reader was encouraged to believe that Poland was the rotten apple in the region.

Less than a week later, Honecker raised the first direct threat of intervention to maintain "stability" in Poland. He said that "antisocialist counterrevolutionary forces" were threatening the political system in Poland, declaring: "One thing should be clear. Poland will remain a socialist country. It belongs completely to the socialist world. No one can turn back history. We and our friends will see to that."

The tensions in the Polish situation continue to mount because the victory of the workers in the August-September strikes drove a wedge into the totalitarian system on which the rule of the bureaucracy depends. And that wedge continues inexorably to widen.

After the party plenum, a new confrontation is shaping up over the issue of censorship. Journalists' organizations in a number of cities have begun to vote resolutions demanding limits on control over the press.

Furthermore, there are indications that the example set by the Polish workers is spreading to the oppressed nationalities within the USSR itself. Thousands of youth have reportedly demonstrated in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, raising various demands and calling for independence for Estonia. Also, Western correspondents have noted an acute interest in the Polish events in Latvia.

In this context, the Polish bureaucracy's continued attempts to obstruct the organization of independent unions make the situation still more explosive. The new union federation has issued a warning that it will call another strike unless the government lives up to its agreements. It has already begun to mobilize the workers.

A series of rallies is being organized throughout the country and the independent union leader Lech Walesa has begun a national tour, which, according to John Darnton in the October 18 *Times*, "is taking on the appearance of a triumphant campaign swing." □

A Report From Bluefields

FSLN Grapples With Problems of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast

By Russell Johnson and Claudio Tavárez

MANAGUA—Making the journey from Managua to Bluefields, the main town on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, is an experience. After squeezing into a crowded bus, one is driven four hours to the east to Ciudad Rama, a small town on the Río Escondido. From there it's all aboard a fast-moving launch ferry, which goes downriver to the coast and Bluefields.

Once on the boat, it's almost like being in another country. Gone are the grasslands and the villages and the road. On each side of the broad river there is thick rain forest, broken here and there by clearings in which stand primitive little houses on stilts, with perhaps a few cows and coconut palms.

Often the ferry slows to avoid swamping a canoe in its wake, as Indian families paddle their way to Rama. The river is the only way in and out.

After three hours of cruising under a blazing sun, the river starts to widen out. The boat passes an island studded with buildings and surrounded by boats—a fish factory. It then goes through a narrow channel and there it is ahead—Bluefields.

Surrounded by sea on three sides and on the other by forest-covered hills, Bluefields

is a cluster of little wooden houses and narrow cobbled streets.

The people are mostly Black—and they speak English. Reggae music and the latest disco hits are heard as one walks down the street.

This is Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, but it's more like having landed on a small Caribbean island.

Bluefields seems idyllic, but in late September the situation there turned ugly. For four days, from September 28 to October 1, the town was paralyzed. Businesses closed, and angry, mostly Black, demonstrators filled the streets—as many as 1,000 demonstrators on September 29, we were told.

The protesters took over boats and shut down the fishing industry. They occupied the local radio station and assaulted government officials. At one point some weapons were stolen from a fish processing plant.

The focus of the discontent was the presence of about eighty Cuban teachers and doctors, who were staying in the town prior to leaving for more remote parts of the Atlantic province of Zelaya to work as volunteers among the peasants.

The leaders of the disturbances de-

manded the immediate expulsion of the Cubans from Bluefields. To back this up, the house where many of the Cubans were lodged was surrounded and stoned.

The Bluefields disturbances came on the heels of a serious escalation of counterrevolutionary violence in various parts of Nicaragua, aimed at destabilizing the revolutionary government. This has been focused mainly along the northern border with Honduras, where thousands of former Somozaist National Guardsmen and common criminals have taken refuge. From there gangs launch murderous forays into populated areas of Nicaragua.

The seriousness of this problem was highlighted October 11 in Masaya, when 700 reservists from the Sandinista People's Army were bid farewell by their families. They had been mobilized to go to the north to help deal with the counterrevolutionary gangs. They were to join a special brigade led by Militia Commander Edén Pastora.

There have also been a number of assassinations of government and Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) officials in the interior of Nicaragua. And in early September a counterrevolutionary plot

headed by former Defense Minister and National Guard Colonel Bernardino Larios was uncovered. Larios had called for kidnapping and assassination of all nine members of the FSLN National Directorate.

As a result of all these developments, the FSLN reacted swiftly to the events in Bluefields, which they saw as a further escalation in the pattern of counterrevolutionary attacks. Units of the Sandinista police and army in Bluefields were reinforced with troops from the western part of the country. The leaders of the disturbances were arrested and brought to Managua.

Interior Minister Tomás Borge declared at an October 1 news conference that the protests were part of a reactionary campaign to separate the Atlantic Coast region from Nicaragua, stimulated by foreign agents and local reactionaries. He pointed in particular to counterrevolutionary propaganda beamed to Bluefields from Costa Rican television, Colombian radio, and the Voice of America.

This plan, Borge said, was linked to other counterrevolutionary plots elsewhere to destabilize the country and sow panic among the people.

Borge's charges were substantiated on October 9 at a second Interior Ministry news conference. With Borge at this conference was Wesley Hernán Savery Harrison, the Black leader of the antigovernment actions in Bluefields who was being held in Managua.

Harrison, for thirteen years a member of a movement to separate the Atlantic Coast region from Nicaragua, detailed to reporters his connections with Bernardino Larios. He said he had met with Larios three times in Managua. After the second meeting, Larios named Harrison Atlantic Coast chief of the Fuerzas Armadas Democráticas (FAD—Democratic Armed Forces). Larios's plans, Harrison said, involved kidnapping and murdering the nine members of the FSLN National Directorate, and the organization of simultaneous armed rebellions within the country and an invasion by Somozaist guardsmen from Honduras. A "government in exile," including Harrison and Larios, was to have been established in Honduras.

Harrison said the plan was originally to have been carried out on July 19, the first anniversary of the revolution. It was postponed to August 23, the date of the mass meeting in Managua to celebrate the completion of the literacy campaign. The plot again failed to come off, and before it could be finally put into motion Larios was arrested.

It was to learn more about the background to the Bluefields disturbances that we traveled there on October 5. During our stay we were able to speak with members of the FSLN, the Sandinista youth organization, and the armed forces, as well as to



Russell Johnson/IP

Miskito-language billboard for literacy campaign in Bluefields.

shopkeepers and to young people in the streets.

What emerged was a picture of a population that has long felt alienated from the mainstream of Nicaraguan life and that has been confused and misled as to the goals of the Sandinista revolution.

The Atlantic Coast has its own history and culture, distinct from the more highly developed Pacific provinces. Zelaya Province has almost half the land area of Nicaragua, but only around 8 percent of the population (193,835 people, according to government sources). It is an area with immense natural resources, including gold and silver mines, rich fishing grounds, timber, and virgin agricultural lands.

About one-third of the population of the coast region is Black, mainly descendants of immigrants who came from English-speaking Caribbean islands after the abolition of slavery. The Blacks live mainly along the southern coast, making a living as fishermen and farmers. They have maintained the use of English, even though almost the only institutions that function in that language are their Protestant churches.

The rest of the population are predominantly Rama Indians in the south, Sumo Indians in the interior mining districts, and Miskito Indians on the northern coast. The Miskitos developed through a mingling of the indigenous peoples with escaped slaves and European pirates. (The latter began appearing on the coast in the seventeenth century.) The Miskito and Sumo languages remain the first languages of many thousands of coast people, we were told.

Until 1896 the Atlantic Coast had a separate existence from the rest of Nicaragua, under the "protection" of Great Britain. Under Somoza, the resources of the region were plundered for the benefit of the dictator and imperialism, with almost nothing being channeled back into developing the coast. Even today, there are virtually no roads or utilities. Bluefields itself only gained television, radio, and telephone links to western Nicaragua after

the insurrection—with the help of Cuban technicians.

It is not difficult to understand then, that the Atlantic Coast population has tended to see itself as a sort of internal colony dominated by the Spanish-speakers of the Pacific zone, or that separatist sentiments have been manifested on occasion.

Another thing that many whom we spoke with in Bluefields pointed out was that the worst brutalities of Somoza's rule were not seen there. The presence of the National Guard was relatively low-key; the Bluefields garrison numbered only about thirty.

Taking all these factors into account, then, we were not surprised to learn that throughout the years of the struggle against Somoza the FSLN had been unable to establish itself on the Atlantic Coast. What few Blacks and other coast people were recruited moved to more politically responsive areas of the country.

During the 1979 insurrection that brought the FSLN to power, there was no fighting in Bluefields. The only action, some young people told us, was a mass march by the entire high-school student body to the government building.

Without mass participation in the revolutionary struggle against Somoza, Bluefields was not polarized as other parts of the country were. The consciousness of the Blacks was not transformed—unlike that of the masses of poor and working people on the Pacific coast, who in their life-or-death struggle for freedom came to understand who their real friends and enemies were.

After the insurrection, many of Somoza's collaborators and other conservative figures remained in place in Bluefields, maintaining much of their influence within the community. Expropriation of the Somozaists' property was not always popular and was not as comprehensive as in the other provinces.

This was explained to us by Paulina Cáceres, a leader of the July 19 Sandinista Youth (JS-19) who had come from Chinandega to help build her organization and

advance the revolution in Bluefields.

Cáceres pointed out that as they had not participated in the revolutionary struggle and were not fully aware of the scope of what had taken place on the other coast, including the massive destruction, the people of Bluefields didn't understand what lay behind economic problems such as high prices and shortages of key commodities like sugar. It seemed to many that things were getting worse, but they could not see why.

In this situation, the local reactionaries began to come out of the woodwork and spread rumors against the revolution. They were aided by Costa Rican television, which has a special channel aimed at the Atlantic Coast, Cáceres said.

The reactionaries' campaign was focused against the presence of Cuban internationalist volunteers. "There's no sugar," the rumors went, "because it's all being exported to Cuba"! There were no jobs, because the Cuban doctors, teachers, and fishing instructors were replacing local residents. "Communism" was going to come and take away everything from everybody.

The rumors even involved the Miskito language literacy campaign that was about to be launched on the coast. The Cubans—who obviously knew no Miskito—were going to teach the course, and not native Miskito speakers, it was said.

We found out for ourselves the correctness of what Cáceres told us when we got to talking with some young Black women in the street about the disturbances, which they had not been part of but obviously had some sympathy with. One of them asked bluntly, "How would you like it if someone came and took away your job?"

Another problem the FSLN had faced in Bluefields, the Sandinista Youth activist said, was the Simón Bolívar Brigade (BSB),* which ran the city for the first month after the insurrection. One of the brigade's central figures in Bluefields was Marvin Wright, a Black from Puerto Limón, Costa Rica.

Wright turned up during the insurrection wearing a military uniform, Cáceres said. He presented himself as a leader of the FSLN. He and the BSB organized much of the work force into trade unions and then presented local employers with wage and

other demands that offered a lot to the workers but were beyond the capacity of the revolution to meet.

In the ensuing conflict with the Sandinista leadership, Cáceres told us, Wright tried to create a rift by making appeals along racial lines, for Black solidarity against the "mestizos" of the Pacific. Finally the BSB's activities in Bluefields and elsewhere became so disruptive that the FSLN had to expel them from the country. But not before the seeds of mistrust of the FSLN-led government had been sown among the local population in Bluefields.

Cáceres said the FSLN was also now critically reexamining its own policies toward the Atlantic Coast. She told us that under the pressure of the enormous tasks faced by the FSLN and the revolutionary government immediately after the overthrow of Somoza, it had not been possible to pay sufficient attention to the specific problems of the Atlantic Coast—the different languages and cultural traditions, the economic and political backwardness, and special health problems.

Organizational structures that grew out of the struggle on the Pacific Coast were imported into Bluefields, but were unsuited to the consciousness and ways of doing things of the local people, Cáceres said. These simply collapsed, weakening communication links between the community and the government and the FSLN, and strengthening the influence of the reactionaries.

As a result of the disturbances and of discussions with leaders of the Black community, Cáceres said, the FSLN was developing a whole new policy for the Atlantic Coast, aimed at winning the confidence of the Blacks and Miskitos in the revolutionary process.

The Managua news media have also reported a rethinking process inside the FSLN concerning its approach to Bluefields and the Atlantic Coast.

Commander of the Revolution Jaime Wheelock was delegated by the FSLN National Directorate to visit Bluefields, to discuss with the Black community their grievances and to reassess policy with the local FSLN leadership.

Under the headline, "Self-criticism and reflection in the case of Bluefields," the FSLN daily *Barricada* reported on October 6 that as a result of this dialogue the

convince the BSB to give up its criminally sectarian stance failed, non-Nicaraguan members of the BSB were expelled from the country.

Moreno's maneuver was launched without consultation with the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International, with which he and his followers were soon to split. The Eleventh World Congress of the Fourth International, held in November 1979, condemned the Simón Bolívar Brigade as a "criminal adventure."

For further information on the Simón Bolívar Brigade, see *Intercontinental Press*, September 3, 1979, p. 804, and December 24, 1979, p. 1277.

FSLN leaders in Bluefields had recognized that they made mistakes in responding to the disturbances and in general to the special problems of the Atlantic Coast.

"The movement that took place in Bluefields last week was not counterrevolutionary, although its leadership had a reactionary character and was opposed to the revolution," *Barricada* quoted William Ramírez, minister for the Atlantic Coast, as saying at the closing session of a meeting of FSLN cadres in Bluefields.

At another meeting with the Bluefields community, Ramírez said, "We find there is a kind of self-criticism and reflection, as well as a recognition that the methods utilized were not the most correct ones." Ramírez pointed out that the armed forces "did not use tact" in dealing with the disturbances. "We understand that from the military point of view there was a breach of discipline. But we do not justify it, and we recognize that there was a lack of communication."

Ramírez added that "many of those concerns could have been listened to by the FSLN's party structures in Bluefields, and the problems could have been solved through the participation of everyone. The situation of the past week would not have been provoked."

For his part, Jaime Wheelock said that he had found great willingness to work out all the difficulties at the meeting with the people of Bluefields. "Now we have a clearer view of the political situation of the Atlantic Coast," Wheelock said. "The political line now has to be more creative. There is a history here, a culture, a reality for the revolution."

Speaking directly to the militants of the FSLN, Wheelock said: "It will be necessary for you to provide creative responses in the forms of organization. You must recall that it is cadres grappling with problems that build the party."

The events in Bluefields posed a big challenge to the FSLN. The disturbances there represented a particularly grave threat to the revolution, a potential beachhead for imperialist intervention. They had to be dealt with firmly.

At the same time, as Wheelock and Ramírez pointed out, the grievances and confusion on the part of the participants in the protests are real and cannot be ignored. To take the base away from the reactionaries, these problems have to be dealt with politically. It is necessary to bring the Atlantic Coast more decisively into the Sandinista Revolution, through policies that are considerate toward the specific features of the region and its peoples. Wheelock's and Ramírez's statements show that there is a clear recognition of this among the Sandinistas.

We left Bluefields convinced that the FSLN leadership was once again showing its revolutionary capacity to learn from the masses themselves in order to advance in a new and stronger way. □

*The Simón Bolívar Brigade (BSB) was organized in Colombia by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), an affiliate of the Bolshevik Faction of the Fourth International led by Nahuel Moreno. The BSB's ostensible purpose was to fight alongside the FSLN against Somoza, but in fact it represented a totally irresponsible factional maneuver against the FSLN by Moreno and his followers.

Organized without FSLN authorization, the BSB only entered Nicaragua after the fall of Somoza. It falsely presented itself as an FSLN unit even while trying to organize workers to oppose what it called the "bourgeois" FSLN-led government. After the Sandinistas' efforts to

Grenada Launches Literacy Drive

By Ernest Harsch

Armed with pencils and books, hundreds of young men and women have gone out into towns, villages, and workplaces throughout Grenada in a major campaign to wipe out illiteracy. They hope, by the end of the year, to teach several thousand illiterate Grenadian workers and farmers how to read and write.

The literacy campaign, which is being organized by the Centre for Popular Education (CPE), is one of the most significant and sustained efforts that have been launched in Grenada since the revolutionary New Jewel Movement (NJM) seized power on March 13, 1979. It is the first mass literacy drive of its kind to be initiated anywhere in the Caribbean since the early days of the Cuban revolution.

At public meetings and rallies, through radio broadcasts, and in newspaper articles, the leaders of the revolution are urging as many Grenadians as possible to participate in this battle, either directly as teachers or students, or by contributing money and teaching materials. They continually stress the importance of the campaign for raising production and political consciousness, and thus for helping to advance the revolution as a whole.

"The C.P.E. must be considered as one of the most important programmes of the Revolution," stated an editorial in the July 19 *New Jewel*, the weekly organ of the NJM. "Through this programme, the P.R.G. [People's Revolutionary Government] hopes to destroy one of the greatest crimes against our people—illiteracy—and to teach our people new ideas."

In a national radio broadcast in early September, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop told the country:

"We must always seek to increase our knowledge, our understanding, our wisdom. This way we can develop analytical minds that can grasp the complexities of modern life and unmask the negative propaganda against our country and our revolution.

"We see the question of education as being relevant to our people growing together as one people, promoting national unity, helping to get rid of all the narrow, parochial and sectarian differences that still plague us."

In an earlier address, Bishop emphasized that while education was previously considered a privilege that was enjoyed by a minority of the population, "it will now be the right of all people." He also stated that education was "the responsibility of our revolution, and the key to the development of our people."

In carrying out their literacy drive, the Grenadian revolutionaries have been directly inspired by the similar campaigns that have been carried out in Cuba and Nicaragua. Articles in the weekly *Free West Indian* and speeches by Bishop and other Grenadian leaders have included repeated references to how the Cuban and Nicaraguan governments successfully combated illiteracy in their countries through massive and organized popular efforts.

The Cubans, who have aided Grenada in many different fields, are also seeking to share their own experiences in fighting illiteracy. The Cuban government sent an advisor, Angel Arrachea, to Grenada to assist the CPE. It also assisted in the printing of some of the teaching materials.

Colonialism's Legacy

The widespread illiteracy and the absence of an adequate educational system that existed at the time of the revolution were a direct legacy of colonial rule.

In the nearly 200 years that the British imperialists ruled Grenada, they built only one public secondary school, in 1885. The other secondary schools were privately built, by various churches.

Education in Grenada fared little better under the dictatorship of Sir Eric Gairy, which took over the reins from the British in 1974. At the time of the revolution, of the sixty-two primary schools in the country, only three were considered adequate. Twelve were completely dilapidated. Many were unpainted, run down, with leaky roofs that could not keep out the torrential rains. In most schools, no sanitary facilities existed. Few teaching materials were available.

The quality of the education was abysmal. Of the 968 pupils who took the final primary school examinations in 1978, only twenty-eight passed. At the most, only 14 percent of all students went on to secondary school, where they had to pay relatively high tuition rates. In the last year of Gairy's rule, only three students were given scholarships to study abroad; one of them was Gairy's daughter.

The Gairy regime tried to claim that most Grenadians could read and write, but in reality a large portion of the Grenadian population was functionally illiterate.

Upon coming to power, the new revolutionary government quickly began to tackle these problems.

Volunteer community work brigades were organized to repair and rebuild the schools. Primary school children received

free milk and cheap lunches. Secondary school fees were slashed to a quarter of what they were under Gairy. The country's second government-run secondary school was opened—the first in ninety-five years. Scholarships were given to more than 200 Grenadians to study at universities abroad.

And within only a few months of the revolution, the new government began to consider how to organize a campaign against illiteracy. At a National Education Conference held July 2-3, 1979, Prime Minister Bishop identified illiteracy as "the most fundamental problem of all" and projected a major drive to get rid of it. (See the following article for major excerpts from Bishop's speech.)

Mobilizing Against Illiteracy

By April 1980, preparations for the literacy campaign were under way. The Centre for Popular Education launched a national registration drive to recruit volunteers and to sign up Grenadians to attend the classes. Surveys were conducted in every village to determine the extent of illiteracy and to identify particular problems and needs.

High school students, trade unionists, members of community organizations and women's groups, teachers, and many other Grenadians were urged to volunteer for the CPE drive. Volunteer brigades were established, many of them adopting the names of heroes of the Grenada revolution.

By late July, seminars were being organized to train the volunteer teachers and to explain to them the goals of the literacy campaign.

The introduction to the teachers' manual, *Forward Ever*, pointed out that "an uneducated people cannot understand the causes of poverty, unemployment and disease" and cannot organize itself to solve these problems.

The manual also stressed that the volunteers should be sensitive to the special needs of their pupils, many of whom are older than the volunteers themselves. It stated that "for our efforts to be successful, we must establish a close and respectful relationship between us and our students."

At one of the seminars, John Wright, an official of the Ministry of Education, told the volunteers: "You must be willing to learn in order to teach."

The classes themselves began on August 18, and were projected to continue until December 18. As of mid-September, there were 1,200 illiterates receiving instruction from about 500 volunteer teachers.

This first phase of the literacy campaign is to be followed by two others. The second phase, scheduled to begin in early 1981, will seek to continue the education process, teaching the newly literate basic mathematics and English, and at a later stage general science and basic economics. The third phase will involve the teaching of skills in agriculture, mechanics, electricity,

carpentry, and other fields.

Despite the promising beginning to the literacy drive, the CPE is facing some practical difficulties. Many illiterates are reluctant to come forward to register for the classes. The CPE estimates that there are more than 6,000 Grenadians who cannot read and write who have not been signed up.

Noting these problems, Minister of Education George Louison emphasized the need for an even greater mobilization by the entire country to support the campaign. He appealed to trade unions, churches, and businesses to contribute to the CPE and to mobilize their members to take part. To increase participation in the campaign, a second registration drive was launched in September.

At a seminar for CPE technicians on September 22, Prime Minister Bishop also pointed out the specific problems of attracting workers in the countryside to the literacy classes, most of which are being held in school buildings. To lessen the inconvenience of attending classes for these workers, he announced that a program was being devised to set up classes in the workplaces themselves.

Literacy and the Revolution

A central theme in the literacy campaign has been the direct links between education and the revolutionary process as a whole. Ultimately, it is those links that will ensure the success of the campaign.

Greater education, the leaders of the revolution repeatedly stress, will help increase production, and thus will help improve everyone's living standards. An editorial in the June 7 *Free West Indian* declared:

"We must understand clearly that the more educated a people become, the more productive they become. A population that can read and write effectively is a population that can grasp, understand and utilise modern agricultural methods, modern machines, modern technology. . . .

"We made a revolution on March 13, 1979, to end tyranny, dictatorship and neo-colonialism. But we also made a revolution to start mass education and to advance production. With our pencils and our copy-books we will open up our minds and feed them with knowledge and with our hoes, forks and cutlasses we will till that rich fertile soil so abundant in our lovely homeland."

Connected with this is the need to raise political consciousness and understanding. As Bishop underlined in a speech in late July, if Grenadians are to continue their struggle against imperialism, they must be able to understand its nature.

This goal is reflected in the teaching materials being used in the literacy classes. The main exercise text, *Let Us Learn Together*, contains lessons about the history of the revolutionary struggle in Grenada (and its small sister islands of

Carriacou and Petit Martinique), about the Caribbean as a whole, about the popular character of the revolution, and about the need for vigilance against the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries.

The role of education in the revolution is

Speech by Maurice Bishop

Education for the New Grenada

[The following are major excerpts from a speech given by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop on July 2, 1979; at the start of a two-day National Education Conference in Grenada.]

* * *

It is for me a great honor and privilege to have to speak this morning at the start of this very historic conference. This conference, of course, takes place at this time when momentous events are taking place in our country. It is part of a process, and part of an opportunity which we the people of our country and all the different sectors and sections and classes and strata will have in the next few months of examining and looking anew at all aspects of our society. This gives us, of course, the opportunity for the first time in many years of looking inwards at ourselves and our society.

As a colonial people up to a few years ago, it has been our practice to look outward, outward away from the needs of our country and the problems facing our people, and outward instead to the needs, to the problems, to the solutions that the metropolitan masters wish to impose on us.

Perhaps the worst crime that colonialism left our country, has indeed left all former colonies, is the education system. This was so because the way in which that system developed, the way in which that system was used, was to teach our people an attitude of self-hate, to get us to abandon our history, our culture, our values. To get us to accept the principles of white superiority, to destroy our confidence, to stifle our creativity, to perpetuate in our society class privilege and class difference.

The colonial masters recognized very early on that if you get a subject people to think like they do, to forget their own history and their own culture, to develop a system of education that is going to have relevance to our outward needs and be almost entirely irrelevant to our internal needs, then they have already won the job of keeping us in perpetual domination and exploitation. Our educational process, therefore, was used mainly as a tool of the ruling elite.

In the days of slavery, of course, it was not necessary to even have education

at the heart of the literacy campaign. The drive is being conducted under the two main slogans of the CPE: "An uneducated person is an enslaved person" and "Without education there can be no liberation." □

because slaves were not required to know how to read or write, nor were they required to think for themselves. Indeed, they did not even have the rights to their own lives. Their sole function was to produce for the slave masters and the sole function of the women was to produce for the slave masters; those that were unable to otherwise work, their sole function was to produce more children that could be used as property to send out profits to the metropolitan countries.

It was only, therefore, after the abolition of slavery, or rather just four years before the abolition, that anything was given at all to education in Grenada, and it was in fact in 1834, I believe, that what they called a Negro Education Grant was set up, and this was to assist with the question of establishing the resources and the means of creating a certain form of education that ensured the continued exploitation of the Grenadian at that time.

Our educational system was used in this way to encourage a number of myths, a number of illusions, a number of deep-seated fallacies. It was meant to create the belief that social mobility was the most important factor to be had from education. It was meant to foster the illusion that the most important reason why anyone should receive education was so that he or she could acquire individual wealth. It helped to teach us most of the negative attitudes and values that today we still see in certain sectors of our society. Attitudes of racist beliefs, racism, priorities, and chauvinist attitudes that make many of the men in our society look at the woman as being not an equal partner but as being a tool for personal use and enjoyment; an attitude of narrow nationalism and of isolationism that has taught us to believe that each of us in each of the several Caribbean islands must always remain separate and apart, and our French, and Spanish, and Dutch speaking brothers and sisters have no relevance to those of us who live in the English speaking section of the Caribbean. It has taught us to accept attitudes of authoritarian rule; a hierarchical structure that says that the people do not have any right to participate, do not have any right to have their voices heard.

The education process compartmentalized us, made us believe that during the

eighteen or nineteen years—for those who are able to get secondary education—that we are so-called students, that our only role is to study, and this study must be completely unrelated to what is happening in our society. An attitude, also, which continued to teach us that our sole function, a hundred and forty something years after the abolition of slavery, was to continue to be producers of raw materials and raw goods for the former colonial masters. These were some of the problems that we inherited. These were some of the myths that were created.

Sisters and brothers, we inherited very many problems on the 13th of March. Perhaps the most fundamental problem of all is the one that many people like to pretend does not exist, and that is the problem of illiteracy. People like to wave around certain facts and figures, and glorify it by the name of statistics, and they say that in Grenada the percentage of illiteracy is very small. But what they mean by that is that most people or perhaps many people are able to sign their names, and the process of being able to scratch a signature on a piece of paper is deemed literacy and therefore they say there is no problem of illiteracy.

But the reality that in fact confronts us is that the vast majority of our people are still unable to read or to write in a functional manner, are still unable to take a newspaper and to appreciate what is written on that paper, are still unable to listen to a radio broadcast and to discern in an intelligent, in an inquiring, in a serious way what is being said, because they have not been given the opportunity of such development. And one of the most crying shames of the recent history of our country is the fact that no one is yet able to assess how many thousands of geniuses might have been uncovered, might have been discovered, might have come forth and flowered if they had had the opportunity of receiving some form of further education.

But one of the major problems of a society such as ours, a society that is ruled by an elite, a society that is divided along

class lines, a society where the major motivational factor is profit, is that very few people care whether the agricultural worker, or the fisherman, or the road worker, or the mason, or very often even the civil servants can read or write. That is not an important question, because as they see it, in order to make more dollar bills, what is important is not what you have in your head but what you have in your arms. Once you have the physical strength to turn the work out, once you are able to turn the machine or to dig with the fork or the cutlass, or to cut with the cutlass or whatever, that is what is important.

And therefore what our society has encouraged is division between those who have certain mental and intellectual skills, those deemed the elite, those deemed the important people in our society, and the vast majority of people, the ones who are in fact the most important because they are the ones who are producing, because no amount of reading and writing and passing exams for certificates can help us produce the cocoa, or nutmeg, or bananas that our country relies on in order to produce the wealth that we have.

And yet, precisely the people that are most responsible for developing our country, for creating the wealth that we have, are precisely the ones that are most looked upon, the ones that are most regarded as being useless, the ones that are thought to most hate themselves, the ones that can never fully develop their personality, because they do not even have the most basic requirements that any human being should have to acquire further information and knowledge. The right to read, the right to write, the right to be able to communicate in a serious way with one's fellow human beings, the right to receive all the information that mankind has gathered over the past several thousand years, the right to understand one's history, the right to think about one's future, because they might say you have the freedom to speak or the freedom to read, but what is the point of having the freedom to read and our country at the same time can pass a

law that bans the right to certain types of books and magazines to come into our country?

What is the point of saying there is freedom to speak when in our country at the same time three and a half months ago [the Gairy regime] prohibited the right to in fact communicate? What is the point of talking about the freedom to develop when what in fact was being encouraged was backwardness, was superstition, the perpetuating of a feeling that only a small elite can rule; that the only purpose of education was to acquire individual wealth?

The physical condition of our schools is a sin crying to heaven for vengeance. Virtually every single pre-primary school in our country is in need of repair. The secondary schools, a fair number of them, are also in pretty urgent need of repairs, and when we come to the situation of the teacher and that of course is the most single important ingredient in any school—the teachers—because in the final analysis even if you do not have a building or even if you do not have books, or exercises to write on, but you have a serious and committed teacher, you can still learn. That is the history of those people who have been fighting their national liberation struggles in Angola and Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique and other countries around the world—the history that you do not always need a classroom to develop the consciousness, to raise the educational and qualificational standards of your people. It is sufficient if you have committed people who are teaching them.

But yet we find that of our teachers at the primary level less than one-third in fact only 30 percent have received any form of professional training at all. At the secondary level the picture is even worse; it is something like 7 percent of all the teachers who have received some form of professional training, and at the pre-primary level the vast majority have in fact received no form of professional training.

And therefore, with these problems it means, sisters and brothers, that the solutions we are going to have to propose, the solutions you are going to have to look at over the next few weeks, are going to have to be radical solutions; are going to have to be solutions that are far reaching; are going to have to be solutions that will deal with the real problems that we have in our country and not the problems we would like to imagine exist, but with the real problems that in fact face us.

The structural problems affecting education and affecting every other sector in our society are of course also very deep-seated problems. I refer here of course to the poverty of our country, to the high transportation cost, to the poor health facilities, to the lack of jobs, to the lack of meals for school children at lunch time, to the inadequate housing that children must live in,



Free West Indian

Volunteers in Carriacou receive training for literacy campaign.

to the poor water facilities that are available.

But what these structural problems should remind us and what it should teach us is that in order for us to move forward, we will always have to remember that there are very serious problems that we face in our country, problems which we could only solve if people and government together come up with creative solutions. Solutions that are not initially going to require a great deal of capital expenditure.

It is easy for any government, it certainly will be easy for the People's Revolutionary Government, to proclaim the principle of free education for all. And this we are of course very happy to do. But it is one thing to say free education, it is another thing to say how are we going to pay for that free education. Where is the money going to come from? Where are the resources going to come from that we are certainly going to need to run schools, train teachers better, provide a more relevant form of education, and all free of cost?

What I think that points to, is that one of the very important lessons that we are going to have to draw—and one of the very important things that we are going to have to embark on as we try to open up the school system to the economically poor and underprivileged in our society—is that we are going to have to learn the lesson that we will have to take our schools to the people. We are going to depend to some extent on a system of volunteers who will be willing to go out into the countryside, where the most serious and endemic problems of illiteracy exist and try to train our people.

All of us are going to have to strive to become teachers on-the-job and off-the-job. All of us are going to have to try to get down to the important task of raising the literacy standard, providing all our people with the basic opportunity of being at least able to read and to write. And this is going to involve a massive task of voluntary work by those who are sufficiently fortunate to have the skills, to have the ability to communicate what we know, who have been able to receive some form of education and therefore are able to pass on what we have learned to those who are themselves unable to acquire any such knowledge.

Secondly, it seems to me that we are going to have to move very quickly to destroy the artificial class divisions of our people into absurd and illogical compartments. We are going to try to get away from the idea of people who are students full-time. And we are going to have to move more and more to the idea of getting everybody in our country to regard themselves as both students and workers.

The whole question of the curriculum is going to be a key one. A curriculum that is geared to developing a new philosophy, that is going to stress the important question of self-reliance, the important question

of genuine independence, that is going to look at us as we in fact are, as a small, poor, overexploited form of colonial Third World country and what that means in practice for our future, that is going to try to begin to raise national consciousness, that is going to stress the importance of national unity, that will stress the importance of developing an approach, an attitude that says on the one hand all of us must work harder, all of us must produce more, but says on the other hand when we work harder and when we produce more the benefits of that production and that sort of work must come back to all of us collectively.

That sort of thinking we are going to have to develop. A participatory democracy that seeks to involve all of our people: workers, farmers, fishermen, youths, students, women; all of them on a regular ongoing basis in making decisions and coming up with solutions for the problems that we have identified as being the real problems that are holding us back.

To develop that sort of approach requires the creation of a new philosophy, a new thinking which must be reflected in the curriculum that we are going to have to develop.

Washington Saves Pol Pot's Seat in UN

[The following appeared as an editorial in the October 24 issue of the U.S. socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Despite opposition around the world and increasing hesitation among U.S. allies, the Carter administration got its way again October 13 at the United Nations.

The ousted dictatorship of Pol Pot—responsible for the death of millions—was designated as sole “legitimate” representative of Kampuchea (Cambodia).

Donald McHenry, U.S. ambassador to the UN, explained that he supported Pol Pot in order to protest the Vietnamese “invasion and occupation.”

The Kampuchean people have a different view. They regarded it as liberation when Vietnamese troops helped them toss out Pol Pot nearly two years ago. Today he controls virtually no territory and has no popular support, despite massive infusions of aid from Washington's allies.

Washington's vote for Pol Pot may be among the most revealing that U.S. representatives ever cast at the UN. It sends a message that will be heard loud and clear by the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Washington's emissaries like to claim that they are trying to spread the virtues of “Western democracy” to the peoples of the “third world.”

The question of the appropriate forms of technology that we are going to use to develop our country, all of these problems are problems which our society must look at, which the curriculum that hopefully over the next few months you will begin to draft an outline of, that the curriculum has relevance to these problems and therefore can assist us, that the educational process can then become a tool for our liberation, our development, for us to make social progress; not as it now is, as a tool to alienate people, to frustrate them, to dehumanize them. And the only way in which we can do that is if we in fact begin a very serious and in-depth process of thinking about the many problems that we face.

So to summarize, sisters and brothers, we must move to wipe out illiteracy, we must move to develop a system of work and study in the schools, we must move to make all of us who are capable of being such teachers, develop the concepts of taking education into the countryside on a voluntary basis to those of our unfortunate sisters and brothers who are not even able to come to the town to get that education.

We must use the educational system and process as a means of preparing the new man for the new life in the new society we are trying to build. □

But the people of the world, including the American working people, are increasingly seeing through that fakery. McHenry's boost for Pol Pot can only help.

Working people remember Washington's “democratic alternative” to the Iranian revolution. The shah's reign of torture and murder.

We remember the “democratic alternative” to the Nicaraguan revolution. The butcher Somoza.

We see the “democratic alternative” to revolution that Washington proposes for El Salvador. A bloody junta that slaughters thousands.

And now we have Washington's “democratic alternative” to the Vietnamese forces that are helping the surviving Kampuchians rebuild their country.

None other than Pol Pot.

It's no wonder that millions around the world risk their lives to revolt against these “alternatives.”

And that's why millions of Americans oppose Carter's draft registration. They don't want to be dragged into Washington's crusade to make the world safe for the shahs, Somozas, and Pol Pots. □

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Evolution of the Thai and Philippine Communist Parties—I

By Paul Petitjean

[This article, the first of two parts, appeared in the September 11 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*, published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Today Thailand and the Philippines are the two Southeast Asian countries in which there is the greatest growth in mass anti-imperialist struggles. The opening of the Sino-Indochinese crisis should not lead us to ignore or downplay the importance of these struggles for the international workers movement and national liberation struggles.

Quite the contrary, the development of a strong revolutionary mass movement in the ASEAN countries¹ would break the noose encircling the Indochinese revolutions.

More generally, there is the possibility in that region, as well as in South Korea, of a new extension of the revolution in East Asia, extending the victories won in China (1949) and in Indochina (1954-1975).

Nonetheless, the situation in Thailand and the Philippines remains largely unknown outside the region, and solidarity activities are largely limited to small circles of activists. But it is necessary to lay the groundwork for broadening the international support movement. The struggles in the Philippines and Thailand have, in fact, reached a turning point in their history. They have begun to undergo—or can undergo in the coming period—qualitative growth.

At the same time, they are largely isolated on the regional level. They are also subject to the contradictions and tensions that arise from the Sino-Indochinese conflicts, and to the pressure of U.S. and Japanese imperialism. They face dictatorial regimes that do not hesitate to use the police and army against them.

Because of both the possibilities and difficulties they confront, the revolutionary struggles in Southeast Asia deserve support from a vast international solidarity movement. But broadening solidarity work, under present conditions, can take place only very gradually.

And if we are to succeed in broadening the solidarity movement, we must first understand and discuss the basic problems posed before the revolutionary movements

of the region and the solidarity movement, because, as we shall see, there is a problem.

This article is written within this perspective. It seeks to provide information and some elements of analysis regarding the present evolution of the revolutionary movements in Thailand and the Philippines. It also seeks to provide greater understanding of the need to strengthen solidarity activities today. It seeks to open a discussion on some political questions that are key to both the future of the struggles in the region and the strengthening of international support.

A Key Region

The geopolitical importance of Southeast Asia has already been proven. It is a pivotal area controlling communications between the Indian and Pacific oceans. Rich in raw materials and with a rather large market, Southeast Asia is an area of growing economic investments from the United States, Japan, and other imperialist powers. In addition, no other region anywhere has been swept by such a long succession of confrontations between revolution and counterrevolution as has dominated the history of East Asia since the beginning of the century.

Today Southeast Asia is still the arena of important regional and international class confrontation. It is perhaps the region of the Third World where the role of the Communist movement has been (and remains) the greatest, where the number of victorious socialist revolutions has been the greatest, and where the Sino-Soviet conflict and the Sino-Indochinese conflicts have the most direct consequences.

Since the victory of the Indochinese revolutions in 1975, the center of gravity of mass anti-imperialist struggles in the region has shifted toward Thailand and the Philippines, each of which has a population of nearly 50 million.

In Indonesia, the most important country in the region in terms of population and economic resources, the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was ruthlessly crushed in 1965. (The PKI was one of the largest CPs in the world outside of the workers states). This has had a lasting impact. As far as we can tell, the Communist movement in Indonesia no longer exists in an organized form, or rather exists only embryonically. What remains of the PKI is largely in exile, split between Moscow and Peking.

On the other hand, in East Timor, at the far end of the Indonesian archipelago near

Australia, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) and the masses came together to fight the army of Indonesian dictator Suharto when it overran the former Portuguese colony. Resistance to the occupation continues, although under extremely difficult conditions.

It is impossible to judge how deeply rooted the Communist Party of Malaya is or the scope of the two splits that shook it in the early and middle 1970s. But the bulk of its guerrilla forces are confined to the Thai side of Malaysia's northern border, and in the past period in Malaysia and Singapore social struggles have not been able to establish themselves in a lasting way in the face of the repression.

In Burma there have been important movements of national resistance, but in the absence of widespread class struggles, although in some border areas the forces of the Communist Party may have seen some growth.

By contrast, in Thailand and in the Philippines there was an unprecedented growth in class struggles in the 1970s. In Thailand there was the explosion of strikes and peasant and worker mobilizations after the Thanom-Prapass military dictatorship fell in October 1973 due to the pressure of vast, quasi-insurrectional student and popular demonstrations. Then after the bloody October 1976 coup, the guerrillas became qualitatively and quantitatively stronger.

In the Philippines there was a rapid radicalization of the student movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and then a continuous extension of social mobilizations and areas of guerrilla activity from region to region and island to island. At the same time there was a considerable growth in the armed resistance of the Moro people, who are Muslims, in the southern part of the Philippine islands.

In Thailand and the Philippines, with the exception of the Muslim regions, Communist parties of Maoist orientation were the only revolutionary organizations able to intervene on a national scale. Organized far-left forces in these countries remain uncommon today.

For a long time Southeast Asia was the last region of the world where parties that stemmed directly from the Third International (or quasi-directly, as in the case of the Thai CP) had neither achieved victory (as in Yugoslavia or China), become reformist, or been destroyed by repression, but had rather remained involved in revolutionary battles. This situation began to

1. ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations, made up of the regimes in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

change, first with the political bankruptcy of the Indonesian CP—whose reformist character was already well-established before it was crushed without being able to resist—and then with the victory of the Indochinese revolutions.

But the special history of the communist movement in Southeast Asia and the influence of the Chinese revolution remain crucial to understanding the movements struggling in Thailand and the Philippines.

This is true for the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), which retains a certain continuity with the Communist movement of the period of the Second World War and earlier. But it is also true of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), even though that party was established only recently. The revolutionary movement of the whole region was to one degree or another stamped by the early history of the Communist movement in Southeast Asia.

Communist Parties at the Crossroads

The Thai and Philippine CPs have different origins. The Thai CP goes back to 1930. It was officially founded in 1942, after the Communist Party of Siam was largely destroyed by repression. The Philippine CP, on the other hand, was only established in 1968, in a split with the pro-Moscow Communist Party.

For a long period the growth of the Communist Party of Thailand was slow, and it suffered serious setbacks.² After it was driven from the cities by the repression, its base was mainly in the areas inhabited by the ethnic minorities (in the north), and in the outlying regions of the country (the northeast and south).

By contrast, the Communist Party of the Philippines grew rapidly after it was formed a dozen years ago by a handful of members, with about seventy-five sympathizers around them. A year later the CP's guerrilla organization, the New People's Army (NPA), was established with sixty members and thirty-five weapons of questionable quality.

Today the CPP and the NPA each have several thousand members (more than half the members of the NPA being members of the CP as well). Twenty-six "guerrilla fronts" have been set up in eleven regions outside of the Manila-Rizal area, where the



Students fleeing attack on Thammasat University during military take-over of Thailand in October 1976. Coup prompted many to join guerrilla forces.

capital is located.³ Moreover, the political influence and direct participation of CP members is felt in many mass struggles carried out by peasants and agricultural workers, industrial workers and urban slum dwellers, mountain tribes, and students. It is clear that the CP has developed a real mass base in the Philippines, although its base still varies depending on the region.

The same thing happened with the Thai CP in the years 1973-76. Before 1973 it had roots in regions such as the northeast and the non-Muslim south. The fall of the military dictatorship and three consecutive years of semi-democracy and intense social struggles allowed it to win a new base in a number of factories in the Bangkok region, in the student movement, and among peasants in the northern plain.

Some of these gains were lost in the repression that followed the October 6, 1976 coup. A number of working-class and student activists fled the capital and took refuge in the guerrilla zones, and legal peasant organizations such as the Farmers Federation of Thailand were decimated. But at the same time the People's Liberation Army of Thailand grew rapidly, to more than 10,000 members. And the earlier social, political, and geographic growth in the CP ranks did not disappear.⁴

The growth in the influence of the Thai

and Philippine CPs takes place in a dual context. In the first place, new social contradictions are coming to a head in these countries. The urban centers are expanding rapidly (Bangkok has between 4 and 5 million inhabitants, and Manila between 6 and 8 million, depending on which estimate you use). The student youth are faced with a crisis in job opportunities. A modest process of industrialization is taking place. The peasantry is undergoing a process of pauperization and differentiation, which is especially linked to the spread of market relations into the countryside.

In addition, the system of imperialist domination in the entire region has gone into crisis with the defeat that the Indochinese revolutions inflicted on the U.S. military forces.

The Thai CP and Philippine CP have been able to win over the most radical wing of the new revolutionary generations that arose in the struggles of the 1970s. Through this process they strengthened (in Thailand) or won (in the Philippines) a central place in the active far-left that is largely unchallenged, except perhaps by reformist currents.

But today they face important difficulties, in terms of both consolidating the gains of the previous period and making the political reorientations called for by the rapid changes in the national and international situation.

These difficulties have been seen most sharply in Thailand. Many students who joined the guerrilla struggle after the 1976 coup have returned to Bangkok. Some of the principal leaders of the Socialist Party and the United Socialist Front, which had joined the armed struggle in 1976 and with the CP had set up the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces in 1977, quit the united front in 1979 and took refuge in Laos or returned to

2. An analysis of the history of the Communist Party of Thailand can be found in Sylvia and Jean Cattori, *L'enjeu thaïlandais* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1979). This is one of the best and most current books on that country. There is a translation of a history of the Thai CP in the *Thai Information Bulletin* (Paris), No. 15, February 1978.

See also Andrew Turton, Jonathan Fast, and Malcolm Caldwell, eds., *Thailand: Roots of Conflict* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978).

Inprecor published an article on the Thai CP in its April 10, 1977 issue.

3. Figures taken from the "Declaration on the Eleventh Anniversary of the New People's Army," published by the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines. See *Ang Bayan*, special issue of March 29, 1980.

4. This growth of the Thai resistance was capped by the formation of the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces (CCPDF) in 1977. On this subject see the dossier published in Issue No. 6 (December 1977) of the *Paris Bulletin thai d'information*.

the capital. Some soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of Thailand, including Therdpoom Jaidi, a former ranking union leader, also left the jungle and crossed the Mekong into Laos.

These splits and individual departures did not break the organizational backbone of the Thai CP or appreciably reduce its national implantation. It is not the first time that that party has gone through small splits. Apparently there were even larger ones in the past that involved members of the leadership apparatus, including a member of the Political Bureau.

Moreover, while new Marxist currents opposed to the CP's line took shape during the crisis in the resistance movement, no competing political organization has arisen (either in Bangkok or in Laos), at least publicly. It is doubtful that any such organizations with an active rank and file exist at present.

But one cannot judge the real political importance of these recent developments on a numerical basis alone. The basic problems that have developed in the last two years in the Thai resistance are actually much deeper than a "quantitative" analysis of the split might lead one to believe.

The majority of the students who left the guerrilla zones did not, however, break politically with the party. Quite often they left because of the difficulties that young city dwellers encountered when they suddenly found themselves in camps in the middle of the jungle where no real preparations had been made to receive the sudden influx of new recruits driven en masse to the zones controlled by the CP by their fear of governmental repression.

Often too, the departures were hastened by frictions that arose between the students and local cadres of peasant extraction in the guerrilla camps.

But a number of basic questions lie behind these departures. One was the lack of democratic functioning and politico-ideological life in numerous camps and in the CP apparatus itself. Another question was how to integrate new generations trained in the 1970s into a cadre established in the 1950s and 1960s, since the new generation had very different political experiences from those of the preceding generations, especially in terms of mass work.

Moreover, some splits have taken place on the basis of a worked-out political criticism of the Thai CP's line. Although the criticism is not necessarily accompanied by the development of a positive alternative line, it directly touches on a whole series of real questions: the analysis of the social structure in Thailand; the strategic balance between rural and urban work; the functioning of the united front; the nature of the close relations between the Thai CP leadership and Peking; the Thai CP leadership's political alignment with the Chinese CP, in particular regarding the Indo-

china question; the ideological basis of the party; and so on.⁵

The people who left for political reasons in that period were the Thai reflection of the marked escalation of the Sino-Indochinese crisis in 1979. A layer of members, who had already been critical, viewed the break between the Thai Communist Party leadership and the Vietnamese and Laotian leaderships as a sign that the Thai CP was irreversibly lined up with Peking, whose international orientation they condemned.

But the political debate that opened up at that time was concerned at least as much with the strategy of the national revolutionary movement as with regional questions. That debate revealed the existence of a whole series of older disagreements which continue to nurture unofficial discussions within the Thai CP itself and among the party's sympathizers.

There are apparently quite a few CP members and sympathizers who share some of the criticisms of the Thai CP leadership put forward by the "splitters." Some even share the fundamental criticisms. But they feel there is no viable alternative to the Thai CP and the debate should be carried out within it and with it.

No comparable crisis exists in the CP in the Philippines. The movement there continues to grow while, for the moment, the progress of the Thai resistance seems stalled. The Philippine CP leadership's relations with Peking differ markedly from those of the Thai CP, and the apparatus is also clearly much younger.

In addition, the Philippines do not have any common border with Indochina, and the Philippine CP is not as directly affected by the repercussions of the Sino-Indochinese conflicts as the Thai CP. Nonetheless, in terms of political positions, we can discern a number of problems that are similar to those seen so sharply in the crisis of the Thai resistance.

Is the Chinese Bureaucracy Internationalist?

One of the main contradictions the Thai and Philippine CPs confront is their policy regarding the Chinese Communist Party. How can formations that have been involved in ongoing revolutionary struggles in their own country continue to support Peking's international policy at a time when the Chinese bureaucracy is cynically and openly carrying out a counterrevolutionary orientation throughout the region?

Of course this is not to defend the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, whose own record includes the betrayal of a goodly number of revolutions. The Soviet bureaucracy even bears the historic responsibility for the Sino-Soviet split, sealed in 1960 by

5. In issue No. 19 of the *Bulletin Thai d'information* there is an initial and rather complete exposition of the debates and differences that came to light in early 1979 within the Thai resistance.

the sabotage of Chinese economic development, the international isolation of Peking as the price of the Moscow-Washington accords reached at Camp David, and the transfer over time of one-third of the Soviet army to the Chinese border.

But the Chinese CP's policy must be subjected to the same critical analysis as that of the Soviet CP.

For a long time Maoist activists in Southeast Asia would try to explain the contradictions that developed between their own struggle and Chinese diplomacy by distinguishing between "government to government relations" (the realm of Chinese diplomacy) and "party to party relations (through which Peking was supposed to continue to support their liberation struggle). But it is no longer possible to try to analyze the orientation of the Chinese bureaucracy in those terms.

At a given moment, the policy of a revolutionary government (forced to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with a reactionary government) may not necessarily coincide with, or take place on the same plane as, the policy of the party, which is the principal instrument for carrying out an internationalist orientation. But the policy of the government and the policy of the party cannot be *contradictory*.

Does anyone still believe that the Chinese *party* supports revolutionary struggles in countries such as Thailand and the Philippines at the very time that the Chinese *government* seeks to ally itself as closely as possible with the ASEAN regimes? Or that the Chinese *party* calls on the Japanese proletariat to fight against the rearmament of Japanese imperialism at a time when the *government* clearly and openly declares that it hopes that Tokyo's military potential will be rapidly increased? Or that the Chinese *party* supports the struggles of the peoples of Southeast Asia against Japanese and U.S. imperialism while the *government* is calling on the U.S. not to withdraw from the Pacific?

On such fundamental questions, the basic orientation of the party and the government must be identical; and there is no doubt that this orientation is counterrevolutionary. In the name of the struggle against "the principal enemy" (Soviet "social imperialism") the Chinese bureaucracy seeks to stabilize the regional situation (meaning to safeguard the neocolonial regimes from a possible extension of the revolution) while isolating and weakening the Indochinese regimes (which is precisely where imperialism has suffered one of its most bitter defeats).

The climate has changed quite a bit among the Philippine and Thai revolutionary activists. Even three or four years ago it was nearly impossible to raise questions about the internationalist character of Peking's policy and receive a hearing (except from militants who were especially

open to the international realities).

Today the discussion is opening in wider and wider circles. But people still respond that we should not be "too quick in judging" Chinese orientations. "Too quick"? It has now been more than ten years since they began to put the present policy into effect, enough time to see it applied on all the continents. The record is eloquent!

In *Africa*: Peking sent military advisers to the disgraceful Mobutu regime in Zaïre; together with the South African apartheid regime it provided military aid to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

In the *Middle East*: There was Peking's remarkable show of support for the shah of Iran during Hua Guofeng's visit to Tehran. Hua's visit came at the very moment when the masses of Iran were mobilizing in demonstrations of rarely equaled size, despite the repression, and were calling for vengeance against the tyrant. The support for the shah also involved the shameful abandonment of one of the main guerrilla struggles in the region, the struggle in Dhofar. The Dhofari guerrillas (who claimed adherence to Maoism!) were battling the Iranian army, the regional gendarme of the neocolonial order.

In *Europe*: There was Peking's support for strengthening European integration; the publicity it gave to anticommunist proposals made by extreme right-wing generals under the pretext that they were also anti-Soviet; the portrayal of the French and Belgian imperialist military intervention in Zaïre as a model for the alliance between the "second" and "third" worlds.

In *Asia*: Peking studiously ignored the Bengali people's right to national self-determination; it supported the Sri Lankan regime's brutal repression of the country's rural youth and the People's Liberation Front (JVP) movement in 1971.

In *East Asia*: The Chinese regime stabbed the Indochinese revolutions in the back during Nixon's trip to Peking (and then on to Moscow) while Hanoi and Haiphong were subjected to unprecedented U.S. bombing.

In *Latin America*: The immediate support for Pinochet in Chile, at the very moment when the new regime was unleashing mass repression that was denounced throughout the world for its violence.

The list is endless. One could say that the present orientation of the Chinese leadership is the opposite of the positions Peking proclaimed in the early 1960s, positions that allowed China to bring around it, against Moscow, the living forces of numerous liberation movements. In those years the Chinese bureaucracy put forward the "anti-imperialist and anti-revisionist" line officially giving priority to support for liberation struggles. They denounced the line of "peaceful coexistence" and "détente" with imperialism that

the Soviet bureaucracy was putting forward.

Even then the real Chinese policy could differ from the orientation that was seemingly put forward, as shown by China's unprincipled support for Pakistan against the Bengali liberation struggle, or Mao's support for Aidit's reformist orientation in the Indonesian CP.

But generally, following the Sino-Soviet split, Chinese policy helped liberation movements to escape the straitjacket of "peaceful coexistence" that the Soviet bureaucracy tried to impose on them.

There has never been any official explanation of the radical change in Peking's international orientation. It simply reflects the narrow needs of the Chinese bureaucracy's diplomacy. The only public change was in how the Soviet Union was officially characterized. It went from being revisionist, to capitalist, and then to social-imperialist (although there has never been any serious basis put forward for these changes).



NPA fighter in the Philippines.

Today Peking is doing exactly what it (rightly) castigated Moscow for. The Chinese bureaucracy has, like the Soviet bureaucracy, written off revolutionary struggles and seeks to establish an agreement of peaceful coexistence with U.S., Japanese, and European imperialism against the Soviet Union. What does this kind of policy have to do with defense of liberation struggles and of the world revolution?

The 'Principal Enemy'

In both the Thai and Philippine CPs there is a contradiction between the international and national positions they take. In 1978 the leadership of the Thai CP officially adopted the "Three Worlds" theory put forward by Peking, and the Philippine CP denounced Soviet "social imperialism" as one of the "two superpowers."

But both of these parties continue to assert that in their own countries the "principal enemy" is still U.S. imperialism and the reactionary regimes in power.

The Thai Communist Party has not published any official position paper in its own name, although the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces and the Socialist Party have done so. But given the CP's influence over these two organizations, we can take their declarations as reflecting the present official line of the Communist Party leadership, which is confirmed by a series of interviews and discussions with leaders and members of the CP.

Responding to a letter sent to the Thai CP and the Committee for Coordinating Patriotic and Democratic Forces by the French Solidarity Committee, the CCPDF declared that "today the revolutionary movement considers the Kriangsak government and American imperialism to be the principal enemies."⁶ The SP (or at least that faction of the SP that remains loyal to the alliance with the CP) noted in its declaration published at the conclusion of its Third Congress, held April 25, 1980, that "on the international scene, the two superpowers are contending for world domination, provoking, as a result, disorders and wars in various places, including in Southeast Asia. Despite its defeat in the Indochina wars and the significant decline in its influence, U.S. imperialism still firmly dominates Thailand and seeks to maintain its influence in this region. . . ." As a result, the Thai Socialist Party states that it must "maintain its cooperation with the CPT" in order to "resolutely pursue armed struggle with the aim of overthrowing the reactionary government, a puppet of U.S. imperialism."⁷

Moreover, in a recent interview with an American journalist, which took place in the historic base of the Thai resistance, the Phu Phan Mountains, a leader of the Thai

6. *Bulletin thai d'information*, Nos. 20 and 21, p. 28.

7. *TIC News*, (Sweden), May 31, 1980.

CP stated that "at present we still regard American imperialism and Kriangsak as our principal enemies. Therefore the report that we are not in favor of the overthrow of Kriangsak is unfounded."

Regarding the new Thai prime minister, Prem Tinsulanonda, the CP leader maintained that he, like Gen. Kriangsak before him, "represents the interest of the imperialists, the [feudal] Sakdina group, and the comprador capitalists. Therefore it is of little import if one replaces the other. The policy cannot change very much."⁸

The Philippine Communist Party has gone even further in its official declarations (this time issued in its own name). It opens up the debate over who is the "principal enemy" on the international level. The March 29, 1980, declaration of the Military Commission of the Philippine CP Central Committee, published in the party newspaper to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the founding of the New People's Army, states that:

In recent years Soviet social-imperialism was behind open aggression and occupations carried out in Africa and in eastern and western Asia. . . . But, on the other hand, U.S. imperialism is still the real immediate enemy that peoples in many parts of the world must confront. In Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the revolutionary movements are mobilizing to confront U.S. imperialism's control, domination, and interference. American imperialism is trying to recover from the big defeats it suffered and continues to suffer at the hands of the revolutionary peoples. It takes advantage of the growing isolation of Soviet social-imperialism to stem its continuous weakening and to rebuild its earlier strength.

The two superpowers—U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism—are the principal enemies of the peoples of the world today. . . .

It is correct for proletarian parties and revolutionary movements in different countries to pursue their goals on the basis of real conditions. For the Filipino people, it is correct to vigorously carry forward and step up the revolutionary struggle against U.S. imperialism, while remaining alert to the plans of Soviet social-imperialism.⁹

In addition, the entire resolution is a call to intensify the struggle against the U.S.-Marcos regime.

We can see that despite the fact that the Philippine CP continues to characterize the Soviet Union as "social imperialist" and puts the two "superpowers" on the same footing, the analysis of the international situation presented here is profoundly different from Peking's analysis, which calls for a broad alliance with the reactionary neocolonial regimes and imperialism against the USSR.

For the Chinese bureaucracy, the "main enemy" today is the USSR (although this could change tomorrow) and its "international line" is based on that.

Regardless of one's analysis of Soviet society and of the ruling bureaucracy's policy, from the vantage point of defense of liberation movements and of the world revolution, there can be no doubt that the "principal enemy" by far remains imperialism (U.S., along with Japanese and European).

To be convinced of this fact one need only glance at a world map. Taking into account "real conditions," note where the USSR could be the main enemy.

This difference in outlook is not restricted simply to things written in documents. The Philippine CP and the New People's Army are involved in a multifaceted struggle against the Marcos regime and the presence of U.S. military bases in their country. Their guerrilla movement may, in the very near future, reach the "advanced stage of strategic defense,"¹⁰ meaning the final stage before balance is established between the guerrilla forces and the regime's forces. They are trying to prepare for a qualitative leap forward in revolutionary struggles, both in terms of deepening the mass movements and strengthening the party's military capability.

We will deal later with the contradictions in and the seriousness of the Thai CP's line regarding the Indochinese question. But in Thailand too they hope to enter the "advanced phase of strategic defense." The Thai government is carrying out its repressive policy and hopes to use the crisis that has opened within the resistance to deal it heavy blows.

According to a memorandum prepared by the new prime minister, Gen. Prem, who is known for carrying out a counterinsurgency policy in the northeast, the principal task of the government is to defeat the Thai CP.¹¹

Major military battles are constantly taking place. For example, in the south in June Thai CP forces took over a military base, killing twenty-one soldiers and rangers and seizing many weapons in an operation involving more than 100 guerrillas.¹² Also in June the government launched a major offensive in the Phu Phan Mountains, using heavy artillery and air strikes.¹³

International Positions of the Philippine CP

An analysis of the international positions taken by the Philippine CP confirms that it wants to maintain an attitude of solidarity with today's big anti-imperialist struggles. But such an analysis also shows the confusion and the dangers in a series of positions that flow from the Maoist analysis that capitalism has been restored

in the USSR and that the Soviet Union is "social imperialist."

Finally, it shows how in a number of cases the Philippine CP fails in its internationalist duty to publicly denounce the counterrevolutionary policy of the Chinese bureaucracy, while never hesitating to denounce the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy.¹⁴

The Philippine CP saluted the "victory of the Nicaraguan revolution." Following on the heels of the overthrow of the shah of Iran, that victory represents "a big step forward in the world struggle against imperialism" and could have especially important repercussions in Latin America. The Philippine CP saluted the courage of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) but stressed the need to build a "Marxist-Leninist party." Analyzing the presence (in August 1979) of three wings within the FSLN, including a bourgeois-liberal wing, the Philippine CP stated that a "clearly socialist program should be articulated," and stressed the importance of ensuring that the "sacrifices of the people" are not diverted to benefit a "reformist path."¹⁵

But the Philippine CP's positions most clearly contradict those of the Chinese leadership in regard to Iran. The Philippine CP saluted the overthrow of the shah. And in November 1979, when the American hostages were seized in Tehran, it pledged its support for the "struggle carried out by the Iranian people against American imperialism."

"The mass action carried out by the Iranian people," the CP wrote, "is part of their ongoing struggle against U.S. imperialism to achieve their national liberation." It is a correct struggle and "every blow struck against imperialism, social-imperialism, and all the local or international reactionary forces is a good thing."¹⁶

Here too the Philippine CP stressed the "Iranian people's need for a Marxist-Leninist party in order to win a total victory." It saw the Khomeini leadership as tied to the national and agricultural capitalists and made a very critical assessment of the regime. "Only the working class can lead the revolution," the article asserted. "The working class has proven its uncompromising revolutionary position by placing itself in the forefront of the people's struggles against the shah and imperialism," despite the negative role of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party.¹⁷

To defend Iran the CP campaigned

14. It should be noted that I have not been able to consult the entire clandestine press of the CCP. Therefore it is possible that some important articles or positions may have escaped my notice.

15. *Ang Bayan*, August 15, 1979.

16. *Ang Bayan*, November 30, 1979.

17. *Ang Bayan*, December 15, 1978.

10. *Ang Bayan*, March 29, 1980, p. 10.

11. Cited by the Pacific Institute (New York) in its July 1980 document, p. 2.

12. *Bangkok Post*, June 21, 1980.

13. *Bangkok Post*, June 23, 1980.

8. *TIC News*, July 15, 1980. Peter Kistemaker's interview with Kem Kongdul, a member of the CP Regional Committee.

9. *Ang Bayan*, March 29, 1980, pp. 9 and 10.

against Washington's use of U.S. military bases in the Philippines to aid the deployment of its naval and air forces in the Indian Ocean and to sit off Iran's shores.¹⁸ It denounced U.S. imperialism's attempts to draw "the Filipino people into [its] war preparations."¹⁹

In addition, in an issue of *BMP* (which at least officially is the organ of the National Democratic Front rather than of the CP) there is an analysis of the Cuban leadership that is interesting for several reasons. The article sharply criticizes Cuban intervention in Africa, but it tries to do so from an anti-imperialist point of view.

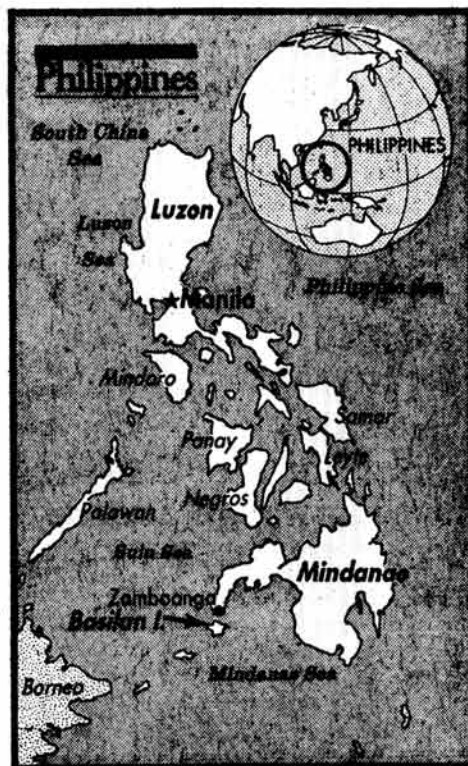
The article begins by denouncing the Cuban abandonment of the struggle of the Eritrean people: Cuba "at one time helped to train the Eritrean guerrillas. But it abandoned them when the USSR told Cuba to help in the murder of the Eritreans by the Ethiopian tanks." However, the article continues, "the world revolution must be the sole criterion and the people themselves the sole pope. Therefore the most fundamental principle in all national liberation struggles is the right of each national and ethnic group to self-determination, which in essence means the right to secede."

The article also tries to refute the argument that the Eritreans are not worthy of support from communist forces because of the character of their leadership or the fact of possible infiltration of CIA agents into their ranks. Such arguments have no validity "to the extent that [this struggle] has the benefit of a real mass base and receives massive support from the population."

Furthermore, using this criterion, the Philippine CP recognizes the justice of the struggle of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNFL), which is supported by the Muslim population in the southern Philippines. In fact, "a mass uprising of great breadth like that of the MNLF, Polisario [in the Western Sahara], or Fretilin [in East Timor] cannot be artificially created by simple intrigues launched by a handful of conspirators."²⁰

This is an important discussion. It is true that recognition of the right to self-determination cannot simply be dropped when the liberation struggle involves an entire population. From this vantage point it is necessary to discuss the aid that the USSR and Cuba provide the Ethiopian regime when the Addis Ababa armies are trying to drown the Eritrean rising in blood.

But we should note that the Philippine CP forgets its own principles when it



refused to recognize the same right to self-determination for the Bengali people, under the pretext that the Indian bourgeoisie would profit from the breakup of the former Pakistani state.

But that too was a real mass uprising, and armies foreign to the local population (Islamabad's armies) tried to use terror to prevent the secession of eastern Pakistan (what is now Bangladesh).

But in that instance Peking defended the Pakistani dictatorship, with which the Chinese leadership had established special relations.

The previously cited article also attacked the role of the Cubans in Angola, in the same terms as their role in Ethiopia. But in Angola the Cubans intervened at the request of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) only after UNITA had begun to base itself on the United States and South Africa when it was unable to extend its own mass base in Angola and could not stop the victorious progress of the MPLA. By then UNITA, along with the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA), had lost any pretense of representing the national liberation struggle in that former Portuguese colony.

UNITA and the FNLA had clearly become imperialism's last hope to stop a revolutionary process. What does the Philippine CP think about the aid the Chinese bureaucracy now gives UNITA, aid that is jointly distributed with aid from South Africa? And what does it think about the Chinese military advisers' role in consolidating Mobutu's bloody regime in Zaïre?

The Philippine CP apparently has nothing to say about these questions.

Silence of this kind makes it difficult to carry out a real discussion on the role of the various regimes that claim to be socialist in today's world. The *BMP* article on the Cubans in Africa remains cautious in its overall assessment:

"The first deviation from real proletarian internationalism is embodied in the unstable and inconsistent nature of the anti-imperialist line of the USSR and Cuba in Africa. Each year, new national liberation struggles or revolts against white power break out with extraordinary vigor. But Cuba and the USSR have been selective. While supporting some, they subject others to shameless blackmail or, worse, close their eyes to them."²¹

But if the Philippine CP wants to open this debate, why keep silent about Peking's abandonment of the guerrillas in Dhofar? And why, in the articles cited above, does the CP not acknowledge the Cuban leadership's role in aiding the Nicaraguan revolution?

In regard to solidarity, the main lessons that revolutionary organizations can draw from an analysis of liberation struggles in recent years is that a truly internationalist position can only be developed in total independence from the orientation of Peking as well as Moscow. It was necessary for us to support the Indochinese revolutions (long aided by Peking and Moscow), the mobilizations of the Iranian people (ignored by Peking and Moscow), the Nicaraguan revolution (aided by Cuba), the liberation movements in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa (finally supported by Moscow, and today fought by Peking), the guerrillas in Dhofar (shamefully abandoned by Peking), and Eritrea (abandoned by Moscow).

Support to the revolutionary struggles and liberation movements must start from the interests of the world revolution. Experience has shown that neither the Chinese bureaucracy nor the Soviet bureaucracy care about the interests of the world revolution. Quite the contrary. Therefore revolutionary organizations must determine their positions in total political and ideological independence from both.

But such political and ideological independence can only be developed through an open and frank debate on the policy pursued by Peking, Moscow, and the other workers states. The position of the Philippine CP, and especially the Thai CP, on Indochina shows the importance and urgency of such a debate.

[Next: The positions of the Communist parties on the conflict in Indochina, as well as the evolution of their national strategies.]

21. *BMP*, August 19, 1978, p. 11.

18. *Ang Bayan*, February 29, 1980.

19. *Ang Bayan*, November 30, 1979.

20. *BMP*, August 19, 1978, pp. 11-12.

Statement of the Fourth International

Polish Workers Confront the Bureaucracy

[The following statement was adopted September 25 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

1. After two months of strikes involving more than two million workers, the Polish working class won a magnificent victory. For the first time since the establishment of the Stalinist totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorship in the USSR, later extended to Eastern Europe, the working class has won in struggle the right to organizations of its own, the right to strike, the partial lifting of censorship, access to the mass media, greater religious freedom, the liberation of political prisoners persecuted for their solidarity with the strikers, and the admission by the bureaucracy of the existence of exorbitant material privileges. This is a victory of historic significance for the Polish working class and the workers everywhere.

Despite all the efforts of the bureaucracy to isolate and divide the strikers—blacking out information, conceding some things to some workers and not to others, and desperately attempting to prevent any centralization of the strikes—the Polish workers have given proof of a remarkable solidarity and sense of class organization.

The strikes began in the Ursus factory, which had been in the forefront of the struggle in 1976. The movement spread from one industrial center to another. At first, a network of correspondents, which arose in the aftermath of the 1970 and 1976 strikes and was linked to the newspaper *Robotnik*, spread the news on the successes of the first strikes. Later, semiclandestine, semitolerated worker mobilizing committees arose in several factories and helped extend the movement.

Right from July 17, with the strike of the Lublin railway workers—sixty kilometers from the Soviet border—the movement took on the character of a quasi-general strike, involving seventeen factories and paralyzing the economic life of that city. When the strike movement reached the Baltic ports, the sector of the working class which had the most experience in the strikes of 1970 and 1976, it achieved a higher level of organization and politicalization. Strike committees (MKS) linking different workplaces appeared. The MKS in the Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot region was composed of 800 delegates from 500 workplaces, and met around the clock in the Lenin shipyards. It became a true workers council. The example of this MKS was emulated in many other areas. In Upper Silesia, which came into the struggle later,

the strikers, who had great weight given the decisive role of coal in Poland's economic life (coal exports earn the largest portion of foreign exchange), formed a MKS with delegates from seventy-two workplaces. The miners won an even greater victory than in Gdansk. The twenty-one demands of the Gdansk MKS served as a model for the workers' demands in many other areas. The centralization of all the MKS's of the country into a single central committee of the strike was on the agenda when the bureaucracy capitulated to the Gdansk strikers.

The strikers and their leadership displayed a good sense of tactics, realistically evaluating the relationship of forces and the nature of the bureaucracy. They did not let themselves get taken in by any provocation. They transformed the factories into bastions of the working class, refusing to negotiate anywhere else, refusing to negotiate at the Communist Party or government offices. They avoided street confrontations. Building their own organizations in the course of the struggle, relying on mass democratic meetings and choosing correct tactics all went hand in hand. Negotiations were conducted under the control of the strikers. Regular mass meetings of the workers critically examined each step in full and unrestricted democratic debate.

The strikers compromised on demands that the bureaucracy would not have been able to concede without committing immediate suicide or provoking an open rupture with the Kremlin. They took account of the fact that while there was universal sympathy with the strikes, only a minority of the working class was directly involved. Furthermore, they had to weigh the danger of direct Kremlin intervention. In the given relation of forces, it was a question of consolidating their autonomous organizations, an initial victory against the bureaucracy, without immediately facing a showdown confrontation with it. The results speak for themselves. While the total number of strikers was not more than two million, there is already double that number now in the "self-managed" trade unions, as the workers call them. Thanks to its exemplary struggle of July-August 1980, the Polish workers have reached a higher level of organization now than during the strike itself.

2. The extent of the workers' victory can be explained by the breadth of the struggle, the high level of organization achieved, the enormous sympathy throughout the country, and by the changes in the international and national

relationship of forces, which are a lot more favorable than in 1956 or 1970.

The deepening crisis of capitalism and of Stalinism, the resistance of the West European working class to the austerity offensive of capital, the fall of the Somoza and shah dictatorships under the blows of the masses, the criticisms of some aspects of the Kremlin's undemocratic practices by the Western European Communist parties, the long-term repercussions of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia—and all those factors which contribute to the modification of the international relationship of forces to the detriment of imperialism and capitalism, including the new gains of the world revolution—makes a Soviet invasion more difficult in Poland.

It would be irresponsible to discount the danger of such an invasion. But it would be more difficult than in the past, and the Soviet bureaucracy would pay a much higher price, including within the Soviet Union itself. The international context as a whole has encouraged the Polish workers and helped force the Polish bureaucracy to make real concessions.

Within Poland, there has been a modification of the social relationship of forces. The working class is now the majority class in the country. There has been a reduction in the weight of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie compared to what it was in 1956. There has been an extension of industrialization and urbanization, and an elevation of the cultural and educational level of the proletariat, etc.

Inside the working class, a layer of vanguard militants has appeared, experienced and battle-hardened through the antibureaucratic struggles of 1970, 1976, and 1980. They have lost a substantial part of their illusions in the possibility of the bureaucracy reforming itself, illusions that were much in evidence in 1956 (the Gomulka experience) and 1970 (the Gierek experience).

The bureaucracy finds itself in an economic impasse, which limits its capacity for maneuver. After the 1970 crisis, the regime first of all stimulated an economic boom, stoked by a growing debt to the capitalist countries. It tried to use the rise in the standard of living of the workers as a basis for restabilizing its control over them. However, the waste and negligence of the bureaucracy, the duplications of investment and "regional and enterprise egoism," inevitable in the absence of true control by the workers, as well as the effects of the capitalist economic crisis that the bureaucracy did not foresee—all

ended up in exacerbating economic difficulties (in particular concerning the supply of foodstuffs and consumer goods to the workers) that the regime tried to resolve on two occasions, in 1976 and 1979-80, by a cut in the workers' living standards. Both times the workers responded, with increasing power.

The bureaucracy failed to divide the antibureaucratic opposition. No political alternative with any credibility in the eyes of the masses was put forward by any faction of the CP. In 1968, the student and intellectual opposition in solidarity with the "Prague spring" remained largely isolated from the working class. On the other hand, the 1970 workers' revolt found practically no echo in the intelligentsia. Between 1976 and 1979, however, the prestige of Gierek was undermined by the 1976 strikes and the concessions he was forced to make. A political opposition was rebuilt among some intellectuals, which won in practice the right to semilegal expression (KOR, *Robotnik*, Catholic intellectuals, nationalist groups). In and around the CP itself timid opposition tendencies reappeared, incapable however of presenting a platform or leader with mass support. So while many opposition intellectual and Church tendencies were ready to avoid any direct confrontation with the bureaucracy or any mass struggle, being content to pressure the bureaucracy, the enormous wave of workers' struggles in the summer of 1980 has qualitatively modified the situation. In fact it unified the immense majority of the people of the city and countryside in support of the workers' strikes.

Thus, while practically the whole country was conscious of the deep crisis that was rocking society, *it was the working class, in struggle, which won social hegemony of the antibureaucratic opposition.* Leaving aside the first weeks that followed the invasion of Hungary by Soviet troops in November 1956, this was the first time this occurred with such breadth and duration in a Stalinist totalitarian workers state. This augurs well for the future political revolution in the USSR where the social relationship of forces is substantially comparable to Poland, if not even better.

It is not the social counterrevolution, the restoration of capitalism—which has only a minuscule social base in Poland—which is on the agenda. What is on the agenda is the replacement of the totalitarian dictatorship of the bureaucracy by the working class through its own democratic organizations. The social and economic basis of the workers state would not be challenged for an instant, as has already been admirably confirmed (after Hungary and Czechoslovakia) by the comportment of the Polish strikers throughout the summer of 1980. The objective thrust of the struggle of the Polish workers is workers democracy and socialism.



Supporters rally outside strike headquarters at Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk.

3. *Even though the Polish workers have achieved a great victory, they have not yet won the final victory over the bureaucracy. The latter remains master of the state apparatus.* It continues to control the social surplus, and therefore all the decisive sectors of social activity. The power of the bureaucracy has not been overturned. It has been contested, shaken, and obliged to make concessions that a short time ago would have been unimaginable. But its power remains.

The concessions won by the Polish working class are in the long-run incompatible with the continued rule of the bureaucratic caste. The bureaucracy is not a new ruling class. It does not play an economically irreplaceable role in society. The working class is perfectly capable of exercising the leadership functions that the bureaucratic caste has usurped. The totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorship can only continue in the long-run on the basis of the political passivity and atomization of the working class. If the workers continue to massively challenge bureaucratic management, it will be condemned.

That is why the appearance of a massively organized workers movement involving millions constitutes a death threat for the totalitarian dictatorship. The two cannot live together for very long. Either an independent working class, through a successive series of confrontations, abolishes the political power of the bureaucracy and carries out a victorious antibureaucratic political revolution, establishing the political power of democratically elected and centralized workers councils; or else the Polish bureaucracy,

powerfully supported by and spurred on in this direction by the Soviet Union and the "brother countries" of Eastern Europe, will liquidate one by one the concessions seized by the workers at the end of August and early September.

With such a future confrontation looming, currents inside the political opposition in Poland, within the working class, and even among the vanguard who led the strike are trying to avoid it by seeking to restrict the activity of the new independent trade unions to only defending the workers' immediate economic interests. The bureaucracy, from its side, is pushing in the same direction, as part of its attempts to corrupt, limit, and eventually liquidate the conquests of the summer of 1980.

But this is doomed to failure. In a society founded upon the nationalization of the principal means of production and exchange, any economic question automatically becomes a political one. Any broad-based workers' demands in the domain of consumption, immediately raises questions concerning the reorganization of production, of economic policy, of the plan, and the modification of the distribution of the national income and the national product between the major sectors (funds of consumption and funds of investment; productive consumption funds and unproductive consumption funds; investment funds in industry and in agriculture, in production and in distribution and transport; individual consumption funds and social consumption funds, etc.)

The Polish workers are perfectly conscious of the flagrant imbalances intro-

duced in the economy by the irrational investment decisions inherent in bureaucratic planning, by the wastage, negligence, and arbitrary nature of such planning, which does not enjoy the corrective of control by the masses. The workers have given two answers to the argument that "any increase in wages not linked to a rise in production leads automatically to inflation, thereby hardly increasing the standard of living of the masses."

First, they have pointed out, not only workers consume, but also the well-off bureaucrats and the rich petty bourgeoisie. In reducing the part going to them, by cutting down their privileges and increasing equality, workers consumption can be increased without necessarily increasing production.

Second, increasing production is not necessarily tied to a new increase in investment paid for by a reduction in workers' consumption. It can also be obtained by a better use of the notoriously underutilized productive resources, by a better equilibrium between agricultural and industrial production, by the elimination of the abuses of bureaucratic management, which results in the indifference shown by the workers to production.

This manner of posing the question of the causes of the Polish economic crisis goes in the direction of workers' control, a demand which has already been made in many factories and cities.

In other words, within the framework of a workers state like Poland today, any immediate economic demands by the workers end up becoming an alternative economic policy to that of the bureaucracy. This could be seen quite clearly in the initial twenty-one demands of the Gdansk MKS. It is still too early to say whether the formulation of such alternative economic policies will be raised through the new trade unions or other organs such as the "works councils," which still legally exist in legislation dating from 1945 and 1956 (although they have ceased to be independent organs of the working class). But whatever might be the body that expresses the workers' desire for a different economic and social policy from the bureaucracy, it is this trend itself and not the specific body that is incompatible with the power of the rule of the bureaucracy. But in a workers state, any independent mass organization of the workers will tend to go in this direction. That is why the conflict between independent trade unions born in the summer of 1980 and the bureaucratic dictatorship is inevitable. One of them is forced to eliminate the other.

Right after the agreements of August and early September, the bureaucracy was seeking to nibble away at the gains of the strike. It systematically obstructed the construction of the new "self-managed" trade unions outside of the Baltic port region. Everywhere, and including in Gdansk, it tried to hinder, if not to prevent

the appearance of a workers' press controlled by the workers themselves. It put pressure on the workers by threatening them with a loss of their social benefits in the event of disaffiliating from the "official" trade unions. Or it tried to transform the latter, headed by leaders nominated from above, into integral parts of the new independent unions in order to weaken them.

We are seeing only the first skirmishes. Other and much sharper confrontations will come, including the use of repression. The workers have so far replied tit for tat, not hesitating to threaten strikes or to actually strike again in order to force respect for the August-September agreements.

4. The struggle against the political power of the bureaucracy is hampered and complicated by the contradiction between the striking force, self-confidence, and capacity of organization of the working class on the one side, and the unevenness and insufficiency of its political class consciousness on the other side. The uneven development of the workers' upsurge in Eastern Europe operates in the same



Strike leader Lech Walesa.

direction. That is without any doubt the principal contradiction of the present crisis in Poland, without which the power of the bureaucracy would have been brushed aside in a single blow.

This contradiction is expressed at two levels. First of all, within the "self-managed" independent trade union itself it is necessary to distinguish at least three distinct groups of workers: those who have gone through the most advanced forms of organization in August and September (above all the workers on the Baltic coast and Upper Silesia, but doubtlessly also those of Ursus and some other key factories); those who participated in the July-to-September strike movement without reaching such forms of organization; and those who didn't go on strike in the summer of 1980, while joining the new trade unions afterwards, notably the majority of workers of Warsaw and Lodz, the two main industrial centers of the country. The weight of the workers' vanguard, and particularly that of workers' leaders recognized as such by the broad masses, is definitely different according to these three categories.

Furthermore, for the large majority of the Polish workers, there is a striking contrast between a class instinct, a remarkable elementary class consciousness and low political class consciousness. In other words, an important part of the Polish proletariat is still marked by a pronounced political-ideological confusion. This is shown by the very strong influence of religion and of the Catholic clergy among the workers, by the presence of petty-bourgeois nationalist currents, by the influence of anarcho-sindicalist tendencies to the left of the independent workers movement now being built.

The fundamental cause of this political-ideological confusion in no way resides in the pressure of the petty-bourgeois peasant milieu in Poland itself or in the pressure of a surrounding capitalist world. On the contrary, before the Second World War, when these pressures were much stronger than at the moment, the Polish working class was one of the most advanced of Europe from the point of view of level of political consciousness.

The political tradition of the Polish workers movement is one of the most impressive and glorious. It was among the Jewish workers of Poland that the first socialist organization in tsarist Russia was born, the Bund, which gave birth to the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, out of which Bolshevism arose. At the time of the Second International, the Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania of Rosa Luxemburg educated revolutionary socialist cadre who helped spread communism in at least three countries. Alongside the Russian Bolsheviks and the German Spartacists, the Polish internationalists were in the vanguard of Zimmerwald and of the struggle against

social patriotism. In the 1918-25 period, the Polish CP was one of the most influential of Europe.

The fundamental cause of this present political and ideological confusion is the disastrous effects of Stalinism on the Polish workers movement in the course of the last forty years.

Stalinism began by destroying the moral and political integrity of the CP by the support given to the Pilsudski coup d'état in 1926. It followed this disastrous work by a blind factional sectarianism that isolated the party more and more from the working class. Then it formally dissolved the CP and physically exterminated nearly all its leading cadres in the 1937-41 period. It put into power mediocre bureaucrats, who were corrupt and unconditional supporters of the Kremlin, most of them brought into Poland by a foreign army identified by the masses with foreign agents. Finally, in the course of the last thirty years, it has systematically "educated" the proletariat in a chauvinist spirit against the true internationalist tradition of the Polish workers movement, smothered any sign of autonomy or critical action from the workers, and since 1956 elevated the activity of the Catholic church hierarchy to the level of the only quasi-legal mass opposition in the country, while continuing to submit the church to a thousand petty interferences.

It is not surprising that in these conditions, where Marxism has been perverted into an apology for totalitarian bureaucratic rule, that religion appears more attractive in the eyes of the masses than any ideology that seems to be identified with detested bureaucratic dictatorship.

This ideological confusion means that even though the working class has already conquered social hegemony inside the anti-bureaucratic opposition, which takes in the immense majority of the Polish nation, *it has not yet conquered political hegemony inside the opposition.* The political evolution of the country in the months and years to come, the outcome of the confrontation with the bureaucracy, the chances of the success of the coming political revolution—all depend to a large extent on the capacity of the working class to reconquer, after its organizational independence, its class political independence, that is, a clear conception of the alternative of socialist democracy to the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship.

This reconquest will be greatly furthered by the existence of the mass organizations in the process of being built and by the experience of struggle that the workers are going through. The presence of a revolutionary Marxist current rooted in the working class, supporting all the demands and struggles of the masses and resting firmly on the fundamental program will play without a doubt an important role.

To be able to combat the obscurantist influence of Catholic and petty-bourgeois

ideologies in the working class, revolutionary Marxists must above all understand the specific conditions in which the political awakening of the Polish working class is taking place. This gives particular importance for all those who support Marxism, authentic communism, to intransigently defend democratic rights on the widest level for the working masses. We defend not only the right to strike and freedom of organization, including political organization, but also freedom of assembly, of the press, and *unrestricted freedom of religion.* Far from criticizing or opposing the access of the church to radio and television won by the Gdansk strikers, we welcome this as a step forward along the road of breaking the monopoly of the bureaucracy on the mass media. We demand that what is rightly accorded to the Catholic current also be accorded to *all* the currents present in the working class and the opposition: to the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), to the trade unionist currents, to various socialist currents, to the communist opposition.

To combat religion and the clergy with administrative and repressive means is totally counterproductive and only reinforces their weight inside the masses. The only efficient struggle against reactionary ideology is by open ideological and political debate, obliging the hierarchy to give their position on the big day-to-day political problems (like the call to order and for a return to work by Cardinal Wyszyński in August; like the positions taken by the clergy against birth control and abortion). This will help reduce its influence inside the proletariat and the youth, providing that there are other mass alternatives to Stalinism.

Furthermore, the accusations concerning the role of the church and of petty-bourgeois forces in the strikes and the antibureaucratic opposition are pure hypocrisy. Apologists of the bureaucratic dictatorship quite easily find a common political language with those forces. It is the bureaucracy's appeal to the "national interest" and to nationalism, its refusal to base itself clearly on the interests of the working class, that allows the most flexible wing of the bureaucracy to have an echo within the intelligentsia and the Catholic hierarchy and among a section of the workers. But the more the independent organization and self-confidence of the working class progresses, the more that such ideas will lose influence inside the workers movement.

5. Two other social classes have weight in post-capitalist Polish society, although very much less than that of the proletariat: the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The Polish peasantry is socially weaker than it was in 1939 or in 1956. Having won the end of forced collectivization and the return to private property in 1956, it is today extremely differentiated. The major-

ity of the small peasants are very poor and only have about one to one-and-a-half hectares of land, which is exploited in an archaic way without the use of mechanical tools. It has already led important struggles, like the milk strike in 1978. It is beginning to organize itself. This mass of small peasants understand the well-founded grievances of the workers' strikes of the summer of 1980 and openly solidarized with them. They have begun to develop their own organizations, analogous to the "self-managed" independent trade unions, which can work out a solution in common with the organized workers to the most urgent problems of supplying the cities with foodstuffs and the countryside with industrial products.

Collaboration by such independent "self-managed" organizations in the present period will prepare the terrain for a solid workers' and peasants' alliance. After the victory of the political revolution, the creation of peasant cooperatives by the poor farmers, freely and without any force and with the massive introduction of modern agricultural machines into the cooperatives, would ensure their members, right from the beginning, a level of life and culture superior to their present misery.

Thus the links that are set up now between independent workers trade unions and the poor peasant independent trade unions can end up in the cooperation of the workers councils and the poor peasants committees in the democratic socialist Poland of tomorrow. The presence inside the villages of a semiproletariat of 3 to 4 million—small peasants who are at the same time salaried workers working in the towns—creates a natural social link between the two classes that facilitates the appearance of peasant trade unions first of all and peasant councils later.

Alongside this mass of small peasants there is a minority of well-off farmers who have manifestly enriched themselves in the course of the last twenty-five years. They have about ten to twenty-five hectares per farm and much machinery, which allows them to carry out modern agriculture in a profitable way. This richer peasantry welcomed the 1956 reforms as a big victory. It is at one and the same time strongly linked to the bureaucracy (into which it is well integrated, especially on a local level) and the Catholic hierarchy between whom it constitutes a social intermediary link. It is this layer which has the monopoly of the surplus foodstuffs with which it both supplies the cities and can export. It is urgent that the working class emancipate itself from this dependence on this layer of rich farmers by the development of a modern cooperative sector, with a high productivity of labor, which can come out of a reconstituted worker-peasant alliance.

The rapid development of industrialization, urbanization, and of literacy has produced a petty-bourgeois intellectual

layer that is much bigger than in the past, to which we can add, especially since the 1956 and 1970-71 reforms, a layer of independent minientrepreneurs in the service sector who have quickly enriched themselves like the well-off peasants.

While the latter exists in a state of symbiosis with the bureaucracy, based above all on corruption and reciprocal favors, it has a contradictory relationship with the dictatorship. While it has shown on several occasions (in 1956, 1968, 1970-71, and 1976) a spirit of irreverent critique, which finds a particularly clear expression in the artistic world (cinema, theater, posters, and poetry) and in certain social sciences, it is particularly partial to the nationalist arguments of the regime and has only weak links with Marxism.

This layer, which accepts a series of the political axioms of the bureaucracy, had a tendency between 1977 and 1980 to consider an anti-working-class austerity policy inevitable. It willingly concedes to the blackmail of the "Soviet intervention" argument against workers' struggles. Its influence is felt even within the KOR. But the bracing experience of the big workers' strikes of the summer of 1980 will no doubt provoke a new differentiation within the intelligentsia. The glorious tradition of Polish Marxism, destroyed by Stalinism, will rise again among the workers primarily, but will also be embraced by those intellectuals ready to place themselves firmly in the workers' camp.

6. The Polish bureaucracy has been deeply shaken by the strike wave and was more and more divided on what response to give to it. This division became a panic when the specter of a national general strike appeared. The capitulation of August-September can only be explained in the light of this panic.

The tactic finally opted for by the bureaucracy was to stop the movement at any price, since it could not repress it, contain it, or divide it—with a view to taking back the concessions later on when the movement would be in reflux. Within this process a big reshuffle of the top structures was also necessary. The more and more complex tactical problems that an independent workers movement that is not in reflux, but rather in full expansion, will pose for the bureaucracy will no doubt cause many new divisions and reshuffles.

The Soviet bureaucracy was first of all irritated by the manifest incapacity of its Polish ally to reestablish control over the working class, then deeply worried by the extent of the concessions that the Polish regime had to give to the strikers. It rightly fears the international repercussions of these concessions in other "people's democracies," and even in the USSR itself.

It reacted on several levels at the same time: drowning in silence the fact that the strikes took place, their importance, the strikers' demands, and the content of the



agreements; grossly slandering the strikers, the MKS, and especially the independent "self-managed" unions as being manipulated by "infiltrated antisocialist elements," which also is a calumny against the Polish working class itself (4 million workers with full workers' democracy were supposedly manipulated by the enemy); threatening to withhold economic aid and thinly veiled blackmail with regard to military intervention; and trying to line up all the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe in a common block against the "Polish virus."

Up to now it has scored some points with this tactic. Despite some sort of show of "independence" by the Kádár regime in Hungary, the bureaucracies of the "people's democracies," who are all threatened by an awakening of their own working class inspired by the Polish example, have all aligned themselves with the Kremlin. They are all pressuring Warsaw toward a gradual "normalization" of the situation. It is true that the East German bureaucracy, whose population has been fully informed of the Polish events thanks to its access to West German radio and television, has not been able to hide the demands of the Polish workers from the East German proletariat, nor the extent of the victory that has been won by them. But that did not prevent them shrieking in alarm against the "antisocialist" elements who were "teleguiding the MKS"—in the same way as the bureaucrats of Prague, Sofia, and Bucharest.

For its own reasons, the Chinese bureaucracy has taken a different line. It publicized the strikers' demands sympathetically, apparently to prepare the Chinese population for a big mobilization against what it thought would be a rapid Soviet intervention. This has already boomed

with Chinese workers in many factories asking for the same rights as those that the Polish workers have won.

For the moment, the Kremlin is still counting on the Warsaw bureaucracy taking back under control the Polish working class step by step, while preparing the terrain for a more radical solution. The more that the Polish bureaucracy is seen to be powerless to stop the organization and politicization of the working class in Poland, the more this upsurge has repercussions in other bureaucratized workers states, the stronger will be the temptation of a military intervention by the Kremlin. That remains technically and politically possible, as long as the political revolution does not develop in several of the "people's democracies" at the same time and the awakening of mass political activity does not affect the Soviet proletariat itself.

But it is precisely in this direction that the logic of the crisis of Stalinism and the totalitarian dictatorship in all these countries is heading. The first direct repercussions of the Polish strikes were modest: the strike of the Reichsbahn workers of East Germany (who live, however, in West Berlin); and the solidarity movements among groups of dissidents and some small groups of young people in several Eastern European countries. But the more that the existence, the legal functioning, the program, the effective role of the independent "self-managed" Polish trade unions are known, the more their force of attraction will influence sectors of the working class in the "people's democracies" and the USSR.

That is why time is on the side of the Polish working class, as long as its mass movement and activity do not regress. The international extension of this movement is the only guarantee against a military intervention of the Kremlin. That is why a real proletarian internationalism is today an obvious political requirement for the Polish working class.

The bourgeoisies of capitalist Europe and imperialism as a whole have been just as frightened as the bureaucracies of the USSR and the "people's democracies" by the upsurge of the Polish working class. They are worried about the impact this example will have on the working class of their own countries, the risk that the workers of Western Europe, North America, and Japan will respond "Polish style" to the austerity measures of the capitalists. This fear goes along with that of the trade union bureaucracies, the CPs and SPs, that the workers of the capitalist countries will demand "self-managed" unions, that is, trade-union democracy and strike committees democratically elected in mass meetings of strikers like the Polish workers did. That is why, while giving "verbal" support to the Polish strikers and while looking to exploit the strikes for anticommunist propaganda ends, all the conservative forces—including the leaders of the so-

called Eurocommunist parties—have welcomed with relief the end of the strikes and the “intelligence” of Warsaw in avoiding a frontal conflict.

The de facto support given by the international bourgeoisie to the Warsaw regime was not limited to platonic declarations. It also took the form of more than a thousand million dollar loan given to the Polish bureaucracy in order to permit it to get through the immediate difficulties of paying the servicing of the colossal external debt and to allow it some room to maneuver both in relation to the Polish workers and to the Kremlin’s pressure.

The bourgeoisie, as much as the bureaucracy, fears as a mortal threat a victorious antibureaucratic political revolution in Poland, which would be a powerful stimulus for the socialist revolution in Western Europe and for the extension of the political revolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR too. The whole framework of the fragmentation of the European proletariat, created at Yalta and at Potsdam, would be threatened.

To those who say that overturning the power of the bureaucratic caste in Warsaw would threaten Europe and the world with a third world war, we reply that this is a shameless lie. The stronger and more active is the working class of Eastern Europe and throughout the world, the more the specter of a third world war retreats. When the working class is mobilized in its millions, as in France in 1968 and Poland in 1980, that is the best barrier against the mad suicide of a world war. Proletarian victories in Europe, East or West, will have deep repercussions inside the American and Soviet proletariat. Those who contribute to, encourage, or tolerate the nuclear arms race and those who demoralize, divide, and condemn the working class to passivity actually encourage the imperialist war drive—not those who are going down the road of the working class taking and exercising power.

7. *The strike and the victory of the two million Polish workers underlines the growing importance of the antibureaucratic political revolution in the overall process of the world revolution.* It confirms more and more the dominant role that the proletariat already plays inside all three sectors of the world revolution: the permanent revolution in the semicolonial countries; the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries, and the political revolution in the totalitarian workers states. It has given another crushing refutation of all those ideologues, who, analyzing history in terms of their own personal disappointment, are tempted to reject the proletariat, since the uneven rhythm of the world revolution does not respect their arbitrary and preconceived timetables and schemes. After May 1968, after more than ten years of exemplary militancy of the Italian working class, after the magnificent upsurge of the Brazilian working class, after the spectacular urban insurrection in Iran and Nicaragua, the Polish strikes confirm one more time the exemplary capacity of and the irresistible strength of millions of workers in a united, collective struggle.

The working class of the capitalist countries have followed, with increasing sympathy and enthusiasm, the exemplary struggle of their brothers and sisters in the Polish working class. To the extent that the independent trade union organizes, develops, and defends the gains of August-September 1980, and tries to put into practice the capacity of the working class to formulate an alternative social and economic policy to the bureaucracy, this sympathy will be accompanied by reflection, by the coming to a new consciousness of the true nature of socialism as the valid alternative to capitalism, as was the case during the “Prague spring.” For us, irreconcilable enemies of imperialism and capitalism, we can only rejoice, for this growing consciousness will nourish more and more the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggle in the countries under the sway of capital.

However, precisely because the principal threat that hangs over the “Polish summer” is still that of repression supported by a Soviet military intervention, and because the “Polish summer” is part and parcel of the world rise of the proletariat, this universal sympathy has to be translated into a true active solidarity movement that modifies the international relationship of forces to the advantage of the Polish working class. The stronger the solidarity movement becomes, the more difficult will be any repressive intervention. It is at the international level that the battle will be decided. The international organized workers movement and the working class can modify the relationship of forces in favor of their brothers and sisters in Poland.

In particular in the trade union move-

ment, it is possible right now to build up solidarity links with the independent workers movement in Poland. The trade unions in the capitalist countries can send delegations to Poland to become informed, to honestly inform their members of the real facts about the “self-managed” independent trade unions in Poland to combat the disinformation of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie about them. The information can result in concrete support: the Polish trade unionists have need of aid in the form of advice, technical and financial aid, and aid in building an independent workers press. Support can lead to mutual adoption between trade union branches and the setting up of big information campaigns in the working class on what the organization of the Polish proletariat really means.

Such systematic solidarity campaigns have a particular importance in counterbalancing the pressure of the Kremlin in the trade union confederations that are largely influenced by the CPs (the CGIL in Italy, the CGT in France, the CCOO in the Spanish state, the CGTP in Portugal, and various federations in the semicolonial countries). One of the objectives to aim for is the establishment of official links from confederation to confederation, between the trade union confederations of a growing number of countries and Solidarity, the Polish confederation.

At the same time, it is important to continue to fight against the imperialist war threat, NATO, the introduction of cruise missiles in West Europe, etc. Part of this fight is opposition to the anticommunist maneuvers of the International Department of the top AFL-CIO bureaucracy in the United States, the reactionary boycott against Polish goods by the American East Coast longshoremen’s union, and any similar proimperialist actions that only harm the cause of the Polish workers.

Members of the Fourth International have a particular responsibility in the development of the solidarity movement with the Polish workers. The Fourth International totally identifies with their aims. The development of solidarity with the Polish workers is an integral part of the building of the Fourth International.

Long live international workers’ solidarity with the Polish workers!

Long live the independent workers movement in Poland!

Down with the totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorship; long live the socialist and democratic Polish workers republic!

Kremlin, Hands Off Poland! Self-determination for the Polish nation!

Down with the Stalinist bureaucracy, for a victorious political revolution in Eastern Europe and the USSR!

Down with imperialism and capitalism, for the victory of the socialist revolution in all capitalist countries!

Long live the Socialist United States of Europe!

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