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**Polish Workers Stage
New Warning Strikes,
Stand United Against
Anti-Semitic Provocations**

Firsthand Report from El Salvador

**Economic Crisis and
Mounting Repression
Erode Junta's Position**

U.S. COAL MINERS STAGE TWO-DAY STRIKE, MARCH ON WASHINGTON AGAINST BUDGET CUTS



INDOCHINA

Interview on Kampuchea, Pol Pot Regime, and Role of Vietnam
Vietnam Courier on Differences Between Chinese, Vietnamese Revolutions

European Workers Resist War Drive, Austerity

By Russell Morse

The combined austerity and militarization drive of the imperialist ruling classes is suffering setbacks on several fronts in Western Europe.

Metalworkers in West Germany are taking the lead in fighting an attempt by the employers to impose the first drop in workers' real wages there since the end of World War II. The bosses are trying to hold wage increases to 3 percent, but inflation is running at 5.5 percent.

In early March the 640,000-member West German metalworkers union IG Metall launched a series of militant one-day strikes and demonstrations to demand an 8 percent wage hike. Some 110,000 workers in 260 plants downed tools on March 5. The next day, 120,000 Volkswagen workers went on strike, while at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Sindelfingen 12,000 stopped work and held a rally. Then on March 11, more strikes involving some 80,000 workers took place at Daimler-Benz, Siemens, and other factories.

The employers broke off negotiations on March 11 after a group of IG Metall members dressed in mourning clothes showed up at the talks and presented the chief management negotiator with a burial urn. "We are symbolically burying social peace," the workers told the bosses' representative.

While the attempt to impose austerity was running up against the resistance of the metalworkers, the imperialist war drive was also hitting obstacles.

On March 7, the West German Defense Ministry announced that instead of boosting arms spending by the 3 percent called for by Washington, it would reduce planned spending by \$615 million during the next four years. The proportion of the state budget devoted to the military is to drop from 18 percent to 16 percent. Projects to develop new tactical missiles, tanks, helicopters, fighter jets, and naval craft are being scrapped or cut back.

In reducing the military budget against Washington's wishes, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's coalition government was responding to the pressure of left-wing forces in Schmidt's Social Democratic Party. SPD parliamentary deputies had demanded cuts of \$500 million in the 1981 military budget, while Schmidt was trying to boost arms spending by 1.75 percent.

The announcement of the cuts came on the eve of Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher's March 9 visit to Washington. And Genscher had still more bad news to

deliver to Reagan.

On March 8 the national convention of the youth organization of Genscher's own Free Democratic Party (FDP)—the Young Democrats—called on the government to abandon the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to station hundreds of new medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe. The youth group set plans to press for adoption of a similar position by the FDP itself at the party's May congress.

The Young Democrats thus joined the SPD's Young Socialists in opposing the missile plan. A growing section of the SPD's parliamentary delegation likewise opposes the NATO decision.

The Young Democrats and the Young Socialists also backed the 100,000-strong February 28 protest in Brokdorf against the Schmidt government's nuclear power program. It was the largest such action yet held in West Germany, where the anti-nuclear-power movement has begun to take up the question of nuclear weapons.

More bad news for the imperialists' militarization drive has come from the Netherlands, where the Labor Party congress voted March 1 to oppose NATO's

plans for new missiles and to call for a reduction of the Netherlands' nuclear role in NATO.

The vote "must have sent shivers down the spines of Holland's NATO partners," the conservative British weekly *Economist* said in its March 7 issue. The magazine warned that "a Dutch refusal to take a share of the 572 cruise and Pershing-2 missiles to be deployed in central and northern Europe could weaken the resolve of politicians in Belgium and West Germany."

The Labor Party congress also decided to launch a Europe-wide campaign against the NATO missiles and in support of turning Europe into a "nuclear-free zone." A similar campaign against the neutron bomb not long ago produced the signatures of more than 1 million persons out of the Netherlands' population of 14 million.

In adopting its stance against nuclear weapons, the Netherlands Labor Party joined its counterpart in Britain, where the October 1980 Labour Party conference voted to demand a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament in Britain and massive cuts in arms spending.

The British Labour Party has also been playing an important role in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which mobilized 80,000 persons in the streets of London last October against the NATO nuclear-missile plan.

All these developments point up the leading role that the West European workers movement is beginning to play in the resistance to the rulers' two-pronged offensive of austerity and militarization. □

El Salvador Propaganda Blitz Backfires on Reagan

By Fred Murphy

"El Salvador is part of a much bigger issue, an issue that goes right to the heart of what we stand for in this country," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs John Bushnell was quoted as saying by the March 6 *Wall Street Journal*.

Bushnell's comment was in line with the big propaganda blitz the Reagan administration launched in February to convince the American people and U.S. allies that the time had come to "draw the line in El Salvador," as Reagan's press secretary put it February 23.

But the campaign backfired badly. So badly, in fact, that Bushnell had to call the Washington press corps in to the State Department on March 12 to complain that the El Salvador "story has been running five times as big as it is" and to ask that the news media "not make this thing such a big deal."

According to the March 13 *Washington Post*, Bushnell "left the impression that the administration is not happy with the

recent publicity given to the dispatch of U.S. military advisers and arms to El Salvador—especially since much of the coverage has focused on comparisons to Vietnam and charges that the United States is backing an unpopular government aligned with rightist forces."

Behind the State Department complaints about media coverage was deep concern over the near-unanimous skepticism and opposition with which Reagan's propaganda show was greeted by working people in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, and Latin America. Although the U.S. capitalist media had gone along fully with earlier requests to tailor its coverage of El Salvador to the government's policy, it could not hold the line any longer in light of the real mood among working people.

The El Salvador campaign has been a debacle for Reagan's foreign policy. Instead of generating support for a war drive, it has reminded working people of Vietnam and evoked more active opposi-

tion. Now that people have been given a glimpse of the true situation in El Salvador, Washington is in a worse position than it was before Reagan launched his calls for an anticommunist crusade.

Many examples could be cited of the adverse press coverage Reagan's moves have received across the United States. For instance, in the March 3 Chicago *Sun-Times*, columnist Roger Simon satirically urged American youth to "go down and support the government of El Salvador. Go down and fight communism. Kill a priest for America. Rape a nun for democracy."

In California, the conservative *San Diego Union* carried a three-part series on March 1, 2, and 3 in which correspondent Alex Drehsler offered extensive evidence that, as he put it, "contrary to Salvadoran government and U.S. State Department reports of lack of popular enthusiasm for the guerrilla cause among the Salvadoran population, the insurgents . . . had considerable support among the local inhabitants."

The popular columnist of the *New York Daily News* Jimmy Breslin reminded his readers February 24 that Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero had been murdered shortly after declaring that "in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, to be captive, to be tortured—and to be found dead."

Article after article also appeared drawing the parallels between Reagan's moves and the early steps taken by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations toward full-scale war in Indochina.

The barrage of negative reaction to Reagan's policy was so intense that even his would-be supporters were moved to complain. "American policies designed to stymie takeover [of El Salvador] by Cuban and Soviet-backed revolutionaries have been so poorly presented that critics have successfully invoked the Vietnam war to mobilize opposition," said *Business Week* magazine in its March 16 issue.

Shortly before Bushnell tried to get the press to stop making a "big deal" out of El Salvador, Reagan got a firsthand glimpse of the kind of opposition that is going to be mobilized if he pursues his belligerent course in Central America.

Reagan began a two-day visit to Canada on March 10 with what was supposed to have been a welcoming ceremony outside Parliament in Ottawa. Instead Reagan was greeted by a crowd of some 2,000 protesters bearing signs that read "U.S. guns kill nuns" and "U.S. out of El Salvador." The demonstration was "the most raucous beginning to a trip abroad for an American president since the Vietnam era," the *Washington Post* said March 11. Booing and catcalls nearly drowned Reagan out as he tried to address the crowd.

Thousands of demonstrators turned out in other Canadian cities, and a total of some 5,000 persons were also involved in

El Salvador solidarity actions across Canada on February 28. These actions have been the largest protests of their kind in Canada since the end of the Vietnam War.

Opposition in Canada to Reagan's war moves in Central America has forced the Trudeau government to low-key its backing for the military/Christian Democratic junta in El Salvador. Although Prime Minister Trudeau failed to tell Reagan that giving military aid to the junta was a "mistake"—as he had said publicly he would do the week before—he offered no ringing endorsement of Washington's policies either.

Rising workers struggles and social protest in West Germany have also led Bonn to take its distance from Reagan's policies.

When Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich

Genscher visited Washington March 9, he brought the Schmidt government's view that "Washington was placing too much emphasis on the military aspects of the situation in El Salvador and not doing enough to bring about domestic change and a political solution," as the *New York Times* put it March 10.

By asking the media to let up on its coverage of El Salvador, Reagan is not giving up on his support for the Salvadoran junta or his attempts to escalate U.S. military involvement. But by attempting to draw a veil of secrecy over his moves he has retreated in the fight to win public support for an interventionist policy in the United States. It is a clear indication of the weakening of Reagan's position. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: March 15, 1981

POLAND	260	Workers Stand United Against Regime's Provocations—by Janice Lynn
USA	262	Coal Miners March on Washington to Protest Budget Cuts—by Stu Singer
	264	West Virginia: Case of Socialist Miner Stirs Debate—by Harry Ring
EL SALVADOR	265	Economic Crisis, Deepening Repression Erode Position of Junta—by Lars Palmgren
NICARAGUA	268	U.S. Wheat Cutoff Causes Crisis —by Arnold Weissberg
	269	Workers Make Gains in Health and Safety —by Lorraine Thiebaud
BOLIVIA	272	Workers Reorganizing to Fight Dictatorship —by Carlos Arze
COLOMBIA	273	Guerrillas Execute Chester Bitterman —by Roberto Kopec
FRANCE	275	Communist Party's Anti-Immigrant Campaign
MID EAST	288	U.S. Steps Up Arms Sales, Building of Bases —by David Frankel
AROUND THE WORLD	274	USA: Protests Over Murder of Black Children Grow
DOCUMENTS	276	Vietnam and the Kampuchean Revolution
	282	Differences Between the Vietnamese and Chinese Revolutions
STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	286	The Meaning of the Coup Attempt in Spain
NEWS ANALYSIS	258	European Workers Resist War Drive, Austerity —by Russell Morse
	258	El Salvador Propaganda Blitz Backfires on Reagan —by Fred Murphy

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Polish Workers Stage New Warning Strikes

By Janice Lynn

In a series of provocative actions, the Polish government has begun to move once more against the independent trade union federation, Solidarity, and its supporters.

The provocations came after Solidarity had agreed to abide by a ninety-day no-strike period requested by Prime Minister Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski in his February 12 inaugural address.

Jaruzelski claimed he needed the time to solve economic problems facing the country. But instead the Polish bureaucrats tried to use this respite to chip away at some of the gains won by the powerful working-class struggles of recent months and to sow divisions within the workers movement. But the Polish workers showed they remain united and ready to fight any moves to divide their forces.

On March 5, Jacek Kuron, founder and chief spokesperson of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), was detained by police for seven hours. Founded to defend victimized workers after the massive 1976 strikes, KOR has close ties to Solidarity.

Kuron was formally warned that he was under investigation for slandering the state and was instructed to report twice a week to his local police station.

As news of Kuron's detention spread, the Solidarity leadership in Gdansk sent out telex messages to regional chapters summoning representatives to an emergency meeting March 7.

In Wroclaw, police attempted to arrest KOR leader Adam Michnik. But Michnik refused to accept the summons and was promptly protected by the local Solidarity chapter, which said it was placing a "workers' guard" around him.

At its March 7 emergency meeting, Solidarity discussed ways of responding to the crackdown. Union leaders charged that Solidarity members and supporters, as well as students and activists in the recently formed farmers' union, Rural Solidarity, were being harassed, intimidated and beaten by the secret police.

"It looks like pressure is building up on all levels," said Warsaw Solidarity spokesman Janusz Onyszkiewicz at a March 7 news conference, "starting at the lower level with harassment of our activists and ending at the higher level with the detention of Jacek Kuron."

Anti-Semitic Slime

Onyszkiewicz also denounced the recent appearance of numerous leaflets and posters in Warsaw that called upon Poles to

rise up against "Jewish chauvinists" attempting to "usurp power" through Solidarity. The leaflets are either unsigned or signed by a previously unknown organization that calls itself Generation Always Faithful To Their Homeland.

One such leaflet, plastered over a Solidarity union poster, warned of "a Trotskyist-Zionist chauvinist" plot and called for a March 8 anti-Semitic rally.

Warsaw Solidarity issued a general call for people to "stand against this attempt at anti-Semitic action," and said that Solidarity stood firmly for the principle of equal rights for all.

Onyszkiewicz said that although this campaign had little following, Solidarity had decided to forcefully condemn it because it had intensified in recent days. He also said that in several instances, Solidarity members had found "low level" party members putting up the anti-Semitic posters.

In contrast to the 500 aging rightists, police agents, and some curious on-lookers who turned out for the openly anti-Semitic meeting March 8, some 3,000 students, professors, and Solidarity members joined together in a rally to commemorate the 1968 student struggle.

In March 1968, the Polish regime attempted to suppress a mass student struggle for democratic rights by carrying out a vicious anti-Semitic witch-hunt. As a result, thousands of Polish Jews were forced to leave the country and many student leaders were expelled from the universities. At the time, there was no powerful workers movement and the students were isolated.

One of those who helped to engineer this sordid anti-Semitic campaign was Gen. Mieczyslaw Moczar. After fading into the background for some years, Moczar is back in power, having recently been placed on the ruling Politbureau.

The Polish bureaucracy is now attempting to use this same despicable method to try and divide the workers movement and blunt the support for Solidarity. The united rally was a significant response to this move by the bureaucracy.

Lech Sokolowski, a worker from the Huta Warszawa steel mill, spoke at the rally about the importance of unity between the workers and students. And Zbigniew Bujak, a leader of Warsaw Solidarity pledged that the students would be defended by the workers. The Solidarity leaders vowed that anti-Semitic purges such as those in 1968 would never happen again. Telegrams were read from professors who had been forced out of the univer-

sity in the 1968 struggles.

Despite the failure of its appeal to anti-Semitism, the bureaucracy continued to carry out attacks on Solidarity members and to drag its feet on resolving local disputes.

Lodz Workers Strike

In Lodz, a major textile city, more than 300,000 workers conducted a one-hour work stoppage March 10 to protest the dismissal of five hospital maintenance workers for their union activity. Solidarity also demanded assurances it would be free to organize the hospital workers.

"The dismissals were the culmination of four months of actions against the union," a Lodz Solidarity representative said. "The real problem in the talks arose when we asked whether the return to work meant that the union would meet with no further obstructions. The hospital director said he had to consult with his superiors. Then he came back and said no."

About 1,000 plants in Lodz and in the rest of the province were affected by the one-hour strike and all transport ground to a halt. Lodz Solidarity announced plans to expand the strike to bring the region's entire textile industry and transport services to a halt if its demands were not met.

As a result of the union's determination a victory was won March 11 when the five reinstated workers were granted the right to continue their union activities in the hospital.

Actions were also being discussed in other areas of the country. In Plock, in the center of Poland, a local Solidarity representative said the workers were discussing a strike to protest the censorship of a union publication.

In Nowy Sacz, in the southeast, Solidarity members were continuing to press their demands that buildings belonging to the Ministry of the Interior be turned into needed health clinics. And in Skarzysko-Kamienna, a machine-tool factory held a two-hour warning strike over a series of local demands.

On March 11, the Solidarity union in Radom announced strike plans and presented a list of seventeen demands. These included a call for the dismissal of the provincial police commander and his deputy, the local governor, the provincial Communist Party leader, and a number of judges. All of these officials were involved in the trials and victimizations of workers following the workers' struggles in 1976.

The union is also seeking a reversal of all court convictions and the erection of a

monument to the victims of the 1976 Radom revolt.

Solidarity also called for an end to prosecution of the detained KOR activists and for authorities to turn over several police buildings so they could be used for hospitals and schools.

In addition, the union protested a March 10 incident in which four youth were beaten up after telling a man not to tear down Solidarity posters.

The Radom workers threatened a two-hour warning strike for March 18 and a communiqué from delegates representing 300 Radom factories said a general strike would start on March 23 if talks on the demands had not begun. As of March 15, the local governor and regional party leader had submitted their resignations.

In Wroclaw, another big city, and in Walbrzych, the Solidarity branches warned they would strike immediately if any KOR members were arrested and formally charged.

With the renewed labor upsurge, Prime Minister Jaruzelski agreed to hold a meeting with Solidarity's entire fifty-person national coordinating committee to discuss all unresolved issues. Solidarity announced that in a March 10 meeting with national Solidarity leader Lech Walesa the prime minister had agreed to the creation of a government-union commission to investigate the increased incidents of harassment.

Behind Bureaucracy's Provocations

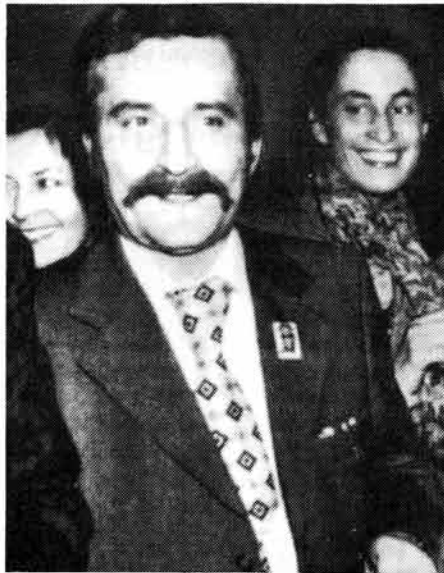
There are two major factors driving the Polish bureaucracy to carry out its renewed campaign of provocations and harassment of Solidarity and its supporters despite Jaruzelski's appeal for labor peace.

Both lower level and top level bureaucrats in the government apparatus know that their jobs and special privileges are at stake—their better housing, better food, country homes, etc. They also know they might end up in jail for their crimes and corruption if the workers win control of the country.

The survival of the bureaucratic caste as a social formation is incompatible with real workers democracy. So it is driven to these acts of harassment and attempts to crush the workers movement in order to preserve its own existence.

The other factor in the bureaucracy's drive against the workers movement is the continuing pressures from Moscow. Top Soviet and Polish officials met in Warsaw March 4 and called for "urgent" action against what they termed were "imperialist and internal reactionary forces" in Poland.

Then on March 10, it was announced both in Warsaw and Moscow that Warsaw Pact military exercises would be held in Poland during the latter half of March. This was an obvious threat. In 1968 such military maneuvers provided cover for preparing the invasion of Czechoslovakia.



WALESA

Articles in the Soviet media have presented Solidarity as little more than a front for "antisocialist" conspirators. But nothing could be further from the truth. Solidarity brings together the most class-conscious Polish workers—the best defenders of socialism.

This was summed up by one of Solidarity's advisers, Brosniko Geremek, quoted in a recent article in the Paris weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*:

"The problem of publicly owned property is definitively settled," Geremek said, explaining that during the August strikes the workers and their supporters extensively discussed the questions of socialism and private property.

"To return to the western system would be a regression in civilization." The Polish system was being challenged, he said, "not because it is socialist, but because it is insufficiently so."

In the same article, KOR activist Adam Michnik explained that in Poland almost everyone was socialist. "In any case, no one wants a return to capitalism," he said.

Walesa declared that "For a Christian, capitalism is worse than socialism." And KOR leader Kuron called private property "an archaic category."

Vast Support for Solidarity

Since Solidarity's founding, the masses of workers in Poland have flocked to the union. According to the March 14 *Economist*, about 1 million of the 3 million Polish communist party members also belong to Solidarity.

Even the *Daily World*, newspaper of the U.S. Communist Party, had to admit this massive support. A March 7 article reported that the overwhelming majority of the 38,500 workers at the Lenin steel mill in Nowa Huta had joined Solidarity. "It now has a membership of 33,000 while the old discredited union, called a branch union, has only 5,000 members," wrote

Daily World reporter Conrad Komorowski.

Komorowski immediately qualified this fact by claiming that now many workers were moving over to the branch union because Solidarity had begun to concern itself with politics.

But the reality is just the opposite. Masses of workers are attracted to Solidarity precisely because it is dealing with political questions, defending the working class and peasantry against arbitrary arrest, censorship, and bureaucratic abuses.

In fact, Solidarity is rallying all the progressive forces in Polish society—farmers, students, the intelligentsia—in addition to the class conscious workers.

Some 500 farmer delegates attended the first national congress of their newly formed union March 8-9 in Poznan. Rural Solidarity delegates demanded legal registration for their union, and an end to censorship and police harassment.

Diametrically opposed to all these progressive forces is the weakened bureaucratic caste of anti-Semites and privilege-seekers who are deathly afraid of the powerful force of united workers and farmers seeking real socialist democracy.

Deepening the isolation of the bureaucratic caste is the fact that rank-and-file members of Poland's Communist Party—the Polish United Workers Party—have begun to rethink many things they had previously taken for granted.

The March 4 *Christian Science Monitor* reported that local party committees have begun to spontaneously spring up and have "inundated party headquarters with their tide of ideas."

A party commission considering reform proposals received some 12,000 resolutions, as well as numerous drafts for a new amendment to the party charter. The proposals call for elections by secret ballot, assurances that at least 50 percent of congress delegates will be workers, and limits on the time served in office.

In an interview with the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, published in the March 8 *Washington Post*, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa raised the idea of a government directly based on the mass organizations of the workers and farmers. He proposed that Solidarity could take the responsibility of government.

"If the government says, 'This is a mess, we resign,'" Walesa said, "Solidarity should take the responsibility and I should take the situation into my hands."

And Walesa added, "Poland will never go back to being what it was before August 1980. Never."

Fallaci, wanting to make sure she had understood Walesa correctly, asked, "Did you really say that should this government fail, Solidarity should govern and you should take the situation into your hands?"

Walesa clearly affirmed this, answering, "Yes, I said it." □

U.S. Coal Miners March on Washington to Protest Budget Cuts

By Stu Singer

[The following article appeared in the March 20 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) hit the Reagan administration and the coal bosses with a powerful show of force. On March 9 and 10 more than 170,000 miners stopped work and about 8,000 rallied in Washington to protest Reagan's announced cutbacks in the black lung program for miners.

The right to organize a walkout like this, called a memorial, is contained in the union contract. And the miners put it to good use.

This is certainly the most powerful union response to Reagan's budget cuts. And it is one of the most important signs yet of American workers fighting back against the capitalist economic crisis.

What Is Black Lung?

The miners fought hard to win black lung benefits. They provide some income compensation, safety standards, and special medical programs for miners and their survivors.

Black lung is the condition of lung destruction noted by doctors since the early 1800s. It affects virtually all coal miners, results in extreme shortness of breath, and leads to other fatal diseases. It is incurable.

It took years of meetings, strikes, and demonstrations in the 1960s to win the black lung benefits program.

The struggle over black lung played a big part in transforming the UMWA, leading to the overthrow of the old leadership, which had sided with the companies against black lung benefits.

Coal miners, who in many cases are the children and grandchildren of miners, are intimately aware of what black lung means and what it took to win the benefits program.

'More Tension'

The March 9 and 10 actions came only days before the deadline set for getting an agreement on the union's three-year contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). A March 9 *Wall Street Journal* article reported the operators viewed the protest actions as an "additional source of tension. . . ."

The miners' action puts them in a much stronger position against the bosses. The *Wall Street Journal* article said the opera-



Suzanne Haig/Militant

tors were already backing away from some of their most outrageous contract demands.

The action also put some tension on the bosses' government. The March 10 *New York Times* described the "Labor Department's hasty response this afternoon to the denunciations that boomed at midday from loudspeakers outside the union's headquarters." A Labor Department spokesman said the protest grew from a "misunderstanding."

"The Republican-controlled Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources today tentatively rejected the full force of the proposed reduction in aid to victims of black [lung] disease," the *Times* reported.

Turn Off the Lights

Mixed in with the music at the Washington rally were brief talks by miners from different states. The widow of one of the seventy-eight victims of the 1968 Consol #9 mine disaster in Farmington, West Virginia, also spoke.

Young miners explained what it was like to watch their fathers and grandfathers suffer and die from black lung; how hard it is to force any benefit payments out of the fund. "Three years after my grandfather died they finally gave some money to my

grandmother," one miner explained.

Another miner said, "If they cut out black lung, we'll turn out the lights."

It was a remark heard frequently during the day. "This demonstration is only the beginning."

"We'll come back to Washington with a lot more people next time."

"They cut black lung; we won't mine coal."

"Cut off black lung; we'll turn off the lights."

The biggest use of coal in the United States is in generating electricity.

El Salvador or Black Lung

Telegrams were read from United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser and from Sen. Edward Kennedy.

But the speakers program was interrupted to introduce miner Charlie Pathel from Local 4060 in District 31. His father, who was retired, had died that morning from black lung. Pathel urged the demonstrators to remember the high stakes in the fight.

Politicians who spoke included both U.S. senators from West Virginia; the governor of the state, John D. Rockefeller IV; and congressmen from all over the country.

The best response was to a remark by Rep. Douglas Appleton from Ohio. "We've got monies to send to El Salvador, but we've got to start at home," he said to loud cheers.

Counterposing military spending for El Salvador to the proposed cuts in black lung benefits was a point raised by many miners in interviews.

This was not a pro-war crowd.

A group of miners from Boone County, West Virginia, said at the end of the rally that they were glad the politicians were there. "It shows how strong the union is."

The politicians were forced to address this rally on the union's terms. They had to keep their usual speeches about the need for austerity in their pockets.

The main speech was by UMWA President Sam Church. Almost every point was greeted with cheers and miners waving their signs.

'Protected by Our Actions'

"We all know the black lung disease, the dreaded disease, too well. We all know that we work in the most dangerous industrial occupation in this country. THE MOST DANGEROUS OCCUPATION. What do those words mean? How does President Reagan relate to those words?"

"I guess it depends on where you are,

President Reagan, and where you've been. It's certainly not been in the coal mines with our people. . . .

"I respect the office of the president. But I don't respect what he's trying to do to you.

"I also know that this country was founded of the people, by the people. And I will not accept from any man the destruction of any part of the people for the government or the large corporations. . . .

"Our strength lies in the fact that we stand united and speak with one voice. . . .

"I now ask Ronald Reagan . . . are you willing, Mr. President, to go into the hospitals and witness the suffering and death? . . . President Reagan, are you willing to go down into the earth with me and see the awful conditions the nation's miners have to work in?

"Mr. President, do you have the courage to do that?" The miners shouted back: "NO, NO!"

"Black lung is an incurable disease," Church said. "It progressively worsens. The United Mine Workers will not stand idly by and watch the black lung program going from our grasp. We will not stand by. It is simple. We just won't allow it.

"Today we're fighting to keep a program that we never thought would be taken from us. We thought we were protected by the laws of this country. We should have known that we are only protected by our actions and our strength. . . ."

Took Over D.C.

The miners started gathering early in the morning March 9 in front of the UMWA headquarters in McPherson Square. The picket signs with black lung slogans were stacked around the park. Tables were set up to distribute the literature packets the union had prepared. Thou-



Salm Koils/Militant



Stu Singer/Militant

sands of black lung stickers and small American flags were distributed to everyone.

The union estimated that 150 buses had been chartered to bring miners to Washington for the protest. Others came by car.

Most demonstrators were from Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, and eastern Kentucky.

The miners took over parts of downtown Washington near the union headquarters. Carrying picket signs and wearing stickers and flags they crowded into nearby restaurants.

Attitudes toward them were mixed. Well-dressed people, who were probably lawyers, politicians, bureaucrats, and businessmen, seemed uncomfortable; they shrank away from the miners.

But truck and cab drivers, construction workers, waitresses, and other working people, especially Blacks, gave the miners clenched-fist salutes, waved, and honked their car horns.

Publicize Black Lung

A number of miners said they hoped the demonstration and walkout would accomplish bringing the issue of black lung to the attention of people throughout the country. This would help their fight, they felt.

The protest did get extensive media coverage.

Even the *Wall Street Journal* ran a feature admitting how serious black lung is.

A couple of miners, both twenty-six years old, from Big Stone Gap, Virginia, saw the demonstration as "a great show of unity."

It gave the lie to many stories circulated about the coal miners and their union.

When Sam Church suggested he might

call the memorial walkout and demonstration after Reagan's budget speech, the Charleston, West Virginia, *Daily Mail* said he was bluffing.

They were wrong. It was just wishful thinking by the coal operators.

After the rally there was a march that went past the AFL-CIO headquarters, the White House, and on to the Washington Monument. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland came out from his office and joined in.

The march was not supposed to stop in front of the White House, but hundreds of miners did stop there. They were met by a line of cops behind police cars backed up by a dozen police on horseback.

Miners yelled insults at the white mansion and its occupants. "See those lights in there," one shouted. "We'll put them all out.

"Send Reagan out here."

Open Discussion

The miners who came to this demonstration were taking a stand against the government.

They were angry and militant. Talking to them and participating in the demonstration was exhilarating and inspiring.

Here are workers going through the same kinds of discussions, expressing the same kinds of concerns as other working people. But they are also acting, powerfully, through their union. And that action is propelling them ahead.

There was openness to socialist ideas. Socialist miners and others sold and distributed 400 copies of the *Militant*, fifty *Young Socialists*, and 1,000 pamphlets on the 1978 coal strike.

Miners wanted to talk about everything from Reagan's budget to El Salvador to

the Equal Rights Amendment, nuclear power, and their upcoming contract. The discussions started before dawn when the miners got on the buses and continued through the demonstration and the trip home.

There was a small gang of right-wingers who circulated through the crowd and hassled people distributing the *Militant* and other publications. They burned some literature, including leaflets being handed out for the UMWA-sponsored demonstration in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, March 28. But their anti-union behavior did not represent the sentiments of most miners at

the demonstration.

American coal miners stood up to the American ruling class this week.

What the bosses and their government want is to impose a situation like at Chrysler against miners and other workers, with cuts in wages and benefits and worsened working conditions. The coal miners showed they are not about to accept such a deal. And the revolt in the miners' union ten years ago established democratic rights that put the miners in a stronger position to fight against such conditions.

The miners' fight is in the interest of all working people. Every blow they land on the bosses and Reagan is a blow for our side.

March 9 was a picture of one of the fighting contingents of American workers.

If it created extra tension for those who own and run this country, they'd better realize this is only the beginning.

As Sam Church explained, the miners are learning "we are only protected by our actions and our strength."

The rest of the working class is learning the same message. □

Defending the Right to Revolution

West Virginia: Case of Socialist Miner Stirs Debate

By Harry Ring

[The following article appeared in the March 13 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has come under red-baiting attack by the Charleston, West Virginia, *Daily Mail*.

Charleston sits in an important coal-mining area. Many miners will undoubtedly be interested in the newly established SWP branch there. Especially since the miners themselves have been under continuing employer-government attack.

But the new SWP branch is apparently upsetting to the editors of the *Daily Mail* and, no doubt, to the area's coal operators.

The issue came to the fore when the February 8 *Sunday Gazette-Mail* published an Associated Press article about Marian Bustin. Bustin is a coal miner who lives in Morgantown, West Virginia. An immigrant from Scotland, she has been investigated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for possible deportation. This was done on the sole basis of her membership in the SWP.

The AP story carried by the *Gazette-Mail* was a reasonably straight-forward account of the Bustin case.

This must have drawn flack. Perhaps from the coal operators whom it can safely be assumed are not without influence with a paper like the *Mail*. Or from interested U.S. government officials. Maybe both.

At any rate, the February 10 *Mail* featured a scurrilous editorial attack on Bustin and the SWP.

The editorial stated that, while Bustin argued she was being harassed solely for her political beliefs, the editors felt moved to advise that these beliefs included, "a belief in the violent overthrow of the Constitutional government of the United States."

The editorial quite bluntly stated its cen-

tral concern:

"Of some 1,800 members of the SWP and the related Young Socialist Alliance, 1,200 are now working in American industry. That leaves 1,199 besides Ms. Bustin."

The February 17 *Daily Mail* published a letter from Chris Horner, chairperson of the Charleston SWP, responding to the editorial.

Horner cited the fact that, after a forty-year FBI investigation, the SWP has never been found guilty of violence or other illegal acts.

"What's really at issue," Horner explained, "is the right of the American people to hold ideas the government doesn't like, such as opposition to the draft, new Vietnams, Ku Klux Klan terror, and nuclear power, or support for the Equal Rights Amendment and the rights of unions."

The *Daily Mail* responded with another editorial in the same issue in which it printed Horner's letter.

The editorial noted that the SWP's "philosophical father" was Leon Trotsky "who, with Nikolai [sic] Lenin, plotted the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution."

It argued that the SWP has never "repudiated the Trotskyite doctrine of violent revolution" and asserted, "It is in keeping with SWP strategy that the party scrupulously avoid criminal activities at present. But the party is nonetheless composed of revolutionaries who happen not yet to have revolted."

Since the party is committed to revolutionary change, the paper declared, "The authorities would be remiss if they failed to keep a close watch on Ms. Bustin, Mr. Horner, and their fellows."

Horner addressed another letter to the *Daily Mail* February 23 which makes some cogent points.

It defends the right to revolution, reminding the *Mail* editors that 200 years ago American workers and farmers founded this



MARIAN BUSTIN

nation through a revolution.

Horner rebuts the oft-repeated right-wing argument that the Russian revolution was a "plot," pointing out that, like the American revolution, "it was made by a large majority of the nation's workers and farmers."

Citing the deep-going social crisis which grips this country, Horner explains that it is precisely because socialists are presenting the working class with meaningful answers that the government is trying to silence us.

We don't know if the *Daily Mail* will consider it profitable to continue the debate. Despite its FBI-type smears, its readers have gotten some idea of what the SWP actually stands for. And, for sure, they know the socialists are in town. □

El Salvador After the Revolutionary Offensive

By Lars Palmgren

SAN SALVADOR—Antilio Vieytes, a nervous, young, U.S.-educated man with the impressive title of minister of planning and coordination of economic and social development, is explaining to me the Salvadoran government's 1980-83 Emergency Plan.

"For the plan to succeed," Vieytes says, "the private sector must begin to invest again. For that to happen there has to be political stability. But don't ask me how we will achieve that. I'm just responsible for drawing up the plans."

On the wall in the minister's office is a big poster entitled "Twenty Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of El Salvador." On the right side of the poster a whole series of arrows comes together under the heading, "El Salvador in the Year 2000—Industrially Developed, With Social Equality."

When asked if this Twenty Year Plan might be a bit optimistic, Antilio Vieytes only shrugs.

But President José Napoleón Duarte, chief of the military/Christian Democratic junta, describes the Twenty Year Plan in an interview as the central aspect, the "culmination," as he puts it, of the Christian Democrats' political program.

Duarte's tone is confident and optimistic. He claims that El Salvador is on its way to political stability. "The military," he says, "now is in full control of the entire country. All that is left is some clean-up operations to bring the whole country back to normal."

Is Junta Gaining Support?

The head of the junta tries to prove his point by saying that "for the past year the streets of this city have almost always been empty. But now the streets are full of people shopping."

Duarte neglects to mention that due to the curfew everyone has to do their shopping during the same few hours.

But Duarte's claim has been picked up by the international press. Is it true, as Duarte claims, that the political situation is beginning to stabilize? Is it true as some people say—including acting Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas—that the junta has been gaining support and the guerrillas losing since the beginning of the guerrilla offensive on January 10? Was the offensive a big military defeat for the revolutionary forces?

Those points are constantly repeated in all the mass media in El Salvador. All the newspapers, radio, and television are under government control. The govern-

ment has even forbidden privately owned radio stations from broadcasting the popular features in which listeners can send each other messages.

The prohibition was not just because the messages could contain coded secrets for the revolutionaries. It was also due to the fact that people might learn of the real situation in the country.

We should not underestimate the intensive propaganda's effects on the population, especially since the possibilities for countering it are limited. The opposition's clandestine radio stations—Radio Vencemos and Radio Liberación—are difficult to tune in.

Circulating leaflets puts one's life in danger, and is only carried out as part of a larger action or on a one-to-one basis. The circulation of the revolutionary press is too small to effectively counter government propaganda.

There has also been a certain amount of fatigue among the population. After two years of intense repression there were hopes that the offensive would bring a quick end to the war. People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) Commander Alejandro Montenegro told me that some segments of the population, especially the petty bourgeoisie, may have been frustrated that the January 10 offensive did not achieve a quick solution and are therefore more prone to accept the government propaganda.

Continuing Repression

But considering the government's monopoly over the news media, it is surprising to see how few people actually believe the government line. It is far more common to meet people who state that the government is lying, who say they listen to Radio Havana, Radio Moscow, the Voice of Nicaragua, the BBC, or even the Voice of America. "At least then we get somewhere in the neighborhood of the truth," an office worker for the Salvadoran Institute for Agrarian Transformation (ISTA) told me.

The reality is that the repression is continuing. According to figures compiled by the Archbishopric's Legal Aid office, in January 2,644 people were murdered by the security forces. Those figures include only civilians and don't count government or revolutionary forces killed in battle.

The February figures are only a little better. The Legal Aid figures also show that from January 10 to the end of February, some 300 people have been killed during the curfew.

Legal Aid activists state that in the recent period the repression has become more generalized and more violent than before. Most of the victims in January and February were not directly involved in political activity, but were simply people in the wrong place at the wrong time.

One of the Legal Aid staff tells of a group of seven young teenagers who were on their way home from downtown San Salvador. About twenty minutes before the curfew was to begin, they were picked up by the army. The army decided that since they would not be able to make it to their homes by the time the curfew began, "we might as well get you now," in the words of one soldier. Only one of the seven youths survived.

Many people are being held in prison without charges. This is legal under the provisions of Decree 507, which gives the police power to hold anyone for up to six months for "investigation." They can be held without any charges, and the prisoner does not have the right to see a lawyer, a judge, or inform anyone of his or her whereabouts.

200,000 Refugees

Another result of the repression is the rise in the number of refugees. In San Salvador alone there are about 5,000—mostly women, children, and the elderly—in camps protected by the Catholic Church. These are all refugees from rural terror campaigns waged by the army and ORDEN, a rural paramilitary terror organization.

There are an estimated 100,000 refugees throughout the country, and another 100,000 who have fled the country for Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Mexico.

There is a second category of refugees, who get more support from the government and the Red Cross. These are the 25,000 to 50,000 junta supporters, mostly members of ORDEN and their families, who have fled areas where the revolutionary forces are active.

The scope of the repression hardly suggests that the situation is being stabilized, as Duarte claims. Nor has it restored the confidence of the private sector to the point where it would be willing to increase its investments, as Planning Minister Vieytes hopes.

Economic Catastrophe

The flight of capital from El Salvador has reached such proportions that by the end of 1980 the country's private fixed

capital was 47.6 percent lower than it had been in 1978 (the year the emergency plan hopes to match). Industry is operating at about 50 percent of capacity, and is continuing to decline.

Unemployment is rising. According to government figures, some 20,000 workers lost their jobs as a result of factory closings last year. A drastic example is the free trade zone of San Salvador, which was opened as part of the Central American Common Market. At one time there were 4,500 workers in the zone. Today there are no more than 1,000.

Another expression of the economic crisis is the drop in consumption. While the population has increased 3.5 percent since 1978, consumption has declined by 3.2 percent.

The junta's emergency economic plan is trying to minimize the catastrophic effects of the crisis. More than half the money that had originally been earmarked for long-term projects has now been shifted to short-term projects such as road repairs in order to provide jobs. But the number of new jobs this creates does not compensate for the decline in employment in the economy as a whole.

The growing public investments have been financed by foreign loans and credits. As a result the country's foreign debt has soared. At the same time, there is no private investment. In fact there is the opposite, private decapitalization.

The unfavorable investment climate is made worse, in the eyes of the capitalists, by the phony reforms the government has undertaken: the land reform and the nationalization of banks and of foreign trade.

Junta's Land Program

Under the first stage of the land reform, all holdings of more than 500 hectares are supposed to be given to the farm workers, who are supposed to form cooperatives. The state pays off the landlord, and the cooperatives are to repay the state over a fifteen-year period. Until then the land will belong to ISTA.

The objective of the land reform program was, in the words of Junta member José Antonio Morales Ehrlich, "to steal the thunder from the revolutionaries." But now the junta has used its trump card without achieving its objective, without being able to change the relationship of forces to its advantage.

The reform was carried out by the armed forces. The army moved into an area, occupied the land, controlled the election of officers of the new cooperatives, and murdered workers known to be sympathetic to the left organizations.

The relationship between the land reform and the repression was so strong from the start that rather than giving rise to hopes that it would solve the problems of the peasants, the program created skepticism, suspicion, and fear.

In the period since the reform was an-



U.S. advisers arrive in El Salvador.

nounced, and especially since the recent offensive, the original inhabitants of many of the haciendas have been forced to leave, have fled under fear of the repression, or have been killed. At the same time, members of ORDEN and supporters of the junta have been moved onto the land.

Increasingly the officers of the cooperatives are drawn from the ORDEN members on the estate or from the administrators under the former owners.

In addition, because of the deteriorating economic situation and the speed with which the land reform was announced, few resources were provided for support of the new "cooperatives." The only credits available are for harvesting. As a result, many cooperatives have had to sell their machinery or livestock to raise funds.

No Help From Capitalists

The other two major reforms, the nationalization of banking and foreign trade, have had little positive results for the workers and peasants.

In addition, the active support of the private sector, which the junta is counting on to solve the economic crisis, has not been forthcoming. In fact, since the January 10 offensive, the bourgeoisie's opposition to even the most timid reforms has increased.

During February a number of bourgeois interest groups placed advertisements or published statements in the San Salvador daily papers. On February 9, the association of those whose land had been taken placed a big and threatening ad protesting the land reform and complaining that they had not yet been compensated. The group maintained that the land reform would have no legal status until confirmed by a constituent assembly.

Three days later, on February 12, the coffee growers protested taxes on coffee

production. The coffee growers, whose lands were hardly affected by the land reform since most of their holdings are under 500 hectares, are one of the most influential economic groups in the country. They have threatened to halt production if the junta does not change the tax law.

On February 19 the cattle owners placed a full page ad in newspapers claiming that meat production in the country was headed for ruin due to the land reform and calling for the reversal of the program.

The same day, the National Conciliation Party (PCN), the main bourgeois political formation, published a long statement accusing the junta of driving the country to the brink of ruin through its policies. "Even the extreme left is clearer than the junta," the PCN statement maintained, "because at least they say what kind of society they want to create." The PCN concluded that "it's time now for a change."

Soon after, José Napoleón Duarte announced that the second phase of the land reform would be suspended for five to ten years.

Low Morale Among Troops

The strike called in conjunction with the January 10 offensive showed that the junta does not even have a firm base of support among government employees. In the capital, the strike was most effective in the government ministries themselves. And the repression since January 10 has struck very heavily against government employees, with continual searches for "subversive propaganda" and controls over movement.

Despite all Duarte's claims about winning a "total military victory" and achieving "total control" over the country, the January 10 offensive did not improve the morale of government troops.

In fact, the government's strident propaganda about its smashing victory has had a demoralizing effect on many soldiers who participated in the confrontations with the revolutionary groups. These soldiers know that the guerrillas are not the "small desperate bands" that the official propaganda makes them out to be.

The troops know that the official reports of low army casualty rates and high losses among the guerrillas are untrue. They know that the army's attempts to drive the guerrillas from the semiliberated zones have been unsuccessful.

The troops also know that there is no truth to the junta's claims that a stream of revolutionaries are accepting the government's amnesty offer. They are aware of the high morale among the revolutionaries, and of the guerrillas' base among the population.

Many of the government troops are young boys, some only fourteen or fifteen years old. Their morale is very directly dependent on their superior officers.

This was shown by the events in Santa

Ana on January 10. When Captain Sandoval called on his troops to revolt against the junta, 200 soldiers, most with no direct political contact with the revolutionary groups, followed him. The rest of the garrison simply melted away, fleeing to their homes, leaving the country, or going into hiding.

Since the offensive, desertions have continued. The army and National Guard have had to carry out a new wave of conscription. Many of the new troops come from the most marginal, petty-criminal elements of the population or from the ranks of ORDEN.

The revolutionaries predict that while these new recruits may be even more brutal than those they replaced, they will also be a very unstable and indisciplined element within the armed forces.

Divisions Within Military

After the January 10 offensive, a formal agreement was reached between the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Democratic Military Youth (JMD). The JMD, which included Sandoval and former junta member Col. Adolfo Majano among its members, is a heterogeneous movement of young officers, bound together by personal loyalty. When Majano was recently arrested by the junta, pressure from the JMD prevented the government from bringing him up on charges of treason and support for subversives. Majano's fate is still not decided.

According to sources in the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the FMLN, the situation inside the armed forces is very tense. They maintain that there is also great tension within the junta, between Duarte and Col. Jaime Abdúl Gutiérrez and Defense Minister José Guillermo García.

The return from abroad of the notorious ultrarightist Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson is expected to exacerbate these tensions. D'Aubuisson, whose connections with the death squads are common knowledge, has been calling for the military to seize full control of the government.

All these factors indicate that there is no substance to Duarte's claim that the situation in the country has become more stable since the offensive.

In fact, what the offensive mainly showed is that the Salvadoran junta is totally dependent on U.S. imperialism and its allies for its survival. Defense Minister García has even admitted that the army could not have held out during the offensive had it not been for the renewal of U.S. military aid.

The only way the junta can establish what it calls "political stability" is by deepening its reign of terror and furthering the militarization of the country; for this, it will require greater and greater intervention by Washington.

The revolutionary forces have learned a great deal from their January offensive. It



Junta's troops pose for photo. Despite facade, morale is low.

was the first general military offensive they had ever launched, and the first big actions carried out under the united framework of the FMLN.

The offensive highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the guerrilla forces. It showed that the FMLN's military capability is considerable, that it can carry out large-scale offensive and defensive troop movements, as well as traditional small-unit guerrilla operations.

The offensive's biggest weakness was the fact that with the exception of Santa Ana where the offensive took the character of an insurrectionary struggle, the offensive as a whole was almost exclusively restricted to military operations.

There were several reasons why the call for a general strike did not get a massive response. There were problems in coordination and an underestimation of the strength of the enemy's repressive apparatus.

In addition, the planning of the offensive was not carried out in close collaboration with the mass organizations. But these problems are now being corrected during this period of preparation for the next offensive.

The revolutionary forces carried out their tactical retreat at the end of the offensive with their forces intact, although very low on ammunition. But representatives of the FMLN state that they have

been able to keep supply lines of ammunition and weapons open since the retreat.

As a result, it may be possible in the future to arm civilians to a greater extent than was the case during the January offensive.

The offensive also showed that the unity of the revolutionary forces in the FMLN is now a reality, even though some differences among the groups remain. Some forces within the FMLN favor a prolonged people's war, while others feel the war must be of short duration, in which the insurrectional aspect must play a central role.

This discussion, as well as the discussion regarding the formation of a unified party, has now been postponed in favor of working out coordinated plans for a new offensive. □

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U.S. Wheat Cutoff Causes Crisis in Nicaragua

By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA—The Reagan administration's decision to halt credits to Nicaragua for the purchase of U.S. wheat means that the country will run out of the vital grain by the end of April unless other sources of financing can be found, Minister of Domestic Trade Dionisio Marengo announced March 7. A shipment of Canadian wheat is expected at the end of June, and a shipment of European wheat in September.

Some 3,000 people work in the production of flour and in baking. All of them would be out of work if the wheat were to run out.

Nicaragua's Government of National Reconstruction and mass organizations have undertaken a series of actions in response to the impending crisis.

A national assembly of bread workers March 8 voted to call for "a continent-wide and worldwide bloc of all bread workers' unions to solidarize with our people and demand that the U.S. government stop the repressive measures that it is using against all Nicaraguans. Our people are struggling for an end to the oppression, exploitation, and dependency that we have lived under for more than 150 years."

Mario Alvarado of the Ministry of Industry urged the workers to keep a sharp eye out for possible hoarding and speculation by the owners of the mills and bakeries: "Nobody is more interested, or has more right, than the workers themselves in seeing to it that no dishonest owners take advantage of the people's hunger."

Representatives of the unions, the Sandinista Defense Committees, the women's association, the Sandinista youth, the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and other organizations met March 12 to form the "Bread for Nicaragua" committee.

The committee will begin a national and international campaign denouncing the credit cutoff as an "open violation of the human rights of the entire Nicaraguan people, above all the children."

The committee will also seek alternative sources of funding from friendly governments.

For its part, the government announced strict controls on the sale and use of wheat flour March 7. The country's three flour mills were ordered to reduce their allocation to bakeries by one-third, and the bakeries were ordered to use the flour only for the production of widely-consumed breads, not for cakes or cookies. The ministry announced an experimental 50 percent boost in the price of flour and called on people to eat less bread and use substitutes

instead. Cuts were also ordered in the milling of wheat for animal feed.

In a March 12 meeting with Minister of Domestic Trade Marengo, representatives of the 350 flour mill workers, with backing from the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), called for protection against the possible loss of two months' pay they face should the wheat run out and the mills shut down.

Meanwhile, the U.S. embassy here has denied that the U.S. government promised to supply wheat for Nicaragua in 1981. This is a lie. In an October 1980 letter Lawrence Harrison, an official of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), agreed to a \$50 million authorization "which," Harrison wrote, "will be sufficient to cover the majority of the imports you want."

The text of the letter was published in the March 10 issue of Managua's *El Nuevo Diario*.

The embassy further asserted that the wheat credit cutoff was for reasons "well-known" to the Nicaraguan government, thus trying to shift the responsibility for hungry Nicaraguans from Washington to Managua.

Although the embassy did not elaborate on the "well-known" reasons for the wheat cutoff, the U.S. government has used a series of pretexts to attempt to strangle Nicaragua economically.

Fifteen million dollars in aid was halted earlier this year after an alleged seaborne landing in El Salvador by Nicaraguan soldiers. When this landing proved to be a complete fabrication, the aid was not reinstated.

Similarly, the wheat credit cutoff followed false charges of Nicaraguan human rights violations levelled by José Esteban González, head of an anti-Sandinista "human rights commission."

González has since admitted that his lurid tales of torture, secret prisons, and kidnappings were lies.

Washington's professed concern for private enterprise in Nicaragua has not been extended to the field of wheat imports. Under Somoza, all Nicaraguan wheat purchases in the U.S. were financed privately. These lines of credit were cancelled after the revolution, and AID loans took their place.

When the owner of Nicaragua's largest flour mill went to the U.S. seeking direct private financing in early March, he was unable to obtain any, he reported March 13.

Nicaragua faces a possible two months without bread. But far from panicking, the Nicaraguan people, through their organizations and their government, are mounting an international campaign to expose Washington's criminal use of food as a weapon of political blackmail. □

'U.S. Out of El Salvador!'



On March 3, more than 6,000 persons marched through the streets of Copenhagen, Denmark, to demand "U.S. Out of El Salvador." More than forty different unions participated in the action, carrying their own banners. El Salvador has become a major topic of discussion in the news media and the workplaces in Denmark.

Nicaraguan Workers Make Gains in Health and Safety

By Lorraine Thiebaud

MANAGUA—Representatives of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and the Ministry of Labor recently invited journalists here to accompany them on a series of health and safety inspections of workplaces.

Dr. Mario Epelman, head of the Labor Ministry's General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety (DGHSO), gave us a preliminary orientation. His department had been organized five months after the revolutionary victory, Epelman said. Before, neither Somoza nor the other capitalists had ever shown any concern for workers' health and safety.

The DGHSO's initial inspections had yielded shocking results. Out of 123 factories, 109 were cited for failing to meet the workers' most basic needs—toilet facilities, drinking water, a place to eat lunch. One hundred twenty-one lacked adequate ventilation or lighting. At 96 sites, fire-prevention equipment was lacking, and at 83, biological or chemical contamination was discovered.

"The crudest exploitation and the most unhealthy conditions were the common denominators at all work sites," Epelman said—"total disregard for the lives and health of the working class."

Grappling With Immense Problems

There are tremendous obstacles and limitations to be faced by the new government in correcting this situation, Epelman said. Nicaragua is still a dependent economy, with underdeveloped productive forces and limited resources.

"When there is a noise problem, the first thing we would like to do is change the machine," Epelman explained, "but that's usually too expensive. So we have to sit down with the workers and figure out: Can we oil it? Can we isolate it? Can we muffle it?"

The DGHSO itself lacks adequate personnel, transportation, equipment, and even office supplies. It has only one noise meter and one camera, and no apparatus at all to monitor air contamination. But that is not what is most crucial, Epelman concluded: "We are convinced that working conditions will improve when the workers themselves take responsibility for health and safety."

CST leader Denis Meléndez said one of the unions' goals is to establish a health and safety committee at every workplace, with the task of guaranteeing immediate steps to provide drinking water, toilets, eating areas, and first-aid facilities and personnel.



Sealing a glue barrel at Químicos Borden. Poster reads: "Against the bourgeois parties—Sandinista people's unity." Larry Boyd

The DGHSO will provide training and technical assistance to these committees.

Health and safety should become key topics in all contract negotiations, Meléndez said.

Somoza's Cement Factory

The first place we visited was PROCON, the cement factory that produces the paving stones that were dug up during the insurrection for use as revolutionary barricades. The Somozas owned 60 percent of PROCON, so that share of the plant is now in state hands.

PROCON employs 229 production workers. There seemed to be two categories—those who work under shelter and those who work under the blazing tropical sun.

Minutes after we entered the factory, our clothes, hair, and cameras were covered with a fine white powder. One could imagine the effect on the workers' lungs. They told us they suffered from chronic coughs. Some were using simple face masks recently made available, but others said the heat makes the masks insufferable after a few minutes.

Where the cement is mixed wet to be poured into molds, noise from the ma-

chines prevented normal conversation. The union grievance secretary, Noel Baltodano, said many workers suffered from permanent hearing damage. One worker leaned over to yell that the vibrations from the machinery sent him home still shaking every night.

We asked where the toilet and drinking fountain were. "Way over there," they laughed, "about half an hour away." We found the facilities near a garbage dump. The "shower" was a single pipe extending from a wall. It had long ago ceased to function, we were told, and no one liked to shower without privacy or towels anyway.

After the tour, union leaders explained a little of PROCON's history. The company was bankrupt and \$7 million in debt after the war. A \$5 million loan was secured, but the workers decided to make up the rest themselves by working at half-pay for four months. This was a big sacrifice for men who earn between 1,200 and 1,500 córdobas a month (10 córdobas = US\$1).

The unionists were most proud of the plant's new cafeteria. For the first time, the workers could leave the work area for a lunch break. The company subsidized half the cost of meals, so the workers could eat

for as little as four córdobas. The cafeteria provided not only wholesome meals but also a place for political meetings. Around the walls we could see handmade signs about a special collection taken up for "the brothers and sisters struggling in El Salvador."

Coffee Processing Plant

The CST representative gave us a run-down on the El Mejor Coffee plant as we rode in the back of a truck to the site in Tipitapa, a few kilometers east of Managua.

The factory is 100 percent state-owned. It had belonged to Manuel Estrada, a well-known Somozaist. He had owned coffee plantations, trucks for transporting his crop to the city, and the processing plant itself. He also held interests in the port facilities from which the coffee was shipped for export.

The government nationalized it all after the war. Estrada was imprisoned for eight months and then allowed to depart for Miami.

At the door we were met by a union representative and an armed member of the factory militia. They took us to the newly expanded cafeteria and offered us cola to drink. "Where's the fine coffee?" I asked. They replied that the workers had voted to stop drinking it in order to export more.

After discussing the plant's operations in "reactivation assemblies," the workers had managed to boost production by 100 percent and thereby hire twenty more workers. Seventy-eight now work at El Mejor.

The machinery in the roasting and packing area had been imported from Germany and was far older than the plant's own twenty years. It gave off tremendous heat and noise. Old rags were wrapped around the handles to prevent burns; the original protectors were long gone.

The workers pointed to fresh holes cut in the walls and four new fans that had been installed two months earlier. "Before, when we asked for improvements, we got fired," one worker volunteered.

Many of the El Mejor workers are women; I made a special point of talking to them. Many explained that they had started working on Estrada's plantations as children. "We've been raised here," one woman in the bean-sorting area said. "Many of us have been sitting here for twenty years looking at each other's ugly faces across these tables."

I tried to learn what they were doing, but their fingers moved so fast that the beans all looked the same color of gray to me. Many women have been forced out of their jobs when their eyesight fails after years of such work.

When we asked to see the first-aid facilities, the union representative introduced us to Victoria Rizzo, who managed a surprisingly well-stocked dispensary.

Victoria was a woman in her fifties, of peasant origin. She told us she had worked as a coffee selector for eighteen years, but had always had an interest in medicine. After the insurrection, she participated in a malaria eradication campaign and caught the attention of an army doctor. He arranged for her to take a four-month course in nursing, and the El Mejor workers voted her full pay for the duration of her studies.

When she returned, Victoria organized the first health and safety committee in the factory. We found that the ventilation and lighting improvements had come about mostly through her initiative. She had also given tetanus vaccinations to all the workers and cleaned up the factory drinking water supply.

Victoria had arranged for a physician to make regular visits to the factory, and absenteeism has dropped substantially since she began her work. "I have made a lot of progress this year," Victoria told us. "The revolution gave me another chance in life."

Fire Hazards and Cancer Threats

As we drove up to the Químicos Borden factory, I could see the familiar Borden trademark, Elsie the Cow, smiling down at us. A signboard informed us that the plant produced shoe cement, wood glue, formalin, and other chemicals whose names I failed to recognize.

The plant was fourteen years old, I was told, imported from Canada. Its main raw materials are imported from Japan. Eighty-five workers are employed there.

Eleven workers met us and rushed us into a back room for a meeting. The chief administrator and "the capitalist" were trying to obstruct the union, the group's spokeswoman explained. CST representatives were being kept out of the plant, and the management was insisting that health inspections could only be carried out with forty-eight hours advance notice.

The workers continually referred to Carlos Siles, the owner of Químicos Borden, as "the capitalist." They said that if he showed his face one time in a year that was a lot. Not long before, the union had revealed that Siles was giving false information to the government, and now "the capitalist" was really angry.

The Labor Ministry representatives with us assured the workers that no advance notice was required for health inspections and that we could proceed with the tour.

First we stopped to watch women, seated on makeshift wooden horses, filling little plastic bottles with white glue. They complained of noxious fumes and a lack of ventilation.

Next we stopped to talk to José, who had worked in the plant for fourteen years. He had been at his current task for eight years—reaching down into a huge barrel with his right hand and bringing up a glob of sticky black resin. The resin went into a

can; with his left hand, José pounded on a lid.

José said he filled several thousand cans a day like that, and that he suffered from back pain from leaning over the barrel. His hands ached too.

The DGHSO representative was alarmed to learn that José spent ten minutes every evening washing the resin off his hands with toluene. Besides having narcotic-like effects on reflexes and thus causing accidents, toluene is usually contaminated with benzene, which causes leukemia and damages sperm cells.

José had never been informed of the dangers he faced. Nor had the other workers ever learned that another of the company's main products, formol, is highly carcinogenic.

The workers' immediate concern was the ever-present danger of fires. Most of the chemicals they handle are gasoline- or alcohol-based and prone to explode. But the plant had no fire-alarm system, nor had there ever been a fire drill. The workers pointed to a garden hose, their only recourse in the event of fire, but because of low water pressure they said it would be useless on the plant's second floor, where most of the chemicals were stored.

The manager began following us as we walked through the factory. He wanted the DGHSO and CST representatives to talk to him but was politely told he would have to wait until after the inspection.

Then he latched onto me—an American journalist who he assumed would share the State Department's views on Nicaragua.

"They think they know it all, but I can tell you what's really going on," he confided. "This place has no lightning rods—it could explode in a minute if it ever got hit. And do you know what the effects of methanol are? Blindness. This factory is contaminating the whole community—we use city water and don't process it before dumping it into the sewer system. There must be more than seventeen different pollutants." He seemed very proud that he had shared his secrets with me.

The manager kept on following us, making comments in a loud voice and trying to assert his authority. When the conversation with the workers turned to an employee who belonged to the procapitalist Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), the manager chimed in, "All parties have a right to exist."

The workers were completely unintimidated. "It's all right for you to belong to the MDN," one told the manager. "It represents your class interests, but not his." Another added, "Sure, all the parties have a right to exist—but *we* took power."

The manager said to me in English, "This guy thinks he's funny, but he doesn't bother me." Then he dropped his cigarette.

As we drove up to the CERSA/Quaker Oats factory, I asked the CST representa-

tive to explain an article that had appeared that morning in the capitalist daily *La Prensa*. It had accused the union president at CERSA, Danilo Amoretti, of attempting to take away the workers' Christmas bonus and turn it over to the CST.

This was a typical *La Prensa* provocation, I was told. The company had always paid a Christmas bonus but had refused to improve working conditions. Now the Labor Ministry was proposing that the bonuses of those workers who earned more than 2,500 córdobas a month be placed in a fund for the construction of a small clinic that the workers and their families would be able to use.

"I have a letter here from the ministry authorizing a solution to the problem," the CST representative said. "If we didn't have it, we wouldn't be able to get in."

Posted on the plant gates was a sign that said: "Danilo—you can't come back until the bonus question is resolved. The workers."

Having the letter, we were allowed in. A meeting was immediately held and the agreement was explained to the seventy-eight CERSA workers. It was obvious that they were sharply divided over the bonus problem.

Inside the plant, a fine flour dust—highly explosive and flammable—covered everything. The health inspectors insisted on the need for monthly fire inspections and said the possibility of air-conditioning the plant was being investigated.

The women in the packing area expressed pride in their new uniforms and a union-operated shop where basic food items could be bought at discount.

But everyone was still arguing over the bonuses. The women were overwhelmingly in favor of the settlement—they said the problem was that the owner maintained big inequalities in the wages of men and women. Men earned about 4,500 córdobas a month, while women only received about 1,300.

The ex-president of the union took me aside to say that the real problem was that "there are too many women on the union board now—you know how women are." I told him I didn't, and he changed the subject to explain what a great guy the owner was. "We always went out to drink with him in the old days, and once a year he invited everyone out to his ranch for a big party."

Later Danilo, the new union president, explained that most of the men were boss. "They call me a communist because I refuse to go drinking with them. They're all *machistas*. We have no organization here yet—no militias, no literacy campaign, no nothing."

As we were leaving CERSA, the CST representative said he hoped we were not too discouraged by what we had seen there. "It is good for you to see everything. We just have to be very patient. It will take a long time to undo the divisions the



Lorraine Thiebaud/IP

Women workers sorting coffee beans at El Mejor processing plant.

capitalists have sown in the working class."

No Fire Extinguisher For 'the Spark of Life'

At the Coca-Cola bottling plant the constant clanging of bottles made it almost impossible to hear. One worker was assigned to each journalist to yell in our ears. Oscar, the union propaganda secretary, showed me around.

From the intolerable heat of the boiler room we passed into the refrigerated area where the workers were issued neither jackets nor gloves.

We stopped to talk to a bottle-watcher, whose task is to see that every bottle is full as it comes off the line. He has a face mask to protect from exploding glass, but spending ten hours a day on his feet had given him varicose veins in both legs.

No one could locate a fire extinguisher in the entire plant—despite the company's advertising slogan, "Coca-Cola—*La chispa de la vida* (the spark of life).

When we moved into a quieter part of the plant, it became more difficult to get information from the workers. Not because they were uncooperative, but because they were full of questions for me: What about El Salvador—would the United States invade? What was happening in Poland? What did Reagan's election mean? Did I know about the Coca-Cola boycott in Guatemala? What were the trade unions like in the United States? Who was interviewing whom, I wanted to know. The workers all called me "comrade," rather than the more common "compañero."

The workers said that 120 men had joined the militia at Coca-Cola, but there

were plans to train all 750 employees, including the women office workers.

In the personnel office, a manager told me the plant's biggest problem was that the government was not delivering enough sugar, and that this had caused production to drop.

Later I asked Oscar about this. "Oh," he said, as other workers gathered around, "the management tries to tell that to everyone who cares to listen. The union did a check and learned that we were getting more sugar than ever but that the management was trying to use more sugar per bottle in order to hoard it and disrupt the government's planning."

So why hadn't the factory been intervened on grounds of decapitalization, I wanted to know. Oscar tried to patiently explain:

"Well, in the first place everything we use here is imported. The bottles come from Guatemala, the caps from Costa Rica, the syrup from the United States." If the factory were intervened or expropriated, he continued, there would be no guarantee that they could continue getting the raw materials they needed. Some people were looking into the possibility of using nationally produced fruit concentrates to make soft drinks, but Coca-Cola was still very popular among Nicaraguans.

"Look," Oscar said, "Coca-Cola is just not a strategic industry. We'll know what to do when the time comes."

"Sure," said another worker, with a big smile on his face, "behind every administrator we have someone assigned by the union to learn his job." □

Bolivian Workers Reorganizing to Fight Dictatorship

By Carlos Arze

LA PAZ—The resurgence of the masses in Bolivia that began when democracy was reestablished in 1978 and 1979 showed the unity and strength of the exploited Bolivian people. This was reflected in three successive elections won by the Democratic People's Unity (UDP), a democratic front of left parties and political sectors of the national bourgeoisie, represented by former-President Hernán Siles Zuazo.

Confronted by the people's unity, by the reactivation of the trade-union movement after the seven-year dictatorship of General Hugo Banzer Suárez, and by the concrete presence of the working class in political life, the bourgeoisie as a whole showed its weakness, its political atomization, and its inability to form a stable bourgeois-democratic government.

In the space of three years there were three national elections, four coups, and seven presidents. This shows the total crisis of capitalism in Bolivia.

But this situation also provides evidence of the crisis of revolutionary leadership, because the capitalist crisis has been going on for a long time and has no solution. Only a victorious struggle by the masses can provide a progressive solution to the situation.

Such a solution is only possible if a workers party is built that can assure this result, or if a mass united front is formed that would struggle not only to overthrow the current dictatorship, but to bring the working people into power.

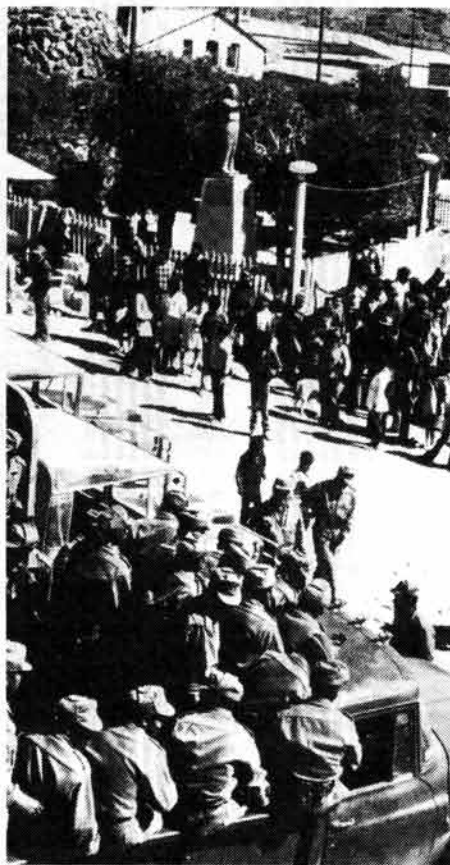
This of course is not a perspective for the immediate future. But the pace and the length of time needed are also related to the ability of the left parties to set up that kind of a mass front.

Dictatorship at the Crossroads

In specific situations, force of arms is undoubtedly decisive. But arms alone are not enough. A regime has to have a growing economic base. Without that, no regime—whether dictatorial or democratic—has any future.

General Luis García Meza took power on July 17, 1980, killing 900 miners (men, women, and children) from the Caracoles mining center, and dozens of workers from the mining districts of Viloco, Huanuni, Catavi, Siglo XX, Quechisla, as well as various trade-union and political leaders.

The radio stations of the miners' union were destroyed. The union headquarters were occupied, especially the office of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB), where paramilitary forces of García Meza and Col. Luis Arces Gómez (now a government



Armed Forces occupy Siglo XX mine.

minister) murdered Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz, leader of the Socialist Party-1 (PS-1), and Gualberto Vega, leader of the Trade-Union Federation of Mine Workers of Bolivia (FSTMB) in Catavi.

After taking power, the army declared Bolivia a military zone and decreed a permanent curfew, with the result that people are continually being murdered.

Nevertheless, behind the bravado of the weapons lies a dying economy. Therein lies the dilemma of the dictatorship, which does not know what to do. A few figures suffice to show how difficult the country's situation is.

In 1980, the rise in Bolivia's production was 1 percent—one of the lowest levels in all of Latin America, comparable only to the economy of Haiti.

The Bolivian economy has been traditionally based on tin mining, and in the last decade it has also been based on oil. But today tin mining suffers from two problems: the decline in production and the falling prices on the international minerals markets. In addition, production

of oil has fallen from 53,000 barrels per day four years ago, to around 24,000 barrels per day in recent months. This has brought the country to the drastic situation of having to consider importing oil, which until very recently it had exported. Commercial agriculture has also declined considerably. At this point, no area of Bolivian production is growing.

On the other hand, the country is experiencing an unprecedented growth in its foreign debt. Today the debt hanging over Bolivia has reached the sum of \$3.8 billion. Along with this, exports have fallen while imports have risen. This means that the country is not getting enough foreign currency.

Taking all this into consideration, with production and exports falling rapidly, how can the country pay its huge foreign debt? In fact, Bolivia is totally mortgaged for the foreseeable future.

"Corrective" Decrees

On January 9, 1981, the military dictatorship issued ten so-called corrective economic decrees. While these measures attempt to solve a problem, they have simply created new socioeconomic problems.

The dictatorship was trying to resolve the deficits of two public companies, the Bolivian Agency for Petroleum Resources (YPFB) and the National Energy Company (CNE). To that end, the dictatorship's decrees ended the subsidies that existed for certain items: gasoline, wheat, sugar, and many others.

This dealt a direct blow to the population's standard of living. The price of bread rose 100 percent, motor oil rose 300 percent, electricity rates climbed about 250 percent, natural gas rose 100 percent, train, bus, and plane fares rose by 40 to 55 percent, and so on.

Undoubtedly these measures alleviated, although they did not resolve, the deficits of the YPFB and CNE. But at the same time they created two new and acute problems.

National industry is directly affected because one of the decrees lifted a series of restrictions that had for years limited imports. Imports are going to rise rapidly, causing competition for Bolivian industrial production.

In addition, the privately owned mines have also been affected. The increases in price of electricity, hydrocarbons, and many other items raise their production costs at a time when mineral prices are falling on the international market. Small and medium-sized mines, the construction

industry, and other sectors have already made demands on the government.

But the sector most deeply hit is the working class and the entire exploited population. The cost of living has risen by at least 50 percent, which has not been matched by wage increases. The government has repeatedly stressed that there will be no wage increases for workers in any sector of the economy.

Privileges for the Military

The officer corps, however, has received fat wage increases, and it got them well before, not after, the economic decrees.

While the wages of the workers have fallen precipitously, the salaries of the military officers have gone through the roof. Before announcing its economic decrees, the government granted increases of 150 to 300 percent in military salaries. One example should suffice: Until December 1980 a second lieutenant was paid 7,000 pesos per month. In January the pay was increased to 17,000 pesos per month. A general earns more than 50,000 pesos per month.

Government Economic Policy

The thrust of the government's economic policy is slowly becoming clear. It is not solely to decrease the purchasing power of wages, nor even to destroy the unions and murder political leaders, as happened on January 15, 1981, when eight leaders of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) were killed in broad daylight while holding a meeting.

The government's economic perspectives seem to be aimed at leaving all initiative and responsibility for the national economy in the hands of private companies and withdraw basic support from the state companies.

In nearly all his speeches, García Meza stressed that private enterprise must become the axis of economic development. To this end, it is not excluded that he may call for the denationalization of some state-controlled sectors of the economy. Even under the regime of Gen. René Barrientos, who died in 1969, there was talk of plans to denationalize the mines owned by the Mining Corporation of Bolivia (COMIBOL), and Gen. Hugo Banzer later wanted to do the same.

But just as these attempts failed, Gen. García Meza will fail in his retrograde aim.

The dictatorship has undoubtedly dealt heavy blows to the political and trade-union movements. In its hatred it has gone so far as to demolish the COB's headquarters building and openly murder political leaders like Quiroga Santa Cruz.

However, one thing is certain: the working class has not been defeated. It does not feel that it has been smashed, but rather that it has been disorganized.

The workers are trying to reorganize their unions and there is a desire to con-

tinue the struggle. This was shown by the forty-eight hour strike waged by the miners in Huanuni, Catavi, and Siglo XX in immediate response to the murder of a worker by the army in the area around Huanuni.

Then there was a forty-eight hour work stoppage on January 12 and 13 in response to the economic decrees. That strike had the participation of the miners and factory workers in La Paz and Cochabamba. People do not feel demoralized or smashed, but they all feel disorganized and are looking for ways to reorganize.

In mines and factories in various cities activity is taking place aimed at organizing underground rank-and-file committees and electing leaders. There are also attempts to get the COB functioning. The proof of this is that the COB—functioning with leaders who remain underground—called the forty-eight hour general work

stoppage against the economic decrees carried out by various sectors of the miners and factory workers.

All this means that the conditions exist for moving ahead in reorganization. But it will be a road with many ups and downs. The dictatorship remains ready to deal harsh blows to trade-union and political activists.

Under these conditions, the Revolutionary Workers Party-*Combate* (POR-*Combate*), the Bolivian section of the Fourth International, is working both to get trade-union cadres functioning and to create the preconditions for the formation of the united mass front between the COB, the unions and various workers parties, the left, and the democrats. This is the axis of the POR-*Combate's* activity in this period.

February 10, 1981

Behind the Demand for Removal of Linguistics Institute

Colombian Guerrillas Execute Chester Bitterman

By Roberto Kopec

[The following article appeared in the March 20 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Chester Bitterman, an employee of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Colombia, was found dead March 7.

Bitterman had been captured by a group that claims to be a faction of the Colombian guerrilla organization M-19. The M-19 group denied any part in the action. The guerrillas who captured Bitterman demanded the SIL leave or be expelled from Colombia in exchange for his release.

The group charged Bitterman had CIA ties and that the SIL was a CIA operation. After forty-seven days of negotiations the SIL—with backing from the Colombian government—refused to meet the demands.

The SIL, also known as Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc., is a U.S.-based organization. Its stated purpose is to study languages in various countries around the world with the objective of translating the Bible into those languages.

But the SIL had come under growing attack in virtually all Latin American countries in which it operates.

The real work of the SIL is to prepare methods for removing indigenous populations (Indians and others) from areas rich in natural resources. It possesses and uses an impressive array of airplanes, helicopters, and other equipment to carry out this "missionary" work.

During the Vietnam war, the SIL worked

with the CIA and the Saigon regime to train sections of the Montagnard peoples in counter-insurgency operations against Vietnamese freedom fighters.

In the early 1970s, the SIL helped Texaco and other big oil companies drive out the Auca Indians and take over oil-rich lands in Ecuador.

The institute has worked in Colombia since 1962, when it signed a contract with the Colombian government. In 1970, it helped suppress an uprising by the Guahibo Indians, providing air support and communications equipment for a bloody operation.

Public outrage at the massacre that resulted caused protests against the institute's presence. In 1978 Diego Uribe Vargas, Colombian minister of foreign affairs, announced he would get the institute out of Colombia. He didn't keep his promise.

Bitterman is being portrayed as a martyr by the media in Colombia and in the United States. His death is being used as a pretext by the Colombian military to indiscriminately arrest opponents of the regime. Fifty have been held and the military promises to seize more.

The SIL violates the human rights of Indians and other Latin American peoples in the interests of the multinational corporations and the U.S. government. The demand for its removal from Colombia deserves support. □

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AROUND THE WORLD



USA: Protests Over Murder of Black Children

As police in Atlanta added the name of a twenty-second Black child to the list of those murdered or presumed murdered in the city since mid-1979, marches and demonstrations throughout the United States have demanded more federal aid to solve the murders. In addition, people throughout the country have taken to wearing green ribbons to show their solidarity with the Black community.

In Atlanta itself, a mass demonstration is scheduled for March 15. One of the organizers, Rev. Joseph Lowery, the national president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a civil rights organization, blasted Ronald Reagan's attitude toward the killings.

"If the president can send \$25 million to El Salvador to meddle in the affairs of that nation," Lowery stated, "he ought to be able to send \$2 million to Atlanta to catch the killer of our children."

A similar point was made by Patricia Wagner, an organizer of a march of 10,000 people in New York City's Harlem on March 13. Wagner told the crowd:

"They can come up with billions for guns, billions for Chrysler, billions to send people to El Salvador, and for electronic surveillance equipment to spy on our people. But they can't find the murderer of twenty-one Black children."

Wagner added that "we cannot depend on the police or the FBI because all too often they are co-conspirators."

In the face of the nationwide demonstrations, and the wearing of the green ribbons, which is far more widespread than was ever the case with yellow ribbons for the hostages in Iran, President Reagan was forced to announce on March 13 that Atlanta would be given \$1.5 million in federal funds to defray the costs of the investigation. A week earlier, the Reagan administration had agreed to provide Atlanta with \$979,000 for educational and mental health programs related to the murders.

Pakistani Regime Forced to Release Political Prisoners

Pakistani military dictator Gen. Zia ul-Haq has released fifty-four political prisoners. Zia's hand was forced by three hijackers who held more than 100 people since March 2 on a Pakistani airliner. The airliner, seized during a domestic flight, was forced to go first to Kabul, Afghanistan, and then on to Damascus, Syria.

The three hijackers, reportedly support-

ers of executed former Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had already shot and killed one passenger, Pakistani diplomat Tariq Rahim. A report from Pakistan, printed in the March 14 British weekly *Economist*, stated that "there is strong reason to believe that Rahim's murder was in revenge for the part Bhutto's supporters believe he played in the overthrow of the former prime minister."

Rahim, an army major, had been Bhutto's aide-de-camp and was with him on the night of the military coup in 1977. The day after the coup Rahim was given a position in the foreign ministry. Supporters of Bhutto believe Rahim got his new position as a reward for informing on the prime minister's movements.

The hijackers claim to be members of a group called Al-Zulfikar, named after the executed former prime minister.

Many Pakistanis, living under the heavy hand of martial law, welcomed the hijacking as an embarrassment to the present military dictatorship. Although Zia at first refused to meet the demand for the release of the prisoners, he apparently did not feel secure enough to hold to his hard line.

Protests Force Romanian Regime to Alter Economic Policy

In the wake of sporadic strikes and demonstrations in recent months, the Romanian Communist Party has announced plans to expand investment in agriculture and curtail industrial growth.

Last year Romania experienced a 5 percent drop in agricultural production, according to published figures. As a result, the food exports needed to finance industrial imports have had to be curtailed, and shortages of meat, eggs, and sugar have appeared in the cities.

For several decades, economic growth rates in Romania have been among the highest in the world. However, Romanian workers and peasants still have the lowest living standards in Eastern Europe due to the government's total concentration on expansion of heavy industry at the expense of other areas of the economy.

Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu admitted to an agricultural conference in Bucharest in February that the previous policy had "sorely neglected" agriculture and caused damage to living standards.

Under the new investment policy, the state will increase its purchase price for agricultural goods by 12 percent and will make heavy investments in irrigation,

drainage, erosion control, and land reclamation.

The cost of the new agricultural investments will not be reflected in higher food prices for consumers. The Romanian rulers are well aware of what happened in Poland after food prices there were sharply increased last July.

Thatcher's Savage Budget

Members of the opposition Labour Party denounced British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's new budget proposals March 11 saying the Tory budget was "as socially unjust as it is economically unjustified." They warned that it posed a "savage" threat to the already severely depressed British economy.

The budget will hit working people hard with tax increases on alcohol, tobacco, gasoline, and automobiles.

Despite a sharp decline in production over the past year, and a rise of unemployment to 10 percent of the workforce, Thatcher resisted union pressure to stimulate the economy by increasing government spending. As a result, some estimates indicate that unemployment will rise by year-end to 3.1 million, about 12 percent of the workforce, and the output of goods and services will fall by 3.5 percent. That fall, on top of the 3 percent decline last year, would be the sharpest two-year drop recorded in this century.

The Thatcher government hopes that the rising unemployment will curb workers' militancy and restrain the union movement, resulting in a decline in real wages that would make British goods more competitive in world markets.

But the day before the budget was unveiled, British civil service unions staged a twenty-four hour strike that disrupted work at many government offices and halted most air traffic.

The civil servants are seeking a 15 percent pay raise, while the Thatcher government is offering only 7 percent, far less than the rate of inflation.

Labour Party leader Michael Foot described the budget as a "catastrophe of the first order," while the *Times* of London, a pro-Thatcher paper, headlined its story "Harsh budget for workers but more for business."

Even members of Thatcher's own party are nervous about the impact the budget will have. "I hope she realizes her mistakes before we all lose the next election," said Sir Timothy Kitson, a Conservative member of Parliament.

French Communist Party's Anti-Immigrant Campaign

[Over the last several months the French Communist Party (PCF) has carried out a number of racist actions against immigrant workers. Most of these immigrants come to France from African countries such as Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Benin, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

[On Christmas Eve, in the Paris suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine, the Communist Party mayor backed a bulldozing attack against the dormitory where 300 African workers from Mali had just been housed.

[A few days later, the PCF municipal authorities at Bagnolet, also a Paris suburb, expelled sixty immigrants from three boarding-houses and closed them on "hygienic" grounds.

[In the PCF-run municipality of Ivry-sur-Seine, it was announced that a limit was being placed on the number of immigrant children in the municipality's vacation camps.

[In Brittany, PCF city council members in Rennes opposed the planned building of an Islamic cultural center.

[The PCF mayor of a Lyon suburb refused to accept any new immigrant families.

[And on February 7 the PCF mayor of Montigny-les-Cormeilles led a demonstration against a Moroccan family the PCF accused, without proof, of drug trafficking.

[In a hypocritical outcry, the French capitalist press has denounced the French CP's actions. But this same capitalist media has refused to denounce the government's repressive campaign against these immigrant workers—a campaign that includes raids and deportations.

[PCF head Georges Marchais has made the immigration issue part of his presidential campaign. He has complained that immigrants are concentrated in the Communist-led working-class neighborhoods in urban areas.

[Marchais has stated that the presence of too many immigrants in these "ghettos" spawns racism. "When the concentration of immigrant workers becomes too great," Marchais stated at a February 24 news conference, "a number of problems arise that lead to racism."

[Marchais also said he thought it would be better to give work to those already in France, rather than letting in more immigrant workers.

[These chauvinist positions are in complete opposition to the concept of international working class solidarity.

[Those responsible for unemployment are the capitalists. The demand of the workers movement should be for a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay in

order to guarantee that everyone can have a job.

[In addition to going on this racist anti-immigrant campaign, the French CP has abstained from joining in demonstrations with other workers' parties and trade unions against the French government's latest round of deportations.

[At the Chaussou auto plant, where immigrant workers comprise some 60 percent of the workforce, the vote for the CP-led union (the General Confederation of Labor—CGT) plunged 16 percent in a recent election.

[The following editorial appeared in the February 20-27 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*].

* * *

There is much news on television these days about immigrants. But not a word has been said about the police raids that have recently resumed: in Lyon on November 19; in Marseilles on January 22; in Massy on February 3.

Each time the scenario is the same: a squadron of state security police (CRS) cordons off a neighborhood, enters a location, checks for papers, makes some arrests, and then deports several dozen workers under the pretext of their not being in compliance with the law.

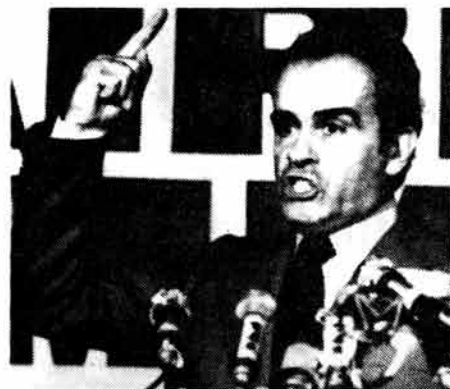
In the department of Bouches-du-Rhône [in southern France], an average of twenty workers per day are deported—either through the port of Marseilles or from Marseilles's Marignane airport.

The government has just decided that immigrant resident cards will now be computerized—one more way of facilitating repression.

Those responsible for these policies are [French president] Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Lionel Stoléru [in charge of immigrant affairs]. And today—doing their anticommunist number—they have the nerve to try and pass themselves off as friends of the immigrant workers. But they are the ones primarily responsible for the anti-immigrant sentiment that is developing in the country. They are the ones who have let so many racist crimes go unpunished.

Immigrant workers must not become scapegoats for the economic crisis. Giscard and the employers are the ones responsible.

The solution to unemployment is not to halt immigration, as the Socialist Party and Communist Party state; and it is not



MARCHAIS

to deport immigrants, as the government is doing.

The solution to unemployment is to reduce the workweek—for everyone to work less so everyone can work. There should be an immediate thirty-five hour workweek.

The PCF leadership has just carried its positions a step further. Instead of pushing for unity among French and immigrant workers against the Giscard government, the PCF leaders explain that there are "too many immigrants," and not only must all immigration be stopped, but the number of immigrants in Communist-governed municipalities must be lowered and "quotas" established.

Not contenting themselves simply with statements to this effect, the PCF leaders have begun to act: in Vitry, bulldozing and ransacking the housing block for African workers from Mali; in Montigny, making unsubstantiated accusations of drug trafficking against an immigrant worker; in Dammarie-les-Lys, attempting to oust immigrant residents from the Sonacotra housing; refusing to rent to foreign tenants; and limiting the number of immigrant children allowed in vacation camps.

These policies run directly counter to the interests of workers. They cover up the national government's responsibility, they strengthen racist prejudices, and they divide the working class.

To accept discrimination and to accept restrictions on the rights of immigrants is to accept dividing the whole working class.

The government and the employers brought these workers to France; they must assure them a job, housing, and a decent wage!

There must be complete equal rights for immigrant workers, including the right to vote.

All trade unions, organizations, and working-class parties must unite to defend immigrant workers against this government.

French and Immigrants: Same Bosses, Same Fight! Same Rights!

No Racist Round-ups! No Deportations!
Unity in Defense of the Immigrant Workers!

Vietnam and the Kampuchean Revolution

[The following interview with Stephen Heder originally appeared in late 1980 in the Tokyo journal *AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3. Heder, an American who speaks the Khmer language fluently, spent three years in Phnompenh covering the war. Since the entry of Vietnamese forces into Kampuchea, Heder has lived along the Thai-Kampuchean border, where he interviewed more than 600 refugees, former members of the Kampuchean Communist Party, Khmer Rouge soldiers, and cadres of the Pol Pot government.]

[Heder is hostile to the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, which he claims is colonial. He roots the conflict between Hanoi and Pol Pot in what he says is Hanoi's view that "the Vietnamese revolution cannot succeed without the cooperation of the Kampuchean revolution." On this basis he comes close to justifying the execution of most of the Kampuchean Communists who returned from Vietnam.]

[But Heder does not attempt to show how the viewpoint attributed to the Vietnamese caused either the murderous policies of the Pol Pot regime against its own people, or the military conflict between Pol Pot and Hanoi.]

[Heder also holds the Vietnamese responsible for "a serious breakdown in production" in Kampuchea. He does not mention the scorched earth policy followed by the retreating Khmer Rouge and the mass migrations of Kampucheans back to their homes. In any case, the disastrous economic conditions described by Heder have since been overcome to a considerable extent.]

[Despite his views on these questions, Heder presents a wealth of valuable factual information.]

* * *

Question. A question now being asked in many quarters, including among former supporters of the Pol Pot government, is what went wrong in Kampuchea. To begin with, were the massive evacuations of Phnom Penh and other cities that took place in 1975 immediately following the liberation of the country necessary?

Answer. I think the first point to be made is that, from the available evidence, the decision to evacuate Phnom Penh was apparently not taken in 1975. The pattern of preceding events indicates that this was part of a long-standing plan. I suspect that planning for the evacuation went back as far as 1971 and certainly at least as far back as 1973.

The basic idea was to control the bour-

geois elements in Phnom Penh by placing them directly under the control of a cooperative structure that had been implanted in the countryside in May of 1973, on the basis of what was supposed to have been poor, lower-middle peasant class power. One can see the whole pattern begin to emerge from this point on. In every area that was liberated or captured, a consistent program of removing the population from that area and relocating it inside zones or territory controlled by party forces was put into effect. This included not only the large cities but also the villages. In 1973, when Phnom Penh was attacked and held for a short period, the population was evacuated to the countryside. In 1974, a plan to capture Phnom Penh failed. But according to the cadres I interviewed, it seems that had Phnom Penh been taken at that time, an evacuation would have been ordered.

The problem of rice and its availability—the solution of the food problem—was a factor in this decision, but this was not accurately presented by the leadership. In fact, there was rice in Phnom Penh; the question was who would eat that rice. The rice captured in Phnom Penh after April 1975 was used to feed the army throughout the country. Had the population been kept inside the city, this would not have been possible. It is not widely known that the regular army forces had been fed to a very large extent from rice purchased in Phnom Penh via an underground network set up at the beginning of the war which continued to operate until 1975.

The rapidity with which the evacuation was carried out, was I think, partially the result of competition that grew up between the various liberation forces entering the capital. Army units from three regions entered Phnom Penh; they came from the northern region, the eastern region and the southwestern region. Each of the regional forces was under orders to evacuate the city as quickly as possible. I think that each of the three armies competed to evacuate the section of Phnom Penh for which they were responsible as quickly as possible in order to demonstrate their own capacity to carry out the orders sent down from above.

Q. There have been allegations that the Khmer Rouge were in fact a minority group when they took over and that the evacuation was actually a display of weakness in that they had to cut short any threat, real or potential, to their military victory. Aside from the danger posed by a possible Sihanouk-Lon Nol alliance, the only other conceivable

threat was that of Vietnam. Already by 1974, conflicts were brewing between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese along the border. Was Phnom Penh evacuated in preparation for war with Vietnam?

A. If you look at the question historically, the idea of evacuating liberated zones or areas temporarily freed from enemy control is a basic ploy of war strategy. Evacuation is intended to physically deny that population to the enemy. The idea of evacuating Phnom Penh does indeed indicate that the Khmer forces felt that they were still in a war situation. Since the primary enemy, in this case Lon Nol, had already been defeated, then the state of continuing war, by implication, must have involved Vietnam.

As for the question of strength versus weakness, ironically, the evacuation of Phnom Penh reflected in one sense an over-estimation of Khmer strength. I think they felt that the cooperative structure they had built up in the countryside was stronger than it really was, that the rural infrastructure would be able to solve the problem of refugees. In fact, the opposite proved to be true.

Q. What were the weaknesses that prevented the Khmer Rouge from solving the problem? For instance, why didn't they prepare the rural cooperatives to accommodate the evacuees?

A. First, the countryside was not producing enough food to take care of the many people who came out of the cities. Second, the cooperatives were just two years old, and that was in the best of cases, i.e. where the cooperatives had been formed immediately after cooperativization was launched. In fact, in most instances, cooperatives were not actually set up for six to eight months after the program was initiated. So there was a lack of basic organizational structures able to handle these people. There was also simply a lack of food. The urban population could not be fed from existing stocks.

Q. As a result of the evacuations many people died. Many people were subjected to extreme physical duress. Would you say that is a fair assessment?

A. Yes. The experience of rural cooperativization in other areas is that it takes at least five years before the rustification of an urban population is able to produce enough food to enable people to carry their own weight inside a cooperative structure. When they came out of the cities and were placed

in these organizations, the evacuees were not able to produce enough to feed themselves. At the same time, the people in the countryside were not able to produce enough surplus to make up for the inability of the newcomers to feed themselves, and they were also reluctant to surrender any surpluses they might have accumulated.

You must understand the pressures that the top level of the party brought to bear on the people who were supposed to be taking care of this problem. If these cadres were unable to feed the displaced population, they would be accused of incompetence. And under the kind of system that evolved in Kampuchea, incompetence was the same as treason, and treason was punishable by death. So in the countryside, the cadres responsible for feeding these people found themselves in an impossible situation. On the one hand, if they failed to feed the people as ordered they would be accused of treason by the top leadership. On the other hand, if they managed to feed the people, they could not hold the rural cooperative structure together.

Q. How were the cooperatives basically organized?

A. The people from the cities were given what amounted to third-class citizenship in the cooperatives. They had no political rights within the cooperative, and they were also put at the bottom of the distribution lists. They were considered, in effect, enemies in the sense that if they created contradictions in the cooperatives, which they almost invariably did for obvious reasons, they were subject to summary execution.

Q. What was the State's role in running the cooperatives? Was it to provide technology, know-how, organizational and political leadership? Did such programs exist? Did the State in any way try to consolidate the cooperatives?

A. The cooperatives were basically supposed to do everything for themselves. There was very little provision for aid from the central level, but, on the other hand, it was expected that the cooperatives would be able to provide support for the Center in order to create a surplus for export. The entire system was riddled with favoritism and corruption. This meant that when requests were sent to the Center and some kind of assistance was supposed to be sent back in return, it tended to fall into the hands of the cadres and never reached the level of the people.

Q. Corruption among the Khmer Rouge is something very new. What evidence do you have of this? Could you give us some concrete examples?

A. By corruption I mean that the cadres appropriated for their own benefit what was supposed to be collective, State or cooperative property.

Q. Was this due to the ideological weakness of the Khmer Rouge?



Forced evacuation of Phnompenh resulted in huge loss of life.

A. I think it was basically due to the lack of proper ideological education of the cadres as a whole. These were people who had power but didn't know how to use it in what might be considered a proper socialist way. Instead they thought: we have power; we take what we want.

Q. How were the urban people who suffered under the Khmer Rouge classified? How did the Khmer Rouge view these new people from the cities who ranged from bureaucrats who had served under Lon Nol to workers?

A. Officially there was supposed to be an investigation, as one might expect, a survey of who and what people were. Both class background and political standpoint were to be assessed. But in practice, this does not seem to have been carried out in most areas; people were simply classified on the basis of where they had come from. In other words, if they had come from the cities they were bad. There was not a careful investigation of whether they had a working-class background or what their political views were on specific issues. Although, if someone had a proper class background and cooperated fully and enthusiastically with the local authorities in the countryside, at least in the beginning, he was safe.

Q. Let's come back to the question of pressure from Vietnam. In your study of Khmer Rouge policies in 1975, did you detect any Vietnamese pressures on the Kampuchean leadership or any conflicts between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese that might have contributed to the evacuation and resettlement policy? (You once mentioned to me the concept of "integral communism" by which Kampuchea was to be divided into

several self-sustained, self-sufficient communities, i.e. self-sufficient in production, defense and government.)

A. I think the basic idea was that each cooperative was supposed to be a self-contained entity capable of resisting on its own future attacks from any quarter, not only from Vietnam but from Thailand, from the United States, etc. The basic problem, I think, was that this was not possible under the existing conditions. The top leadership insisted that it was possible, and when it proved not to be, they blamed the failure not on their insistence on the implementation of an impossible policy, but on the failure of the people who were attempting to implement it, who were thereby placed in an untenable position.

Q. Can you elaborate on that?

A. You can imagine the dilemma of local cadres in straight economic terms. You are supposed to, on the one hand, feed the population in your own little unit. On the other hand, you're supposed to be able to contribute something to the State. And, you're supposed to be able to maintain the class power of the poor and lower-middle peasantry. If you fail at any one of these tasks, you're accused of treason. The only solution to this contradiction—not the *only* solution, but the most common solution, if it can be called that—was execution.

Q. Concerning internal conflict within Democratic Kampuchea, several questions arise. For instance, what was the structure of Democratic Kampuchea itself? Democratic Kampuchea grew very quickly in the five years since 1967 or 1968. From that point on, there is the question of cadre recruiting and leadership. Second, there is the question of

the post-liberation period, i.e. after 1975. Anthony Barnett, for example, says that there were internal conflicts and that coups were attempted in 1976, 1977 and 1978. Could you comment on these points?

A. In the war period (1968-1975), the party was structured on a regional basis. There were a number of regional committees: one for the Northwest, the North, the East and the Southwest. Each of these committees possessed a separate political and administrative structure and its own armed forces. The top leadership (Pol Pot et. al.) really had no power base of its own. Although it laid down the general line and chaired the military committee, it had no effective direct command over troops and no direct population base of its own. So after 1975, the leadership faced the problem of attempting to centralize the whole structure. At the same time, it had to convince people to continue to accept the general policy lines it was issuing.

These two problems tended to dovetail in that as it became increasingly clear that the general line was unworkable, people in the various regions advocated changes in it. At the same time, the Center was attempting to undermine the regional power bases and bring the whole unwieldy structure under centralized administrative control. What happened, then, was that every time there was an attempt at centralization or an attempt on the part of any of the regional power bases to implement a change in the general policy line, there would either be a coup or an attempt to prevent a coup. The latter took the form of an attempt to stamp out any kind of opposition or suggestion of change before it could coalesce into a threat to the general policy line and the Center's attempts at centralization.

Q. Could you elaborate on the general line and the changes advocated by the regional leaders?

A. This is not very clear. These conflicts were kept very closely within the party, and it was never admitted that a challenge to the general policy line existed. I would like to emphasize that from the available evidence, the real question appears not to have been whether or not there existed a threat from Vietnam. This was agreed upon by everyone. The major question was what was the best way to oppose Vietnam in terms of a line on national construction, a line on socialist revolution and a line on national defense. What we find here are groups advocating different ways of organizing the people to fight the Vietnamese, different ways of deploying troops, different foreign policies to build international coalitions or different international fronts to oppose Vietnam.

What appears to have happened is that the party Center formed a coalition with the Southwest regional party committee. One of the reasons this coalition was possible was that the general line on socialist revolution and national construction advocated by the



POL POT

Center seems to have been most feasible in the Southwest due to the nature of the class structure there. The general line on these two questions was much less workable in the other regions. What eventually happened, then, was that Pol Pot and others in the central leadership made a deal with the Southwest. Whenever there was opposition to the general line from the other regions, or any attempt by these to resist centralization, the Center and the Southwest would move in, purge the cadres from the regions involved and take them over. This process began in the northern region, spread to the Northwest and was finally extended to the East.

Q. I have two questions now. Why the Southwest? The class structure in the Southwest seems to have offered solid support for the Center. And again, could you be more specific about the problem of the Northwest?

A. The Southwest is generally the poorest part of Kampuchea. It has the highest percentages of poor and lower middle peasants. It has the lowest level of productivity and therefore the highest degree of absolute poverty. A line advocating the transfer of complete and absolute power to the poor and lower-middle peasantry was therefore most viable in the Southwest. Furthermore, the Southwest had the largest population, the largest number of troops and, in some ways, the largest agricultural surplus. Not because it was more productive, but just because there were more producers in absolute terms. Therefore, it was better able to meet the demands of the Center by sending it large amounts of rice. It could thus feed its people internally and provide a rice surplus to the State.

The Northwest is the richest part of Kampuchea, has the highest percentage of big landowners and rich and upper-middle peasants and also the weakest wartime party apparatus. On a number of points it seems the Northwest committee was at odds with the Center. One problem was the extent to

which intellectuals should be integrated into administration in the Northwest. Another question was the extent to which Thailand posed a threat. The Northwest borders on Thailand and had the most problems dealing with reactionary or restorationist groups coming from Thailand, and I think they advocated that a larger proportion of the general national budget be allocated to the Northwest to deal with this problem. The Northwest also contended that the Center should not concentrate exclusively on the threat from Vietnam, and this created an additional contradiction.

There are some indications that the Southwest regional party committee consciously dumped the problem of urban evacuees on the Northwest committee. In the original evacuation of Phnom Penh, a very large number of people were sent to the Southwest. Then, at the end of 1975, many of these people, in fact, most of them, seemed to have been transferred to the Northwest. Therefore the Northwest had to bear the heaviest burden in terms of feeding people coming from the urban centers and experienced the greatest difficulty in solving that particular problem. As the economic situation in the Northwest became increasingly difficult, it was easy to accuse the cadres there of incompetence or of collaboration with enemy agents because they seemed to be unable to solve the problems. The Northwest, from the evidence I was able to collect, was never able to send any rice to the Center despite the fact that it is traditionally the rice bowl of Kampuchea. I think the major reason for this was that it had so many urban evacuees to deal with and such a small structure with which to organize the region. At the same time, it had to deal with Thailand.

Q. It seems to me from our discussion that the internal problem was the main weakness of Democratic Kampuchea rather than external threats or pressures from Thailand or Vietnam. Would that be a fair evaluation?

A. I think it could be justifiably said that the internal failures contributed at least as much, if not more, to the downfall of the regime than the external pressures. In other words, the errors in the general line and the errors in correcting the errors in the general line created a situation in which it was much easier for Vietnam to do what it did inside Kampuchea. What I am really saying is that the central leadership's policies were objectively ultra-leftist. It did two things. On the one hand, it so destroyed the national bourgeois forces that there was no possibility of rallying these against an invader, and furthermore, it so alienated the revolutionary forces that there was ultimately very little possibility of using them to oppose external aggression.

Q. I have two questions about internal conflict. How extensive were the regional revolts? And what were their consequences?

A. The regional revolts were never very extensive, mostly because they were successfully suppressed, not because there was any lack of desire to revolt. What happened was that the once popular revolutionary forces in each of the regions subjected to purges were alienated by those purges. For instance, in the Northwest, what one might consider the reactionary forces had been alienated by the original policies of the Northwest cadres dictated from the Center. Furthermore, the revolutionary forces in the Northwest were alienated when cadres from other regions came in and purged them. In other words, the poor and lower-middle peasants who supplied the original revolutionary forces in the Northwest were alienated and disillusioned when massive purges were carried out against their members in 1977.

The same thing occurred again in the East in 1978. It seems that after the rainy season harvest in late 1977 and again in early 1978, the eastern region failed to meet its rice quota to the Center. The Center accused the East of being incompetent and therefore treasonous. At the same time, I think the eastern region, which had suffered most extensively from the clashes with Vietnam, was arguing that some kind of diplomatic time had to be bought with this country in order to prepare more adequately for dealing with the Vietnamese. This was also considered treasonous. Consequently, the Center moved against the eastern region, and in moving against it in the way it did, it managed to alienate many basic level eastern cadres. Thus, when the Vietnamese invaded, the revolutionary forces, which had been built up in the East since 1970 or even earlier, were basically in opposition to the central party leadership.

What one really finds are people who were originally revolutionary and, if you will, anti-Vietnamese in the sense that they opposed any kind of Vietnamese hegemony over Kampuchea, being forced into the position of either being liquidated by the Center or of going over to the Vietnamese. This created a situation in which many militants did finally go over to the Vietnamese against their original wishes.

Q. Are you talking about people such as Heng Samrin?

A. Exactly. The interviews I conducted indicate that, after the purge in the eastern region in May 1978, Heng Samrin went into the maquis and at first tried to organize opposition to the Center on the basis of independent self-reliance. He explained to people in meetings that he had personally led troops against Vietnam and that he was well aware of the danger from Vietnam, but as time went on, as forces from the Central Committee closed in, as starvation and disease set in among his followers, he sent emissaries to Vietnam and eventually a deal was struck. He really had no other choice. If he was going to continue his opposition to what he considered a policy sure to bring about a Vietnamese takeover of the country,

he had to put himself in a position where he would facilitate that takeover in order to attempt to prevent it. These people faced a very bizarre situation.

There are indications now that Heng Samrin was originally against the Vietnamese and we are beginning to see the results. The apparent political eclipse that Heng Samrin is undergoing in Phnom Penh, I think, reflects the fact that the deal he made with the Vietnamese was tactical and that both he and the Vietnamese know it.

Q. So you would not label him a puppet of the Vietnamese?

A. Well, in the end that's what happened to him. But I would say that he was forced into it, that it wasn't his original intention.

Q. What conflict led to the first purges, let's say in 1970-71? How did these affect the group in power since the Vietnamese takeover?

A. A fairly large number of Kampuchean communist cadres had been in Vietnam for an extended period of time, mostly since 1954. They returned to Kampuchea in 1970. The cadres inside Kampuchea labelled these people outsiders. Apparently, there was general agreement inside the party as a whole that these people should not be accepted, that they should not be allowed to hold power inside the party. At a party congress in the latter part of 1971, a number of key decisions were taken with respect to them. . . .

Another decision was to integrate the Kampucheans who had been recruited by these people into the power structure of the domestic cadres, i.e. the cadres who had remained inside the country. The third decision was to either ease out or to drive out the Vietnamese forces that were occupying Kampuchean territory. This three-fold program was carried out in various stages from late 1971 through early 1973.

As for the pattern the purges took, the method of purging developed to deal with this problem eventually became standard within the party. For the most part, these people were secretly liquidated. Cadres would return from Vietnam; in many cases they were isolated from each other, both organizationally and geographically. The party simply called them to study sessions or to meetings from which they never came back. There was no open campaign inside the party or among the population against these people, presumably in order not to alert others to the purge in progress and thereby delay to the last possible moment any realization among the targeted victims that they were in danger. This was apparently handled by the State security apparatus of the party which existed at the Center and had branches in all the regions.

Purges seem to have been carried out in each region, and it was carried out, I think, with the agreement—the enthusiastic agreement—of the regional committees.

However, the structure created to implement the purges was then later used by the Center and the Southwest regional committee against the other regional committees of the party, where the same pattern can be seen. There was never any open ideological struggle; there was never any discussion. If the secretary of the northern regional party was to be purged, he was called to Phnom Penh for a meeting from which he never returned. By using this method, it could even be denied that this person had been purged.

I think one may legitimately consider the cadres who came back from an extended period in Hanoi in 1970 a threat to the independence of the party. However, the method developed to get rid of them was later used against people who could not legitimately be considered a threat to the independence of the party. What we have is the institutional development of a certain way of dealing with enemies. The resulting problem was that, while this institution originally dealt with people who could really be considered enemies, it was later used cynically, hypocritically or inaccurately against people who were not enemies, but who had legitimate differences over other questions.

Q. So the suspicion of Khmer revolutionaries with Vietnamese ties was more an expression of the xenophobic tendency which the leadership of Democratic Kampuchea displayed than a well-grounded fear that they represented the interests of Vietnam.

A. After 1975, anybody opposing any part of the line pushed by the top levels of the Center was considered objectively to be in the Vietnamese camp and was treated as such. There was never any rational analysis of the real positions of these people. "If you disagree with me, you're pro-Vietnamese" was the position of the party leadership. There was a real threat from Vietnam. There was a real problem about how to deal with that danger, and the basic failure of the regime in handling contradictions among people who were not really enemies proved to be fatal: treating as enemies people who were not really in effect created enemies where before had existed none.

Q. Now we come to a fundamental question: is the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea historically desirable from the Vietnamese point of view, or did it occur after Liberation (1975) with the development of an irreconcilable situation in which the two countries found themselves in mutual confrontation, mainly over border issues (the frontier provinces, islands and the political questions we talked about earlier)?

A. The Vietnamese position is that the Vietnamese revolution cannot succeed without the cooperation of the Kampuchean revolution. This implies the acceptance on the part of the Kampuchean revolutionaries of this principle. And I think it was this principle with which the Kampucheans basically disagreed. They felt that the Kampuchean

revolution could not be successful if it was constantly subordinated to the needs of the Vietnamese revolution. Ultimately these two positions developed into an acute and irreconcilable conflict. The border problems were, I think, secondary and really more an expression of the general contradiction than a cause.

The Vietnamese analysis of events inside Kampuchea, as everyone knows, is closely tied to China and their view of the Chinese role in Kampuchea. If one looks at the situation inside Kampuchea after 1975 and especially in 1977 and 1978, I think it is objectively true that the Kampuchean leadership was destroying the revolution, and that endangered Kampuchean independence. From the Vietnamese point of view, it appeared that this was going to take the form of a Chinese takeover. I don't think that happened at the time of the Vietnamese invasion. There were certain tendencies in that direction, and those tendencies were identified by the Vietnamese as a major threat.

Ironically, what happened is that Kampuchean national independence was in fact lost, but it was lost not as a result of a Chinese takeover, but as a result of a Vietnamese takeover. Given what was going on inside Kampuchea, one or the other of these possibilities was highly likely. The Vietnamese were in a good strategic position and had the capabilities and the intention of acting first. Whether the Chinese would have taken the opportunity to turn Kampuchea into a colony, a dependency or a protectorate, is a separate historical question and one which is hard to deal with since it remains completely hypothetical. All we know is what really did happen: Kampuchea was taken over by Vietnam.

Q. Democratic Kampuchea realized that the conflict with Vietnam had reached an irreversible point, and at that time, I believe it was in 1977, there was quite a clear change for the better in Kampuchea's relationship with Thailand. Did this contribute in any way to the worsening of the relationship between Kampuchea and Vietnam?

A. To return to the question of the situation in the Northwest after the purge of the northwest regional cadres, the military forces that had been deployed along the Thai border were withdrawn. Some of them were sent to the Vietnamese border. I think it's clear that from that point on, the Kampuchians were attempting, on a rather limited basis, to create an alliance with Thailand against Vietnam, to ally themselves with China and also to join with the United States against Vietnam.

One of the differences inside the party was how far to take these new relationships. Some wanted to adopt a more or less identical position to that of China—the establishment of an open alliance with the United States against the Soviet Union; others urged the establishment of an open alliance with the United States against Vietnam; still others opted for something closer to the

Albanian position which was to try to fight both at once. There was a tendency within the party to take an Albanian position, and these elements were purged. Other elements were in favor of taking a much more China-like position; those elements were also purged, leaving the rather curious position that emerged in 1977 and 1978, which was, in fact, somewhere between the Albanian and the Chinese position.

Q. Do you think that the Vietnamese had no choice but to invade, considering the 1977 border clashes and the penetration of Kampuchean guerrillas into Vietnam's New Economic Zones?

A. I don't think that the existing situation made this an absolute necessity. I think that the Vietnamese may have felt the situation would get much worse if they didn't move at that point. It was therefore more a matter of preemption than the need to deal with an immediate threat.

Q. What is the Vietnamese role in Kampuchea today? How much control do the Vietnamese exercise at the village, provincial and national levels?

A. The Vietnamese have a direct influence over Kampuchea and, in effect, control it all the way from the central down to the provincial, the district and even the sub-district levels. There are Vietnamese experts—advisors—at all of these points. Although there are not Vietnamese advisors in every sub-district, there appear to be in most of them. There is a Vietnamese troop presence in Phnom Penh and in all the provinces, all the districts and all the sub-districts and perhaps 10 to 20 per cent of the villages. It is really the Vietnamese advisory command and the Vietnamese troops that hold the whole show together, because the Kampuchean side of the regime is full of internal contradictions and not very well formed.

At the highest level it includes the survivors of the purges of those who returned to Kampuchea from Vietnam in 1970. It also includes the survivors of the 1978 purges in the eastern regions; the survivors of the United Front intellectuals who returned to Kampuchea after 1975; simple refugees, mostly bourgeois, noncommunist elements who fled to Vietnam after 1975 and bourgeois intellectuals recruited locally after the Vietnamese came. As can well be imagined, these groups do not get along very well. There are many contradictions among them, and if the Vietnamese advisory structure and troops were removed, the whole thing, I think, would unravel in a very short time.

The Vietnamese are there at this moment to keep the whole system intact and prevent its unraveling; they are not so much there to fight organized resistance groups (the Khmer Rouge or the so-called Khmer Serei and the anti-communist resistance groups) because both of these remain fairly weak. If the Vietnamese troops and the Vietnamese

advisory structure were withdrawn, I do not think the Khmer Rouge would return to power or that a non-communist regime would be immediately established. There would be rather chaos and anarchy. Nobody would control the country. All of the groups inside Kampuchea, including the Heng Samrin regime and the groups opposed to it, would divide the country up into small zones of control and fight it out among themselves.

Q. Are you saying that the Vietnamese are able to solve the problems that the Kampuchean leadership was not able to?

A. The Vietnamese are obviously not able to set up a viable Kampuchean regime inside the country. In that sense they cannot solve these problems, and if one looks at what is taking place there now, one finds a very serious breakdown of production, both in the agricultural and industrial sectors but especially in the agricultural sector. In one sense the Khmer Rouge did a much better job of putting agricultural production together. Where they failed was in the distribution of the fruits of that production and in keeping the costs of organizing production at an acceptable level.

One could sum it up by saying that whereas the Khmer Rouge proved unable to make Kampuchea function as an independent entity, the Vietnamese are unable to make Kampuchea function as a colonial entity. It didn't work in the Khmer Rouge case and it isn't working in the Vietnamese case. If my conclusion about what would happen if the Vietnamese did withdraw is correct, there would not be a country left behind to operate.

Q. There are conflicting arguments over the Vietnamese ability to solve the most pressing problem in Kampuchea; i.e., the food shortage. Several international organizations argue that the Vietnamese are doing their best. The counter argument is that the Vietnamese are using international aid through the landbridge they set up across the Thai border—the shipment of rice into Kampuchea—and that this aid is being used to feed Vietnamese troops. There are even allegations that the Vietnamese are taking it into Kampuchea. How would you evaluate these different arguments?

A. I think that the answer to the first part of the question is that the Vietnamese are doing their best but that it is not good enough. The regime they created is incapable of getting relief rice to the people on a large scale. The Vietnamese always complain that there are not enough competent technical cadres to implement the various food programs, and they blame this on the executions carried out by the Khmer Rouge. The executions carried out by the Khmer Rouge are indeed part of the problem, but they are not the whole problem. Another major aspect is that many of the surviving cadres have left the country because they do not want to cooperate with the Vietnamese.



Kampuchean refugees fleeing into Vietnam to escape Pol Pot forces.

Another problem is that the administration at the lower levels is so distrusted by the Vietnamese that they are reluctant to allow that administration enough free play with the international rice relief to put it into the hands of the people. In other words, the Vietnamese are reluctant to give rice to sub-district committees and village committees because these committees are considered politically unreliable, and quite correctly so from the Vietnamese point of view, I think.

As for the question of the Vietnamese appropriating large amounts of international aid, I would say that in the early period of the Vietnamese invasion, the Vietnamese troops did consume significant amounts of Kampuchean rice. They were unable to feed their troops from Vietnam and were forced to rely upon local supplies. However, that period is now past, and for the most part, the Vietnamese are not taking international rice aid for themselves. The problem is that because of the weakness and the incompetence of the regime that they've created, that rice doesn't get to the basic levels, and at the same time, because of the contradictions in that regime and its weaknesses and its incompetence, it is unable to produce enough rice to feed the people.

Q. There are reports coming out of Kampuchea from visiting journalists that the Vietnamese, through their inability to set up a new economic structure for Kampuchea, have been forced to allow a free market economy to operate to a certain degree within Kampuchea particularly along the Kampuchean-Thai border. Could you comment on that?

A. The cross-border operations of the international organizations from Thailand, when they first began in September or October of last year, started at a time when the Vietnamese were still on the offensive in the border areas and carrying out military oper-

ations, in fact, establishing military control there. The Vietnamese were then very tough with people trying to get across the border to get international aid. At first it seemed this was in order to prevent them from receiving the aid. Now in fact it appears that basically it was just a matter of initially establishing military security along the border. And since military security has been established, people have been more or less allowed to cross the border into Thailand freely, either to pick up aid in the form of seed rice, milled rice for eating or goods for trade. There have been some periods in which the Vietnamese have attempted to close the border, but again these have been periods in which the Vietnamese have been engaged in specific military operations along the frontier and were basically preoccupied with clearing the frontier in order to carry out these operations.

More generally, one of the ironies of the situation inside Kampuchea is that the Vietnamese-designed plan for local agricultural reorganization and production is, at the theoretical level, based on early collectivization. In other words, the highest level of collectivization in the countryside is a solidarity team for production where land is collectivized but the means of agricultural production are not. This assumes the existence of a certain amount of rural capitalism to take up the slack that cannot be handled by the collective system. Now the problem is that coming out of the Democratic Kampuchea period, there was no such rural, local-level capitalism. So in order to solve some of the supply problems in the countryside, the Vietnamese have had to allow a certain amount of capitalism to develop. And the only source for that capitalism, in a sense, is on the Thai side of the frontier. The goods come from Thailand, and the traders have to be tied into a trade network which originates there. Presumably in the long run, this will be stamped out, but for the moment, given

the level of agricultural organization in rural Kampuchea, it is a necessity.

I think the Vietnamese accept this as something they not only can live with but which is to their advantage at this point. Also given the general class line that they are pursuing, which proclaims to, and appears in fact to, include certain national bourgeois elements both in the towns and in the countryside, they have to allow the kinds of people who want to deal in this kind of trade to carry on these activities. If they were to stamp them out, they would lose the support of these people, or at least they fear they would lose the support of these people, and they don't want to risk that.

Q. The last question concerns the various resistance groups opposing the Vietnamese occupation. How viable are the Khmer Rouge or the Khmer Serei groups? Is there a possibility of a Khmer Serei group allying itself with Democratic Kampuchea and posing a real threat to Heng Samrin and Vietnamese political power in Kampuchea (with the backing of course of China, the U.S. and Thailand)?

A. The Khmer Rouge at the present moment have very little possibility of organizing any large-scale, widespread, deep resistance to the Vietnamese. The things that were done between 1975 and 1978 have so alienated such large sectors of the population that the Khmer forces cannot expand beyond the corps that they had left at the end of last year, a corps very severely decimated not only by Vietnamese military attacks but also by starvation and disease. Now as a result of international aid, this rump corps has regained some strength, but it hasn't been able to expand beyond the limited sectors of the population which constituted its base at the end of last year. As is well known, the Khmer Rouge leadership has proclaimed a very broad united front, promising all kinds of freedoms and the reversal of former policies that for the present nobody believes it, either internally or internationally. I would be very surprised if the Khmer Rouge resistance could ever rally a real resistance against the Vietnamese. It is possible that if, over the next ten years the Khmer Rouge resistance lives up to the promises it has made and behaves very well with the population, it will begin to regain some of the support that it had before 1975. It might then begin to pose a real popular threat to the Vietnamese, but I consider this unlikely. □

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Differences Between the Vietnamese and Chinese Revolutions

[Since the victory of the Vietnamese liberation fighters in their long struggle against U.S. imperialism in 1975, there has been a growing divergence between the Vietnamese and Chinese leaderships. Friction between the two governments came to a head when Vietnamese forces helped to overthrow the genocidal Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea in January 1979 and Peking invaded Vietnam.

[The following article presents the Vietnamese view of what is behind the differences. It appeared in the September 25, 1980 issue of *Vietnam Courier*, an English-language magazine published in Hanoi.]

* * *

I. During the National Democratic Revolution

During the years when the Communist Parties were founded in each country, Vietnam and China had the common characteristics of colonial and semifeudal Far-eastern countries: a very small working class (about 0.5% of the population in China in 1921, over 1% in Vietnam in 1930): the Communist Party in each country had to work in a sea of individualistic backward peasants.

The fundamental problem was which class led the revolution—the working class or the peasantry—and on which position the Party should stand to carry out the revolution: on the working class or on the peasantry.

Since its foundation the Communist Party in Vietnam asserted itself as the political party of the working class in order to lead the revolution; it has remained true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism on proletarian revolution in the period of imperialism, following the slogan "Proletarians of the world and oppressed peoples, unite!"

The Party has resolutely upheld the banners of national independence and socialism, has stood closely united with the proletarian movement and the oppressed nations throughout the world, has been guided in all its actions by Marxism-Leninism, has drawn the lessons of the experiences of the various proletarian movements in the world, especially the Great October Socialist Revolution so as to gradually take the Vietnamese revolution to complete victory.

On the contrary, the Chinese Communist Party, since it had been submitted to Maoist leadership, has promoted the peasantry and petty-bourgeois positions to lead the revolution, gradually separating itself from the international communist and workers' movement and finally opposing it.

Mao Zedong wrote in his book "On New Democracy": "The politics of new democracy

is essentially handing power to the peasants," and "the peasant force is the main force in the Chinese revolution".¹ In Vietnam the Communists clearly understood that it was necessary for Party members coming from petty-bourgeois or intellectual backgrounds, etc., to steep themselves in the life of the proletariat if they wanted to train properly. This meant taking part in manual labour and living with industrial workers, in a word, to become industrial workers. The leaders of the revolutionary movement in China, on the other hand, always held that cadres should "xia feng," that is to go to the country to mix with poor and landless peasants and learn from them and to become, not workers, but peasants in order to lead the proletarian revolution.

It is precisely owing to this erroneous view of the role of the masses and of the motive forces of the revolution that in 1927 when fiercely attacked by Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), they failed to build their forces on the spot within the masses, including the urban and rural population, both workers and peasants. Instead they had to carry out the Long March and take flight in search of a new base. This was an epic experience but at the same time a bitter historical defeat. They left with 300,000 but only 30,000 remained at the end of the long march. And this was due to the fact that they had failed to take the path of the masses drawn by Marxism-Leninism, they had failed to rely on the working class, to organize and educate the peasants under proletarian leadership.

In Vietnam, the repression exercised by the French colonialists was many times fiercer than that of the Jiang Jieshi clique. However, thanks to a correct working class line, the Party managed to mobilize the workers and peasants to fight side by side. Thus the Party led the workers at Truong Thi, Ben Thuy (Nghe Tinh province) to join the struggle, it created a solid worker-peasant alliance placed under the leadership of the working class. That is why when the revolutionary tide was at its lowest ebb, the Party was able to survive and fight in the very midst of the local population. During the hard period of white terror (1931-32) the Party held firmly to the aims of national independence and socialism. It never wavered or shifted to the peasant position, never gave up the ultimate goal—socialism. The Party's programme of action was drawn up in June 1932 when the Party was going through its hardest times. The programme

still stressed: "The Indochinese workers and peasants, under the guidance of the Communist Party, will take up arms in insurrection to carry out the future tasks of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolutions, and together will advance resolutely towards socialism."

Although subjected to colonialist terror, the party of the Vietnamese working class did not seek refuge by conducting a long march. Instead, it had faith in the masses and restored the revolutionary bases among the masses, which resulted in a speedy recovery of the movement and a new revolutionary upsurge.

In the course of the armed struggle the Chinese revolutionary line consisted in extolling the role of armed violence, while overlooking the political struggle, and considering that revolutionary power is *born from the barrel of a gun*, and not from the revolutionary movement of the masses. They attributed all revolutionary gains to the armed struggle, considered the armed struggle as all-powerful. In organizing the fighting forces, they also took the "peasant road," i.e. they relied on the countryside, and used the countryside to encircle the cities. Mao Zedong considered this to be an original revolutionary initiative in the new situation.²

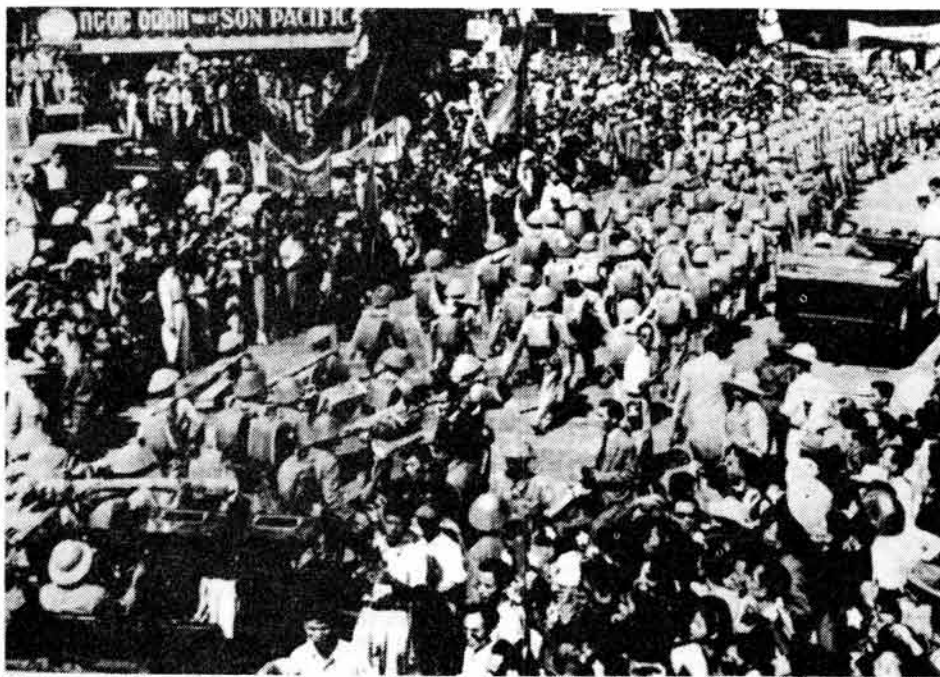
In carrying out their revolution the Vietnamese have learned from the experience of the Chinese in the war of liberation, but our road was different. We built our armed forces from the mass movement organized by the Party. The *red self-defence units* born in 1930 were the offspring of the masses' revolutionary organizations, such as the Red Trade Unions, the Red Peasants' Association, the Communist Youth League, etc. They were the tools used by the Party to seize power, but revolutionary power was seized by the mass movement itself, under the leadership of the Party, through political and armed violence; it was by no means born from the barrel of a gun.

The development of the armed forces and the building of revolutionary power during the August Revolution in Vietnam were carried out in the following way. Out of the organizations making up the Viet Minh Front, the Party selected the armed forces. The Party led the masses in co-ordinating the political struggle with the armed struggle to seize power. Revolutionary power, as built by the working class, in return makes use of the armed forces as an instrument of violence to consolidate itself.

In our fight we attach great importance not only to the armed struggle but also to

1. Mao Zedong, *Selected Works, Volume II*, Beijing Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1968, p. 546. (Translated from the Vietnamese).

2. *Hongqi Review*, 1977, No. 11, p. 16.



Vietnamese liberation fighters marching into Hanoi in 1954.

political struggle: *co-ordination between political struggle and armed struggle*. As soon as the first revolutionary organization—the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Detachment—was set up, President Ho Chi Minh said: Its name is the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Detachment, its primary purpose is to *concentrate on political struggle rather than on armed struggle* and then to *co-ordinate political struggle and armed struggle*. Although the revolutionary army consisted mainly of peasants, its political ideology, military style and military discipline had to conform to those of a proletarian army. In this way it could avoid adventurism, liberalism, indiscipline which are rampant in an army of peasants.

Concerning the revolutionary war, we did not simply rely on the countryside and use the countryside to encircle the cities, but agitated for both the cities and the countryside to rise up together. As a concrete example we can cite Viet Bac as a large base area of the August revolution. We also had a security zone on the outskirts of Hanoi and the town of Ha Dong, a combat zone in the mining areas such as the Dong Trieu Fourth Combat Zone (Quang Ninh) and in the plains such as the Quynh Luu Combat Zone (Ninh Binh). The Vietnamese revolution evolved in the following way: *to go from partial insurrection to revolutionary war, to coordinate revolutionary war and partial insurrection leading to general offensive and concerted uprisings*. Uprisings can be carried out wherever conditions permit, and it is not necessary to use the countryside to encircle the cities, or to rely on the peasants to liberate the workers as Chinese leaders think.

In proceeding from partial insurrections to a general uprising we brought into play

the initiatives, the creativeness of the people throughout the country. This experience shed light on the path to follow in our recent struggle against U.S. imperialism. While the Chinese leaders advised us to wage a *protracted war*, we opted for *concerted uprisings*. And when we had risen up and won initial victories they were frightened and advised us not to hit too hard because, in their opinion, U.S. imperialism was stronger than us. They also said we should only use forces the size of a platoon or smaller to attack the enemy. But we had our own way to fight the enemy, and won the war.

Because we attached great importance to both political struggle and armed struggle, to the workers and the peasants, because we knew how to bring into play the three strategic zones (the cities and the countryside, the plains and mountain areas), we were able to carry out the strategy of *revolutionary offensive*, of attacking the enemy right from the outset.

When the U.S. imperialists were defeated in their special war and sent their forces *en masse* into South Vietnam, and started a local war, the Chinese leaders advised us to adopt an adventurist military line: to draw the Americans to the North to defeat them. But we insisted on fighting and defeating the Americans in the South itself through revolutionary offensives. We did not simply start an armed struggle but also made use of all three “offensive spearheads”: political struggle, armed struggle, and agitation in the ranks of the enemy. We were able to mobilize not only workers and peasants but also intellectuals, college and school students. The women, in particular, the “long-haired army” as they were also called, dealt deadly political blows to the enemy.

The differences in the line and methods of

struggle between Vietnam and China led to differences in building the forces of the revolutionary masses, in building the *National United Front*. The Chinese leaders overestimated the strength of the sea of peasants and overlooked the political struggle, and so did not see the need to build a *long-term* national united front. It should be recalled that the period of the National United Front between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang was a very short one.

In Vietnam, as early as 1930 the Communist Party, in accordance with the Comintern’s policy of anti-imperialist front, decided to build the Indochinese anti-imperialist Alliance, whose aim it was to “unite all the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces to overthrow imperialist rule, to win back complete independence for the Indochinese countries and support the liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies.”³ Subsequently, other forms of national united front came into being in conformity with each revolutionary period; such as the Democratic Front in 1936–39, the Viet Minh Front in 1941–51, the Lien Viet Front in 1946–54, the Fatherland Front as from 1955, etc. Our fundamental line still consisted in basing ourselves on *worker-peasant alliance exclusively led by the working class* to rally all the patriotic forces in order to win back national independence and freedom. The policy of unity advocated by the Vietnamese Party is a lasting one, a consistent one, it conforms to both reason and sentiment, it is a policy of unity based on struggle, love, and a sincere desire to transform human beings.

Such a proletarian line in building of our forces and in organizing the struggle has helped us achieve a position of strength from which to make *continuous attacks*, to fight back the enemy step by step, to defeat him little by little until we achieve complete national liberation. During the war of resistance against the French colonialists we made continued attacks, combined national revolution with democratic revolution, in order to win victory in both. In the war of resistance against the U.S. imperialists, we did not advocate waiting for the liberation of South Vietnam to build socialism throughout the country but held that “under all circumstances the North should be consolidated and advance toward socialism.”⁴

The Chinese revolution was victorious thanks to the favourable conditions created by the socialist camp which had become a world system. In those conditions any struggle for national salvation which can win the assistance of the world revolutionary movement, which can arouse the masses whose majority is composed of peasants, which can form the spearhead of an attack on the main enemy—the imperialists and their henchmen—is likely to achieve victory. The Chi-

3. *Party Documents (1930-45) Volume I*, Hanoi, 1977, p. 143 (in Vietnamese).

4. Political Report at the 8th Plenum of the Party’s Central Committee (August 1955).

nese leaders were mistaken in relying too much on the peasants and overlooking the workers. But in the national democratic revolution such a blunder was not too serious since during that period the peasants made up the main force and were inspired by the land reform to take an active part in the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle. Not until the socialist revolution did it have serious consequences.

II. During the Socialist Revolution

In Vietnam, when the war for national liberation ended victoriously in 1954 in the North and in 1975 in the South, we relied on the workers to take over the factories in the cities.

In China, the liberation army was composed overwhelmingly of peasants armed with Mao Zedong's thoughts on the role of the peasantry, was entrusted with the task of controlling the cities. A military control was set up, and as a result the armed forces of peasants were used to control the workers in the cities. In 1958 Mao Zedong said: "We should propagate rural style and guerilla habits in the cities."

Chinese workers do not account for a high proportion of the Communist Party's membership.

According to a French document at the 8th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (September 1956), out of 10,734,385 Party members there were only 1,502,814 workers; 1,253,223 intellectuals (in the broad sense); 7,414,459 were of peasant stock. The number of workers in the country increased fairly fast in the first years (1949: 3 million, and after the period of economic development 1949-57 it reached 25.6 million in 1958). And they were mostly workers of large-scale factories. However, in 1961-62 the Chinese leaders moved nearly 30 million urban inhabitants into the country with the aim of concentrating the work force, materials, and money into agriculture, which they viewed as the most important branch of the national economy. The number of workers and government officials then decreased from 44 million in 1960 to 30 or 31 million in 1962 (factory workers from 22 million to 14.5 million, building workers from 6 million to 2 million). In 1966 the number of workers decreased again to 12 or 13 million.

The Chinese leaders hold that one can rely on the peasants to do everything, and pretend they "have surpassed Marx." They even view that Marxism is a "European phenomenon," that one should learn from its technique and analytical method and then "de-Europeanize it" and "sinify it." Mao said at the 6th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (October 1938): "There is no abstract concept of Marxism, there is only concrete Marxism having a national form. To 'sinify Marxism'—so to speak—means that in all its manifestations it must start from the characteristics of China and be applied in conformity with those characteristics." At the Beidaihe Congress in summer 1958 Mao again said that "in the management of the

State we should combine Marx and Qin Shi Huangdi (a Chinese emperor who ran the country by means of a barbarous dictatorship).

In Lenin's view, the more backward a country is, the more historical detours it has to go through, the more difficulties it will meet in the transition from the capitalist relations to socialist relations. For besides the task of destroying the old regime, there is the more difficult task of organizing the new one. But the Chinese leaders hold that the more backward the economy, the easier the transition from capitalism to socialism is, because "the poorer they are, the more attached the people are to the revolution."

They put forward adventurist policies, such as *building people's communes*, which was to be the shortest and easiest way to communism. In fact, they were a form of rudimentary egalitarianism and ascetic socialism. They abolished rationing on daily necessities and adopted a system of free supplies in order to impose an austere way of life. At the Beidaihe Conference Mao stated: "To adopt a system of free supplies, to put into practice a communist way of life means to oppose the Marxist way to the capitalist way." The Chinese leaders approved the initiative of abolishing payment of salary according to work done and bonuses, and considered that stressing material benefits was short-sighted individualism. This policy resulted in a reduction of production.

This petty-bourgeois adventurist line also manifested itself in the Great Leap Forward, the Steel and Iron Produced by All movements. In 1958 two million rudimentary and Martin blast furnaces were built, at the cost of 3.8 million *renminbi* (Chinese currency). 80 million *tonnes* of coal were used to produce steel and pig iron (up to December 1958). However the 9 or 10 million *tonnes* of pig iron and over 4 million *tonnes* of steel produced were not usable.

Each one of the "three red banners" (general line, great leap forward, and people's communes) was a hard blow to the working class, the peasant-worker alliance, and undetermined social production.

At the Lushan Conference in 1959 Mao admitted:

"I've made two mistakes: first, to appeal for massive production of steel and pig iron, second, to appeal for the building of people's communes. It seems that I am responsible for that." At the 9th plenum of the Party Central Committee (8th legislature) held in January 1961, Mao again admitted: "We were impatient with the transition period."

The failure of that policy led to deep rifts within the ranks of the Beijing ruling circles. Mao started the *cultural revolution* through which he extolled ascetic socialism, criticized the relatively easy life of those who relied on their labor to earn their living considering these people as having followed the capitalist path.

On 16 July 1966 Mao swam in the Yangtze river. On 26 July 1966, Renmin Ribao urged the youth "to master the rules of the

revolution in the storm of class struggle, to learn how to swim in class struggle." On 18 August 1966 a million red guards demonstrated. The number of red guards rapidly increased: 11 million college and school students and 50 million youth rose up to carry out the cultural revolution. It was in fact a move to overthrow Liu Shaoqi and consolidate Mao's position. This was a large-scale purge disguised under the theory of "continuing the revolution under the proletarian dictatorship." The period of "Great Chaos" lasted from 11 January 1966 to September 1967, but the consequences of the cultural revolution lasted longer. The damage done to China was enormous.

In Vietnam things were quite different. The Vietnamese revolution continued to advance steadily. It always stood firm on the proletarian position, holding high the banners of national independence and socialism.

In 1954 the country was divided into two, the North was exhausted because of the war, but the Party was resolved to take it to socialism, on the basis of a Marxist analysis of problems and advantages. It applied objective laws creatively and guided the entire society to advance step by step without burning stages.

The three years from 1955 through 1957 were devoted to restoring and developing the economy and developing our culture, with the aim of reaching the 1939 level. In the rehabilitation of the economy we paid attention to the consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance, pressing for recovery of both industry and agriculture. We never failed to strengthen the working class both in quality and in numbers. During those years the number of factories increased from 31 (in 1955) to 150 (in 1957), the number of workers and public servants increased from 170,000 to 250,000. We emphasized ideological education, raised the cultural and technical level and upheld the role of the workers in State management. On 14 September 1957 the Law on Trade Unions was adopted by the National Assembly.

Once the economy had recovered, we started to solve the contradictions between the advanced revolutionary power on the one hand and the backward social and production relations on the other: the three-year plan (1958-1960) was drawn up. It was a plan aimed at transforming and developing the economy, developing culture, in order to transform in a socialist way all the elements of the national economy, the central task being the transformation of agriculture. In 1960, 85.8 per cent of peasant households, accounting for 68.1 per cent of the land joined the agricultural cooperatives, 218,000 artisans out of 305,000 joined the handicrafts cooperatives and became engaged in collective production. All the bourgeois households in industry and trade entered the joint State-private enterprises, cooperatives, or cooperative enterprises. The number of workers continued to grow. The number of enterprises increased from 150 in

1957 to 1,012 in 1960, the number of workers from 250,000 to 480,000. We opposed the ideas of "waiting for the South" and of "allowing capitalism a period of development in order to create the material and technical premises for socialism" etc. We did not allow subjectivism, voluntarism, and rightist errors to slow down the advance of the revolution.

Subsequently, we solved the contradictions between the advanced relations of production and the backward material and technical basis. The first Five-year-plan (1961-1965) was aimed at industrialisation. While in China the order of precedence in the branches of the economy was agriculture, light industry, heavy industry; we regarded industry as the basis for the development of the national economy, and followed the policy of "prioritizing the rational development of heavy industry on the basis of the development of agriculture and light industry."

We consider the *scientific and technological revolution to be the linchpin* in solving the above-mentioned contradiction. Unlike the Chinese leaders who underestimate the role of intellectuals, we pay much attention to enlarging the body of scientific workers, technicians and skilled workers.

Taking the 1960 levels as units:

	1965	1969	1973
Scientific workers & technicians	5.5	9.5	15.5
Graduates and post-graduates	5.4	10.7	20.6
Secondary vocational education level	5.6	9.1	13.9
Skilled workers	2.5	3.1	4.5

(Year-book of Statistics, 1974, p. 80)

Parallel to the revolution in relations of production and the scientific and technological revolution we are carrying out an *ideological and cultural revolution, building the new social system, the new economy, the new culture, and the new people*. Our cultural revolution consists in building a popular, national, scientific, socialist culture, a culture of the people, for the people, with the aim of helping them to become their own collective masters with all the qualities of a socialist people, to inherit the fine traditions of the nation and stand united in mutual love and fidelity.

This is diametrically opposed to China's cultural revolution. In China the cultural revolution and even "the criticize Lin Biao, criticize Confucius campaign" failed to wipe out the vestiges of Confucianism. Conversely, they consolidated bureaucratism, dictatorship, paternalism, which are the essence of Confucianism. In Vietnam, collective mastery means eradicating the vestiges of Confucianism, especially the "gang chang" theory (old-style social relations in which the King, the father and the husband reign supreme respectively over their subjects, children and wives).

So far as *foreign relations* are concerned

the difference between Vietnam and China is even more obvious.

Vietnam consistently upholds the principles of proletarian internationalism, maintains a policy of independence, sovereignty, and international solidarity. We regard the socialist camp as the centre for unity and have contributed to stepping up the three currents of the world revolution: socialist revolution, the movement for national liberation, and the movement of struggle for democracy and peace in the capitalist countries.

China is carrying out a policy of great-power expansionism. The Beijing leaders hold that Leninism has fulfilled the historic mission of Marxism in the period of imperialism and that now Mao Zedong's thought is Marxism-Leninism in the period of total collapse of imperialism. They deem that the centre of world revolution is shifting to the world of ex-colonies, to China.

In the relations between socialist countries they stress equality in order to compete with the Soviet Union. In 1965, they stated that they had the right to oppose the common resolutions of the 1957 and 1960 conferences of the Communist and Workers' Parties which they had adopted. It has become increasingly clear that Mao's statement "the East Wind Prevails over the West Wind" at the 1957 Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties implied that the Chinese wind had prevailed over the Soviet wind, and not that socialism had prevailed over imperialism. When they said they opposed Soviet revisionism, they aimed at hegemonism among the socialist countries and the third world. In 1962 they held that there were only 5 socialist countries: China, Vietnam, Korea, Romania, and Albania. Between these 5 countries and the two superpowers, namely the Soviet Union and the United States, there were two buffer zones: the third world and the second world (Japan and Western Europe).

This is the source of the "three worlds theory." This theory was expressed by Deng Xiaoping in the two speeches he made at the United Nations General Assembly on 15 October 1971 and 10 April 1974: "The socialist

camp continued to exist for some time after the Second World War, and no longer exists" and "the U.S. and the Soviet Union make up the first world. The developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and a number of other zones belong to the third world. Those developed countries which stand between the two above-mentioned worlds make up the second."

The aim of the "three-worlds theory" is to erase socialism as a factor of world politics, a factor which determines the positioning of the main opposing camps in the world.

China has gone out of its way to court the United States and Japan, and volunteered its services as a counter-revolutionary shock force. It has made a volte-face in its relations with Vietnam; it has invaded Vietnam, then raised a hue and cry about "great hegemonism" and "small hegemonism," and put an end to the treaty of mutual assistance signed with the Soviet Union.

What is particularly dangerous is that the Chinese are trying their best to make war propaganda, while Vietnam perseveres in its stand for peace. We would only resort to just wars to oppose unjust ones in order to defend our independence and preserve peace. The Chinese leaders say that war is "a normal phenomenon in the relations between two worlds, and that each generation must have its own war." To them war is a means of carrying out their expansionist and hegemonistic designs.

* * *

The correct, just and creative policy followed by Vietnam, her absolute loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism is a mirror reflecting the road of betrayal followed by the Chinese ruling circle over the past few decades. This genuinely revolutionary line is also the fundamental guarantee of the Vietnamese people's certain victory over the Chinese reactionaries if they recklessly start another war of aggression against Vietnam.

(After an article by Văn Tao, published in the journal *Nghiên Cứu Lịch Sử—Historical Studies—No. 1 and 3, 1980*). □

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The Meaning of the Coup Attempt in Spain

[The following statement was issued by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International February 24.]

* * *

On February 23, the Spanish parliament was about to give a vote of confidence to Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, who had been put forward by his party—the Democratic Center Union (UCD)—to be prime minister in the most reactionary government in Spain since the 1976 resignation of Arias Navarro. Just as the parliamentary session was beginning, it was interrupted by an attack led by two Civil Guard companies, commanded by Lieut. Col. Antonio Tejero Molina.

Tejero Was Not Alone

At the same time, the ultrarightist general of Valencia, Jaime Milans del Bosch—one of the most influential members in the Spanish military command—decreed a state of emergency in the region under his command. He proceeded to set up a military occupation, declared a curfew, and banned all activities by political parties and trade unions. He also issued a decree, which in large part was similar to former dictator Francisco Franco's call proclaiming the "uprising" of July 18, 1936.

A company of the Spanish army's main task force brigade—the Brunete armored unit, under Milans del Bosch's command—took over the state-run radio and television, and broadcast martial music. Many other significant sectors of the army took a wait and see attitude.

Tejero had been one of the main instigators of another coup attempt—the so-called Galaxy Plot in November 1978. Despite this, he maintained his responsibilities in the army.

In the weeks leading up to the events, several military officers had publicly declared they favored the "restoration of order" by the army.

And, on February 23, the police were conducting a "silent strike." This was an extension of various signs of rebellion against the government in preceding days. The police were protesting against the exposure of their systematic use of torture, following the death by torture of Basque nationalist activist José Ignacio Arraqui while in police custody.

Only several hours after the coup attempt had begun, could it be safely said that the putsch was becoming a lost cause. King Juan Carlos's February 24 speech, made at 1:00 a.m., more than six hours after the parliament had been seized, showed that a lot of time was necessary to bring the situation in the army under

control. It took twelve hours to obtain Tejero's surrender and to free the members of parliament and cabinet ministers.

This was not an adventure by some fringe grouping of civil guards led by someone a bit deranged. It was a real attempt at a military pronunciamiento—numerous examples of which have already been part of Spain's history. It was an extremely serious attempt, which had as its declared objective to pressure the king into forming a military government that would do away with democratic rights and repress the workers movement and nationalist organizations.

A State Apparatus Built By the Dictatorship

How could an attempted coup of this scale have developed? The answer to this question lies with the very character of the political regime and the institutions that developed out of what was called the "reform" that began at the end of 1976.

The king was the main protagonist in this process, which was to lead to the setting up of a parliamentary regime. This was on the condition that the state apparatus inherited from Francoism—especially the military command, the police, and the judicial system—be completely preserved.

The majority workers parties—the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Spanish Communist Party (PCE)—accepted this blackmail and compelled the workers to accept it. Since then, not only have these parties refused to have anything to do with any mass action against the many attacks and provocations carried out by this state apparatus, but on several occasions they supported this repression under the pretext of the "fight against the ETA," the Basque Nationalist organization. Last June they even ended up voting for an ultrareactionary "antiterrorist" law.

The repressive Francoist apparatus is, and will remain intact, despite some inevitable, though probably quite light penalties against sections of the military most directly implicated in the coup attempt.

The problem is not the existence of "a few fascists," which could be resolved by some small reforms. Rather, there is a repressive apparatus, built up over forty years of dictatorship, which must be radically eliminated if the threats that emanate from it are to disappear.

The Winning King

Why did the coup fail? Everyone has emphasized the role played by the king. And everyone appeared to be pleased with the new strengthening of his authority—starting with the PSOE and PCE leaders.

The truth is that the occupation of

parliament revealed the extreme instability of the regime's political institutions—the parliament, senate, and government. Only the king retained some authority, although the facts show that he had only limited authority over a significant sector of the military command.

Only a small minority of social layers wanted a coup right away. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie wanted to continue ruling within the framework of the present political institutions. Moreover, this was also the position of the major imperialist governments. Thus, once the occupation of parliament became known, it was quite normal for the king to receive unconditional support from the bosses' organizations, the bourgeois parties, and the nationalist governments of Catalonia and Euskadi (the Basque Country).

What is really quite serious for the future of the workers movement and the nationalities of the Spanish state, is that the trade unions and majority workers parties immediately gave the king a blank check. They explicitly called for a total demobilization, with only a few hesitations on the part of the PCE.

Given these conditions, the king did not have any difficulty playing the role of the "constitutional" head of the bourgeois state and army. His Bonapartist role has now appeared more clearly than before, given the obvious crisis in the bourgeoisie's policies. It was the king who presided over the meetings of the only political body of the state that remained functioning—even after the members of parliament were released—the junta of the armed forces. And it was the king who convened an "informational meeting" on the afternoon of February 24, with leaders of the People's Alliance (AP), the UCD, PSOE, and the PCE. After this meeting, PCE head Santiago Carrillo expressed the "total agreement of all the participants" with the king.

The king's powers have certainly been strengthened. But in no way does this mean that democracy has been reinforced as the reformist leaders are trying to say. The reactionaries' threats, which hang over the working masses, have not diminished. They have increased.

First, the ability of the repressive apparatus to exert political pressure has increased. It is true that the military figures most visibly implicated in the attempted coup have been punished. But those who represent the future danger are the heads of the "loyal" army, especially the most reactionary ones—those whom the king thanked for their "loyalty." The king is going to use his authority to compromise with them and it will not take very long

before the effects are felt in the Spanish state.

Second, there is now a greater possibility that Calvo Sotelo's new government will be able to implement its program—but in an even more right wing form than previously planned. Indicative of this is that the Catalan nationalists, who before the coup attempt had decided to abstain in the vote to endorse the Calvo Sotelo government, today say they will vote for it.

Lastly, and more fundamentally, the attitude of the leaders of the reformist workers parties towards the monarchy adds to the workers' political disorientation.

The Reformists Demobilize

Nobody can question the willingness of the working class and the peoples of the Spanish state—who suffered under Francoism not so long ago—to oppose a reactionary coup d'état. Through their own experiences, they have learned the effectiveness and need for mass mobilizations to answer these attacks.

It is true that within the Spanish workers movement there is a certain demoralization and confusion, organized for some time now by the PSOE and PCE leaders. These leaders showed themselves to be incapable of responding to the attempted coup.

But despite this, just a few days before the coup attempt tens of thousands of people demonstrated against police torture in the largest demonstration in the history of the Basque country. And during the last several weeks, tens of thousands of workers carried out struggles, both in the crisis-ridden industrial sectors and in the public transport sector.

The Spanish workers have maintained their ability to engage in action and to respond. Even the hesitations of the reformist leaders following the coup attempt reflect this. While the leaders of the Workers Commissions (CO) and the General Workers Union (UGT) in their first published communiqué called solely for calm and confidence in the king, the Catalan Workers Commissions called for a two day general strike and the Communist Party of Euskadi also called for a general strike. And even the first communiqué from the PCE central leadership, although quickly modified, included a similar call.

At the urging of our comrades of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) in Madrid, the PCE and LCR called a demonstration the night of the coup in front of the parliament. But the PCE later called it off. Similarly, the leaders of the UGT and CO also changed their attitude somewhat. Following the king's speech, they called for a two-hour strike on February 24, except for the public service sector, and maintained their stand against street demonstrations, reiterating their confidence in the king.

It is not the willingness to struggle that



TEJERO

is lacking. What is lacking is a desire on the part of the leadership of the majority parties of the working-class movement to take action. What they have plenty of, on the other hand, is cowardice. They have not learned anything from experience, or from the defeats they brought about in the past, from which they themselves suffered. They have not learned that the only sure weapon against a reactionary coup attempt, is the general strike, the immediate mobilization of the workers in the streets, and the control of all public services by the strikers. Even those sectors that went a little further immediately following the coup attempt—such as the Euskadi CP leaders or the Workers Commissions of Catalonia—very quickly pulled back from their first positions. In reality, they had done virtually nothing to implement their own slogans and fell over one another throwing themselves at the king's feet, along with their countrywide leaders.

These are the people responsible for those dramatic scenes that took place in so many workplaces—where the shopsteward's committees, together with the most committed members and vanguard trade unionists remained glued to their radios, waiting to find out what actions to take. (This was the same radio that several hours earlier had been occupied by the putschists). And these were the people who, once again, had to justify their capitulation in advance by explaining that the "relationship of forces" was not adequate. But they are the ones who prevent the real relationship of forces from being expressed politically and who prevent the workers movement from putting itself forward in a fighting way, rather than being the victim of the reactionaries' attacks.

United Mobilization is Possible

It was necessary and possible to act differently. For example, as soon as news of the attempted coup became known, the

LCR mobilized workers for a general strike, calling for united action, the dissolution of the repressive bodies, a purge of the state apparatus, punishment of all officers implicated in the coup attempt, and for defense of democratic rights. The first calls for struggle heard by the Spanish workers were signed by the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state.

Big events test political orientations and parties. In the present case, the tests are clear and the lessons evident. It is vital to learn from them.

Whatever artificial and temporary atmosphere of "national unity" may prevail, only a united mobilization of all the workers parties, unions, and revolutionary nationalist organizations is capable of defending democratic rights and fighting for the dismantling of the state apparatus inherited from Francoism.

Only by fighting against any type of pact with the bourgeoisie and against any confidence in the bourgeois state institutions—especially in the monarchy—can the workers movement again gain confidence in its own strength and ability to lead all the exploited and in particular, the peoples of the oppressed nationalities. This is the only way possible to confront and smash the next—and probably more serious—coup attempts.

For Ongoing International Vigilance

The Spanish events took the international workers movement by surprise. After the fall of the Portuguese, Greek, and Spanish dictatorships, it appeared that there was no longer a danger of military coups in capitalist Europe.

Although there is a special situation in Spain, due to the maintenance of the repressive Francoist state apparatus, this coup attempt must remind us—especially the European workers movement—that there are sectors of the bourgeoisie who resolutely defend the bourgeois system by using the strength of the army and police to massively repress the working class and its allies. Solidarity with the working class and oppressed nationalities in the Spanish state, from the working class in capitalist Europe can demonstrate a determination to defeat any reactionary operations. At the same time, such solidarity can serve to educate the working class vanguard about the stakes in the coming class battles.

It is necessary to get out the truth within the international workers movement about what really happened in Spain and about the threats that still hang over the workers there. The international workers movement must be ready to respond in a united way to any attacks on democratic rights and must support the Spanish workers movement in its struggle to put an end to Francoism. It must maintain a constant state of alert to be ready to aid the workers and peoples of the Spanish state in all the difficult times that still lie ahead. □

U.S. Steps Up Arms Sales, Building of Bases

By David Frankel

U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig is set to visit the Middle East early in April. Haig will be the first top official of the Reagan administration to travel to the Mideast. His job will be to further the Pentagon's plans for military intervention in the region.

What is in store was indicated March 6 when the Reagan administration announced that it would sell the Saudi Arabian monarchy additional equipment for its air force, including the most advanced air-to-air missiles in the Pentagon's arsenal.

At the same time, it was announced that Reagan would ask for an additional \$600 million in military aid to Israel and expand U.S. intelligence links with the Zionist regime.

Administration officials explained the following day, according to *New York Times* reporter Bernard Gwertzman, that the sales to Tel Aviv and Riyadh were "only part of an overall program to extend military cooperation with Middle East nations."

Among the countries mentioned were Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, "and some Persian Gulf nations." In addition, "An effort will be made to include Pakistan in the program," Gwertzman reported.

Along with its stepped-up arms sales and an increase in U.S. training teams assigned to local armed forces, Washington is moving ahead with its program of stationing U.S. forces in the area and

building new bases there.

U.S. officials described a five-year plan to construct or expand military bases in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean March 11. Although the total cost is being kept secret, the amount budgeted for just the 1982 fiscal year, which begins in October 1981, is nearly \$500 million. The overall price will clearly be in the billions.

Saudi Arabia, with its vast oil reserves, is at the center of the Pentagon's plans. As columnist Joseph Kraft explained March 5:

"The most acute security problem in the Gulf is presented by Saudi Arabia. Not that American planners expect a Soviet invasion from Afghanistan across Iran. The danger, instead, is thought to lie with elements in the armed forces, or among the foreign work force, which does most of the labor in the kingdom. Separately or together, they could set in motion a coup against the royal family."

Of course, every progressive and forward-looking person in Saudi Arabia and the entire Middle East longs for the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy. Kraft suggests that "in a pinch the American military could help the Saudi royals. The basic idea is for a small, highly mobile force, presumably based on Egyptian territory, that could put several thousand men anywhere in the kingdom within an hour or two."

Included in the Pentagon's 1982 budget is \$106.4 million for improving the Egyptian port and military base of Ras Banas, on the Red Sea opposite an important Saudi oil terminal. According to Richard Halloran in the March 12 *New York Times*:

"The plan calls for construction of oil storage tanks and other shelter for supplies for naval forces; for expanding runways and aprons to accommodate jet fighters and military air transports, and for an austere staging area for ground troops that might be dispatched elsewhere in the region."

During his visit to Saudi Arabia, Haig will no doubt try to get agreement for the establishment of formal U.S. bases on Saudi territory. Meanwhile, with encouragement from Washington and with the help of thousands of U.S. advisers and technicians, the Saudi regime is spending billions on a military infrastructure that is far larger than its own forces can possibly use.

As one "informed source" quoted by David B. Ottaway in the February 27

Washington Post put it, "Frankly, we don't need any bases in the kingdom; they are already here."

However, the Saudi regime's reluctance to allow U.S. forces to formally occupy bases on Saudi territory reflects the dilemma facing Washington. The weakness of the monarchy and its fear of the workers, especially in the wake of the Iranian revolution, force it to seek support from imperialism. On the other hand, the more the Saudi regime is identified with imperialist interests and the closer it moves to Washington, the more opposition it arouses among its own people.

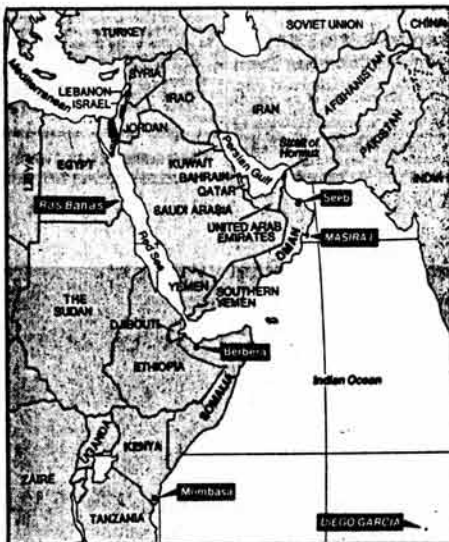
Kraft gives his assessment, saying that "a semi-miracle will be required for the new approach to work." Nevertheless, he gives his endorsement to Reagan's course, as have the U.S. rulers as a whole.

Their reasons? As Kraft explains, "it isn't as though the old policy was leading anywhere." □

Belgium's Slump Worst Since World War II

A recent report by Belgium's national bank forecast that the country's economy will shrink by 1.7 percent this year, private investment will fall by 3.8 percent, the balance of payments account will be \$6.8 billion in deficit, and unemployment will rise to 477,000, some 10 percent of the workforce.

The Belgian government, headed by Christian Democrat Wilfried Martens, has presented an economic plan based on wage restraints and cuts in government spending on social services. A two-year wage freeze was instituted in January, and a new budget with heavy spending cuts is expected in April. □



Pentagon is building new bases and expanding old ones.

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