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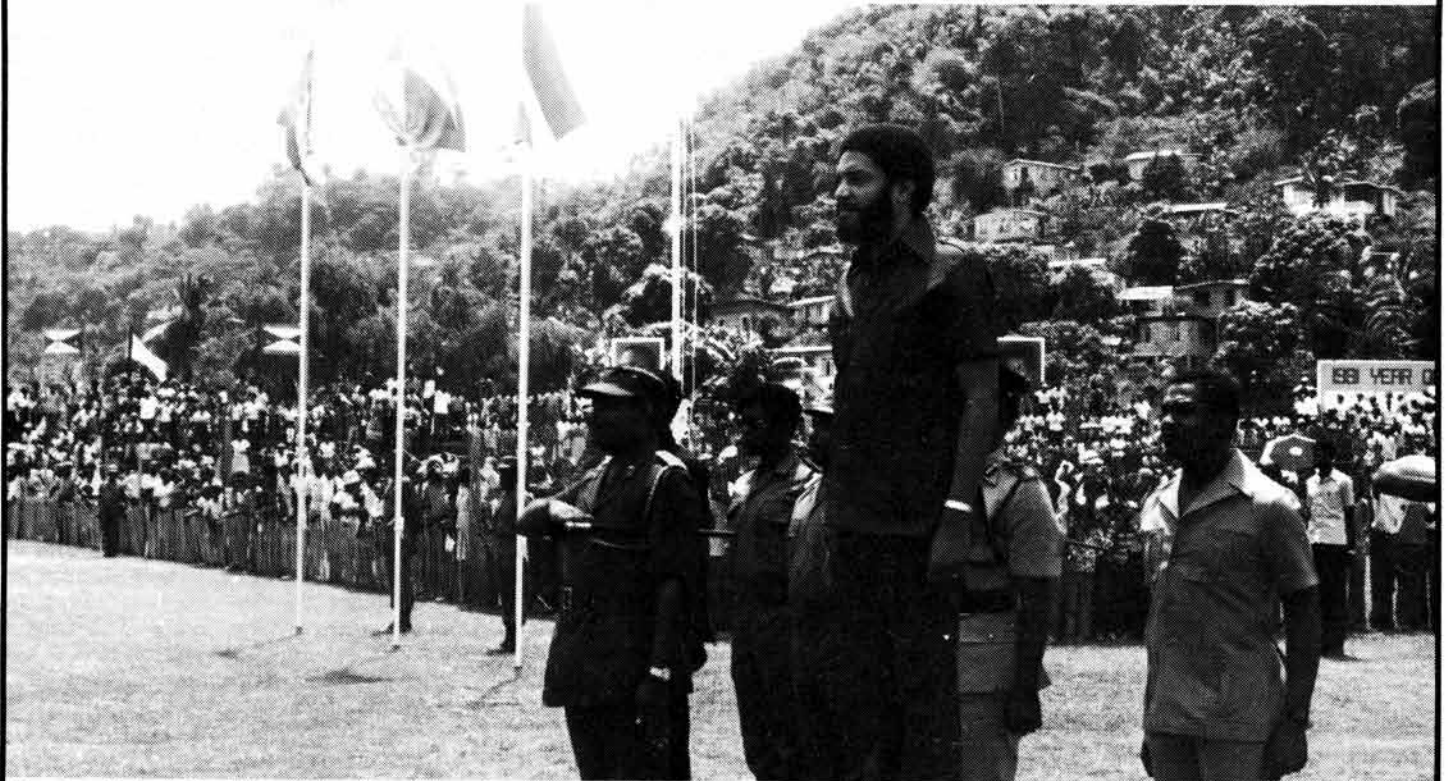
Vol. 19, No. 11

March 30, 1981

USA \$1

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Grenada: Two Years of Revolution



Maurice Bishop, Caribbean island's prime minister, at March 13 anniversary celebration.

Kara Obradovic/Young Socialist

**Will CIA's Secret Army Be Unleashed?
*Reagan's Vendetta Against Cuba***

Socialists Answer British Government

**Who Is Responsible for the
Violence in Northern Ireland?**

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reagan Takes Aim at Southern Africa

By Ernest Harsch

It did not take President Reagan very long to spell out what he meant on March 3 when he declared that Washington should be more "helpful" to "a friendly nation like South Africa."

Within less than three weeks of that statement, his administration had already taken several concrete steps that showed the direction in which U.S. policy toward southern Africa was heading:

- On March 19, the White House formally asked Congress to repeal an amendment that bars covert U.S. assistance to pro-imperialist guerrillas fighting against the Angolan government.

- On March 20, it confirmed that it had cut off all food assistance to Mozambique in response to the Mozambican government's expulsion of six Americans for working for the CIA.

- A week earlier, five senior South African military officers were allowed to visit Washington to meet with Pentagon officials.

- When South African jets struck nearly 200 miles into Angola March 17 to bomb Namibian refugee camps, the State Department expressed its "concern"—but refused to condemn this blatant act of aggression.

Together with statements by various White House officials, these moves reveal what actually lies behind the Reagan administration's "review" of U.S. policy toward southern Africa: plans to intervene more directly against the African liberation struggle.

As in Central America and the Caribbean, the U.S. ruling class sees its domination over the peoples of the region being challenged. The attainment of independence by Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe; the struggle of the Namibian people for an end to South African rule; the massive strikes and demonstrations by South Africa's Black majority, all have struck blows against imperialism's continued control over Africa.

Reagan's answer to these just struggles is the same as in Latin America: try to deny the peoples of Africa their sovereign rights, and prop up the most reactionary regimes on the continent.

In this, the Reagan administration's general policy toward Africa is similar to that of previous U.S. governments. It was Nixon who gave increased military and economic support to the Portuguese colonial authorities and the apartheid regime in Pretoria. It was Ford who sent the CIA into Angola and aided the South African invasion of that country. And it was

Carter who provided U.S. planes for the French troop intervention in Zaïre, encouraged the Somalian regime to invade Ethiopia, and allowed clandestine U.S. arms sales to Pretoria to continue.

One important factor limiting the effectiveness of those U.S. attacks on Africa—besides the strength of the African liberation struggles themselves—was the widespread opposition within the United States to any moves that could lead to another war like the one in Vietnam.

The Clark Amendment, adopted in 1976, was a reflection of those domestic pressures. It prohibited Washington from giving covert aid to the rightist forces fighting against the Angolan government, in particular Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

What Reagan would like to do is end such restrictions on the government's ability to act. He wants the freedom to intervene wherever necessary to safeguard imperialism's interests. Just before the White House asked Congress to repeal the amendment, Secretary of State Alexander Haig placed the issue in a broader context, stating that it was "a question of principle."

It is obviously also a direct threat to Angola. Since the end of the civil war, bands of UNITA terrorists—armed by the South Africans and often backed up by South African troops—have continued to roam through southern Angola murdering villagers, blowing up bridges, and striking at Namibian refugee camps.

These are the forces Reagan wants to arm. In May 1980, while campaigning for the presidency, he explicitly proposed giving military aid to UNITA. "Well, frankly I would provide them with weapons," he said.

Even if Washington did not immediately give new or large-scale aid to UNITA, the repeal of the amendment would nevertheless encourage the apartheid regime to step up its own attacks on Angola.

U.S. provocations against Mozambique have also escalated since Reagan took office.

On March 4, the Mozambican government ordered the expulsion of six Americans attached to the U.S. embassy in Maputo for "proven activities in espionage, subversion and interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Mozambique."

They were accused of working for the CIA and providing Pretoria with information on South African exiles.

Such information may have been used in the January 30 South African attack into Mozambique, in which more than a dozen people were killed at the Maputo offices of the African National Congress, one of the main South African liberation movements.

The Mozambican government accused the CIA of supporting "counterrevolutionary activity in order to destabilize the independent states in southern Africa."

Reagan's response to this exposure was typically callous. In an inhuman attempt to make the entire Mozambican people suffer, he cut off about \$5 million in sales of wheat and rice and a grant of 27,000 tons of corn.

Inevitably, stepped-up U.S. intervention against the peoples of southern Africa will involve a closer alliance with the apartheid regime, Africa's biggest economy and military power and the strongest imperialist bastion in the region.

Reagan has left little doubt about his administration's determination to continue propping up the white minority regime. "Can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we have fought?" he asked in a March 3 televised interview. "A country that, strategically, is essential to the free world in its production of minerals that we all must have?"

Less than two weeks after Reagan's interview, five South African military intelligence officers visited Washington and met with congressional officials, staff members of the National Security Council and Defense Intelligence Agency, and at least one unidentified cabinet member.

Although the five are well known in South Africa, the State Department claimed that the U.S. embassy there did not know they were military officers when it granted them visas.

These indications of Reagan's developing policy toward southern Africa have already drawn widespread protests.

The government-owned *Sunday News* in Tanzania called the U.S. stance toward Africa "big power arrogance," and the *Sunday Nation* in Kenya termed it "naive and ill-conceived." Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe said closer U.S. ties with Pretoria would be "harmful." Mozambican President Samora Machel declared, "This is an administration which considers just struggles, the struggles of peoples for their freedom and independence, as terrorism."

Reflecting Black outrage within the United States, conservative Black columnist Carl Rowan on March 13 accused Reagan of "crawling into bed with a band of fascists."

Even some of Washington's allies in Europe have displayed discomfort. One West German official, worried that Reagan's approach could backfire, told a reporter, "Remember that the Cubans came into Angola when the South Africans were only 60 miles from Luanda. When we read about speculation that the United States

may support Savimbi in a guerrilla fight against the Angolan Government, we remember what happened before." □

Polish Workers Protest New Provocation

By Janice Lynn

More than half a million Polish workers walked off their jobs March 20 to protest police beatings of trade-union activists in Bydgoszcz.

In this latest and most serious government provocation, some 200 uniformed police and plainclothes officers kicked and punched Solidarity members and farmers as they were being evicted from a Bydgoszcz meeting hall March 19.

The Solidarity members had been invited to the provincial assembly hall to participate in discussions on demands by farmers for the recognition of their organization, Rural Solidarity. But officials abruptly adjourned the meeting without addressing this issue.

When many of those assembled refused to disperse, the police burst into the hall, and dragged the union activists to the backyard where they were badly beaten. A leader of Solidarity's national commission, Jan Rulewski, was singled out for particularly brutal treatment. Rulewski and two others required hospitalization and were reported to be in serious condition.

The union is demanding the resignations of the province's deputy governor, local police commander, and the local Communist Party chief; publication of photographs taken during the attack; and the names of the policemen involved.

Solidarity representatives met with government officials, but as of March 22 no agreements had been reached.

At a March 20 news conference, a representative of the Warsaw chapter of Solidarity noted that the incident "carried all the signs of provocation."

Solidarity representative Janusz Onyszkiewicz told reporters, "Certain forces are against the changes going on in the country." While noting that those responsible might include some high in the power structure, Onyszkiewicz said that Prime Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski was "being given the benefit of the doubt."

A Solidarity resolution also asserted that the police raid was "an obvious provocation directed against the Government." And Solidarity leader Lech Walesa stated, "Not all the authorities are pigs. We wish to trust some of them."

Despite this attempt by Solidarity to encourage top government officials to resolve the situation, the Communist Party Politburo adopted a hard-line stance.

Refusing to condemn the police action or to punish those responsible, a March 22 Politburo statement declared instead that

the "tendency to develop activities of a political character" had gained ground in Solidarity. And it accused elements in the union of trying to spread unrest and distrust.

The Warsaw Solidarity chapter called off its two-hour warning strike that had been scheduled for March 23, heeding Walesa's calls for nationally-coordinated actions.

Polish television has been carrying extensive footage of Soviet and Polish troops conducting military exercises.

But Moscow's threats and the continu-

ing provocations by the Polish bureaucracy have not intimidated the workers movement.

"One side has an army. We haven't got one," Walesa cautioned Bydgoszcz workers. But, he said, "If the need arises the whole country will be brought to a standstill."

The union's top leadership is discussing the possibility of a nationwide strike if their demands are not met. And all Solidarity chapters remain on "strike alert." They deserve the full support of the international workers movement. □

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Reagan's Ominous New Threats Against Cuba, Nicaragua

By Fred Murphy

Top officials of the Reagan administration are making the most serious threats against Cuba to come out of Washington since the early 1960s.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 18, Under Secretary of State Walter Stoessel pointed to Cuba as the "primary source" of arms for the revolutionary forces in El Salvador.

In order "to stop the flow" of these alleged shipments, Stoessel said Washington had already made "specific plans."

"Including military plans?" Senator Christopher Dodd asked.

"They do not exclude anything," Stoessel replied.

The day after Stoessel's testimony, Secretary of State Alexander Haig appeared before the same committee. He tried to restore the administration's stance of ambiguity by saying that "no decisions have been made." But he also said it would be wrong to exclude the use of military action against Cuba.

Washington, Haig said, is "considering the full range of options" for stopping Cuban support of the Salvadoran rebels.

At the same hearings, Haig charged that in Nicaragua "the extreme left" is in power and has been receiving "sophisticated air defense weapons and possibly tanks" from East European countries.

The day before, at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, Haig had spoken of a Soviet "hit list . . . for the ultimate takeover of Central America." He asserted that "phase one has been completed with the seizure of Nicaragua."

Ominous New Factor

An ominous new factor in Washington's drive against the revolutionary forces in the Caribbean and Central America was brought to light March 12 in the *New York Daily News*. "The Central Intelligence Agency is considering the renewal of cooperation with anti-Castro Cuban exiles," the paper's Washington correspondent Lars-Erik Nelson wrote.

"The planned move appeared to be an attempt to back up the administration's veiled threats 'to strike at the source'—a reference to Cuba's alleged involvement in El Salvador."

Nelson said the plan had "strong advocates within the CIA" but that other officials regarded it as "silly" on the grounds that the exile groups "cannot be controlled."

The *Daily News* article was quickly followed by more detailed items.

On March 15, *Parade* magazine—

distributed in the Sunday editions of major newspapers from coast to coast—carried a cover story entitled "How Latin Guerrillas Train on Our Soil." Inside, reporter Eddie Adams described how he was given a guided tour of a sixty-eight-acre "guerrilla 'boot camp'" in southern Florida, "about 20 minutes by car from Miami's International Airport."

Adams found "Cuban and Nicaraguan exiles . . . training and practicing to invade their former homelands. . . ."

Disapproval of Reagan Rises Sharply

After eight weeks in office, President Reagan is less popular with the American people than any newly elected president in twenty-eight years.

These were the results of a nationwide Gallup Poll conducted March 13-15.

Fifty-nine percent of those polled expressed approval of Reagan's performance and 17 percent said they were undecided. At comparable times in their terms, President Carter was backed by 75 percent, President Nixon by 65 percent, President Kennedy by 73 percent, and President Eisenhower by 67 percent.

Twenty-four percent of those polled said they disapproved of Reagan's handling of the presidency. The comparable rating so soon after taking office was 9 percent for Carter and Nixon, 7 percent for Kennedy, and 8 percent for Eisenhower.

The poll also showed that disapproval of Reagan's performance was growing rapidly, rising from 13 percent at the end of January, to the 24 percent present rating.

Dissatisfaction was highest among Blacks, Latinos, and other minorities who will be among the hardest hit by Reagan's budget-slashing proposals. Some 45 percent of nonwhites said they disapproved of Reagan's performance.

White House press secretary James Brady admitted March 18 that Reagan's plummeting popularity resulted primarily from his economic program. But Brady has not seen anything yet. Hatred for Reagan is just beginning to build up.

Correspondent Jo Thomas of the *New York Times* was welcomed to the same camp. According to her March 16 dispatch from Miami, she found "former members of the Nicaraguan National Guard . . . training openly alongside the Cuban exiles in camps in Florida, preparing, they say, for guerrilla attacks on the Sandinists in Nicaragua."

"We're training people not only here in Florida, but in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica," an expropriated Nicaraguan trucking magnate told Adams. "We have training camps in California, too."

Cuban exile Jorge González, who goes by the code name "Bombillo" (light bulb), told Thomas that there are also camps in Tampa and Okeechobee, Florida, and in New Jersey and Los Angeles.

Armed to the Teeth

The Cuban and Nicaraguan paramilitary groups "advertise for recruits over Spanish-language Miami radio stations," Adams reported. "The guerrillas say they're armed to the teeth with an arsenal of weapons that even includes amphibious assault boats."

The notion that these counterrevolutionaries could organize so openly without the knowledge or approval of the U.S. government strains credulity. Nevertheless, one State Department official tried to keep up appearances, telling Adams that "the new administration is not going to turn back the clock 21 years in Cuba or 17 months in Nicaragua and support any exile groups. It's illegal. It's a breach of international law. It's also stupid."

Stupid and illegal it may be, but that never stopped Washington in the past. In the weeks preceding the April 1961 counterrevolutionary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón), articles much like those of Adams and Thomas appeared in U.S. magazines and newspapers. "In hidden camps south of Miami, small groups of young men . . . drill with rifles and machine guns for a few weeks, then sneak back into Cuba by two's and three's to join guerrilla companies fighting in the hills," a feature in the April 8, 1961 *Saturday Evening Post* said.

"For nearly nine months Cuban exile military forces dedicated to the overthrow of Premier Fidel Castro have been training in the United States as well as in Central America," Tad Szulc reported in the April 7, 1961 *New York Times*.

Then as now, such activities were in open violation of the U.S. Neutrality Act,

which is supposed to bar the organization or promotion of warfare against any nation with which the United States is officially at peace.

CIA's Secret Army

But this never stopped Washington. After the Cuban workers and peasants defeated the Bay of Pigs invasion, the CIA built up a huge station in Miami numbering 600 to 700 actual CIA officers and at least 2,000 personnel in all, including the Cuban exile forces.

The activities of the "CIA's Secret Army" were described in detail in a television program of that name broadcast over CBS-TV on June 10, 1977, and rebroadcast twice this February. (For more on this program, see *IP*, July 4, 1977, p. 766.)

The show's producer, Bill Moyers, interviewed one Cuban counterrevolutionary, Rolando Martínez (jailed in 1972 for helping with the Watergate burglary), who personally participated in more than 350 sabotage missions to Cuba from the CIA's bases in southern Florida.

Moyers had this to say about Washington's cover-up of such activities:

The CIA employed all of its traditional methods, but there was no way to hide the operations of more than two thousand American and Cuban agents, with their gun boats, traveling down the coast.

How then did they do it?

They had a lot of help. From the Coast Guard, Customs, the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, and much of the Miami and South Florida establishment. . . .

Nineteen separate police departments had to be enlisted so they wouldn't arrest the gun-toting Cuban agents. Bankers were needed to extend credit to CIA men running phony businesses and using fake names.

Now compare Moyers's report with this paragraph from the "Dissent Paper" on El Salvador leaked by State Department analysts to the press last December:

US intelligence has been in contact with Nicaraguan exile groups in Guatemala and in Miami and is aware of their relationship with Cuban exile terrorist groups operating in the US. Charges that CIA has been promoting and encouraging these organizations have not been substantiated. However no attempt has been made to restrict their mobility in and out of the US or to interfere with their activities. Their mobility and their links with the US—it seems reasonable to assume—could not be maintained without the tacit consent (or practical incompetence) of at least four agencies: INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service], CIA, FBI and US Customs.

Reagan Tries to Free his Hands

The open reactivation of the CIA's Secret Army—now augmented by Somozaists and other counterrevolutionary scum from Nicaragua—comes at a time when the Reagan administration is trying to see how far it can go in freeing its hands for

stepped up counterrevolutionary activity around the world.

- The State Department is pressing Congress to repeal the Clark Amendment, passed in early 1976 to expressly prohibit covert CIA activity in Angola. Reagan wants the option of providing aid to the counterrevolutionary, pro-South Africa troops of Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Savimbi is reportedly planning a visit to Washington soon, at which time he will be given an official welcome by Reagan.

- Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said March 8 that it would be "a useful thing" for Washington to provide arms to



CIA Deputy Director Inman. Says he would never even think of spying on Americans.

rightist Afghan guerrillas operating from Pakistan. In the past U.S. officials have denied supplying such aid.

The next day President Reagan told an ABC News interviewer that he agreed with Weinberger. It was "semantically incorrect," Reagan added, to term the Afghan rightists "rebels."

"Those are freedom fighters," Reagan said. "Those are people fighting for their own country and not wanting to become a satellite state of the Soviet Union. . . ."

- Secretary of State Haig has said he sees nothing objectionable about providing

arms to Kampuchean exile forces operating in Thailand under the command of mass-murderer Pol Pot.

- And on March 10 the *New York Times* leaked word of a draft presidential order that would authorize the CIA to carry out burglaries, electronic surveillance, and other covert spying activities on U.S. citizens. CIA Deputy Director Adm. Bobby Inman disavowed the document as a "third-level working-staff paper" in Congressional testimony March 13, but similar proposals are under discussion within the Reagan administration.

Whether Washington can actually carry out any of these threats is another matter. There is massive opposition among working people in the United States to the CIA and other secret-police outfits' spying on and harassing Americans or trying to sabotage or overthrow governments abroad. Admiral Inman's quick denial of any plans to unleash the CIA in the United States was one indication that Reagan and company must take such sentiment into account.

Opposition in Miami

One interesting reflection of this was a March 14 editorial in the *Miami Herald*, the city's leading daily and one with impeccable anti-Castro credentials. "No. Absolutely not," the editorial began. "Under no circumstances should the United States Government, through the Central Intelligence Agency or any other organ, resume the practice of providing arms, military training, or support to anti-Castro Cuban guerrillas."

The editorial was in part a reflection of the concern on the part of capitalist interests in southern Florida about the disruptive role the anti-Castro gangs have played there: "Bombings, extortion, and murders have resulted in the past from the mixing of Cuban-exile patriotism with U.S. weapons and explosives."

But the paper also hit upon a contradiction in Reagan's policies that is going to plague Washington more and more.

"The Administration has seized on international terrorism as a substitute for human rights as the pillar of its foreign policy," the *Miami Herald* said. "It simply cannot ask the cooperation of other governments in curbing terrorism while simultaneously arming guerrillas whose record of terrorist activity is clear in South Florida, Mexico, and other nations."

The same goes for all the other reactionary forces that the U.S. rulers identify with and seek to arm—the Afghan rightists, Savimbi's UNITA, Pol Pot's terrorists, the Salvadoran junta, the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships, and so on.

Reagan's policies will help the American people understand better than ever before where the real terrorists are to be found—in Washington. □

Massive Protests in Nicaragua Block Procapitalist Rally

By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA—A procapitalist rally scheduled for March 15 in the little town of Nandaime was cancelled at the last minute by its organizers, after angry protests swept the country.

The rally had been called by the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), headed by wealthy cotton grower and industrialist Alfonso Robelo.

The MDN hoped to use the rally to make political gains from the country's real economic problems. The capitalists have tried to lay blame for these problems on the revolutionary government and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

In granting official permission for the MDN rally, Minister of the Interior Tomás Borge reminded the organizers of the tense international situation. He noted that on March 7 security forces had discovered arms caches on two farms in the Nandaime area, and that there had been serious efforts to provoke armed incidents, especially around Nandaime. He urged the MDN to use common sense and not to further provoke the Nicaraguan people.

Capitalist Sabotage

Robelo, the MDN, and the other procapitalist political currents are widely detested because they are identified with sabotage of the economy and of national defense, and with U.S. government pressures against Nicaragua.

The MDN and its allies, such as the reactionary daily *La Prensa*, have refused to take part in the national mobilization to bring in the cotton harvest. They have refused to help build the militias, crucial for national defense.

The capitalists have engaged in a vast campaign of withdrawing their capital from enterprises, weakening an economy staggering under the load of foreign debt inherited from Somoza.

They have failed to condemn the cutoff of credits for the purchase of U.S. wheat, which could leave the country without bread for two months.

They supported the false charges of human rights violations in Nicaragua spread by José Esteban González. He has retracted them.

They have failed to condemn the constant raids by ex-members of Somoza's National Guard across the border from Honduras, which have claimed 100 Nicaraguan lives.

They blamed the revolutionary government and the FSLN for the Reagan admin-

istration's decision to "freeze" \$15 million in aid.

Despite Borge's warning, Robelo, speaking on Costa Rican radio March 12, accused the FSLN of "militarizing" the country. Claiming there were 40,000 people in the army, police, and security forces, he minimized the possibility of a U.S. military intervention and made no mention of the counterrevolutionaries openly training in Florida for an invasion of Nicaragua.

The next day, the U.S. State Department echoed Robelo's charges. It said Nicaragua was increasing the size of its army from 30,000 to 50,000, and claimed an army that size was "too big to be purely defensive."

Killing Sparks Protest

All this would have been enough to provoke an angry popular reaction. But the last straw was the March 13 murder of a member of the Sandinista People's Militias by a gang, two members of which said they were in the MDN.

The killing brought 2,000 people to the national headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) for a memorial protest.

Robelo had boasted that 60,000 people would turn up in Nandaime Sunday morning to repudiate the FSLN. Instead, tens of thousands poured into the streets Saturday night in cities and towns around the country—and stayed there until they heard the MDN rally had been called off.

The protests were partly organized by Sandinista mass organizations, in particular by the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs). But the size and militancy of the actions surprised many FSLN supporters also.

In cities like León, Estelí, and Masaya, reporters compared the scene with the time of the insurrection. Barricades were built to prevent people from going to Nandaime, bonfires were set, and marches and rallies were held. In some smaller towns, almost the whole population turned out.

'We Are Sandinistas'

The response in Nandaime itself was particularly dramatic. This town of 20,000 people, seventy kilometers from Managua, had been chosen as the site for the MDN rally because of its conservative reputation. But throughout the day Saturday, thousands of people demonstrated against the planned rally. Almost every street corner had an anti-MDN speaker. The workers at the cattle yard where the rally was to take place passed a resolution of

protest. The message was clear: "Nandaime is Sandinista."

In Managua, large crowds gathered outside the offices of *La Prensa* and its counterpart Radio Corporación. It was only after top FSLN leaders intervened that the angry demonstrators dispersed.

Commander of the Revolution Bayardo Arce went on the radio at midnight Saturday to urge everyone to register their protests in an orderly way and to refrain from violence.

A representative of the FSLN afterward expressed regret at isolated incidents of violence that could not be prevented. (Several houses were burned and at least two vehicles destroyed.)

The FSLN laid the blame for the violence on the provocations of the MDN.

'Just Like July 19'

By Sunday morning everything was completely calm once again—except in Nandaime, where an all-day fiesta was held to celebrate the cancellation of the anti-Sandinista rally. "This is just like July 19 all over again," the head of the CDS told a radio reporter.

In Monimbó and other cities, people who had been in the streets most of the night went off to pick cotton, as they do every Sunday morning.

Robelo has called the night of March 14 "a night of terror," and charged that the masses' repudiation of the MDN proved that political pluralism in Nicaragua was "a farce."

Nicaraguans in the streets interviewed by Sandinista Television, answered him. They explained that pluralism meant that workers, small producers, and students and other patriotic people had the right to organize and speak out. It didn't mean that counterrevolutionaries had the right to organize to crush the revolution.

A "Popular Victory: Provocateurs Retreat," read the *Barricada* headline March 15. The FSLN daily explained that Robelo and his friends had backed down "in face of the just and widespread popular protest which has been generated all over the country." □

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'A War Against Working People is Opening Up'

Bosses Force U.S. Coal Miners Out on Strike

[On March 17 negotiations for a new contract between the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) and U.S. coal companies broke off. By March 19, some 13,000 miners from Pennsylvania to Alabama had already walked off the job without waiting for the formal expiration of the contract. The following appeared as a front-page editorial in the March 27 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

A war against working people is opening up, beginning in the coalfields. The billionaire energy barons have refused to sign a decent contract with the United Mine Workers of America.

They are out to break the resistance and fighting spirit of one of the major industrial unions, the bedrock of the strength of working people in this country. Every working person has a vital stake in the outcome of this battle.

Sam Church, president of the 160,000-member UMWA, sized up the powerful forces that are trying to crack the union: "It might appear that the UMW is David against the Goliath of big oil, big coal, big steel and others." He concluded: "But I am confident that David is going to win this one, too."

"Even though we don't want a strike, it is inevitable," Church declared March 18.

Thousands of miners have already walked off the job to protest arbitrary firings, safety violations, and other company provocations.

Bosses Want to 'Take, Take, Take'

"I don't think the operators want to settle it without a strike," said Church. "Negotiations are meant to be a time of give and take. But the only thing I have seen from [the industry's] three negotiators . . . is take, take, take," he went on.

"We have asked for no more than a decent living, a decent life, a safe workplace, adequate pensions," Church declared.

That's just what the Goliaths Church talked about don't want to grant—not to miners or any other workers.

They demand miners give up guaranteed Sundays off to keep the mines running seven days a week.

They want to force the miners to accept a company-by-company pension program instead of the present industry-wide program. "What does a retired miner do if his company goes under? He loses his pension," said miner Ed Bell of Martin's Ferry, Ohio.

They want to break the union mine-safety committees that prevent the nation's most dangerous industry from taking the lives of even more miners.

They want to use a stacked arbitration

setup to put an end to miners' right to strike to enforce the contract. They want to be able to fire miners who resist contract violations.

The coal bosses say they need to rip these gains away from miners in order to increase productivity. But profits are all they care about.

A Weak and Divided Union?

As they do in every contract fight, the media portray the miners' demands as excessive. But the miners are fighting to hold on to things that all workers want and desperately need.

For years, company public relations men have been putting out the word that the miners are a weak, divided, and declining union. These Goliaths don't know their David.

The UMWA has great reserves of strength. In past struggles, the members established a big degree of union democracy. And they have no hesitation about using union power to defend their needs.

They have another resource denied to the energy Goliaths. Millions of working people in this country support the miners. They know the miners' fight is our fight.

That massive support for the coal miners must begin to be mobilized now. Expressions of solidarity, such as messages from unions and other organizations, should be sent to the UMWA.

The march on Harrisburg March 28, the day after the contract expires, will provide the first opportunity for a massive outpouring of support for the embattled union.

The rally, sponsored by more than ten international unions and many other groups, calls for keeping the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant shut down, for jobs, and for support to the UMWA's fight for a decent contract.

The miners were among the first organizations to come out against nuclear power, and they have spearheaded the growing involvement of labor in the antinuclear movement. "You can't blow up the world with coal," is the way one miner expressed their view.

Billionaires' Hit List

The UMWA's stand against nuclear power is another reason why the union places high on the energy billionaires' hit list. The coal miners are a big obstacle to their plans to pockmark the country with these death-dealing installations.

This is another reason why every opponent of nuclear power should be in Harrisburg March 28 to support the UMWA.

Opponents of war and the draft should be there, too. The miners' insistence on thinking for themselves and standing up for their

rights is an obstacle to the Goliaths' plans for getting us into new Vietnams. Like most workers, miners are increasingly convinced that Washington has no business trying to run the affairs of El Salvador, the Middle East, or anyplace else.

"War is not a solution. It is just destruction," Church said October 10 to the Labor Conference on Safe Energy and Full Employment, which the miners helped organize. "We wouldn't have gotten ourselves into the crisis in the Mideast if it wasn't for America's lust for their oil."

The mineowners don't have public opinion on their side. But they have the U.S. government in their pocket. They count on Reagan to beat down the miners where Carter failed in 1977.

The industry publication *Coal Age* said in a January editorial: "The coal industry . . . is looking to the White House for removal of obstacles that stand in the way of vigorous coal production and use." That's their code for the mineworkers' union, which stands in the way of their energy ripoff.

And Reagan has already taken their side. His budget proposal called for gutting miners' black lung benefits.

Reagan's Big-Business Program

The Reagan program is big-business's program for slashing the living standards and rights of every worker. It takes food from the mouths of schoolchildren in order to buy more weapons of mass destruction. It seeks to slash unemployment compensation in order to stuff more money into the pockets of the rich.

It takes aim at Black rights and women's rights.

And the industrial unions are Reagan's prime targets. The rulers want lower wages, more joblessness, longer hours, and more unsafe working conditions for auto workers, steelworkers, rubber workers, machinists, and others. That means breaking the power of the unions.

This is the mineowners' program for America.

And the coal miners stand in Reagan's way.

What is happening in the coalfields and throughout the United States today powerfully confirms labor's principle that an injury to one is an injury to all.

If the miners are able to hold off Goliath's attack, all the Davids will be strengthened—from Blacks in Atlanta, to production line workers in Detroit and Gary, to supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment.

That's why the industrial unions should take the lead in mobilizing solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the coalfields.

The slogan of every working person today must be: "All out for the miners! All out to Harrisburg March 28!" □

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Is It Illegal to Be a Socialist?

By Nelson Blackstock

[The following article appeared in the March 27 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Not much is known about Charles Mandigo. But what he did last month, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) believe, will have a major impact on the trial of their suit against the government, which opens in New York in April.

The socialists are demanding an end to government spying and harassment, and \$40 million in damages. After eight years of stalling, the U.S. government is finally being forced to address some of the fundamental questions raised by the socialist suit.

Charles Mandigo is a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent. He seems to live in Washington, D.C. On February 18 he signed an affidavit that was submitted to the court.

Two weeks ago the *Militant* printed a major section of that affidavit. In it Mandigo answered Judge Thomas Griesa's request that the FBI turn over their list of alleged crimes committed by six leaders of the SWP.

The judge, remember, asked the FBI for a list of crimes. And what did they come up with? Not much, it seemed. Oh, we did learn that Andrew Pulley was fined for going AWOL from the Army in 1968. But this sort of stuff can hardly justify a forty-year-long multi-million-dollar operation.

The bulk of the Mandigo affidavit consisted of things like: Farrell Dobbs "was

re-elected to the National Committee of the SWP at the November, 1945, convention." Jack Barnes was "National Chairman of the YSA in 1965." Joseph Hansen "was a member of the National Committee, SWP." Carl Skoglund "was a charter member of the SWP."

It may seem as if the FBI couldn't come up with much, so it added this stuff as padding.

But it's only when you realize that *these were in fact the actual crimes in the government's view*—things like "member of the National Committee, SWP"—that the real meaning of the Mandigo affidavit starts to become clear.

In a section of the document not printed in the *Militant*, Mandigo cites the legal justification for spying on the SWP. He lists several statutes and executive orders, the most important being the Smith Act.

Membership illegal

The Smith Act seeks to make membership in the SWP illegal. And, at times, it can succeed.

If you don't believe it talk to Farrell Dobbs or one of the others who spent time behind bars in the 1940s, convicted of violating the Smith Act.

If belonging to the SWP is against the law, then why are members walking the streets today?

To answer that question you have to first look at where the suit fits into the recent past of American politics—as well as to where it fits into what is looming on the horizon.

Through the years of Vietnam and Watergate a lot of things began to become unstuck for the ruling class. They've since spent the better part of a decade trying to put them back together.

Essentially, the ruling class rules by illusions. During these years some of the illusions became tarnished.

Central to the illusions through which they maintain their power is the notion that this is a democracy guided by a spirit of fair play in which everybody has a say.

Watergate gave working people a glimpse into the subterranean regions of class rule. It's an area they normally keep out of sight. This is where you'll find the Smith Act.

The Smith Act was passed when the ruling class was getting ready to take the country into World War II. Wars are not a pleasant feature of class rule.

The Smith Act is pretty ugly stuff. On its face, it's obviously unconstitutional. It's hard to square with the illusion of fair play

and everybody having a say.

The Smith Act makes no bones about it. Its purpose is not only to make it against the law to get rid of the government—an idea at odds with what the founders of this country did—it makes it against the law to let anybody know you might be thinking about it.

The Smith Act is an anti-sedition law. It makes mere advocacy of certain ideas illegal.

Such laws are not normally used except in times of war. Having enshrined it in the books in preparation for sending hundreds of thousands of Americans to their deaths, they began by using it against the most far-sighted section of the working class.

The Minneapolis Teamsters union and the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party were voicing most clearly the interests of workers as the capitalists began beating the drums of war.

Eighteen leaders of the SWP and Teamsters were charged, tried, convicted, and imprisoned under the Smith Act.

Communist Party

They didn't use the Smith Act against the Communist Party during the war. There were no better patriots at the time.

But when it was over, a new war began, the cold war. That's when they went after the CP.

This was the domestic expression of moves to contain communism the world over. It meant trying to halt the colonial revolution, and shoring up the ruling classes in Europe.

At home it meant housebreaking the labor movement. The first of the new Smith Act convictions came in 1949. Like the Rosenberg executions four years later, they were designed to send a message: Keep your mouth shut, don't rock the boat, or, who knows, something like this might happen to you.

When the appeal got to the Supreme Court, the convictions were upheld. But as the fifties rolled on, and new convictions reached the court, things began to change.

The atmosphere in the country was shifting, primarily under the impact of the rising civil rights movement. Sensitive to the new moods and what the ruling class could get away with, the high court tailored its decisions accordingly.

Between 1957 and 1961 decisions were handed down reversing the convictions of some CP members. The act was reinterpreted in such a way as to make convictions more difficult. This helped deflate mounting pressure to repeal the whole thing.

In his *Teamster Bureaucracy*, Farrell Dobbs explains it this way:

"This thought-control device has thereby been kept alive. So it continues to present a statutory medium through which people can be prosecuted, in violation of the Bill of Rights, on charges of 'advocacy' aimed at 'eventual' overthrow of the government

UAW President Backs Socialist Lawsuit

United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser, a sponsor of the Political Rights Defense Fund, has issued a statement of support for the Socialist Workers Party lawsuit against government spying and harassment.

Fraser, the first president of an international labor union to endorse the socialist suit, said, "The fact that the causes espoused by a specific party may be unpopular or controversial should have no bearing on its constitutional right to operate.

"Police state tactics are not only unconstitutional but are abhorrent to the spirit of a free and democratic country and should not be tolerated."

by force and violence; and to serve that purpose the law can be given all the necessary teeth by judicial fiat, whenever the capitalist overlords so desire."

Over the years a myth has been created—the myth that the Smith Act is dead. But the truth is that it is still very much alive.

Now, twenty years after the last court ruling and forty years after the first prosecutions, the Smith Act is coming to the fore again.

The reason this is happening at this particular time lies in developments that began five years ago.

A New Era

By 1976 the ruling class was ready to put Watergate and all the rest behind them. Gerald Ford had pardoned Richard Nixon, and before long Jimmy Carter would replace Ford.

In March 1976 new guidelines came down from the FBI. These would guarantee an end to the evils of the past, or so they said.

On September 13, 1976, the attorney general announced an end to the FBI "investigation" of the SWP and YSA.

Behind these moves was a calculated plan to make people think that a genuine change was taking place.

The SWP had filed its suit at the height of Watergate, in 1973.

Impressed by this legal challenge to Watergate-type crimes, others filed suits modeled after the SWP's.

The government's line now became to settle these suits out of court. Over the years many have been settled. In return, the FBI promised to end the bad things they had done in the past, or so it appeared. But it was all sleight of hand. They had to appear to be giving in to reinforce the illusions.

When you read what they were really saying, you discovered that the FBI was promising absolutely nothing. It was a hoax.

Things were rolling along pretty much as the government hoped until October 1980. That's when it became clear that the SWP was refusing to settle on the terms they were offering.

"It came as a big surprise to them," said Larry Seigle, who represented the SWP in a meeting with Justice Department lawyers in Washington. "You could see it on their faces. Up until then they thought we were just driving a hard bargain. And they were ready to make relatively big financial concessions to get this thing out of the way.

"But the idea that we were not going to settle, that we were going to take it to trial, that is something they had not seriously considered."

The government now faced a new problem. By not letting them get away with what they were proposing, the socialists

were blowing the whistle on the government's whole strategy. The government would now have to go into open court and defend its policies in regard to the SWP. What would that defense be?

Up to now the case had revolved around the most patently illegal actions of the FBI. There had been headline-making disclosures about Cointelpro—the FBI's carefully constructed plots, sanctioned at the highest level, to disrupt legitimate political activity. And about FBI burglaries, involving ninety-two break-ins at the New York SWP offices alone.

Unusual Things

There had been important political victories. These crimes had been exposed before the eyes of millions.

It seemed to many as though the case was limited to these matters.

But once it became clear that the government was to be forced to provide legal justification for the entire operation against the socialists, it was a whole new ball game.

In the following weeks some unusual things began to happen.

For the first time, on November 18, Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward G. Williams referred to the SWP's "illegal acts" at a pretrial hearing. This was when the judge ordered the FBI to produce a list of these acts, resulting in the Mandigo affidavit.

Also in November we saw the attempted firing of five workers at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on the basis that they were suspected members of the SWP. Documents produced under court order uncovered a Cointelpro-style operation.

It was at a hearing on these firings that Williams first mentioned the Smith Act. It was also where the government first spoke of "sensitive industries." (More on that later.)

In December the government had to submit an outline of its defense strategy for the coming trial. That's when they came out with a wholesale proclamation of their right and intention to spy on, harass, and deport socialists—or, really, anybody else they want to.

In December and January fifteen workers were fired at Lockheed in Georgia, charged with "falsifying" their job applications. But secret company documents proved that through collusion with the FBI they were actually fired for being suspected socialists.

Then, in late February, the Mandigo document appeared.

In addition to asking for a list of "illegal acts," the judge also asked the FBI to provide legal grounds for their investigation of the SWP and YSA.

Besides the Smith Act and several other statutes, the FBI bases its anti-SWP program on executive order 10450. First issued by President Truman in 1947, it estab-

lished a loyalty program under which the government moved to purge "sensitive industries" of suspected "subversives." It is a vicious weapon against labor.

When the government talks of "sensitive industries," they mean much the same places the socialists had in mind when they made their turn to industry a while ago.

Under this executive order the infamous "attorney general's list" was set up. It proscribed dozens of organizations. To be a member of any of them could bar you from federal employment.

Interestingly, while in 1974 Nixon made a big to-do about abolishing the attorney general's list, he left its foundation, executive order 10450, intact. Like the Smith Act, it lies in wait to be used when needed.

Underpinnings

By driving through to the end with their suit, the socialists are now confronting the shrouded underpinnings of the capitalist state.

They entered this area before, in 1978. Attorney General Griffin Bell was then ready to go to jail rather than turn over the names of some two-bit stool pigeons hired to pose as members of the SWP and YSA.

This is the area of "informer privileges," "executive privilege," and "state secrets." You won't find any mention of these things in the Constitution. Ordinarily they keep them under wraps. But they are essential to class rule.

The bourgeoisie can rule without a Constitution or without a Bill of Rights. They do it today in many countries. But nowhere can they rule without state secrets and informers.

The socialists are now forcing the government to come out and say what they really believe. That is the meaning of the Mandigo affidavit.

The Smith Act was passed to ban parties whose purpose it is to put another class in power. The SWP is such an organization.

In court the socialists will explain the Marxist ideas on which they base themselves—the ideas that the government wants to suppress. They will also press forward in forcing the government to reveal where it really stands.

What the socialists are now in effect moving toward is re-trying the Smith Act case of 1941. They are going to ask the court to rule that the government cannot use the Smith Act—or any of the other thought-control laws or edicts—as a basis for its investigation of the SWP and YSA.

Such a ruling would in practice render the Smith Act unconstitutional. If a law that seeks to ban revolutionary ideas can't be applied to the SWP, it can hardly be applied to anyone else.

A victory would be a blow in defense of every union or Black activist taking a stand against what the government is doing. □

Grenada Marks Two Years of Revolution

By Malik Miah

ST. GEORGE'S—"A united, conscious, organized, vigilant people can never be defeated," declare billboards throughout revolutionary Grenada.

Two years ago on March 13, the 110,000 people of this Caribbean island ended the brutal dictatorship of Eric Gairy and began the construction of a free Grenada. Under the leadership of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), the people of Grenada—for the first time in nearly 400 years—had finally taken their destiny into their own hands.

As leaders of the People's Revolutionary Government, the NJM, and the mass organizations explain, the revolution is still in its infancy, facing many threats from enemies abroad and some reactionaries inside the country. Yet it is obvious even to a visitor that Grenada is a nation in transition, a country throwing off the shackles of imperialist domination and moving toward freedom.

Second Anniversary Celebration

The people's support for the government and the changes already brought about by the revolution were clearly expressed at the spirited march and rally held here on Friday, March 13.

The march and rally culminated weeks of celebrations across the island and the sister islands of Petit Martinique and Carriacou. In each town and village cultural events, sporting events, and political rallies and meetings took place to discuss the progress of the revolution.

On March 8, International Women's Day, a rally of 6,000 women and men took place at the northern end of the island. March 9-12 were set aside as days of solidarity with the struggles of the peoples of Palestine, Western Sahara, and others the world over.

On March 13, some 10,000 Grenadians marched through the streets of St. George's and rallied at Queens Park.

Young Pioneers led the way in white T-Shirts with a large red dot in the middle—the symbol of the Grenada revolution.

They were followed by a parade that included a steel band playing lively reggae music that people danced to as they marched. Represented in the march were contingents from the mass organizations and from towns across the island. It included workers, farmers, students, women, unemployed youth, and many supporters of the revolution from around the world.

In new uniforms provided by Nicaragua, members of the militia, army, police, and prison service marched at the end of the

parade, along with nurses in bright white uniforms.

The crowd gave a great round of applause when the defense forces proudly marched into the rally site. The main banner at the celebration read, "Workers of Grenada Salute 2nd Anniversary of the Revolution." The banner of the National Women's Organization proudly proclaimed, "NWO Women Participate Equally in Production and Defense."

The most popular T-shirt worn read, "Grow more food, build the revolution."

Guests and friends of Grenada also came to the rally. Many foreign governments sent representatives, including the Soviet Union and other workers states in Eastern Europe, plus Vietnam, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Governments from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean were also represented. Although Grenada seeks friendly relations with the U.S. and British governments, these failed to send representatives. However, Grenadians living in the United States and Americans who support the revolution were present. They included representatives of the Black United Front, the newly formed National Black Independent Political Party, the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance, and numerous individuals from the U.S.-Canada-Grenada Friendship Societies.

Cuban and Nicaraguan Solidarity

The special guests at the celebrations, however, were the delegates from the two other revolutionary governments in the region—Cuba and Nicaragua.

In fact, the loudest applause and chants were reserved for when the first Black man to orbit the earth arrived at the stadium: Lt. Col. Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez of Cuba. Chants of "Tamayo! Tamayo!" rang through the park.

The Cuban delegation also included Sergio del Valle, the minister of public health and member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba. He gave greetings to the rally.

Next to Tamayo, the biggest applause erupted when the delegation from revolutionary Nicaragua arrived at the bandstand. The Sandinista delegation was led by Commander Luis Carrión, a member of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, and also included Father Ernesto Cardenal, the Nicaraguan minister of culture.

In his speech to the rally, Carrión pledged Nicaragua's continued support to

the Grenada revolution. He expressed thanks for Grenada's internationalist aid in sending two teachers to help in the literacy drive in Nicaragua's English-speaking Atlantic Coast region.

We Are the Future of the Revolution

Before the speeches were given, however, a theme of the revolution was dramatized by the Young Pioneers. Lined up in a row, the letters on their T-shirts read: "We are the future of the revolution."

This display of youthful enthusiasm reflected the depth of support the people of Grenada have for the gains of the revolution.

The chair of the rally, Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, noted that the revolution is a hundred times stronger than it was a year ago because of the higher political consciousness of the people.

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop elaborated on this point in his main address, which was listened to closely by all in attendance. Bishop discussed the progress of the revolution, the tasks that remain, and its overall political perspectives from the standpoint of workers and farmers around the world.

Bishop began with a look at the world crisis of capitalism:

"As we meet here today for the second anniversary, we do so at a time of great crisis in the world, a time of big international industrial crisis, particularly in the Western world. We do so at a time, comrades, when millions of people in the industrialized Western world are roaming the streets looking for work. . . . a time when people are making comparisons with the period of the 1920s and 1930s, the period of the great depression.

"A time in the world, sisters and brothers, when we are seeing daily runaway inflation. A time in the world when we are seeing a worsening of the balance of trade for developing countries. A time in the world when there is a great deterioration of the conditions of the rural poor of the poorest countries in the world.

"A time, in fact, where in some countries illiteracy is actually on the increase. A time when by all estimates . . . over 500 million people every night are going to bed hungry with nothing to put into their stomachs. A time when the United Nations has estimated that a great crisis in food production will get even worse unless resources are set aside now to begin to deal with this difficult problem.

"A time, sisters and brothers, when there

is a serious, worldwide environmental problem, when industrial pollution is affecting the air, is affecting the water, is affecting the land.

"Owners of plants following the pursuit of dollars are doing this indiscriminately without any regard to the health and welfare of the poorer people of the world."

Bishop then turned to the response of the Reagans, the Thatchers, and other servants of the multinational corporations to this crisis. The imperialists, Bishop explained, demand even more blood from the neocolonial countries, as well as from their own workers.

"This present crisis in the world, sisters and brothers, is so bad that the richest country in the world has taken a decision to close down even hospitals, to close down even schools, to cut back on food stamps that they give to poor people, to cut back

on surgical assistance for poor people, to cut back on government subsidies to help the poorest farmers to stay in production, to cut back on student loans and grants that assist the poorest students who are receiving a university education, to cut back in fact on subsidies for people's programs, including programs that benefit handicapped children.

"This crisis is so bad that this country has decided to allow factories to close, to allow their people to roam the streets in their millions, daily joined by thousands more looking for jobs that are not available."

This crisis of the imperialist countries, Bishop pointed out, has an impact on Grenada and other small, poor countries and nations whose economies are distorted by imperialism.

"Comrades, this economic crisis that

these countries are facing has rather severe effects on our own country and economy, because our country and other countries like ours are dependent on their economies. When their economies run into trouble, ours also feels the effects of that trouble. When they sneeze, we in the Third World catch a cold. When they run into problems, we are the ones who feel it even more than their own people."

Advancing the Revolution

Despite the crisis of the world capitalist economy, Grenada has been able to register many concrete advances for its people. It has been able to do so for one simple reason: the workers and farmers of Grenada run the government—not the super rich.

Because of that, Bishop could confidently state, "We believe, in Grenada, that it is possible even in the face of these difficulties for progress to be made, that it is possible for the country to continue to move forward even in the face of these difficulties. We believe that there are ways of achieving this objective."

He presented three formulas for progress that no Thatcher or Reagan could ever stand on.

"First and foremost," Bishop said, "we believe in the need for honesty with the people. We believe it is important to always tell the people the truth, to always give the people the facts, even when they are bad facts, to never lull the people into a false sense of trusting, to never deceive the people, to never make them believe that by some miracle suddenly things are going to improve without greater effort, and greater sacrifice, and greater production on our part.

"Be honest with the people, tell the people the facts, get the people to know the real truth of our future.

"The second formula that we believe to be important is the need to adopt a conscious policy to put the people at the center, to put the people at the focus of all of the activities of the government, the state, and the revolution. To always aim to involve, to always aim to have the people participate, to always seek to deepen the unity of the people, because a people that is mobilized is a people that is ready to face the future.

"The third formula is that we . . . take an approach toward building our country that stresses the basic needs of our people, an approach that looks inward to the problems of our country, an approach that looks to the realities of our country, and not an approach that looks outward to the needs of other people's countries that are already richer than our own."

These are the three foundations on which progress is being made in revolutionary free Grenada. They provide examples to workers and farmers around the world.

Bishop outlined some of the gains made

Why Grenadians Are Celebrating

Despite Grenada's small size and limited resources, the accomplishments of the revolution after its first two years are already quite impressive.

In 1978, only three students received scholarships from the Gairy regime; during the first year of the revolution 109 Grenadians received scholarships.

Following the passage of the Trade Union Recognition act, about 80 percent of the workforce has been able to join unions, compared to 30 percent under Gairy.

Costs of basic food staples are kept down. Cheap fertilizer is provided to farmers. Housing materials are provided free or at low-interest loans to workers and farmers. Technical and other forms of assistance are provided to unemployed workers ready to cultivate unused lands.

Women have won the right to equal pay for equal work. Women workers now get paid maternity leave. Women have taken on active roles at all levels of the mass organizations and trade unions.

One of the biggest successes has been in the field of education. Last year witnessed the launching of a major literacy campaign. Although 85 percent of all Grenadians were considered to be illiterate, the level of education was very low. The government thus established the Centre for Popular Education (CPE) to carry out a literacy drive in three phases.

The first phase, completed at the end of this February, wiped out most of the illiteracy. Education Minister George Louison reported that the illiteracy rate is now down to 6 or 7 percent. Most importantly, the CPE was able to mobilize thousands of Grenadians to par-

ticipate as volunteer teachers or as students. CPE brigades travelled to all three islands and to every town and village in the country.

The second phase, which begins in April, aims to provide adult education and training programs. According to Bishop, this phase involves "not just reading and writing. It is also about consciousness, about developing a nation that, for the first time, will begin to put proper values on those things that are important."

Other areas in which the revolution has made progress are in fishing and agriculture.

Under Gairy, the government had no modern fishing trawlers. It now has two trawlers, given to it by the government of Cuba. The first fish processing plant was opened last year.

Most arable land in Grenada is underutilized, and a third is not cultivated at all. The government's goal in 1981 is to not only grow more food—at least enough for all of the island's basic staples—but also to allow Grenada to become an exporter of processed fruits and vegetables.

As a result of the government's "idle lands for idle hands" program, unemployment has been reduced to just over 30 percent, from more than 50 percent at the time of the revolution. This is mainly a result of getting people back to the land by joining agricultural cooperatives.

One of the most ambitious projects is the building of the island's first international airport. Cuba has provided several hundred construction workers and is contributing one-third of the cost of the airport, mainly in heavy construction equipment.

—Malik Miah

over the last two years based on this approach.

"While others are cutting back on medical care and medical systems for the poor in their countries, we have moved instead to double the number of doctors who are available to add to the quantity and quality of health care in our country. We have moved to triple the number of dentists in our country. We have moved to establish for the first time in our country after over 350 years free medical attention for all of the people in all areas of the country today.

"While others are choosing to close their schools, we are choosing to build new schools. And in fact over the past year we opened a new secondary school. . . . And if this sounds like a small achievement, sisters and brothers, I want to remind you that after 350 years of British colonialism and twenty-nine years of Gairyism, only one single secondary school was ever built in our country out of public funds. . . .

"While others, brothers and sisters, are cutting subsidies and cutting grants to their schools, we are looking to expand our facilities for our people. We are now providing in our primary schools free milk and a subsidized meal system for all of the children in the primary schools who are in need of assistance. We have moved to the point where we have doubled the number of scholarships to secondary schools so that the children of our country, all of them, are able to receive a secondary education free of cost."

Threats by Imperialism

Because of the example provided by the Grenada revolution—and because of Grenada's close friendship with Cuba—

imperialist powers view Grenada as a direct challenge to their continued domination over the Caribbean. From the early days of the revolution, they have threatened Grenada, sought to isolate it, and provided aid and encouragement to local counterrevolutionary elements.

Because of this, Bishop explained that the watchwords of the revolution were "production and defense."

The active mobilization and participation of the people in all aspects of the revolution, including the People's Militia, is recognized as the only way to counter the destabilization attempts of imperialism.

Today, Bishop explained, some forces are trying to drive Grenada out of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and Washington has stationed a naval task force in the Caribbean.

Bishop also took up the Reagan administration's campaign against "international terrorism," which it is using as a justification to threaten insurgent peoples.

"What they are doing," Bishop explained, "is moving from attacking countries like South Africa or Chile or South Korea. What they are doing by attacking international terrorists is trying to lump together the socialist countries, the Non-aligned countries, the national liberation movements, the progressive countries in the third world . . . to try to attack the freedom fighters against apartheid in Namibia and South Africa as being internationalist terrorists."

Grenada rejects this imperialist definition of terrorism.

Bishop explained, "What they are doing . . . is that they are trying to get away by blaming countries like Cuba, like

Nicaragua, like Namibia, like Zimbabwe, like Grenada, to blame our countries for their economic difficulties."

This is also the significance of the U.S. concept of "linkage," Bishop explained. If the people in one part of the world fight back, imperialism says it has the right to intervene against governments in other parts of the world unless they change their stance.

In response to such heavy-handed blackmail, Bishop said that Grenada would continue to support the struggles of oppressed peoples. "We give our fullest support to the people of El Salvador," he declared.

International Solidarity

In closing his report to the anniversary rally, Bishop appealed for international solidarity.

"We ask you to form more friendship organizations, and expand your memberships even further in America, Canada, and England," he said. "We appreciate the material support you have given to Grenada. . . . We ask you to answer the propaganda against Grenada. We ask you to push the slogan, 'Come see for yourself.' Do not let others tell you about Grenada. Come see it for yourself."

The day after the anniversary celebration, representatives from groups in a number of countries met in St. George's and issued a statement in solidarity with the Grenada revolution. The statement urged supporters of free Grenada to carry out the following four tasks:

"1. respond to anti-Grenada propaganda in the media and in other forms by communicating the realities of the Grenada process;

"2. provide, wherever possible, political, technical, and material support to the people and government of Grenada—for example, by supporting the book drive, and by purchasing international airport bonds;

"3. work at all times for the development of national policies towards Grenada and the Caribbean which are supportive of progressive changes in the region;

"4. encourage progressive organizations and individuals to sponsor and engage in visits to Grenada so that they may see for themselves and understand the truth about the Grenada revolution." □

Reagan Urges Allies To Put On the Squeeze

As Grenada was celebrating the second anniversary of its revolution, the Reagan administration in Washington marked the date in its own way by urging its allies to impose an economic blockade against the island.

According to a report by Karen DeYoung in the March 20 *Washington Post*, "In an action that has irritated some of the 10 member countries of the Common Market, a U.S. official was sent to the organization's headquarters in Brussels last week to try to head off possible community assistance to Grenada, a small Caribbean island whose government has close ties to Cuba."

Because the United States has few direct trade ties with Grenada, its only way of applying economic pressure against the revolutionary government is by convincing its imperialist allies to put on the squeeze.

The Reagan administration claims that it is particularly concerned about the construction of a new international airport in Grenada, with Cuban assistance. The U.S. official who travelled to Brussels was quoted as saying that Common Market assistance for the airport would aid Cuba's "expansionist" aims in the Caribbean. What Washington is really concerned about is that the airport will allow Grenada to strengthen its economy, particularly its tourist industry, and increase its independence from the imperialist countries.

The Common Market has so far not formally responded to the U.S. requests to halt aid to Grenada. Some governments have indicated their reluctance to go along with Washington's interventionist policy in the Caribbean.

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AROUND THE WORLD



Dutch Fight to Rid Netherlands of Nuclear Arms

"Not since the 1950s has there been such a swell of European public opinion against the use of atomic weapons," the *Washington Post* admits in a March 20 article by Bradley Graham.

Graham focuses on the antinuclear movement in the Netherlands. "An active majority of the people of the Netherlands want to be rid of nuclear weapons," he says, citing surveys that show 60 percent of the Dutch people favoring removal of nuclear arms from their country.

The Interchurch Peace Council, which is sponsored by the major churches in the Netherlands, participated in a successful campaign against deployment of the neutron bomb after it was proposed by the Carter administration in 1977. Now that Washington is pushing for the deployment of new medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, the arms issue has heated up again.

With Dutch elections coming in May, the ruling Christian Democratic-Liberal coalition has put off until later in the year an answer to NATO's request that it take 48 of the 572 new missiles slated for deployment in Europe. In any case, Graham notes, "the missiles issue promises to dominate the foreign policy debate."

The antinuclear weapons campaign, Graham says, draws "key backing from churches, labor unions and Western Europe's influential Socialist and Social Democratic parties. . . ."

"Hitherto, this movement has not been able to shake governments," said Joseph Luns, secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in a recent interview. But he repeated for emphasis the word "hitherto."

The Dutch Labor Party—the largest party in the Netherlands, although it is not represented in the government—announced its opposition to stationing the new NATO missiles on March 1.

Graham quoted a U.S. diplomat in the Hague, who said: "Other NATO members will be watching the Dutch decision closely, wondering whether Holland can actually reject the missiles and, to put it bluntly, get away with it."

Mandel Wins Fight to Enter France

Ernest Mandel, internationally known Marxist economist and a leader of the Fourth International, has scored a victory over the French government's attempt to bar him from France.

According to the March 13 Paris daily *Le Monde*, Interior Minister Christian

Bonnet wrote to ombudsman Robert Fabre who was mediating the case between the government and Mandel:

"... After a new examination of the record and taking account the course of behavior of the movement to which Mr. Mandel belongs, I have decided to repeal the 1972 measure barring this foreigner's entry into France."

The Belgian economist had been refused entry into France in 1968 and 1972, and then again in May 1979 and March 1980.

Mandel has also been barred from entering the United States, West Germany, Switzerland, and Canada in an attempt to prevent his Marxist views from being heard. In West Germany, the ban provoked demonstrations and protest statements from leading writers and intellectuals.

Mandel had been granted entry to the U.S. in 1962 and 1968 and spoke at some thirty universities. But in 1969, he was barred from coming to the U.S. to accept an invitation to debate the well-known economist John Kenneth Galbraith.

The 1969 ban provoked an outcry of protest from American scholars and civil libertarians and in 1970 eight prominent professors joined Mandel in filing a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of exclusion provisions of a witch-hunting piece of legislation called the McCarran-Walter act. This act bars anyone holding "communist" views from entering the U.S.

In 1972 a victory was won in a lower federal court, but a Supreme Court ruling upheld the act and Mandel's ban.

Mandel was again denied a visa to enter the United States in 1976. He had been invited to teach two classes as part of Stanford University's guest professorship program.

Since 1976 Mandel has been granted limited visas to speak in the United States, but has been harassed by U.S. officials and his movements restricted.

Many Generals Not Charged in Spanish Coup Attempt

The attempted military coup in Spain involved many more conspirators than Spanish authorities have acknowledged, the March 23 issue of the U.S. magazine *Newsweek* confirmed. "Most of the plotters probably won't be indicted because King Juan Carlos wants to avoid a destabilizing purge of the army," the newsweekly noted.

It reported that a few weeks before the coup attempt seventeen Spanish generals met secretly in a Madrid apartment and voted fifteen to two to endorse it. The two

no votes were only because the two generals didn't think the coup being planned would work.

Some twenty-three right-wing Civil Guard and army officers have been indicted for their part in the coup. So far only two generals are among them.

Salvador Solidarity Rally in Israel

A rally in solidarity with the people of El Salvador was held in Tel Aviv February 28. This was the first Salvador solidarity rally to be held in Israel.

The rally was held under the slogan "Stop all Israeli arms exports to the junta in El Salvador." Nearly 100 people—Palestinians and Jews—attended.

Speakers included representatives of the newly formed Israeli Solidarity Committee with El Salvador, Stephen Zunk from the El Salvador Task Force—a U.S. solidarity coalition—Prof. Israel Shahak, chairperson of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, and a representative of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the Israeli section of the Fourth International.

A slide-show on the Salvadoran struggle was also shown and many people signed up with the solidarity committee.

A Hebrew-language pamphlet, "El Salvador: People in Struggle," has been published by the RCL. It features information about Israeli arms sales to El Salvador and Central America.

Bikini Islanders Sue U.S. Over Nuclear Testing

Nearly 1,000 displaced people of the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean are suing the U.S. government for \$450 million in damages. The suit, filed March 16, charges that nuclear testing damaged or destroyed their livelihood and homeland.

In 1946 the people of Bikini were evacuated so "Operation Crossroads"—the first American atomic tests in the Pacific—could begin. They were relocated three times to other atolls or islands, hundreds of miles away.

"What did my people get from being moved off Bikini?" asked Sen. Henchi Balos, elected representative of the people of Bikini to the Marshall Islands Legislature. "Our homeland was destroyed. Our land is radioactive. Three of our islands were wiped off the face of the earth."

Twenty-three nuclear bombs were tested at Bikini and a hydrogen bomb test in 1954 destroyed three of the islands in the atoll.

Who Is Responsible for Violence in Northern Ireland?

[The following exchange was initiated January 17, the day after the attempted assassination of Irish liberation fighter Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and her husband, Michael McAliskey. Devlin McAliskey has been a leader in the fight to win political status for Irish political prisoners.

SWP Protests Attack on McAliskays

If Bernadette Devlin McAliskey dies, there is no way your government can escape the responsibility for her death. The assassination of four leaders of the H-Block campaign in 1980 made it obvious that her life was in danger.

This savage attack on her and her husband Michael reveals the full horror of

The exchange consists of a telegram sent by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, a reply by the first secretary of the British embassy in Washington, and a rebuttal by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.]

the system that Britain has created and maintained in Northern Ireland.

We demand: the immediate prosecution and conviction of the attackers.

Grant the demands of the H-Block prisoners.

End British occupation and colonial rule of Northern Ireland.

British Government Replies

The Workers Party [*sic*]
14 Charles Lane
New York
NY 10014

3 February 1981

I have been asked to reply to your recent telegram to the Prime Minister about events in Northern Ireland.

In your telegram, you sought assurances that those responsible for the attempted murder of Mr and Mrs McAliskey should be prosecuted. I cannot emphasise too strongly that my Government condemns without reservation terrorist violence by anyone in Northern Ireland from whatever quarter it may come. The Security Forces relentlessly pursue suspected terrorists of any description. Following the attack on Mr and Mrs McAliskey, three men were apprehended by an army patrol in the vicinity of the McAliskey's home. They were charged with the attempted murder of the McAliskays on 21 January and are currently being held in custody awaiting trial. Both Mr and Mrs McAliskey are now making good progress in hospital, where they were taken, following the attack, by British soldiers who also provided crucial emergency medical aid.

So far as the demands of the protesting prisoners at HM Prison Maze are concerned, the Government has repeatedly made it clear that it is not prepared to concede the demand for political status by prisoners who claim that their crimes had a political motive. The Government cannot accept that those who make a claim of this kind should be treated differently from other convicted prisoners in Northern Ireland. No-one is imprisoned in Northern

Ireland, or elsewhere in the United Kingdom, for his or her political beliefs. None of the protesting prisoners has been adopted as a "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International. All have been convicted in open court, many for very serious criminal offenses such as murder, armed robbery and explosives and firearms offences. In June 1980 the European Commission of Human Rights, in a case brought by four of the protesting prisoners, ruled that "the protest cannot derive any legitimacy or justification from the European Convention of Human Rights". The Commission also ruled that the applicants were seeking a status of political prisoner to which they

were not entitled under national law, under the Convention or under existing norms of international law.

The Government has responded positively to suggestions that changes might be made on humanitarian grounds in the living conditions of prisoners in Northern Ireland. For example, in future all prisoners in Northern Ireland will be issued with civilian-type clothing instead of prison uniform.

My Government cannot accept the suggestion that it "occupies" Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and will remain so unless the people of Northern Ireland and Parliament at Westminster decide otherwise. Statutory provision exists for the wishes of the Northern Ireland electorate to be tested at intervals by a "Border Poll" and successive Governments have made it clear that those wishes, whether to remain part of the United Kingdom or to leave it, will be respected. A substantial majority of the people of Northern Ireland at present wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. In a Border Poll in March 1973, the overwhelming majority of those who voted and an absolute majority of the electorate expressed the wish that Northern Ireland should remain within the United Kingdom. At successive elections both before and after 1973 most voters have supported parties who wish to retain the union with Great Britain.

Yours sincerely,
J.S. Wall
First Secretary

SWP National Secretary: The Record of British Terrorism

J.S. Wall, First Secretary
British Embassy
3100 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

March 20, 1981

Mr. Wall:

In your letter of February 3, you assert that the British government "condemns without reservation terrorist violence in Northern Ireland from whatever quarter it may come." You claim, "The Security Forces relentlessly pursue terrorists of any description." And you insist that the British government is upholding international law and human rights in Northern Ireland.

These claims are false.

The primary instigators and protectors of terrorism in Northern Ireland are the

British government and its agents.

To begin with, British troops have been responsible for killing numerous unarmed civilians. The most infamous example was the "Bloody Sunday" massacre of January 30, 1972, when British paratroopers opened fire on some 15,000 unarmed demonstrators, slaughtering thirteen of them in cold blood.

Catholic priests, members of the British Parliament on the scene, journalists, and community leaders all testified that the paratroopers fired indiscriminately into the crowd and that the only incident prior to the attack was some rock throwing.

"They just jumped out, and, with unbelievable murderous fury, shot into the fleeing crowd," reported Italian journalist Fulvio Grimaldi in the February 1, 1972, issue of the *Irish Times*.



Victim of January 30, 1972 "Bloody Sunday" massacre by British troops.

"I have travelled to many countries," Grimaldi said. "I have seen many civil wars and revolutions and wars. I have never seen such a cold-blooded murder, organised, disciplined murder, planned murder."

Although the massive upsurge within Ireland sparked by the massacre, and the accompanying international outcry, forced the British government to tread more carefully, the killings did not end with Bloody Sunday.

Thus, in its October 8, 1978, issue, the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* felt it necessary to caution the British government.

"The death of innocent people shot either by mistake or because they stumbled unawares into traps set by plain clothes soldiers for terrorists is becoming a grim fact of life in Northern Ireland," the *Guardian* noted. "In the past four months three people who were indisputably innocent have been shot."

An example of how these murder squads operate was reported in a January 1, 1980, Associated Press dispatch. "British soldiers, laying an ambush for terrorists in the darkness of New Year's morning," it reported, "accidentally shot and killed their squad leader and another member of their own unit. . . ."

"They were shot, apparently without being challenged, outside a village in the strongly pro-Irish Republican Army county of Armagh."

Obviously, the soldiers were mistaken by their buddies for local residents. No warning was called, no cry to halt. Anybody in the area was considered fair game, and if it had been a local farmer, or a milkman on his rounds, the British army would have chalked up another success in the war against "terrorism."

But outright killings by British troops in Northern Ireland are only the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Wall. The British government is responsible for the organization and maintenance of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment.

These exclusively Protestant forces have a long and shameful record of abuse, torture, and murder directed against the oppressed Catholic population of Northern Ireland. Since they operate under the auspices of the British government, their continuing crimes are the responsibility of that government.

Terrorism against the Catholic population is the method that has been used for centuries in maintaining British rule in Ireland. The Protestant ascendancy, along with its anti-Catholic pogroms and its systematic oppression of the Catholic majority, was instituted by the British government as a means of colonial rule.

Although you insist that your government "cannot accept the suggestion that it 'occupies' Northern Ireland," the sordid history of British colonial wars against the

Irish people establishes beyond any doubt why the British government today finds it necessary to station thousands of troops in that country.

Although it has been six decades since Britain enforced the partition of Ireland against the wishes of the Irish people, resistance to colonial rule continues. The creation of an artificial statelet in the six counties of Northern Ireland was an affront to the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

Although you refuse to admit the truth, the London *Sunday Times* Insight Team, in its 1972 book *Northern Ireland: A Report on the Conflict*, pointed out in regard to the establishment of Northern Ireland:

"The border was itself the first and biggest gerrymander: the six counties it enclosed, the new province of Ulster, had no point or meaning except as the largest area which the Protestant tribe could hold against the Catholic. Protestant supremacy was the only reason why the State existed. As such, the State itself was an immoral concept. It therefore had to be maintained from the first by immoral means—the fiddling of internal boundaries too, the steady pressure on Catholics to emigrate by making it hard for them to live and work, the police bullying . . . And in the end the Army on the streets, internment, 'deep interrogation.'"

It is hypocritical for you to deny that the

struggle of the nationalist population against this colonial system is a political struggle, to deny that the Republican prisoners in Northern Ireland are imprisoned for their political beliefs.

It was the British government that invoked internment without trial for Republican prisoners in August 1971 and which maintained that policy until December 1975. Those interned were never tried or convicted of any criminal acts. They were picked out solely on the basis of their political beliefs.

Because of that, the British government itself was forced to concede special status to the Republican prisoners from 1972 until 1976.

When the British government discontinued internment without trial as a result of the resistance of the nationalist population and international pressure, it came up with a new method for dealing with its political opponents.

Under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1976, anybody the authorities characterize as a "suspected terrorist" can be seized and taken to interrogation centers, where they can be held incommunicado for up to seven days, and then tried without jury by a single judge in what are known as Diplock courts. More than 85 percent of all convictions in these Diplock courts are based wholly or mainly on a statement or confession obtained through torture.

You, Mr. Wall, quote selectively from the European Commission on Human Rights. Need I remind you that on September 2, 1976, the European Commission on Human Rights issued an 8,400 page report that found Britain guilty of using torture against suspected "terrorists" in Northern Ireland?

Among the methods described in the report were:

- Forcing prisoners to stand with fingers and forehead pressed against a wall for up to twelve hours.
- Keeping prisoners masked and hooded for up to twenty-four hours.
- Subjecting prisoners to continuous shouting and loud noises.
- Beating prisoners in the chest, head, and abdomen as they were lined up for hours against police station walls.
- Depriving prisoners of adequate sleep and food.

The European Commission on Human Rights also found that British troops had instructed local police in the use of torture techniques, and had recommended their use against suspected members of the Irish Republican Army.

These are the methods that must be used against any people fighting for its liberty. They are wholly in keeping with the centuries-long record of British oppression and terrorism in Ireland.

For these reasons, I repeat the points

made in our January 17 telegram.

We demand the immediate prosecution and conviction of the people responsible for the attack on the lives of Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and Michael McAliskey! Grant the demands of the H-Block pri-

soners! End British occupation and colonial rule of Northern Ireland!

Jack Barnes
National Secretary,
Socialist Workers Party

Cubans Charge CIA Was Behind Embassy Seizure

Cuba has accused the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, working through a Portuguese diplomat, of organizing the February 13 terrorist assault on the Ecuadoran embassy in Havana.

A March 17 report by Cuba's acting minister of foreign relations, Ricardo Alarcón, asserted that Portugal's chargé d'affaires in Havana, Francisco de Sales Mascarenhas, acted as the CIA's intermediary and "organized, provoked, and took part" in the armed occupation of the Ecuadoran embassy.

Alarcón reported that de Sales Mascarenhas has been confronted with evidence of his participation in a meeting of diplomats accredited in Havana. Although Cuba cannot provide de Sales Mascarenhas with the opportunity to prove his innocence in a trial, since he enjoys diplomatic immunity, it invited him to confront his accusers—the individuals who took part in the embassy seizure—in a public forum.

Rather than accept the invitation, the Portuguese government responded by expelling the Cuban ambassador to Portugal, Manuel Estévez Pérez.

Nonetheless, Cuba went ahead and presented its evidence against de Sales Mascarenhas on March 19 in a televised press

conference for three leaders of the occupation. The three confirmed the role of the Portuguese diplomat and explained that the weapons used in the takeover had been hidden in the residence of de Sales Mascarenhas, only yards from the building housing the Ecuadoran embassy. They also stated that the Portuguese chargé d'affaires had tried to get them to carry out an attempt on Fidel Castro's life.

The Ecuadoran government has been using the events of the embassy occupation to create an incident in relations with Cuba, accusing the Cuban government of violating diplomatic norms.

The position of the Ecuadoran government has no basis in fact. Its representatives on the scene gave authorization to the Cuban authorities to reoccupy the embassy. This was confirmed by the fact that the head of the special delegation sent by the Ecuadoran government was forced to resign upon his return.

In addition, Ecuador had refused to grant political asylum to the invaders, recognizing that they were common criminals who should be tried in Cuban courts.

As Ricardo Alarcón noted, the positions taken by the Ecuadoran and Portuguese governments are "part of the U.S. policy of isolation and harassment of Cuba." □

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How Cuba Has Changed Since the 1960s

[The following interview conducted by Betsey Stone appeared in the March 6 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

In November, I was one of fifty-three people who went to Cuba on a two-week tour sponsored by the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister-publication, *Perspectiva Mundial*. We were fortunate to have on our tour Eva Chertov, a member of the Socialist Workers Party who had lived in Cuba from 1962 to 1969. Chertov, who was making her first trip back, shared with us her impressions of the changes that have taken place in Cuba since she left in 1969. When we returned to the U.S., she summed up what she learned in the following interview.

* * *

Stone: First, can you say a few words about what you did in Cuba while you were there in the 1960s?

Chertov: I lived in Havana and was married to a Cuban. I studied at the University of Havana, taught English to adult education classes, helped set up a program for training language teachers, and worked as a translator for the Cuban press agency, *Prensa Latina*.

Since I was in Cuba for personal reasons, I was not given the special treatment usually given foreign technicians. I lived as the Cubans lived, on a Cuban ration card.

Stone: What was your impression of Cuba today, after being gone so long?

Chertov: Returning after eleven years, I felt the changes were incredible. Today the Cubans refer to the first decade of the revolution, the time I lived there, as "los años duros," the hard years.

U.S. Blockade

When I first arrived it was shortly after the United States imposed the blockade stopping trade with Cuba. Up until then Cuba had imported almost all its goods from the U.S., so the blockade brought with it shortages of everything, from toothpaste to replacement parts for machinery. During this time food was strictly rationed and we had just enough food to survive. In fact, if it had not been for the help of the Soviet Union and other workers states, the Cuban people would have literally faced starvation.

After a while things began to pick up, but then hurricane Flora hit, which put a large part of Cuban farm land under water. The food situation after that was very tight and continued to be so for some time.

Since 1969, the economic situation has improved dramatically. Coming back, one of

the first things I noticed was the number of goods now off ration. I went to visit an old friend and she went to the store to buy food for our lunch. I didn't want to eat any of it, because I thought I would be taking some of her ration. But then I found out that the things she had bought—butter, cheese, a can of peas—she had gotten on the free market.

I remember in the late 1960s everything was on ration and we couldn't get cheese, except maybe a little at Christmas. Milk was available only for children, old people, and the sick. Now you can get milk easily. The same is true for fish and eggs. This means that every Cuban now is able to get adequate protein in their diet. Fruits and vegetables in season are also freely available—another change. They are also making wonderful ice cream and yogurt. This is a result of the enormous expansion of the dairy industry.

Chicken, beef and pork are still on ration, but exist in greater quantities than before. Once every nine days you get approximately three-quarters of a pound of chicken or meat. Although fish is more available, unfortunately Cubans are not very fond of fish.

Consumer Items

Another striking change to me was the number of consumer items available. In 1969 there used to be almost nothing in the store windows. Because people were making more money after the revolution, and the money was more evenly distributed, there were not enough goods to meet the demand. So as soon as a new item would come on the market, it would be snatched up. This was the case with books, clothes, everything.

But now production and trade have increased to the point where you see stores full of goods. And there is a much more even distribution of goods throughout the country. On our tour we drove all the way down the island from Santiago de Cuba to Havana, and we found stores full of goods everywhere.

We also noticed that most people have TVs, even in the rural areas. About one-third have washing machines, which was not the case before.

Stone: I read that up until recently clothes were available only on ration and in very limited quantity. For example, a person could get something like two pairs of socks a year, one pair of pants, two shirts. So I was very surprised when I got to Cuba to see how well people were dressed.

Chertov: Yes, the situation with clothes is much better. People can buy a limited amount of clothing at low prices with their

ration cards and they can also get most items of clothing at higher prices on the free market. And the quality is much better than it used to be. I noticed they even have designer jeans. One of the labels says, "Cuba Si."

They are still working out certain problems that have come with opening up the free market. For instance friends of mine said there was a problem with brassieres. When they put them on the free market people rushed to buy them up because they still had the idea that if you don't buy all you can, they will disappear. This led to a scarcity. We were also told that there was a problem with the quality of shoes.

Stone: No one on our tour saw any lines to buy goods. People said there were lines sometimes when a new shipment of something came in, but we didn't see any.

Chertov: I spent quite a bit of time in lines in the 1960s, so that's another big change for the better. They also have something now called the shopping bag plan. Working women save time by leaving their shopping list and a bag at the grocery on the way to work, and when they come back in the evening, it will be filled.

Stone: What about housing?

Chertov: Housing has also improved. You see new construction all over the place and many new schools, hospitals, recreation facilities, and housing developments. There is also an arrangement whereby people can swap houses and apartments so they can get housing that better suits their needs. There still is a great deal of inadequate housing and people living in crowded conditions. But compared to other countries in Latin America, Cuba's progress in housing is outstanding.

Rent is also very low, six to ten percent of your pay.

Stone: What about inflation?

Chertov: Because they have abolished capitalism, they don't have as serious a problem with inflation as we have in the U.S. For example, there are many foods in Cuba that cost as little as they did ten years ago.

They do not have a system that leads to price increases so the rich can make bigger profits. But, Cubans are affected by the inflation in the international capitalist market, since they buy goods on that market. They also suffer from the fact that while the prices of manufactured goods are going up on the world market, the price of

sugar and other agricultural exports has generally been going down.

The effect of this is softened by the fact that the bulk of Cuba's trade is with the Soviet Union where the same laws of capitalism do not apply. We were told, for example, that today the same amount of oil from the Soviet Union is traded for the same amount of Cuban sugar as was the case fifteen years ago.

Economic Crisis

Stone: The U.S. press claims there is a big economic crisis in Cuba. What would you say to that?

Chertov: I would say first of all that in assessing the Cuban economy you should not compare it to the U.S. economy, but to other countries who have had the same history of imperialist domination as Cuba. When you make this comparison, Cuba has made spectacular progress, not only in making goods available to everyone, but in ending hunger and disease, in developing industry and agriculture, in ending unemployment and poverty in the countryside, and in education, and social services.

There have been economic problems. Diseases ruined large parts of last year's tobacco and sugar crops and swine fever has broken out in the eastern part of Cuba. There is also the continuing impact of the U.S. blockade and the underdevelopment that the revolution inherited in 1959. This means there are not as many consumer goods available as in the U.S. For example, most people in Cuba do not own cars.

But, when the U.S. press says that the Cuban economy is in a big crisis, this is just another one of their lies. In fact, economically the Cuban people are better off than ever before—much better. And if you go to Cuba, the Cuban people themselves will tell you this. It's obvious!

I would say that in general the Cuban revolution is much stronger than when I was there, not weaker.

This strength comes not only from an improvement in the standard of living of the people, but also from broader political changes in Cuba and the world.

People's Power

One of the most important things has been the development of People's Power. Starting in Matanzas province in 1974, assemblies of People's Power have been set up throughout the country in order to give people more direct control over the institutions which affect their lives. Medical care, education, transportation, stores and restaurants, many workplaces, and sports and recreation facilities are all now under the control of the municipal People's Power assemblies.

The delegates to these assemblies are elected directly by the people from election districts ranging in size from 100 people in rural areas to 3,000 in cities. The delegates are not paid. The overwhelming majority of those elected are working people who carry

out many of their tasks in their free time after work.

These municipal assemblies have taken over many responsibilities that were previously centralized nationally. Whereas you used to have to go to the national ministry of education to get your school repaired, now the municipal People's Power can do that. And People's Power decides what the priorities for the city are in construction repair of old buildings and so forth.

All this is outlined in a book by Marta Harnecker, *Cuba, Dictatorship or Democracy*. Anyone who wants to understand People's Power should begin by reading that book.

I remember in the late 1960s, there was a great deal of disorganization and soul searching about how to solve problems. You would be in a ration line, waiting to buy onions, and then you would hear someone say that a whole warehouse of onions had rotted due to some slip-up.

When people heard things like that it was terribly frustrating, especially given the shortages, because there were no channels to solve these problems.

People would try to get in touch with a person in a ministry who was responsible or they would bring it to the attention of Fidel. Fidel was always showing up unexpectedly in different places and often when he did people would barrage him with problems.

Now people have an institutionalized way to take action themselves to solve problems. For example, I was sitting in a friend's house and she said to me, "Remember that neighborhood near here where they couldn't get water for a whole number of years? Well, right after People's Power, they got water."

The way my friends described how People's Power functioned was that every three months everyone in the neighborhood district gets together with their delegate in what is called an accountability session. They get a report from the delegate on what went on at the municipal assembly and discuss what should be done by the assembly and how to solve problems in their district. They can also take up questions of concern nationally.

If the person they elected as a delegate is not doing an adequate job, there are procedures for direct recall of that delegate.

Stone: I believe that it was right after you left Cuba that the whole process began which led up to the creation of People's Power. It began with the 1970 campaign to produce ten million tons of sugar in one year. They got about eight million, which was a lot, but the goal was not reached and the economy was disrupted in the process.

Chertov: Yes, Fidel explained afterward that one of the problems was that the people who knew the goal was unrealistic did not have enough input in working out the plan for the campaign. Flowing from this, in the early 1970s steps were taken to involve the masses of working people of Cuba more directly in the decision making.

First there was a campaign to strengthen the mass organizations, most importantly the trade unions. The unions were given a much bigger role in economic decisions.

Union Role in Decisions

Now the unions discuss the national economic plan. For example, the five-year plan that was just discussed at the Second Congress of the Communist Party was first discussed by the workers in all the workplaces. Each union also discusses and votes on the production plan and goals for that particular plant and industry.

Stone: On our tour we talked with many working people about the mass organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women, the peasants' organization, the youth organizations, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and People's Power.

It was striking to me the way people answered our questions about these organizations, describing them with pride and confidence. They clearly saw them as theirs, as organizations they participated in and were familiar with, as organizations which gave them a say about what goes on in Cuban society.

Chertov: The importance of People's Power was illustrated last year in the events that led to a shake-up in the government and a series of speeches against bureaucracy by Raul Castro.

Severe problems had developed: a crisis in transportation in Havana, long lines at the health clinics, and other serious problems.

These were discussed in the municipal People's Power but after a while it became clear that they could not be solved at the local level. It became clear that these were problems that stemmed from mismanagement and lack of concern at the highest levels of the national ministries.

Then you also had the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) doing one of their jobs, which is looking out for anything that is against the laws passed by People's Power.

Abuses by Officials

These committees were reporting that there were officials abusing public property. These officials were using construction materials to build homes for themselves; they were letting their kids joyride in cars using state gasoline, things like this.

And people started to say, "Why should I outdo myself for the revolution with things going on like this?" So there was growing resentment against such inequalities and inefficiencies, which was expressed in the local People's Power meetings and in letters to the newspapers and letters to Fidel. It was also discussed in the national assembly of People's Power.

This discussion was no doubt aided by the fact that there is a direct line of communication to the national assembly from the local assemblies, since over half of the national



Cubans assemble for May 17, 1980 March of the Fighting People. 'Massive demonstrations were greatest proof of strength of revolution.'

assembly delegates are elected directly from the local assemblies.

In response to the outcry against the abuses taking place, a decision was made to reorganize the government ministries. And Raúl Castro made a series of speeches blasting bureaucrats who misused positions of responsibility. He denounced mismanagement, stealing from the public, bureaucratic attitudes and "faintheartedness" in the face of threats from the U.S.

The reorganization, in which many such bureaucrats lost their jobs, and the speeches by Raúl were seen as a vindication of the point of view of the masses. And there was great rejoicing in Cuba about this.

Stone: What about the exodus of the 125,000 Cubans who left for Miami? What did the Cubans you spoke with have to say about that?

Chertov: A Cuban friend of mine, Dr. Ivo Horta, lived near the Peruvian embassy and was a doctor assigned to care for the people who went to the embassy in order to leave the country.

When I first questioned Ivo about this, I didn't refer to the people in the embassy as scum. He corrected me. He said the right word is *escoria*, or in English, scum.

He said all that we had seen in the Cuban films about the type of people in the embassy was correct—the bullies held sway in the embassy. The law of the jungle prevailed, with the stronger snatching food away from the children and old people. He told me that for him, the exodus of the scum and the mass demonstrations that followed strengthened his pride in the revolution.

Why Some Left Cuba

The Cubans who left had various reasons for doing so, but most Cubans I spoke to said a big percentage of those who went were motivated by the desire for the kind of con-

sumer goods they could get in the U.S.

Others who left were afraid of the growing U.S. threats against Cuba. Revolutionary struggles in Central America are bringing a more serious confrontation between the U.S. and Cuba. Some people—those the Cubans term the fainthearted—want to get out of the line of fire.

A small minority of those who left were people who actually held official positions of some kind, as plant managers or government officials. It was these people, who had been given positions of authority in the revolution, that the Cubans were most angry at for leaving.

When people would learn that such an official was going, demonstrations would begin against them. These demonstrations began in the neighborhoods and were completely spontaneous. People would surround the homes of those leaving, carrying signs and chanting.

Often these officials embodied just the bureaucratic qualities that Raúl Castro had castigated in his speeches—conservative political ideas, 'faintheartedness' in the face of U.S. threats, stealing from the public, and abuse of authority. So feelings ran pretty high at these demonstrations.

At the university a professor who was leaving was confronted by a mass of angry, near-violent students.

One person told me that when she and others were picketing the home of such a traitor, the police came by and said, "Compañeros, don't you think you've made your point?" But the people refused to leave.

And the police had to protect these people when they left their house to go to the grocery.

So, these demonstrations were a continuation of the earlier struggle against bureaucracy that had culminated with the reorganization of the government and Raúl Castro's speeches. It was a way for the Cuban masses

to show their complete hatred and opposition for such bureaucrats and all they stand for.

U.S. Media Charges

Stone: What about the charge that the Cubans sent people to the U.S. who had been in jail in Cuba?

Chertov: Many Cubans mentioned to us that when the 125,000 left for Miami the crime rate in Cuba decreased. They also told us that some people were let out of prison to come to the U.S., but that no one was sent who was presently serving a sentence for a violent crime.

No one was forced to go, but prisoners who were given the option to go included people who had stolen public property or cheated on their ration cards—crimes which show a mentality of getting more for yourself at the expense of others.

There was also a charge in the American press that the mentally ill were being sent to the U.S., but Fidel explained that this was a lie. He said Cuba thinks too much of the mentally ill to send them to the U.S.

Stone: When we were visiting Camagüey province, the head of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples told us he felt the relatives from the United States who visited Cuba in large numbers over the past several years had an influence on many of those who left. Could you comment on that?

Chertov: Many of these relatives came down laden with presents, with pictures of their cars, describing the U.S. as a land of streets paved with gold. This was part of rationalizing their own decision to leave Cuba and they did have some effect.

Mariel brought into the open a badly needed discussion about the values and priorities of these visiting relatives. It showed the logic of putting as your primary goal in life owning a car or a fancy stereo

—not just wanting there to be more consumer goods, which everyone in Cuba does, but putting personal consumption *first*.

To the Cubans, those who chose Miami have played into the hands of imperialism. When we told people in Cuba about the difficulties those who left were having in the U.S., people made it clear they did not think they deserved a lot of sympathy. They have the same attitude toward them as a unionist in this country would have toward a scab in a strike.

Pride in Revolution

This rejection of those who left is tied to the enormous pride Cubans have in the revolution and its accomplishments. It's been a long struggle. Their lives have been defined by building this revolution. And now they've begun to see the fruits of their labor and they feel insulted to the marrow of their bones that people turn their backs on all this.

The whole experience of the 125,000 leaving and the demonstrations that followed was a very deepgoing and emotional one.

The massive demonstrations, when millions of people marched, were the greatest proof possible of the strength of the revolution. Through these demonstrations the Cuban people showed their rejection of the motives of those who left, their determination to stand up to the provocations and threats by the U.S. and their support for the revolution.

We saw movies of these demonstrations and people spoke about them. There was no mistaking the enthusiasm and commitment of those who marched. Many people described it as a high point in their lives and in the revolution.

Stone: What about Cuba's international role? What has changed since 1969?

Chertov: Perhaps this is the most important change, because 1969 was soon after the death of Che Guevara and the failure of the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia. The Cubans realized then that there might not be any quick victories for the revolution in other countries. So the attitude tended to be one of bracing for a long haul.

But in the middle and late 1970s, this began to change. The Cubans were inspired by a series of victories—first Vietnam, then the fall of the Portuguese empire in Southern Africa and the victory of the Cuban and Angolan troops in defeating the invasion of Angola by South Africa.

And now, with the victories in Nicaragua and Grenada and the massive struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala, revolutionary morale is very high.

Effect of Nicaragua

After the victory in Nicaragua, a huge rally greeted the Nicaraguan fighters when they visited Cuba, and wherever they went on the island, people rushed out to meet them. Our tour guide said that for her it was like reliving the euphoric days of the Cuban



Eva Chertov, center, translating for socialists during tour of Cuba.

revolution in the early 1960s, when the guerrillas came out of the mountains with their beards.

Over the past decade tens of thousands of Cubans have gone abroad as teachers, doctors, technicians, and soldiers. Many have seen the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada firsthand.

Many others have seen the horrible conditions of life brought about by imperialist domination in Angola, Jamaica, and other countries.

They come back with a deeper appreciation of the gains of the Cuban revolution—the free medical care, the high quality of education, the gains made against poverty, racism, and unemployment.

This is all reflected in a growth in revolutionary confidence. And there is no question that at least the people I knew in Cuba are now in a clearer state of mind concerning the revolution and what to do with their lives than before.

Of course, the Cuban revolution has always been internationalist. They have always seen it as their duty to support revolutionary struggles throughout the world. But I think now there is a deeper conviction among the masses in Cuba that their fate and future is linked to the struggle for the liberation of the peoples of the world.

Good Time to Visit

I think we were very fortunate to be in Cuba at the time we were. Because the events of last spring, Mariel and the mass demonstrations, were the culmination of something that's been building up.

Cubans have gone through a whole series of experiences—the development of People's Power, the strengthening of the trade unions and other mass organizations, the improvement in the economy, the shake-up in the government and Raúl Castro's speeches, and now the change in the situation internationally.

All this has brought about a strengthening of the revolution and a strengthening of the role of the working class in the revolution.

Stone: We had one person on our tour who had just been to Nicaragua. He said that after being in Nicaragua, Cuba seemed like a wealthy country. He described some of the challenges and problems the Nicaraguan revolution is facing due to the poverty and the high rate of illiteracy and said that he could now better appreciate the importance of twenty years of educational progress in Cuba.

Chertov: The higher cultural and educational level makes it possible for the masses to participate more effectively in economic decision-making and in institutions such as People's Power.

When I was in Cuba in the 1960s, the first steps were being taken. People were being won to socialism for the first time, the economy was being totally reorganized, and the mass organizations and the Communist Party were being built. It's often hard to grasp the real immensity of these tasks, especially when at the same time people are learning such basic things as how to read and write.

New Generation of Youth

One of the most inspiring things about going back was talking with the new generation of youth who have grown up since I left Cuba. We met and talked to them everywhere—on the beaches, in the discos, in the bookstores. They were very alive. And they had an enormous belief in the future that is completely missing in the U.S.

You talk with them about what they are planning to do with their lives—work in agriculture, be a doctor, or whatever—and this is discussed in the context not only that this is possible, but that by doing this they will be helping the revolution as well.

These youth have shed much of the backwardness and prejudice that still affects the older generations. The women are stronger in standing up for their rights and they get more support in this from the men of their generation.

The youth are also so accustomed to a society that does not discriminate in terms of race that it is hard for them to believe or understand the type of racism that exists in the U.S.

On questions concerning sex, they are also very different from their parents. When I lived in Cuba there was the remains of a very hypocritical attitude toward sex. People went out and had affairs, but you weren't supposed to talk about it. Now, friends my age, who have teenage children, told me there is a sexual revolution among young people.

One friend has a sixteen year-old son who is living with a young woman in her mother's house. They may or may not get married. This would have been unheard of ten years ago. And, of course, birth control is

free and available to anyone, including young people, on request.

Stone: What about the attitude toward gays?

Status of Gays

Chertov: Of course in Cuba there are no laws against gay sex as there are in the United States. Such laws were wiped out with the passage of the new Family Code.

The attitude toward gays in Cuba is still backward, however. They do face discrimination.

But here also, especially among the youth, there is some change for the better. For example, we were told by a member of the Young Communists that an informal discussion is going on among members of that organization about this whole question, which represents progress.

There is also a new sex manual, widely used, which takes the position that gay sex is not a sickness, but should be accepted as part of human sexuality.

A brother of one of my friends told us an interesting story. He is gay and he has always been a revolutionary. When Mariel opened up, some people in his Committee for the Defense of the Revolution filled out an application for him to leave for Miami.

He was outraged.

He went to his job director and asked him to go with him to talk with the people in the CDR. The job director told them, "This man is a revolutionary. We don't care who he sleeps with; you don't do such a thing to a revolutionary."

I asked my friend, "Don't you think that other homosexuals would have left Cuba if this had happened to them?"

He said, "Not if they were revolutionaries." He also said he felt that things were generally getting better on this question and that he thought it was important for gays like himself to stay and continue to be part of the revolution.

Stone: Are there other changes you noticed in Cuba that you would like to raise?

Chertov: The Cuban Communist Party has been expanded to bring in more workers and now a higher percentage of the party is industrial workers than ever before.

Stone: How do you become a member of the Communist Party?

Chertov: You first have to be chosen by other workers in your work place as a vanguard worker, that is, someone who stands out as a good worker and has the qualities valued in a revolutionary. Then you have to be voted in by members of the party in the unit you join.

So it is a highly selective process. The Cubans will tell you that only "the best of the best" are voted in as members.

A number of my friends have been selected to be Communist Party members since I left. This impressed me because I know them to be critical-minded people, people

who think for themselves and who had no particular connections. It shows the openness of the party.

Cultural Explosion

Another thing that really impressed me about Cuba today was what I would describe as a cultural explosion.

My closest friends were people I studied with at the university who are now working in films and literature. They told me about a movement that has developed of literary workshops. People who want to write can join and discuss what they are doing with each other and with more experienced poets and writers.

Large numbers of people are involved in such workshops—at workplaces and so forth. The stress in culture is on involvement of the average person, what they call the amateur movements.

You see this cultural explosion in all areas—the theater, film, painting, handicrafts, music, everything.

Another significant thing is the stress on Afro-Cuban cultural traditions. There is a pride in Cuba's African heritage that now is even more clearly expressed than before.

The higher general integration of women in society is quite obvious. More women working and studying. More women taking leadership roles.

Women

This has been a process. At the time of the revolution, only about ten percent of Cuban women worked and most of these were either maids or prostitutes. In the 1960s, women began for the first time to come out of the home and work and participate in political activity in large numbers.

Now, this trend is continuing and women are breaking into new types of jobs, such as industry. There is still a long way to go, but big strides on this have been made since I was there.

One last thing I might say is that it was a big relief to spend time again in a revolutionary country where you do not see advertisements with women's bodies being used to sell products and where you don't have to be afraid walking around at night alone.

In fact it was wonderful to be in a society again where human beings in general, whether they be children or old people, male or female, white or Black, are treated—and treat each other—with dignity and respect.

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The Cuban Revolution Today

By Jean-Pierre Beauvais

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* * *

Cuba and Internationalism

Internacionalismo! As 1980 draws to a close, on the eve of the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party and the twenty-second anniversary of the revolution, reminders of this "sacred duty" are seen everywhere. Along the roads, on shop walls, on the radio and television, at school.

One theme dominates: militant solidarity with Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala. One slogan is repeated a thousand times: "Without internationalism, the revolution wouldn't exist!"

This morning on the bottom of the international news page of *Granma*, the Communist Party daily newspaper, there is a dispatch from the Soviet news agency, Tass, describing an imperialist plot against Poland . . .

Roberto is not a "vanguard worker." He will never be a member of the Cuban CP. Fifty-four years old, he has spent his entire life in the Escambray mountains, one of the most isolated and backward areas on the island. As an independent farmer he grows coffee beans. In a chance encounter, Roberto told us about his life. In doing so he was telling us about the revolution: the literacy campaign and his happiness at having learned to read, the arrival of the teacher in the village, the building of the school, the road, electricity, the doctor and the dispensary, which his wife works at, the visits by the veterinarian and the advice of the agricultural engineer.

When he told us about his children he was again speaking about the revolution: "Three children, three internationalists," he said. "One of them is an officer and fought the imperialists for two-and-a-half years in Angola, another is an 'internationalist doctor' in Ethiopia, the third is an 'internationalist teacher' in Nicaragua, on the coast."

Like Che in Bolivia

This small peasant, still attached to his little patch of land, for whom the peaks of Escambray still mark the end of the world, spoke of internationalism as the most beautiful thing that the revolution had taught his children. His children who, "a

little like Che Guevara in Bolivia, help other peoples to fight imperialism and bring them what they themselves were brought by the Cuban revolution."

It was a moving encounter, symbolic, like so many others, of what this revolution is after twenty years of existence, symbolic of the depth of its roots, the strength of the internationalist feeling that is present everywhere.

Raul, a high official in the Transport Ministry, is in charge of the problem of labor productivity in the ports. At the end of a conversation on this question, which is crucial for the Cuban economy, Raul told me that "if we were to ask the workers at the port of Havana—all ages and all categories—how many were ready to go and fight in El Salvador, 90 percent would immediately volunteer. If, however, we asked how many wanted to participate in a training program that would later allow us to increase labor productivity, we would get 10 percent, or at the most 15 percent to volunteer."

The internationalism of the Havana dock workers and Roberto's pride in his children are examples of what is behind the prolonged applause of hundreds of thousands of Cubans who gathered December 20 at the Plaza of the Revolution to listen to Fidel Castro's speech closing the Second Congress. As Castro said: "The basic characteristic of our Congress was its internationalist character." For the Cuban masses the revolution can only be internationalist. More than ever that is the education the leaders try to, and do, give them.

That's one of the major focuses of the people's mobilization, a mobilization that has clearly broadened and deepened since what Fidel Castro called the "big turning point" represented by the victory of the Nicaraguan revolutionaries and the rise of struggles in El Salvador.

From San Salvador to Gdansk

The "internationalist battle" sometimes causes the Cuban CP and state to take serious political risks. They devote major human and material resources to it and give up other resources—like those they would get from a normalization of relations with the United States—especially in order to contribute to the consolidation and extension of the Central American revolution, to the victory of new "inevitably socialist" revolutions. Victories which, in turn, would constitute "the best help possible" for Cuba, according to Fidel Castro.

But this internationalist dimension reveals and also focuses some of the most significant contradictions and limitations of the Cuban revolution and its leadership. In the name of internationalism, and again at the cost of enormous sacrifices, more than one hundred thousand soldiers and officers have at one time or another served in Africa.

They victoriously drove the imperialist invasion of the South African racists out of Angola. But as an armed wing of the bourgeois Angolan government they participated in taming people's mobilizations in the urban centers.

In Ethiopia they powerfully aided in the defense of the revolutionary process, the most deepgoing seen to date in an African country. But they furnished the Ethiopian army with logistical aid in its repeated attempts to crush the Eritrean people's struggle for independence.

And finally, also based on his concept of "internationalism," when confronted with the Polish crisis Fidel Castro places himself unambiguously on the side of the Soviet bureaucracy and completely agrees with its point of view. He obviously would prefer that there be no Soviet intervention in Poland, but he justifies it, in advance, in terms of the "right of the socialist camp to defend its integrity against imperialist attacks."

Logic of the Two Camps

Empirically, the internationalist practices of the Castroist leadership are foreign to what Lenin saw as the essence of internationalism: "The conscious will to organize joint action of the proletariat of different countries for its emancipation." The Communist [Third] International was the concretization of this conscious will and the instrument for this joint action.

The practices of the Cuban leadership fundamentally flow from their experience as a national leadership, from the internal dynamic of the revolution, its needs, and above all from its specific position within the context of the world-wide relationship of forces.

Being right in the heart of the United States sphere of influence, and convinced that only the extension of the revolution, especially within that sphere, will strengthen their position, the Cuban leaders are opposed to any new Yalta Agreement. They are against "dividing the world into spheres of influence," an "obsolete, reactionary and fascist" concept, "which is equivalent to freezing progress and change throughout the world" as Fidel

Castro says in his report to the Second Congress of the Cuban CP.

Placed on the front lines of the struggle against imperialism, the revolution has survived as a result of the ongoing extraordinary mass mobilizations, as well as the massive aid of the Soviet Union and its allies and their de facto military guarantee. In addition, the Castroist leadership analyzes the world situation from the vantage point of the confrontation between two basic camps: imperialism and the socialist camp.

On a world scale the Castroist leadership mixes up and makes an amalgam of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat and the conflict between these two camps. In its views, to really fight today against imperialism is to fight for socialism, which means to unite with the socialist camp and fight for its internal unity.

The international resolution of the Cuban CP emphasizes "the need to continue working unreservedly for unity of action by the three great forces of modern revolutionary process: socialism, the international workers' movement, and the national liberation movement." It states its commitment to "struggle against the imperialist strategy of breaking up the revolutionary movement, opposing all efforts to divide these forces. . . ."

Thus, by making an amalgam of the interests of the world proletariat and oppressed peoples with the interests of a

supposedly homogenous "socialist camp," one is led to subordinate the interests of the proletariat to those of the bureaucracies in power in the workers states, and especially the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

This is the logic of an analysis of the world situation made by using the distorted lens of the "two camps" view and not taking into account the existence of bureaucracies with their own specific interests that are different from those of the workers.

There seems to be a total contradiction between an internationalist policy of extending the revolution in Central America and alignment along the lines of the main views of the Soviet bureaucracy. This contradiction is the product of contradictory elements—two decades of growing Soviet influence on Cuban society and the economy, on a genuine workers and peasants revolution with non-Stalinist leadership; and the deep effects the revolutionary upsurge that has already produced the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution has had on the Cuban workers state and its leadership.

But a contradiction of this type and scope must necessarily be temporary. How it will be resolved depends not only on these factors, especially on the progress or setbacks of the Latin American revolution, but also on the internal dynamic of the Cuban revolution. This dynamic—as we shall see—is itself marked by numerous deep contradictions.

"People's Power" and Socialist Democracy

People's Power is a network of institutions installed since the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in 1975. The system of People's Power illustrates the internal dynamics of Cuban society and the relationship between the Castroist leadership and the masses.

* * *

By now it's midnight. The meeting to hear the report back on activities by the delegate to the municipal People's Power assembly from this district of Boyeros, on the outskirts of Havana, began more than three hours ago. About two hundred people are meeting, as they do every three months, in this hall, open to the wind. The atmosphere is lively. The chairperson often must call the participants to order.

On the wall are a picture of Che Guevara and two banners. One banner says "The Right to Recall: A Basic Aspect of Proletarian Democracy"; the other states that "The Delegate is Not Your Boss. You Elected Him, You Can Recall Him."

An hour later the meeting ends. In addition to the delegate's initial report on the activity of the municipal Assembly of People's Power and his activity as the

district's representative, seven other points have also been discussed, four of them raised by people in attendance.

The discussions dealt with problems concerning roads, the enlargement of a playground, a poorly stocked shop, an incompetent official in charge of a local cafeteria, shortcomings of the commission elected to oversee distribution of cement. While the subjects discussed were of a purely local character, they were among those that affect the daily life of the meeting's participants.

The Delegate is Not Your Boss

At the end of the meeting, Emilio, the delegate, seemed satisfied. "Between this assembly and the one last week [report-back meetings are held twice to allow more people to participate] nearly 75 percent of the voters attended. The problems they raised are real ones, and they proposed constructive solutions. Now it is up to me to see that they are directly carried out or discussed in the municipal assembly."

The 174 municipal assemblies on the island are the basic local structure of People's Power. The assemblies are responsible for applying the laws, and they

organize and regulate municipal life. They are responsible for the organization and functioning of the bodies that regulate all spheres of social and economic activity on the municipal level. They also appoint, replace, or dismiss the municipal officials and directors of local enterprises. Finally, they elect, and can remove, judges of the People's Courts within their jurisdictions.

These functions, which are the most important ones although there are numerous others as well, reflect a desire for large-scale decentralization after the overcentralization—"centralized bureaucratism" as it is commonly called in Havana—that prevailed during the first fifteen years of the revolution.

The municipal assemblies are composed of anywhere from 30 to 200 delegates who, like Emilio, each represent a district with an average of 500-600 voters. When it is time to nominate candidates for delegate to the municipal assembly, the districts are broken down into from two to eight zones.

Each zone holds a general assembly at which candidates for delegate are nominated by members of that zone, and no one else. A vote is taken, and the leading candidate becomes the zone's nominee in the district election. The main criteria in the election are the nominees' individual histories and profiles.

The candidates nominated by each of the zones then become the de facto list of candidates for the whole district. The delegate is elected by the district as a whole, after an "election campaign" that also concentrates on the individual profiles of the candidates. If no one receives an absolute majority in the first round, a second round runoff is held between the leading candidates.

Unless a delegate has a special assignment, he or she is expected to carry out the activity, which is unpaid, outside of regular working hours.

In order to understand the real content of this set of procedures, and to understand the report-back assemblies—i.e. to understand the relationship between the municipal delegate and his constituents, and the relationship between the local People's Power assembly and the masses—you have to begin with the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs).

Committees for the Defense of the Revolution

The CDRs were set up more than twenty years ago to mobilize the population against any imperialist attack. With their five million members (more than 80 percent of the adult population), the CDRs remain the basic mass organization in Cuba. Organized on a block-by-block basis, the CDRs, with their social and "vigilance" activities, and regular meetings for political education and discussion, organize and mobilize the masses.

The people who nominate and elect the candidates, who discuss their activities

and even recall their delegates are not simply passive "voters." They are "citizens organized in the CDRs."

The right to recall delegates, which has been used several hundred times since the establishment of People's Power, would never have been possible if the masses were not organized in the CDRs.

But on the regional and national levels of People's Power, the situation is completely different. The delegates or deputies to the regional and national bodies are elected solely by the municipal delegates. They are not necessarily members of the municipal bodies that elect them and that they are supposed to represent.

A significant proportion, although a minority, of the candidates for the higher bodies are directly nominated by the central party and state apparatus, on grounds of having a needed level of "competence."

Under these conditions, the report-back meetings and the control over the activities of the delegates to higher bodies, as well as the nomination procedure and the right of recall, remain very largely rights in "form" only, and are not really subject to control by the masses.

The system for choosing candidates for the municipal assemblies—with nominations made by voters' assemblies of small zones—limits the possibility for the party apparatus to manipulate the nominations. But the party does in fact have the initiative when it comes to nominations for the regional and national assemblies.

Then there are the criteria used to choose the candidates at every level. The criteria are always biographical, featuring devotion to the revolutionary cause, and never political. They could not be political since there is no debate over perspectives.

Locally, in the district and the municipal assembly, it is very natural that the moral criterion of devotion to the revolution seems necessary and sufficient to the voters. It works well for the main tasks on that level—to run things as well as possible and resolve the mass of problems of every sort that arise.

On the regional, and especially the national level, having a good personal history and devotion to the revolution, while not unimportant, are not very weighty in the absence of other political criteria. It is then easy, and quite common, to confuse devotion to the revolution with devotion to the apparatus, to the leadership; to confuse devotion with blind following. Several times Fidel Castro has attacked this mechanism.

But being a follower seems to be a prerequisite qualification to be a member of a provincial or the National Assembly of People's Power. The role of those bodies is to register and give legal form to the decisions made by the real leadership of the country: the party's political bureau and the secretariat.

This assessment is confirmed by the fact that the sessions are very short, no matter

how important the documents being discussed, and by the small number of speakers and the formal nature of the discussions.

People's Power and Socialist Democracy

In the municipalities and their neighborhoods, People's Power expresses the ongoing character and depth of the mobilization of the Cuban masses. Even more than the endless marches and gigantic rallies, it provides evidence of the massive, and often enthusiastic, support the Castroist leadership still enjoys. It illustrates this leadership's desire to maintain and even expand this mobilization, its consciousness that that is where its basic strength comes from.

People's Power is also an attempt by the leadership to turn this mobilization into an instrument of struggle against what it calls "bureaucratism," meaning administrative inefficiency, wastage, incompetence, and the "small privileges" of numerous local cadres.

But when you go beyond the municipalities and their districts, when you go beyond the problems of "the application of policies," People's Power loses all its sub-

stance because it remains the product—and the instrument—of the Cuban leadership's paternalistic conception of its relationship to the masses.

As a result of its paternalistic conception, it tried to eliminate inefficiency and waste—typical products of decisions imposed on the masses from above—without a system of socialist democracy in which the decisions are made by the producers themselves through mechanisms of genuine workers' power.

Furthermore, the combination of a single-party regime and the impossibility, in practice, for currents of thought to express themselves within the party—as is the case in Cuba—is incompatible with a system of socialist democracy.

People's Power is the product of this combination, despite everything within it that is positive for the Cuban masses. It would be wrong to see it as the embryo of real workers' power.

Twenty-two years after the victory, it remains, above all, the institutionalized form of a unique relationship between the leadership of a revolution and the masses—unique in terms of its level and its long duration.

Economic Gains and Options

An educational system put in place in the course of two decades, unequalled in any country under imperialist domination. A ratio of medical facilities and medical personnel that, in many areas, is higher than the average in France. These are some of the gains of the Cuban revolution, for all its bureaucratic deformations.

* * *

"What surprised me most? Not seeing any children in the streets during school hours . . ." The man pauses, as if surprised, almost shocked by his answer.

A business lawyer in Bogotá, conservative politician and anti-communist, he is not on Cuban soil by choice. As a passenger on a Colombian airplane hijacked to Havana in December, he visited the city while waiting to get back to his country.

Is he, perhaps, thinking for the first time in his life about those tens and tens of thousands of famished infants wandering around the cities of Colombia, looking for food and shelter?

Is he, perhaps, recalling one of his countless speeches about "Colombia, land of freedom" and "Cuba, island of the Gulag"?

The content of the U.S. organized and financed anti-Castroist propaganda that has flooded the entire Latin American media for twenty-two years evaporated in the face of the reality.

The Extraordinary Becomes Common

There are no children loitering in the

streets of Havana because the revolution has defeated illiteracy—which totalled about 50 percent of the population before 1959. It has trained massive numbers of teachers, built schools and institutes. The educational system put in place in the course of two decades is unequalled in any country under imperialist domination.

At the end of the 1979-1980 school year 98.5 percent of the children finishing primary school began their secondary education. Two years from now the first three years of secondary schooling will be compulsory. This year more than one Cuban out of three is receiving an education. And from kindergarten to university, including the very numerous courses for adults, education is completely free, including materials, books, transportation, and often meals.

In terms of health care the gains are just as remarkable, if not more so. The ratio of medical facilities and personnel to population is higher than the French average in many respects. For example, in France there are 135 doctors per 100,000 people, while in Cuba there are 159 doctors per 100,000. This has made possible the installation of a medical system that has an increasingly preventive character, and it is totally free of charge.

The result has been dramatic progress in health care: beginning with the drastic reduction in infant mortality. The average life expectancy of a Cuban has leaped by a number of years since 1959, to the point that it now equals that of economically

more "developed" countries: 74.5 years for women, 71.5 years for men.

In addition to health and education, the positive progress of the Cuban revolution in its bitter struggle against economic "underdevelopment" and its social effects has been considerable.

An old construction worker I saw in Matanzas illustrated that. To the applause of the future residents, he unfurled a banner on top of an apartment building in the course of construction. The banner said: "The revolution is when the extraordinary becomes an everyday occurrence."

Individual Consumption and Collective Consumption

Clearly, given the lack of infrastructure and resources, and the effects of the imperialist-imposed blockade, the systematic emphasis given to collective consumption has made it necessary to sacrifice individual consumption.

A minority of Cubans, apparently a small minority, sharply questions this decision and the restrictions that flow from it. It's this minority that provided most of those who wanted to leave for the United States. People who are motivated more by the "opulence" of the supermarkets of Florida or Texas, as related by relatives who have already emigrated, than by ideological or political considerations.

"Even if I have to work fourteen hours a day over there, even if I'm despised because I'm Latino, I want to leave. In Miami I'll work for myself and not for the state, not for the others. And I'll be able to buy what I want, a car, a stereo. Here that's impossible." A young technician, son of a professor at the University of Havana, made this confession after asking if we had a tee-shirt with Travolta's picture to sell him.

Nevertheless, the level of wages, the free character and quality of the basic social services, the extremely low prices for numerous food products and basic services mean that the Cuban working class has the highest level of real resources in Latin America—in spite of the restrictions and the rationing. The advantage is more striking for agricultural workers. The people who want to leave are perfectly well aware of that fact: the United States is the only place that interests them.

In spite of exceptionally unfavorable economic conditions (as an appendage of the United States, Cuba produced nothing but sugar and tobacco before 1959), in spite of the absence of energy sources, of raw materials other than nickel, in spite of twenty years of blockade, in spite of errors, too, revolutionary Cuba compares favorably to the other countries of Latin America, to the most industrial among them, to those with the most natural resources, to those with enormous oil income.

Getting beyond superficial images (empty store windows versus full store



Demonstration in Havana, July 26, 1980.

windows in the downtown areas of the capital cities) the superiority of a socialist and planned economy, liberated from imperialist exploitation, from the profit motive, is decisively seen in the progress made in genuinely fighting against economic underdevelopment and its terrible social effects.

Isn't it this above all that imperialism wants to hide from the Latin American masses through its wild propaganda? And yet, at all levels, the economy remains the weak point of the Cuban revolution.

What Reform?

Because of the bureaucratic management methods, the consciousness of the masses in the economic sphere has not risen in the same way as on a more immediately political level. Thus we see phenomena such as absenteeism, waste, repeated immobilization of materials and, more generally, very low productivity of labor.

For several years the Cuban leaders have been trying to correct this situation by progressively implementing a network of "reforms" of the system of economic management and decision-making.

"We have taken as a point of reference the reforms initiated in the Soviet Union, based on the works of the economist Lieberman. We have also studied the measures

taken more recently in Hungary, as well as the functioning of industry in Yugoslavia," a very young cadre working on the plan tells us.

He adds that "the objective is to gradually replace a system based on administrative directives with a system based on the objective economic laws that still operate at this stage in the construction of socialism, when the law of value and monetary-commercial relations still exist, even though their content is new."

The resulting big increases in plant autonomy are accompanied by a strengthening of the authority of the manager and the executives, while the union is relegated to responsibility for overseeing the application of the social laws.

The system of production norms becomes the predominant method of organizing labor. The profitability of the plant becomes an essential criterion and the profits that can be made become the instrument for "material stimulation" of the workers: those profits finance a system of bonuses that are added to wages.

If systematically applied, these reforms will—in the short run—result in some improvement in the functioning of the economy. Nevertheless, they are simply a series of technical improvements that remain within the framework of bureau-

cratic management methods.

The bonuses and the other "material stimulants," which are basic instruments for raising productivity, will not contribute greatly to raising the level of the masses' "economic consciousness."

Fundamentally, a rise in the level of consciousness can only be achieved through exercising real control over the management of the economy, combined with a free political discussion on essential perspectives. That involves the possibility of discussions inside and outside the Com-

Bureaucratic Deformations, Democratic Reorganization

Since the conclusion of the Second Congress of the Communist Party, meetings have been being organized to hear reports on it in all the workplaces, in all the neighborhoods. Rank-and-file party bodies, People's Power organs, trade union meetings, meetings of the Federation of Cuban Women, and Committees for the Defense of the Revolution have been discussing Fidel Castro's report and the new tasks that flow from it.

The first task is immediate: Massive organization of territorial militias in response to the new threats that the installment of Reagan as the head of the U.S. government pose for the revolution.

These territorial militias will be auxiliaries of the armed forces. They will be organized in the production centers and residential areas. A call has been made for workers to join by the hundreds of thousands. Everyone will get their weapon through a surprising system: They'll get a weapon after they've done a number of hours of "voluntary work" whose value equals the weapon's price.

Can one imagine a better symbol of the Castroist leadership's intransigence toward imperialism, of its willingness to contribute at whatever cost to the deepening and extension of revolutionary developments in Central America; or a better symbol of its relationship with the Cuban masses?

* * *

We have already noted some of the tremendous results of the struggle against economic underdevelopment and its social consequences. But two short decades of this struggle is a very short time compared to centuries of colonial and neocolonial exploitation.

For a long time Cuban society will still be marked by the limited development of the productive forces, the relatively limited weight of a proletariat with weak cultural traditions, the shortage of consumer goods and products. These are objective factors favoring a tendency toward bureaucratization of the Cuban state and Communist Party.

This tendency is expressed by a layer of

Communist Party. Once again, this is the decisive question, as it was when we analyzed the limits of People's Power.

In the future, therefore, these reforms may have serious consequences on a social level: they may be a source of significant inequality among workers, they may widen the gap between the situation of workers and leading cadres within the plants, and increase existing privileges. In sum, they could be the basis for deepening and systematizing the already existing bureaucratic deformations.

intermediate cadres and leaders who, through their management or controlling positions in the state apparatus (administration, army, economic apparatus) enjoy social privileges. They are the very ones whom Fidel Castro denounced in his report to the Second Congress a few weeks ago:

"At a certain point during this five-year period, it became clear that a number of bad habits were spreading in our country. . . . There were increasing signs that the spirit of austerity was flagging, that a softening up process was going on in which some people tended to let things slide, pursue privileges, make accommodations and take other attitudes, while work discipline dropped."

Still a Limited Phenomenon

While this phenomenon has experienced relative growth these last years, it is still limited in its material content and social breadth.

Moreover, the Cuban leading group is still the same one that led the revolutionary struggle against the dictatorship, and then against imperialist domination and its policy of aggression.

The leadership does not come out of this layer of intermediate cadres. Nor is it the expression of that layer. Even if the thrust of certain of the leadership's political decisions favors that layer, the decisions are primarily made as a function of the immediate and long-range interests of the masses.

In Cuba there is not a crystallized bureaucracy acting as a privileged social layer with its own interests that are opposed to the interests of the proletariat. That kind of bureaucracy is in power in a "bureaucratically degenerated" workers state like the Soviet Union and it's against the powers and privileges of that kind of bureaucracy that the Polish workers mobilized.

In this connection it would be hard to imagine those responsible for and complicit with the massacres of workers in Gdansk in 1970 organizing militias and seeing to it that the majority of the Polish workers are armed, as the Castroist leadership is currently doing.

For all these reasons, when speaking of Cuba, we must speak of "bureaucratic deformations."

But it is not inevitable that these deformations must deepen, that they must be qualitatively transformed into a process of degeneration.

Nevertheless, we should not underestimate factors other than the heritage of underdevelopment that also work in the direction of an increasing tendency toward bureaucratization.

We should bear in mind certain aspects of the "economic reform" that are tied to the installation of the "new management and planning system," which have been previously analysed: increased plant autonomy, the essential role of the managers, the widening differences in income increased somewhat between those "in charge" and the rest of the personnel, growing inequality within the working class.

The series of ties with the Soviet Union is another factor. There is often a tendency to view them simply as economic ties: the daily arrival of a Soviet oil tanker in one of the island's ports, or the enormous quantities of sugar bought at a favorable price, fixed according to criteria independent of the fluctuations of the world sugar market; the long term loans at very low interest, or the grants of military material.

But there are bilateral ties at numerous other levels: politics, science, culture, sports, technology. And above all, the links are forged with this layer of intermediate cadres, whom the Soviet bureaucracy cannot help but influence by putting forward, whatever the differences between the two countries, its own values, methods, and concepts.

The area where this influence of the Soviet bureaucracy is felt with the most serious potential consequences is in the field of teaching: Already social sciences, philosophy, economics, and "Marxism-Leninism" have been taught to entire generations of Cuban students on the basis of Soviet manuals or under the inspiration of Soviet writings.

The Democratic Reorganization

"Our worst enemies could not have done us more damage," Fidel Castro was quick to declare at the end of his denunciation of the "bad habits," quoted above, in his report to the Second Congress.

After such statements, there can be no doubt that the Cuban leaders are convinced of the importance of this kind of problem for the revolution's future. Particularly when Castro adds: "Was our Revolution beginning to degenerate on our imperialist enemy's doorstep? Was that an inexorable law for any revolution in power?"

But they basically see it as a series of individual, personal attitudes and behaviour patterns which they denounce as "bureaucratism." And for many years now

they have failed to analyze this phenomenon as they did correctly at the beginning of the revolution: as a social phenomenon.

The struggle against the tendencies toward bureaucratization, which is a social phenomenon, is nothing other than the struggle for the strengthening and defense of the revolution. It cannot be carried out in a real way on the basis of the paternalistic relations that the Cuban leaders have with the masses.

The struggle against bureaucratization requires mobilizing the masses, within the framework of genuine workers' power, which, based on the transformation and extension of the current structures of People's Power, would insure democratic control of the plan, democratic effective mass participation at all the decision-making levels, not just at the social level.

Call for Full Political Discussion

Iranian Trotskyists Hold Convention

By Janice Lynn

A new revolutionary-socialist party was founded in Iran at a January 22-24 convention. The Workers Unity Party—HVK—was formed by about sixty former members of the two other Trotskyist parties in Iran that are affiliated to the Fourth International—the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) and the Socialist Workers Party (HKS).

The HVK announced its formation in the first issue of its newspaper *Hemmat* (Determination), the appearance of which coincided with the second anniversary of the Iranian revolution. *Hemmat*, scheduled to appear weekly, is edited by Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh, a nearly twenty-year veteran of Iranian Trotskyism, who was the HKE presidential candidate in the 1980 Iranian elections.

"In order for this revolution to survive," the HVK political committee wrote, in the first issue of *Hemmat*, "it must spread, throw off the yoke of imperialism, uproot capitalism and feudalism, and establish a workers and farmers government."

The HVK noted that the workers *shoras* (committees) were the "heart of the revolution," mobilizing workers in the anti-imperialist struggles, in the resistance to the imperialist-backed Iraqi invasion, in defense of workers' rights, and in the campaign to increase production for the war effort.

The *shoras* and other organizations thrown up by the revolution are attempting to construct a society in the interests of the majority, *Hemmat* noted.

"The *shoras* must be armed with a program that can broaden and unite them,

First of all that means recognizing and organizing freedom of expression and organization inside and outside the Cuban Communist Party.

That kind of "democratic reorganization" would give considerable impetus to the construction of a socialist society. Drawing its strength from the mobilization of the Cuban masses, but drawing also upon the revolutionary developments of other Latin American countries, it would, in turn, constitute a new and decisive contribution by the Cuban revolutionaries to the liberation of the continent. It would strengthen them against all their enemies, against their false friends.

The real battle to defend the Cuban revolution, a permanent task for revolutionary Marxists, also means calling for such a reorganization. Cuba sí! □

and attract the majority of people to a working-class solution—the only way to win the war and the revolution," *Hemmat* wrote.

The HVK called for:

- Defense of the Iranian government against any imperialist invasions or counterrevolutionary plots;

- The political and military mobilization of all workers and toilers, including military training and the formation of the army of 20 million in the cities and countryside;

- All economic forces to be used in the war effort; a state monopoly of foreign trade; and nationalization of imperialist capital;

- Increases in wages as prices increase and opening the books of the factories for the workers inspection;

- Workers *shoras* to draft the labor laws; against firing workers for political reasons; democracy in the *shoras*;

- The right of poor peasants to land and the immediate implementation of the government's land distribution program;

- Respect for the national rights of the Kurdish people and other oppressed national minorities; arming of the Kurdish people against the Iraqi invasion; and military unity among Kurds, the army, and Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) to counter the Iraqi invasion and imperialism's threats;

- Equal rights for women workers; an end to all discrimination against women; and the military mobilization of women for the war effort;

- Freedom of expression, freedom of the

press, freedom of association and organization, and the release of all anti-imperialist political prisoners;

- The extension and unification of the *shoras* and a congress of workers' *shoras* to formulate policies for winning the war; and

- A workers and peasants government.

The HVK convention was the first convention of the Trotskyist movement in Iran since the overthrow of the shah. The HVK had urged a united convention with the HKE and HKS, but this proved not to be possible.

One of the decisions of the HVK convention was to call for political discussions among all the Trotskyist forces in Iran to lay the basis for a principled unity in order to build the Iranian section of the Fourth International.

These discussions would include the questions of defense of the Iranian regime against the imperialists and the Iraqi invasion; the strategic course and specific demands needed to mobilize the workers and farmers to advance their interests; and defense of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination against the Iranian regime's military offensive.

Representatives from both the HKE and the HKS attended the HVK convention to present their views.

The HVK's tasks and perspectives resolution stressed the importance of HVK members getting into industry, and active participation alongside the anti-imperialist workers in the resistance movement against Iraqi aggression through the mass organizations of the working class.

It also voted to make the campaign for the release of HKE member Nemat Jazayeri a priority. Jazayeri was subsequently freed from prison on March 3. □

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Statement of the Fourth International

Poland: Advance of the Workers and the Bureaucracy's Reply

[The following statement was adopted by a majority vote of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on February 1].

* * *

I

Since the end of November 1980, changes have occurred in the situation in Poland caused by the tremendous rise in workers militancy, their independent organization beginning in July-August, and the important victories gained by the working class as a result of the Szczecin, Gdansk, and Katowice agreements. These changes can be summarized by four points.

1. The radicalization of the working class continues, especially among the young workers and the workers in large enterprises.

Despite heavy government and media pressure, Solidarity's January 24, 1981 appeal to stop work was a big success. This was called in order to force implementation of the August agreement that recognized the five-day workweek. Eighty percent of the workers in big factories remained at home.

The workers have gone further than the August agreements, carrying out direct action for the legal recognition of Rural Solidarity. In Rzeszow, they went on strike in support of their small-farmer allies.

The workers have moved to more radical forms of action, such as the occupation of public offices, in order to obtain the dismissal of corrupt and incompetent local and regional state and party officials, including a minister and a former regional party secretary. In the southwest of the country (the Bielsko-Biala region), around Jelemlia Gora, a strike having this aim broke out. Factory managers have been dismissed by the workers.

The bureaucracy's provocations, such as its refusal to give the independent trade unions access to the mass media or attempts to censure Solidarity's press organs, are beginning to meet with militant resistance: four-hour strikes in Lodz and Bialystok on January 27, militant actions in Wroclaw, and strikes in Szczecin that prevented all the official media from appearing.

All these movements objectively express the incompatibility between the workers' massive independent organization and the tendency towards self-management on the one hand, and the bureaucracy's monopoly of political power on the other hand, as well as the growing consciousness of this

incompatibility by larger and larger sectors of the working class.

The mass movement is on an upswing. On the whole, all the workers' struggles continue to be victorious, even though some partial compromises have had to be made.

2. Simultaneously, the Kania leadership of the bureaucracy, pushed on by the Kremlin and its bureaucratic allies in Eastern Europe, started a concerted counter-offensive.

For the first time since the August agreements, the militia intervened against the workers in Nowy Sacz and Ustrzyki Dolne, driving them out of occupied buildings. The implementation of some key points in the August agreements (the abolition of censorship, the access of Solidarity to the mass media) is being denied or postponed.

There has been no recognition of Rural Solidarity—the powerful expression of a workers and farmers alliance—especially in the region populated by poor farmers and the rural semiproletariat, as in southeast Poland around Rzeszow.

The prosecutor general has threatened editors and collaborators of publications that appear without being censored with legal action and arrest. There have even been threats to declare a state of emergency. The Kremlin openly challenges the Polish workers' major gain—the right to strike.

While the bureaucracy's provocations undoubtedly accelerate the radicalization of large sectors of the independent workers organizations, they have a clear strategic purpose.

With the full support of the Church hierarchy, and many neo-ZNAK "reformist" Warsaw intellectuals who act as "advisers" for Solidarity, the Kania wing of the bureaucracy tries to demoralize the workers by making it appear that the independent trade unions cannot get any economic, material advantages for them. The bureaucracy does not hesitate to openly use economic sabotage to attain that goal.

The Kania current tries to divide Solidarity into a radical wing and a more moderate wing, supporting some regional leaders of the independent trade unions. It tries to apply the classical "salami" tactic: first isolating the most radical leaders and advisers of Solidarity; then eliminating them, so it can go on to a more widespread attack against the organization as a whole, once the movement is in retreat and larger sectors of the masses are disoriented

and demoralized.

3. A process of widespread differentiation has begun inside Solidarity. This is partly a result of the internal logic of the objective situation in Poland, and partly a result of the beginning of a counter-offensive by the bureaucracy. But it is also an inevitable product of the initial lack of political clarity and clearly conceived and stated medium- and long-term programmatic goals inside Solidarity, (in contrast to immediate demands, on which there was full clarity and broad unity).

A more radical left wing has appeared among local and regional cadres and leaders, while a wing more openly ready to collaborate with the bureaucracy has appeared at the opposite pole. In between there are many intermediary positions vacillating between these different currents, which are best exemplified by Lech Walesa.

In spite of his immense popularity and authority, rightly gained by the extraordinary determination he showed in the August-September period, Walesa is now starting to waver under the contradictory pressure of the Catholic Church hierarchy and the "liberal" wing of the bureaucracy on the one hand, and the growing pressure of a more and more militant rank and file—not only in Gdansk, but also in Warsaw, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Wroclaw, and other regions—on the other hand.

The lack of any centralized, or nationally circulated news on what is happening in the factories and in the unions, is also another objective factor accounting for this differentiation.

4. Lastly, the tremendous rise of workers' self-confidence, independent organization, and desire for workers democracy has begun to have deep repercussions inside the Communist Party (the Polish United Workers Party—PUWP). This was inevitable, given the size of the workers' upsurge and the size of the PUWP itself. This is a key change that has taken place in the situation.

While the different wings of the bureaucracy obviously pursue the same goals of safeguarding the bureaucracy's monopoly of power, powerful rank-and-file tendencies have appeared inside the PUWP which are fighting, not only for a total reorientation of the CP's policies, but also for a democratization of the party. The focal point of this tendency is the struggle for a special party congress, for which local activists have already started to elect delegates on a democratic basis, despite the explicit instructions of the Central Committee. This

has taken place in cities such as Lodz, Poznan, Torun, and others.

The most left-wing tendencies inside Solidarity are made up of a significant number of PUWP oppositionists. This growing rank-and-file pressure inside the CP will inevitably give rise to a new deepening of the differentiations inside the bureaucracy. But at present, no central figure and no wing of the top bureaucracy supports the radical demands of the workers or those of the left-wing oppositionists inside the PUWP. The Polish bureaucracy, and especially Moscow, must assure at all costs that the coming PUWP congress opens the process of "normalization" inside the PUWP as well.

II

The plans of the Kania-led CP bureaucracy are presently supported by the Catholic Church hierarchy, a sector of the reformist intellectuals, and the wing of Solidarity's leadership that they influence. This is a powerful convergence of forces, whose possibility of influencing large sectors of the toiling masses should not be underestimated. These plans are essentially based on two arguments, which are repeated again and again by all the mass media and are also expressed inside the independent trade union movement by conciliationist forces.

These arguments are: the material impossibility of granting economic conces-

sions to the workers and farmers, given the sad state of the Polish economy; and the impossibility of granting any more political concessions to the workers other than the legal recognition of Solidarity, without provoking a military intervention by the Kremlin. Therefore, it is necessary to stop strikes and militant actions and replace them by eternal negotiations and more and more rotten compromises.

The aim of these arguments is to divide and demoralize the workers, to show them that all future struggles will come to nothing, and could even lead to the gains of August 1980 being taken back one by one.

In spite of their apparent "common sense" character, these arguments are

Polish Communist Party Leaders Delay Test of Strength

[The following article appeared in the February 16 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*, published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*]

* * *

The accompanying statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was written before the results of the eighth plenum of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) Central Committee were known. The outcome reveals that the position of the Kania wing was strengthened.

Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski was named prime minister, while retaining his position as minister of defense. And several supporters of a "dialogue" with the Solidarity trade-union federation were given vice-premierships—particularly the chief negotiator of the Gdansk agreement, and Rakowski the editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper *Politika*.

This confirms that the top ranks of the bureaucracy do not feel strong enough to test their strength right now against the massive, organized movement of workers, students, and farmers. They prefer to approach things indirectly, win some time, spread things out, and count on attrition, divisions, and exhaustion among the workers, in order to begin the "normalization" process.

But in no way does this signify a new retreat by the bureaucracy. On the whole, the situation remains as it is described in the statement.

On one hand, the independent mass movement continues to organize and consolidate itself, winning some partial victories. The Bielsko-Biala strike that won recognition of the farmers' right to

form an association independent of the government (although not a trade union), and the recognition of a students' independent union are two examples of these partial victories.

But the government continues to take back with one hand what it gives with the other. It continues to challenge the Gdansk, Szczecin, and Katowice agreements; and it continues to try to restrict Solidarity to actions around "pure" material and economic demands, which is obviously impossible in a nationalized and planned economy like Poland's, where every economic problem automatically touches on political questions.

At the PUWP's Central Committee plenum, Kania and Jaruzelski continued to hammer away at the "antiso-cialist and counterrevolutionary" elements who are "manipulating" the 10 million Solidarity members. They did this despite the fact that the leaders and advisers they characterize as such—especially Karol Modzelewski and the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR) representatives—have issued many conciliatory statements, and stated and restated daily that they will in no way oppose the PUWP's exercise of political power or Poland's membership in the Warsaw Pact.

Kania and Jaruzelski, moreover, are being pushed hard by the Kremlin, which doesn't think twice about denouncing the entire Solidarity organization—some 80 percent of the Polish working class—as "counterrevolutionary." It is possible that Moscow may have to tone down its language in the near future. The reports at the Soviet Communist Party Congress, which is about to open, will be revealing on this question.

But no one doubts that the very existence of a mass workers organization that is independent of the Polish state and the bureaucracy and is capable of taking action and exercising the right to strike, is structurally incompatible with the survival of the bureaucratic dictatorship. The Kremlin understands this perfectly well and it acts on this basis. Any hesitation has to do with the pace, forms, and time span of normalization, not with the need to rein in Solidarity—that is, destroy it—as the independent and democratic representative of the working class.

In this context, the conciliatory statements by national Solidarity leaders and KOR representatives are understandable. They want to exhaust all the mechanisms of negotiations, so that the movement's strength will not be eroded in repeated partial strikes. But it must be stressed that Solidarity's strength, growth, and future depend in large measure on its ability to remain the voice of the *entire* working class.

Not giving active solidarity to any sector of the movement or to the radical elements or "dissidents" against whom the bureaucracy takes aim, will cause deep divisions inside the working class, whose radical sectors are not ready to give up to Kania's "salami" tactics. Any excessive centralization of the union and any retreats on the issue of internal democracy and the rights of the rank-and-file would have even more disastrous effects.

The coming weeks will show the extent to which the masses' tremendous combativity—which has not been broken by the very difficult winter period—can thwart the bureaucracy's maneuvers and the waffling of the national trade-union leadership itself.

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utterly unfounded and can be easily refuted. It is simply not true that there is no material basis for a considerable improvement in the workers' living and working conditions.

The best example of the barefaced lies the bureaucrats are spreading is the argument that granting a five-day workweek would automatically entail a 10 percent reduction in production. This is totally refuted by concrete investigations conducted by workers in many workplaces, which have shown in facts and figures that any loss in output through a reduction in working hours can be more than offset by eliminating bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy.

For example: by stopping the discontinuity in the flow of raw materials and energy, which means that many machines remain idle part of the week; by stopping bureaucratic waste and theft, which means that a significant part of the actual output does not reach normal distribution within the framework of the planned economy; and correcting the unbelievable disorder, and lack of proportion and equilibrium within Polish "planning," which could be better characterized as "non-planning."

If the bureaucracy refuses to recognize these obvious facts, let them "open the books" of the national economy to Solidarity and to the entire working class! Let the Polish workers and small farmers extend workers control on a national level! Let Solidarity work out and present before the mass media an economic counterplan that concretely shows how it is possible to assure better living and working conditions for the masses without any reduction in production.

It is not true that an increasing "moderation" of Solidarity's leadership and a gradual abandonment of all democratic demands and all demands for radical change with respect to economic management, will be a sufficient deterrent to military intervention by the Kremlin. This argument would only hold up if the objective factor of the rise and massive radicalization of 10 million Polish workers is disregarded.

And no moderation, even that of a "skillful" tactician, is going to stop the workers on the road towards gaining complete control over their economic, social, and political conditions.

For this reason, whether such an intervention actually occurs or not, and at what moment it occurs, depends upon the Soviet bureaucracy's judgement of the advantages and disadvantages of such an intervention from the viewpoint of defense of the conservative bureaucratic caste's power and privileges. That judgement is strongly influenced by the evolution of the relationship of forces inside Poland, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union itself, and on a world scale.

Everything that weakens the unity and cohesiveness of the Polish proletariat, even

without successfully breaking its basic militancy, can only objectively favor a military intervention by the Kremlin, as it would reduce the price the Kremlin would have to pay for it.

A policy of "moderation" and conciliation by the trade union leadership, which in and of itself cannot halt the upsurge of the Polish masses, would have the precise effect of disorienting and demoralizing one sector of the proletariat, even though other sectors would continue to radicalize. Let us not forget that in Czechoslovakia, the Dubcek leadership followed a similar policy of "moderation" and this did not at all prevent the Kremlin from intervening militarily.

Conversely, everything that increases the unity, cohesiveness, and determination of the free trade unions as a whole, can only convince the Kremlin that in case of military intervention, every Polish factory will become a center of resistance.

Guns can achieve many things. But they cannot force 12 million workers who refuse to do so, to collaborate with a hated management or to work harder—except by resorting to extreme terror and a bloodbath on a scale which the Kremlin did not even dare to carry out in Hungary in 1956, not to mention Czechoslovakia in 1968.

So a resolute defense of workers' interests, a resolute struggle for the full implementation of the August agreements, and for a national program of workers control, and the strengthening of the worker-farmer alliance is a powerful, although by no means sufficient, deterrent to military intervention.

A strong worker-farmer alliance—through the legalization of Rural Solidarity and "farmers self-management"—could lead to a solution of the food crisis. Today, this means that while defending the small farmers' right to own their own farms, they will begin to understand and implement the advantages of free cooperation and collective ownership of tractors and other modern agricultural implements, because "self-management" on one-hectare farms just doesn't make sense. In any case, this could be a much more powerful weapon than an unprincipled policy of conciliation.

It is worth noting that up to now, Kania's line has not been able to stop the growth of workers' struggles, nor prevent them from being victorious. So, his credibility in the eyes of the bureaucracy and the Kremlin is quickly eroding, as is the credibility of the "conciliationist" elements within Solidarity.

In this context, the forces within the Polish and Soviet bureaucracies who favor open repression (like the Olszowski-Grabski wing in the PUWP), who are conscious that a situation of dual power is beginning to spontaneously develop in the country, can only grow stronger.

III

It must be stressed that world imperialism and the international bourgeoisie have significantly changed their attitude towards the social and political struggles unfolding in Poland.

For revolutionary Marxists, it was clear from the beginning that imperialism feared the tremendous upsurge of militancy and independent organization by the Polish working class, which is as explosive for the capitalist system as for the bureaucratic dictatorships. The example of the Polish workers can easily inspire workers in Western Europe and elsewhere, as it can inspire and serve as an example to workers in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China.

While at the beginning, imperialism covered up for this fear by making verbal declarations of sympathy with the Polish workers and used their justified fear of military intervention by the Kremlin to step up its anticommunist hysteria as a justification for an intensified arms race, things radically changed when the five-day workweek became a central issue in the struggle in Poland.

This change in attitude came about not only because the struggle for a shorter workweek is today the central focus for workers defending themselves against the onslaught of the capitalists and their governments throughout the world (especially the struggle for a thirty-five-hour workweek in Western Europe), but above all because the Polish bureaucracy owes Western banks some 20 billion dollars.

The bankers and the International Monetary Fund, anxious about their "assets," exercise a growing pressure upon the Polish bureaucracy to take all "necessary measures to be sure the goods are delivered," i.e. imposing austerity measures upon the Polish working class instead of granting it new economic concessions.

This was confirmed quite openly by a January 10-11, 1981 *International Herald Tribune* editorial and by an article written by a key economist in the January 25-26, 1981 French daily *Le Monde*, which preached "moderation" for the Solidarity leadership, exactly as did the pope, the Polish Catholic hierarchy, the Kania wing of the Polish bureaucracy, and the Kremlin. They urged them to abandon the "unrealistic" goal of immediate implementation of the five-day week. The Soviet news agency Tass also approvingly quoted the conservative statements made by French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing on the events in Poland.

This is an additional reason why the international working class, its trade unions, and especially the CP-led unions in Italy, France, Spain, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere, must give full and unconditional support to the Polish workers' just demands for a forty-hour week. This is also further reason why Solidarity should make

seeking fraternal solidarity from these unions and their members a priority. This in turn would create additional embarrassment for the Kremlin if it decided to launch a counterrevolutionary intervention.

It should be noted in this context, that most of the CP's throughout the world—from the Hungarian to the Cuban, from the Italian and French to the Mexican and Brazilian—have aligned themselves with the Kremlin-inspired Kania line of trying to break the workers' upsurge by rallying together all the conservative forces inside Poland.

All these CP's characterize large sectors of Solidarity as "antisocialist" and "counterrevolutionary." This politically prepares the ground for military intervention by the Kremlin. It is for this reason also that audacious initiatives and appeals for solidarity with the Polish workers, directed towards CP-led unions inside and outside the workers states, are so urgent.

IV

One of the key weaknesses of Solidarity and its active membership is the fact that, while their enemies know what they want and apply a consciously worked out and deliberate strategy to get it, the militant workers, the radicalized young workers, the radical left among the intellectuals, and the Solidarity leaders, as well as the left oppositionists inside the PUWP, still operate in a dispersed manner. They have no common, overall program and no clear understanding of the way to politically advance in order to get the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers and poor farmers in the coming, unavoidable confrontation.

There are many reasons for these weaknesses:

- The newness of the movement and the relatively short period of the upsurge, which has not yet allowed for a new, nationally recognized leadership to emerge;
- The regional structure of the movement, which is not compensated by democratically elected, national union structures;
- The ideological confusion created by decades of large-scale depolitization, Stalinist miseducation, and the deep influence of the Church;
- The reactionary role of the powerful Catholic hierarchy, which thanks to the Stalinists, has the prestige of having been the only semi-legal oppositional force for twenty-five years;
- The programmatic confusion that exists among many of Solidarity's radical cadres and among the left wing in general; and
- The absence of a strong, national, democratically centralized structure of the free trade unions which, in the best of cases, will appear only after their first national convention.

In the meantime, the movement must face the onslaught of a well-knit national, bureaucratic apparatus, albeit divided and increasingly unsure of the line to follow.

We believe that at this stage of the movement, these obstacles can still be overcome. But the longer the delay in taking the minimum steps necessary to achieve these goals, the harder it will become to achieve them.

The most important minimum measures to meet the onslaught of all the conservative forces head-on are:

1. Let the central idea of "solidarity" be fully implemented: one for all, all for one! No discrimination, no repression, no exclusion, no administrative dismissal of any cadres of Solidarity! United, 10 million Polish workers can successfully oppose Kania's "salami" tactics. They must be convinced that the campaign against Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik and the campaign against the Gdansk, Warsaw, Szczecin, Katowice, Lodz, Torun, Bydgoszcz, and Radom radicals is a campaign, which if successful, will be the beginning of an overall onslaught to break the independent trade union movement.

2. The beginning of a national, programmatic, ideological-political discussion in the framework of preparing for a truly democratic congress of Solidarity, and to move towards a national unity in action between all the militant, radical forces and the left-wing inside Solidarity, including the oppositional forces inside the PUWP.

In this discussion, the first answers for resolution of the present economic crisis could be put forward. The left, the radicals, the activists, and the left oppositionists of the PUWP should try to map out a concrete program for workers control, workers self-management, and workers power, around which millions of workers and poor farmers can be rallied.

The discussion, which has already begun in Solidarity and in the PUWP, on the need to build a revolutionary party—a real vanguard party that could lead the workers towards the definitive realization of their aspirations—should be advanced.

This is the only way forward towards socialism in Poland and the only way to unmask the slanderous propaganda of the Kremlin and its stooges, which asserts that the defenders of such a program are "antisocialist elements" and "counterrevolutionaries." Meanwhile, the pope, the Catholic hierarchy, and the international banking community have apparently become the supporters, or at least the "loyal allies" of socialism. This will inevitably lead to the need to assure the right to form tendencies inside the trade unions.

To attain these goals, the setting up of a national network able to circulate throughout the country the rich ideological and programmatic discussions taking place would be a big step forward. During the last weeks, this has been going on at a regional level—in the many local and

regional bodies of the union. But this still remains largely unknown to the large mass of Solidarity's membership.

In the same way as the KOR and *Robotnik's* small network prepared and assisted the big strike wave of July-August 1980, just by breaking through the bureaucracy's monopoly on news (censored and full of lies), and informing the workers about what was really going on, the immensely more powerful unions can today break through the barrier that forbids them from having access to the mass media by circulating information throughout the country on the renewed ideological discussions and the radicalization going on at the regional levels.

3. After the present CP leadership failed in its attempt to divide the movement during the battle over free Saturdays, and given the rise in the degree of unity that the working class displayed in this confrontation, the PUWP leadership faces two alternatives. It must either grant important, new concessions to the working class or prepare a military offensive against the worker's movement.

If the party leadership opts for confrontation, a national mobilization of all Polish workers will be necessary. In this situation, the soldiers—just like the workers, farmers, and students—must think about their own independent, democratic organization.

While being conscious of the serious threat weighing upon the Polish workers' great upsurge, we of the Fourth International, along with the mass of activist and radical Polish workers, have no reason to underestimate the tremendous power of the Polish working class. The mass movement continues to be on an upswing. The battle for the forty-hour week, for the abolition of censorship, and for free access by Solidarity and all the tendencies within it to the mass media, can and must be won.

If the left unites, it can carry the overwhelming majority of organized workers and poor farmers in a resolute struggle against the bureaucracy's counteroffensive.

No austerity policy against the Polish workers and poor farmers, who bear no responsibility whatsoever for the economic mess created by bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption!

Forward towards workers control and workers self-management on a national scale!

Forward towards socialist democracy!

Forward towards a counterplan by the workers against the bureaucracy's miserable economic bankruptcy!

Forward towards complete respect and true national sovereignty of the Polish nation!

Forward towards the Polish workers' solidarity with workers' struggles and anti-imperialist battles the world over!

Forward towards full workers power in Poland! □

First Congress of Rural Solidarity Held in Poland

By Jacqueline Allio

[The following article appeared in the March 13, 1981 issue of the French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

POZNAN—"Farmers! Our strength is in unity. Let's follow the example of Workers' Solidarity. Let's not be divided." This was the appeal from the organizing committee of the first congress of the Independent Self-Run Union of Independent Farmers (NSZZRI) Solidarity, which took place in Poznan on March 8 and 9.

The gathering was a unity congress in that it brought together representatives of the different associations that had been established recently. The 490 delegates came from all regions of the country, representing between one-fifth and one-third of Poland's three million independent farmers.

On the platform were Jan Porozniak, the worker who initiated the strike at the Gdansk shipyards; Father Sadlowski, the small, well-known priest from Zbrosza Duza (the only village to have gone on strike in August in support of the workers); and a representative of miners' Solidarity. Their presence symbolized the organizers' desire to do everything possible to strengthen the ties between workers and farmers.

"We do not preach provocation, but there is no question of backing down. This union must exist, it must be legalized. Everything depends on us, on us all," Lech Walesa stated in his opening remarks.

"We will do all we can to help you," added Stanislaw Wondolowski in the name of the National Coordinating Commission (KKP) of Solidarity. But he quickly added: "No, we're not going to help you, we are all going to help ourselves because we have common interests."

The majority of independent farmers work under impossible conditions. No agricultural machines, no spare parts, no fertilizer, no construction material, not to mention the impoverished social services and the discrimination against farmers in regard to retirement and all sorts of allocations.

The objectives of the farmers' union are both simple and ambitious. They are simple in the sense that they aim above all to defend the interests of the union members—to guarantee ownership of the land against the bureaucracy's expectations, and to improve the conditions of life and social position of farmers.

They are ambitious because they call for

the right to "a real self-management that would make it possible to regain the confidence of the farmers, which has been destroyed by years of errors regarding agricultural policy" (NSZZRI Solidarity from the Poznan region).

"We are not antisocialist," a farmer from Torun told me. "Socialism has existed for thirty-five years. It has to be transformed, that's for sure, but we must go forward."

There has not been any decline whatsoever in the combativity of the farmers that was seen in the strikes that took place in southern Poland and in the street demonstrations organized in solidarity by the farmers in a number of cities in the north.

"The regime is making a fool of itself: it refuses to legalize Rural Solidarity, but the government representatives signed the Rzeszow accords with a strike committee 'acting in the name of the founding committee of the independent national union of independent farmers.' It would be good if it yielded!" said one of the leaders of the Rzeszow strike.

There are many who remain optimistic, asserting that it won't be necessary to have a test of strength to force the government to legally recognize Rural Solidarity.

Others, however, are preparing a response. The farmers of the Poznan region are already projecting a total halt to all sales of agricultural produce to state stores if the regime refuses to recognize the farmers' union. They would sell their products directly to the workers in the factories and would directly organize with Solidarity.

One leader stated: "The so-called good will of the authorities toward the farmers, which has filled columns of the press for some time, will be measured by one thing: whether or not they agree to legalize our union."

For many who, even a week ago, were under the illusion that social peace was possible, the events of recent days showed that to "go forward" means an inevitable confrontation with the regime.

But this does not seem to frighten them. Responding to questions from several journalists about what they planned to do if the repressive measures were stepped up, they stated very simply "we will fight."

Other reporters were nervous that the spirit of the farmers did not seem to reflect what the regime was prepared to grant. The little priest from Zbrosza Duza, who was one of the organizers of the press conference, answered them in this way:

"When Lenin began the revolution, he did not ask permission. He charged ahead!" □

The Program Under Discussion

The first national congress of the farmers' union was preceded by a wide-ranging discussion between and within the different organizations. In some cases these regional organizations had even formulated programs, which were then discussed by the participants in the congress and will serve as a basis for writing the program of the new organization.

For example, the union from the Poznan region, after recapitulating the main demands of all the farmers, wrote:

"The union acts in the name of the entire nation. It will support all efforts aimed at increasing agricultural production with the goal of assuring Polish self-sufficiency in food. The union will support the development of democratically elected rural self-management councils. It will do whatever is necessary to fully achieve the cooperative idea in the countryside."

After asserting its willingness to develop exchanges with similar organizations in other countries, and to fight to increase the skills of farmers and improve education in the countryside, the Poznan farmers' union program stated it would "fight for a just relationship between agricultural prices and the prices of the means of [agricultural] production." It also announced that a trade union institute would be established in Poznan to oversee the application of that demand.

Finally, and this is still quite rare in Poland, the group stressed that the "union will take up the defense of the rights of farming women."

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