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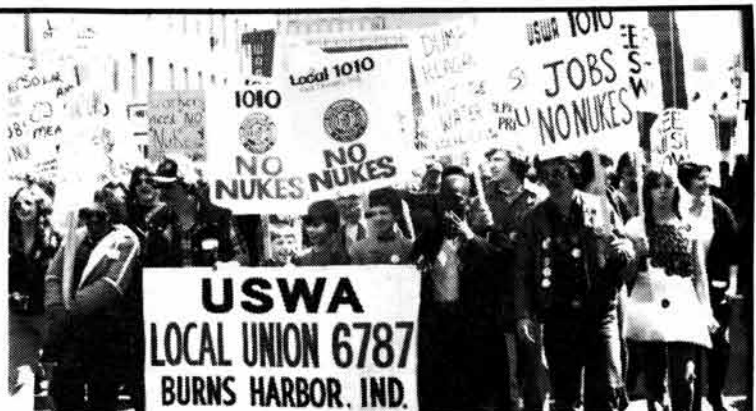
Polish Workers Stand Firm Against Attacks By Regime



Leaders of Solidarity union march with steelworkers during March 27 warning strike.

New Step in Labor Radicalization

U.S. Trade Unions Demonstrate Against Nuclear Power



March 28 demonstration in Harrisburg.

Fred Murphy/IP

Behind Reagan's Massive Naval Buildup

Polish Workers Stand Firm Against Threats

By Ernest Harsch

"We are striking so that we might never again be beaten, jailed or slandered, so that the police will pursue criminals, not unionists," declared a bulletin by the Warsaw strike committee of the 10-million-member independent union federation, Solidarity.

"We are striking to make those in power realize that Solidarity is an inalienable part of Polish life and that any attempt to liquidate it would be the work of traitors or madmen."

"We strike," the bulletin added, "to make clear to people that there is no other way for Poland than through democratic reforms."

Coming on the morning of March 27—as millions of Solidarity supporters downed their tools across the country—the bulletin voiced the determination of the Polish workers to answer the bureaucracy's incessant campaign of harassment and provocation against them, particularly the brutal police beating of several dozen unionists in the northern city of Bydgoszcz on March 19.

Despite increased threats from Moscow of a possible Soviet military intervention and warnings by the Polish government that it may declare a "state of emergency," Solidarity was not intimidated.

Besides going ahead with its March 27 strike, Solidarity warned that it would launch a further, indefinite general strike if the government failed to punish those responsible for the beatings in Bydgoszcz and provide guarantees of the union's right to function.

Faced with this determination, the leadership of the Polish Communist Party remained split over how to deal with the situation. A party Central Committee meeting March 29-30 ended in an apparent standoff between those who favored greater repression and those who counseled negotiations and concessions.

'We Are Not Afraid'

The four-hour "warning" strike on March 27 was the largest organized labor protest against bureaucratic rule yet undertaken in Eastern Europe.

Precisely at 8:00 a.m., factory sirens and church bells throughout Poland announced the beginning of the strike. The national television, instead of its usual morning station-identification insignia, broadcast signs that read, "The strike is on," and "Solidarity."

Miners in Silesia, steelworkers in Warsaw, shipbuilders in Gdansk, factory workers in Wroclaw, Jelenia Gora, Katowice,

Lublin, and towns from one end of the country to the other stopped work and gathered in their workplaces to discuss the police and government attacks on Solidarity.

Eugeniusz Garal, a leader of Solidarity at the Nowotko diesel engine plant, stated, "The issue is upholding the law and showing to this group of people that clings desperately to their chairs and the comforts they have achieved at the expense of society that people see what they are up to and are not willing to tolerate it any longer."

One striker, at a construction site in central Warsaw, told reporters, "We are not afraid. There are too many of us. We are together."

Warsaw and other cities were festooned with banners and red-and-white Polish flags, which have become symbols of the antibureaucratic struggle. A huge banner across the closed gates of the giant Huta Warszawa steel mill proclaimed, "Bestial attack on Solidarity by police and special branch in Bydgoszcz."

The strike was very well organized and disciplined. According to the strike plan, essential services like railways, communications, and health services remained in operation. Dockworkers in Szczecin unloaded ships that carried food, but no others.

Universities in Warsaw, Krakow, and Wroclaw also shut down in sympathy with the workers. A large banner reading "Strike" was strung across the main gate at the University of Warsaw, while students and teachers inside discussed Poland's political situation.

Many members of the Communist Party participated in the strike as well (about 1.7 million of the party's 3 million members also belong to Solidarity).

The extent of this support for the strike among the party ranks was even reflected in the Central Committee meeting. One committee member, Janina Kostrzewska, who works in a computer factory in Wroclaw, explained that her local party organization decided to join the strike "even though we were aware we were violating party discipline."

"We read the events in Bydgoszcz as a clear violation of constitutional freedoms and civic rights," she said. "We are part of the working class. We'll never turn against that class. The guilt for the last strike is not carried by the determined workers who went on strike but those who brought them to such determination."

Through the strike, Solidarity conclu-

sively demonstrated that it had the vast bulk of the Polish working class—and most of the population as a whole—behind it. The small caste of highly privileged bureaucrats who rule the country were more politically isolated than ever.

'A Local Incident?'

Just three days before Solidarity held its warning strike, Communist Party chief Stanislaw Kania accused the union of blowing up "a local incident" into "a national affair threatening catastrophe."

But the Bydgoszcz attack was not an isolated or unimportant event. It was part of a persistent campaign by sectors of the Polish bureaucracy to harass and intimidate the union's supporters, try to foster divisions within the Solidarity leadership, and open the way for further attempts to undermine the gains the Polish workers have won since August 1980.

Ever since Solidarity won legal recognition, it has had to fight to prevent the government from renegeing on its promises. It was only after several national job actions and series of regional strikes that it won new pledges that previous accords would be implemented.

When Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed prime minister on February 12, he appealed for "ninety days of peace."

But since then, Solidarity has experienced anything but peace.

- In Lodz, five hospital maintenance workers were dismissed for their union activities, prompting 300,000 workers in that city to strike March 10 for their reinstatement.

- Leaders of the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KOR), including Solidarity advisers Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik, were briefly arrested and placed under "investigation."

- Anti-Semitic leaflets have been circulated by Communist Party members to try to sow divisions among workers. Other leaflets, issued anonymously, have called for assassinations of government officials—an obvious attempt to smear Solidarity.

- Various activists of the independent farmers' union, the 1.3 million-member Rural Solidarity, have been harassed, intimidated, and beaten by the secret police.

A Deliberate Provocation

The attack in Bydgoszcz was the most serious provocation so far.

On March 16, members of Rural Solidarity and an affiliated farmers' organization in Bydgoszcz occupied the provincial offices of the government-sponsored United Peasants Party (ZSL) in order to dramatize their demand for official recognition of Rural Solidarity and for the allocation of greater resources toward agricultural development.

A member of Solidarity's National Coordinating Commission, Jan Ruwelski, was sent to Bydgoszcz to show the union's

support for the demands of the farmers and to help arrange negotiations with the local authorities.

On March 19, a delegation of workers and farmers' leaders was invited to the provincial assembly hall, ostensibly to discuss the farmers' grievances.

Before the farmers' demands came up on the agenda, however, Deputy Governor Roman Bak abruptly adjourned the meeting. Ruwelski protested. He appealed to "the conscience of all those present to stay with us." About forty-five legislators did so, and joined with the unionists to begin drafting a protest statement.

Several hours later, about 200 police stormed into the hall and began beating those present. The police singled out the most prominent union leaders for especially brutal treatment, including Ruwelski and sixty-eight-year-old Michal Bartoszcze, the leader of the farmers' occupation at the ZSL offices.

Several dozen unionists were injured, and three—Ruwelski, Bartoszcze, and Mariusz Labentowicz—had to be hospitalized. Bartoszcze was so seriously injured that he had to be taken to an intensive care unit in a Warsaw hospital.

The local branch of Solidarity immediately condemned this "bloody police beating" of the three activists, and organized a protest strike by more than half a million workers in the region the next day. The strikers raised a banner at the Bydgoszcz offices of Solidarity that read, "90 Days of Peace—Shattered."

In the context of the other recent provocations against Solidarity, union members around the country viewed the Bydgoszcz assault as an attack against the entire union. If unanswered, it would have encouraged the Polish bureaucrats to launch other, even more serious attacks.

'Solidarity Is the Working Class'

The Polish workers' refusal to knuckle under to threats and physical provocations has thrown the bureaucracy into a quandary.

The growing demands for the institution of workers democracy are incompatible with a continuation of the corruption and privileges enjoyed by top government, party, and police administrators—the better housing, vacation villas, special food shops, and other services that ordinary workers cannot get. So the bureaucracy is driven to acts of harassment and intimidation in a desperate attempt to try to preserve its own existence as a privileged social caste.

The Polish bureaucrats also have to take into account the Kremlin's increasingly insistent demands that it take some decisive action against Solidarity.

At the same time, however, the bureaucracy is confronted with its own political weakness within the country. As Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski complained in an interview in the March 28

Zycie Warszawy, the main Warsaw daily, it was "impossible to struggle against a movement that has millions of followers."

These conflicting pressures were clearly expressed during the Central Committee meeting. While some officials favored resisting Solidarity's demands and stepping up attacks against it, others—reflecting the ferment within the party ranks—openly voiced many of the demands being raised by Polish workers and even indicated sympathy with Solidarity.

Albin Swiak, a Warsaw delegate, explained during the plenum, "The feeling is inside the party that we shall not regain the people's trust if we do not oust those who discredited the party and abused power."

"We have to say it openly," declared Ignacy Drabik, a metal factory foreman from Kielce. "Many people holding jobs want to keep them, without active commitment, at the expense of the working class,

and they will use force."

Kazimierz Cypryński, a local party first secretary in Szczecin, explicitly stated what top officials are unwilling to publicly admit: "We must know that Solidarity is in the first place the working class itself."

It is this inability of the Polish bureaucrats to halt the growing movement for workers democracy in Poland that has the Kremlin especially worried. The Soviet bureaucracy knows that the example of the Polish workers could easily spread.

That is why the Soviet press has been publishing stepped-up attacks against Solidarity, including wild accusations that are often contradicted by Polish government officials. That is why Moscow is holding out the threat of a direct military intervention.

But even Soviet troops may not be enough. As Solidarity leader Lech Walesa declared, "Nobody will make us work from the barrel of a gun." □

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U.S. Labor Protests Nuclear Power

By Fred Murphy

HARRISBURG—Nearly fifteen thousand trade-union members and other opponents of nuclear power marched and rallied at the Pennsylvania state capitol here on March 28. It was the first labor-sponsored demonstration against atomic energy ever held in the United States.

Led off by a contingent of striking coal miners and officials from major U.S. unions, the spirited march protested plans to reopen the crippled Three Mile Island nuclear reactor twelve miles southeast of here and expressed solidarity with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in its fight to win a decent contract from the coal bosses.

Contingents from locals of the miners, machinists, rail workers, electrical workers, steelworkers, food and commercial workers, letter carriers, and other unions came from as far away as New Mexico, Texas, and Nebraska, as well as from Pennsylvania and nearby states such as New York, New Jersey, and West Virginia.

Placards supporting the striking coal miners were visible everywhere alongside antinuclear banners.

Other banners showed how the demonstration had united the growing resistance among the U.S. working class and its allies to the two-pronged offensive of war threats and austerity launched by the Reagan administration.

Opposition to War and Racism

A large contingent of activists from the Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador (CISPES) bore signs reading "Money for black lung benefits, not for war!" This was a reference to the miners' fight against threatened cuts in benefits to miners disabled from years of breathing coal dust.

Many marchers sported the green ribbons being worn across the United States to protest the racist murders of Black children in Atlanta, Georgia. A minute of silence in memory of the Atlanta victims was observed at the beginning of the rally.

The demonstration marked the second anniversary of the Three Mile Island accident. On March 28, 1979, the nuclear power plant near Harrisburg suffered a near-meltdown, threatening the lives of tens of thousands in the surrounding area.

The march was initiated and organized by the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment, and had the support of eleven U.S. trade unions representing some 6 million workers. These include the United Mine Workers, International Association of Machinists (IAM), United

Auto Workers, United Furniture Workers, International Chemical Workers, International Longshoremen and Warehousemen, International Woodworkers, and National Education Association (the largest U.S. teachers union).

The Labor Committee was founded at an October 1980 conference in Pittsburgh, attended by nearly 1,000 union members.

In January, a follow-up gathering was held in Harrisburg and launched the call for the March 28 demonstration. It quickly gained the support not only of the antinuclear forces in the labor movement but also of a wide range of environmental and antinuclear organizations.

The October conference and the March 28 protest were the most visible signs of a crucial new development in U.S. politics. Major industrial unions are taking the lead in organizing a fight against the government and the employers on a key social issue.

"Today there's a powerful new social force on the scene," said Labor Committee coordinator Jerry Gordon in his opening remarks at the March 28 rally. "Today, unions representing over six million members are throwing their muscle into the fight for safe energy."

No to Cancer, No to War

Top officials of the miners and machinists unions headed the speakers' list. IAM President William Winpisinger told the crowd that "we're fed up with the old blackmail scheme"—the argument that halting nuclear power means the loss of jobs. "There are a lot more jobs in the coal industry," Winpisinger declared.

The IAM president cited "three reasons" why his union had put its weight behind the March 28 demonstration. First, because 25,000 IAM members are employed in the nuclear industry; "we believe our members have a right to refuse to work in any cancerous cesspool."

Secondly, Winpisinger said, the IAM "has a responsibility to the community and the public" to fight the spread of nuclear wastes. "No responsible trade-union leader in this country is going to commit the public to turning the United States into a nuclear trash dump."

And third, the IAM president said, "our union, as a participant in the world community, has a responsibility to promote peace." He called for opposing not only nuclear power but nuclear weapons as well. Both are being promoted "by the same folks who brought us two-dollar [a gallon] gasoline and the threat of war in

the Persian Gulf," Winpisinger concluded.

"We need to stand fast against the madness of the corporate profiteers. Let's stop 'em right here!"

UMWA Secretary-Treasurer Willard Esselstyn spoke for the union's president, Sam Church, who could not attend because of his involvement in local union meetings that were discussing the proposed new UMWA contract with the coal industry.

"We in the UMWA and in the trade-union movement have learned from our own history of struggling against robber barons and insensitive governments," Esselstyn declared, running down a history of mining disasters and the UMWA's fight for laws to safeguard working conditions in the mines. "More than 100,000 lives have been taken in the mines since the turn of the century, but that's nothing compared with just one nuclear meltdown."

"We must end this folly and end it now," Esselstyn concluded. "Together we will arouse our fellow Americans with the cry, 'Stop nuclear power now!'"

Rail Unions Join Protest

An important new development was announced on the eve of the demonstration. Fourteen railroad unions representing more than 1 million workers endorsed the protest and joined the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment.

At the rally, Donald Sweitzer of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) announced that the rail unions were calling another march in Washington on April 29 to protest Reagan's proposed cuts in passenger rail service and denationalization of the Conrail freight system in the northeastern United States. "The only way we can oppose the Reagan budget cuts," Sweitzer said, "is for us to stand out in demonstrations such as this. We must take to the streets."

Joining the trade unionists on the platform were leading figures from other social movements. They drove home the point that a new unity was being forged between labor and other forces fighting social injustice in the United States.

Former Congresswoman Bella Abzug, a prominent figure in the fight against the Vietnam war and in the U.S. women's movement, pointed out how the Reagan administration was playing up the alleged "threats from international terrorism, from Cuba, from the Soviet Union, and from El Salvador." The "real threat," Abzug declared, "comes from the Reagan administration and their collaborators in Congress and their co-conspirators in the corporations."

Abzug warned that "the same gang of crazies that brought us Vietnam are now talking about limited nuclear war and war in El Salvador." She called for "a coalition of labor, young people, women, minorities, and the elderly" to "fight against Reagan's budget cuts, his increases in military

spending, and the war threat in El Salvador."

James Farmer, a founding leader of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which played an important role in the civil-rights battles of the 1960s, hailed the March 28 rally as part of "the same struggle, the same fight" that was waged by Martin Luther King.

The militancy of the speakers was in tune with the sentiments of the demonstrators. One indication of this was that more than 1,000 people bought socialist literature from Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance activists at the demonstration.

Role of Miners

The miners union played a special role in organizing and building the Harrisburg demonstration. The UMWA has taken the lead in pressing the U.S. labor movement to oppose nuclear power. Its role in the antinuclear struggle reflects the coal miners' overall position as the vanguard in the fight of the U.S. working class against the government-employer offensive.

In the 110-day coal strike of 1977-78, the UMWA dealt a sharp setback to the employers' plans to break a major U.S. industrial union. Since then the miners have continued to show their willingness to stand up to the bosses' attacks.

Besides being the force in the March 28 protest, the miners have also been at the front of the fight against the massive cuts in social spending that the Reagan administration is trying to impose.

On March 9 and 10, 170,000 miners joined a two-day strike called by the UMWA to protest Reagan's threats to sharply reduce benefits paid to miners disabled by "black lung" disease. Eight thousand miners marched in Washington on March 9 as part of the UMWA's protest. This example is now being followed by the railroad unions.

At the March 9 action, UMWA President Church declared, "We're fighting to keep a program that we never thought would be taken from us. We thought we were protected by the laws of this country.

"We should have known that we are only protected by our actions and our strength."

This theme was repeated by speaker after speaker at the Harrisburg rally. Pointing to another example being set for workers the world over, Harrisburg labor leader Jane Perkins said: "We don't believe the industry, the government and their allies anymore. . . .

"It's time to wake up, to recognize what our brothers and sisters are learning in Poland now, that our protection is our solidarity with each other, and our protection is our resolve to continue this struggle. . . ."

Coal Strike

There were fewer coal miners in attendance at the Harrisburg demonstration

than organizers had hoped to see. This reflected developments on another front where the union is also engaged in battle.

The coal miners 1978 contract expired on March 27—the day before the antinuclear rally—and another big coal strike was under way. UMWA members throughout the country were involved in meetings to discuss a proposed new contract on March 28.

The Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) represents the coal industry. It includes some of the biggest corporations in the United States, such as U.S. Steel.

BCOA negotiators had tried to impose a contract aimed at weakening the union and stepping up productivity at the expense of workers' rights. The BCOA tried to impose Sunday work for the first time in the UMWA's history and dismantle the industry-wide pension system.

On many of these "take-away" demands, the UMWA negotiators refused to concede. Talks broke off on March 17. Within forty-eight hours, 12,000 miners in nine states had walked off their jobs.

The spontaneous walkouts alerted the coal bosses to the militant resistance their demands were evoking among the miners. The BCOA hastened back to the bargaining table and withdrew some of its most outrageous proposals, such as Sunday work and pension dismantlement.

The new pact still contained serious union-weakening provisions, however. It opened the way for nonunion contractors to do construction work in the mines and allowed the companies to buy nonunion coal without paying royalties to the union pension fund as has been done in the past.

Such provisions in the proposed contract led to widespread opposition to its ratification as the ranks of the UMWA began their discussions. Union coal miners won the right to read, discuss, and vote on their contracts as a result of a long and bitter struggle inside the union during the late

1960s and early 1970s. A successful movement known as Miners for Democracy ousted the corrupt UMWA bureaucracy, and a broad and militant layer of younger miners gained leadership positions in many locals and districts.

The first step in the current contract discussions was the March 24 meeting of the UMWA bargaining council, made up of representatives from the union's district organizations. The council voted 21-to-14 to go along with the proposed contract. But once the text of the agreement was distributed to the ranks and to local leaders, opposition mounted. In many areas, meetings of local presidents rejected the pact and consigned stacks of contract booklets to bonfires.

Many miners feel confident that since the UMWA has already forced the BCOA to back off from its most outrageous demands, they can win still more concessions. Miners held off a big attack on their union in 1977-78, and they are ready to wage such a fight again if need be.

Solidarity with the UMWA like that expressed by other unions and by environmentalists and representatives of other social movements at the March 28 Harrisburg protest can be the key to further victories by the miners. In turn, this will spur other sectors of the working class to fight harder against the rulers' attacks.

The Harrisburg demonstration, along with the miners' March 9 action in Washington, the planned protest by the rail unions, and the UMWA's refusal to knuckle under to the coal operators, are clear indications of what is happening in the American labor movement.

The ranks of labor are becoming convinced that they have to stand up and fight back against the bosses and their government. The political stance of sectors of the union bureaucracy is beginning to shift under this pressure. And the pace of the class struggle is speeding up. □



Fred Murphy/TP

A Veteran U.S. Socialist Looks at Nicaragua

[The following interview with George Novack, a veteran leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and a contributing editor of *Intercontinental Press*, was conducted in New York on March 5, shortly after Novack's return from an eight-day visit to Nicaragua.]

* * *

Question. Perhaps you could begin by giving us some of your initial impressions of Nicaragua. For example, what was the mood among the people?

Answer. My visit got off to a flying start—my seat companion on the plane to Managua turned out to be the commercial attaché of the Nicaraguan consulate in New Orleans, who was returning home for consultations. His was the first such office the FSLN has set up in this country.

We exchanged views on many matters of common interest, including the progress of the solidarity movement in the United States. He discussed some of the difficulties his government agency was encountering in securing spare parts for machinery from American manufacturers and acquiring enough dollars for the needed purchases in this country.

Every visitor is appalled by the devastation in the center of Managua. This is only slightly mitigated by the few new government buildings, commercial structures, and service stations. The desolate and denuded expanses of so vast an area resembles the South Bronx, magnified manyfold. Yet the city appears tranquil, and, except for the omnipresent militia, little different from that of a Mexican city of comparable size.

The military barracks and the armed militiamen and women indicate how much the people are on guard and ready to meet any kind of aggression. Yet the prevailing atmosphere corresponds to the designation of "Nicaragua Libre."

The people we spoke with felt that for the first time they had conquered the right of free expression. They were resolved to make the most of it. No one refused or seemed afraid to answer the questions we put to them—whether they were ardent supporters of the revolution or critics of it.

This is objectively confirmed by the sharp polarity of views expressed in the three daily newspapers—*Barricada*, *La Prensa*, and *El Nuevo Diario*. People have a genuine sense of liberation after their success in throwing off the straitjacket of Somozaism.

One of the main topics of conversation while we were there was the suspension of the loan for wheat by the Reagan administration. This stupidly insensitive and reactionary act was guaranteed to enrage the

Nicaraguans. And it confirmed their apprehensions about Washington's evil intentions.

They exclaimed, "This is taking the bread out of our mouths! But even if we have to eat bananas, we won't submit to such blackmail."

Q. While you were in Nicaragua, the capitalist press here in the United States began claiming that the Sandinistas were backing off from giving solidarity to the struggle in El Salvador. Did you find any evidence that that was the case?

A. The current disinformation campaign carried in the American press—especially in the *New York Times*—that Nicaragua is slackening its support to the Salvadoran rebels didn't have any credence in Managua.

Solidarity between the two revolutions is very firm, very intense. Both the government and the people have pledged to implement the policy inscribed on so many banners there: "If Nicaragua won, El Salvador will win."

The Nicaraguans know full well that any setback or defeat for the insurgency in the neighboring country leaves them vulnerable to attack, and that victory for the Salvadoran revolution is essential to their own national security and their own future.

Reagan's false hue and cry that the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions are pawns of Havana and Moscow deceitfully conceals the role of Mexico's support to them. I note that this is scarcely mentioned by the media, because it would go contrary to the official propaganda designed to justify stepped-up intervention in El Salvador and pressure on Nicaragua.

As it happened, it was Mexico Solidarity Week in Nicaragua while we were there. (That made my Mexican companion, Arminda Yáñez, doubly welcome wherever we went.)

At the rally on February 21—held in the little town of Niquinohomo, Sandino's birthplace, to commemorate his assassination—the only foreign delegation singled out from the platform was the one representing Mexican President López Portillo.

The rally was attended by nearly all the members of the National Directorate of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. It was a party-building event, for the induction of members into the FSLN. Speakers emphasized that membership in the movement was a privilege without privileges, and that it carried the heaviest responsibilities for serving the people.

Such qualities were evident in some of the FSLN members and supporters we were able to meet and talk with. We encountered

Sandinistas of several generations. We paid two visits to a very remarkable eighty-six-year-old woman, Dr. Concepción Palacios.

She is a heroine of the FSLN. Her father was Sandino's personal physician, and she herself supported most of the Sandinista leaders in Mexico City when they were in exile there. She also harbored Che Guevara when he was in Mexico, and after 1959 he asked her to come to Havana to help organize Cuba's national medical services. (She was also the physician of Arminda's family since the 1930s, so it was a very happy reunion.)

Dr. Palacios told us that when she returned to Managua, she was given a plaque signed by all the Commanders of the Revolution, as well as a house to live in.

She regretted only one thing—that at her age she couldn't be more active. But she did plan to give some talks to women members of the militia.

A Sandinista of middle age that we met was Professor Eduardo Pérez-Valle, a veteran of the "Generation of '44"—student youth who rose up against the Somoza dictatorship in the 1940s. He was an editor of the first publication that told the truth about Sandino's struggle; for that and other "crimes," he had served two prison sentences.

Pérez-Valle is now a teacher of Nicaraguan history at the university, and is attached to the Ministry of Culture to oversee its publishing efforts.

Pérez-Valle's daughter Vilma, a medical student at the university in León, had spent the previous week picking cotton. She told us that all of the students at the university were encouraged to do so.

I asked both Professor Pérez-Valle and the driver of the jeep that took us to the countryside if, when they started their struggle against the dictatorship, they had expected to ever prevail against it.

Both of them stated that this did not really enter their minds. But they felt that they were compelled to involve themselves in the struggle regardless of its prospects. This was encouraging to hear for someone who has been involved for forty-seven years in the struggle to get rid of the American imperialists.

Q. Were you able to attend any meetings of the mass organizations?

A. In our walks through the city we happened upon two trade-union gatherings.

One was at the government printing plant. The speakers there stressed two points. One union leader held up a pamphlet that had been produced in the plant and urged the workers not only to print it but also to read and study it. It was a biography of



Arnold Weissberg/IP

At nationalized sugar mill. From left, George Novack, government technician, *IP* correspondent Matilde Zimmermann, Arminda Yáñez.

Sandino, I believe. He said they should hold educational meetings on its contents.

The other point was an appeal to the workers to volunteer to help with the cotton harvest the following weekend.

Later we stopped by the headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation—the CST—to pick up a copy of *Barricada*. There we chanced upon a meeting of the newly formed bakery workers union.

The organizer was reading the new contract clause by clause and explaining it. This is the first union these workers have had, and the experience of unionism was new to them. He explained the wage rates and other aspects of the contract.

At the end of the meeting the organizer announced that one of their members had been killed at work the night before; they took up a collection for his family.

Q. You mentioned a trip into the countryside . . .

A. We spent one day in an agricultural area, accompanied by Arnold Weissberg and Matilde Zimmermann, the correspondents for *Intercontinental Press*, and guided by representatives from the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform [INRA].

At a farm that was once part of Somoza's domain, we attended an instructive seminar-in-the-fields for about forty or fifty small cattle ranchers, each of which had about ten to fifty head.

They were shown a new species of grass that would provide better and cheaper fodder for their livestock. Then they gathered under the shade of a nearby tree to listen to talks by two veterinarians on the dangers of encephalitis among the horses in the area and what could be done to counteract it.

The veterinarians explained what they were trying to do to track down the cause of such diseases and to counteract them. They

especially urged the ranchers to report any instance of such disease so that it could be quickly isolated.

When one of the veterinarians stated that the disease was coming from neighboring Honduras and Guatemala, a reporter from *La Prensa* inquired, "Are you sure that that's the case? Couldn't it come from Cuban cattle?" This was typical of the needling campaign of that reactionary paper.

After lunch, we went to a nationalized sugar mill, on a plantation also formerly possessed by Somoza. It was quite a sizable installation, and it operated around the clock. Fortunately, we could find out about it from one of the technical superintendents, who had been educated at McGill University in Canada and spoke excellent English.

He explained that they had a quota based upon continuous operation, but in recent weeks had been unable to meet their norms for two main reasons: one, the boilers, which are the heart of the sugar mill, are ancient. One was sixty years old, the other forty years old. They tend to break down recurrently.

The other problem was the lack of enough grappling hooks to lift the cut cane onto trucks for transportation to the mill, which must be fed continuously. He said that these hooks could only be obtained in the United States, and they had not been able to get them.

The mill had about 150 year-round workers, who were unionized. The technician said that workers at the mill, which is a considerable distance from any city, had mostly been illiterate and politically uneducated during the Somoza regime. When the country was liberated and Somoza took off for Miami from his private airstrip at that very plantation, the workers had had unrealistic expectations of what the revolution could immediately do for them. This affected the mill's productivity.

The technician said that wages at the mill had been tripled since the revolution, but that further increases would be tied to productivity. While not being able to provide further wage increases, they would be improving social services at the mill.

Q. Was there a local unit of the FSLN at the sugar mill? How was it organized?

A. The contingent of FSLN members at the mill numbered about thirty. It was not easy to become an FSLN member. An eligible worker had to be approved and singled out by three agencies—his immediate workmates, the union in the mill, and the Sandinista section.

Moreover, the technician told us, it is a very heavy responsibility to be a Sandinista cadre, and not many workers are ready to shoulder all the tasks involved. He himself not only had to supervise the operations in the mill but serve in the militia and even volunteer to pick cotton, along with other activities.

Q. What kinds of political literature did you find circulating in Nicaragua?

A. First of all, I was especially pleased to observe the growing circulation and popularity of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party's Spanish-language magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*. It seems to be widely read and respected among activists in Nicaragua.

Most of the available literature I noticed in Managua came from the Soviet Union, which provides books and pamphlets free of charge to Nicaragua. Among these are the classics of Marxism—works by Lenin, Marx, and Engels.

It should be remembered that among other scarcities in Nicaragua, there is a shortage of political information. For most people, it was nonexistent under the Somoza regime. I asked the driver of our INRA jeep, a Sandinista activist before the revolution, "What did you read in those days?"

"Read?" he responded. "We never read anything. It was too dangerous. Even if we were able to read, all that we knew was what we heard by word of mouth."

There is still a paucity of publications, so *Perspectiva Mundial* is a rich and refreshing packet of views and news from a Marxist standpoint, and as such it is very welcome. There is no restriction by the authorities on its distribution.

Q. You mentioned the circulation of Marxist literature. What were your impressions as to the application of socialist ideas by the leadership and their acceptance by the ranks of the revolution, by the masses?

A. There is a very high level of commitment to the revolution among the masses, but a rather primitive level of understanding its requirements, particularly in the area of ideology. The Sandinista leaders are constantly working to overcome this contradiction. One form this takes is the inculcation of the doctrines of Sandinism.

These doctrines are anti-imperialist to the core, proudly nationalist, and democratic. They are firmly rooted in allegiance to the interests of the workers and peasants. The motto, "Only the workers and peasants will go all the way," is not simply an official slogan but the strategic line in guiding the FSLN, its leaders and followers.

They have shown by their deeds how seriously they take this and how well they understand it. But there is little, if any, explicit propaganda for socialism as a programmatic goal.

They do present the content of socialism indirectly and implicitly, but without designating it by name—often speaking of the "elimination of the exploitation of man by man," for example. And they point to the Cuban revolution as a positive example.

Q. Why is this, do you think?

A. One thing that modifies, or at least molds, the formulations that they present to the public is their genuine concern about forestalling an exodus by the middle class. They're plagued by a shortage of trained personnel in all fields—business, medicine, agriculture, and so on. A brain drain would be very costly at this stage of economic development. It remains to be seen how effective they will be in holding such people in the long run, but what they are primarily motivated by is the short-run emergency they are facing in this year of difficulties.

Moreover, alongside the nationalized sectors of the economy there remain influential capitalist elements organized in the Superior Council of Private Enterprise [COSEP] and in Alfonso Robelo's party, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement [MDN].

The reactionary daily *La Prensa* carries on an unremitting and defamatory oppositional campaign designed to subvert the government and stir up anticommunist, anti-Cuban feelings among the middle-class elements, among the small proprietors, and among susceptible youth.

This has its effects in a certain measure of suspicion—less of the specific actions of the FSLN to date than fear of what it might do in the future. We encountered an example of this in a government official we spoke with. A staunch adherent of the revolution, he seemed untutored in the ideas of Marxism. He had owned fifteen trucks and wondered whether socialism meant the expropriation and prohibiting of all small enterprises.

I told him that the principal task of a workers government was to nationalize the holdings of the agricultural and commercial capitalists and the imperialist corporations who control the commanding heights of the economy. There was no reason why small businesses couldn't continue to function under socialism, so long as they were needed to provide useful services for the people.

Later on I heard several other individuals voice similar concerns.

We talked with four taxi drivers. Two were for the revolution; two were against it.

One of them, in a statement taken directly from *La Prensa* declared that the Cubans were coming in and taking away the wealth of the country. We even heard echoes of apprehension about the influence of the Cubans from a woman Sandinista.

Why does this exist? One reason is that the Nicaraguans are very proud of the sovereignty they have gained and don't want to relinquish an iota of it to any outside force, whether friend or foe. Moreover, they were saturated with anticommunist propaganda under Somoza, which is repeated *ad nauseum* in the bourgeois press and on the capitalist radio stations.

While these attitudes among certain layers—which are not hidden or suppressed—have to be taken into account, they should be viewed in proportion.

What is the real relationship of class forces? The FSLN leadership and party, based on the mass organizations, and militias, is securely entrenched in power. This anti-bourgeois and anticapitalist party is politically sovereign, despite decorative bourgeois representatives in the Council of State.

The FSLN is growing stronger month by month and cementing its ties with the masses. We were told that it is stronger in the countryside than in the cities, because for the first time, the campesinos who make up the bulk of the population see that they have a government that acts on their behalf and does things for them. It brings them—or plans to do so—literacy, drinking water, electricity, schools, medical care, and other social services, and they have high hopes for further improvements.

The government is severely handicapped by insufficient revenues, having heavy foreign liabilities and lack of money for imports. It sorely needs to raise agricultural productivity. That is the only source of accumulation, since it has very little light industry and no heavy industry. It must tackle gigantic tasks with scanty means and insufficient cadres.

We were told that the FSLN has first-rate leaders on the top and willing hands and heads in the ranks, but suffers from a shortage of experienced middle cadres. The youthful and inexperienced recruits will have to be trained for these functions.

Thus the government is in a bind not of its own making. Despite the best of intentions, it does not command the resources to satisfy the rising expectations or even the elementary demands of various sectors of the population. This situation tends to breed a certain amount of discontent that reaction can exploit.

Q. The situation you've begun to describe brings to mind the characterization of the current regime in Nicaragua as a workers and farmers government; it has been described in this way in resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party. Did your firsthand view of the situation provide confirmation of such an analysis?

A. This is a question of considerable theoretical and political importance for the orientation of revolutionary Marxists. In general, a workers and peasants government is a regime thrust into power by a colossal upsurge of the revolutionary masses, which is independent of the bourgeoisie, and which can move forward step by step toward the elimination of capitalist property and the consolidation of a workers state.

Now this is a highly contradictory interim political formation, which serves as a bridge from an exploitative social system to its displacement by its opposite. As such it is inherently unstable, and sooner or later obliged either to go on to become a full-fledged workers state or slide back into the clutches of capitalism and imperialism.

From afar, the FSLN regime appeared to conform to the principal requirements of that kind of government. It had overthrown Somoza's dictatorship in a bloody civil war, disarmed and driven out his mercenaries, confiscated his immense landed and business holdings, armed and mobilized the workers economically and politically, defied U.S. imperialism, nationalized the banking system, extended democratic rights, quelled the counterrevolution, taken control of foreign trade, and established close ties with Cuba and Grenada.

Within the compass of its restricted capability, it has also taken a series of practical steps to improve the conditions of the workers and peasants, and is trying to do more. It was clear that sovereign power was concentrated in the hands of the FSLN, and that its rule rested on the conscious allegiance of the poor.

However, the possessing classes still maintain significant footholds in the economy, and have possibilities to sabotage its operations, even though they remain hostage to the government. And this their followers are trying to do. The class struggle that began with the offensive against the Somoza dictatorship has still to be carried through to the end. While the democratic elements of their revolution are quite effective, the crossing over onto a socialist economic basis is still to come.

This incompleteness of the revolution is reflected among other things in the confusions of the Sandinista ideology. Despite the hospitality towards Marxist literature, there is an absence of explicit official propaganda for socialism as a program and a goal.

What I learned tended to substantiate our appraisal of the character and the characteristics of the Sandinista regime. Pending developments within the country and from abroad are most likely to intensify class conflict and accelerate the fortification of workers power. In any event, that's the course to which the FSLN is committed. As Commander Jaime Wheelock declared last November, "Unless this country is drowned in blood, there will be no return of the exploiting classes to power in Nicaragua."

The Washington warmakers would be well advised to heed these words. □

Capitalism and Mercury Poisoning in Nicaragua

By Lorraine Thiebaud

MANAGUA—The practices of the Pennwalt company here have provided Nicaragua's best-known case of capitalist disregard for the environment and the health and safety of the working class.

Pennwalt's chemical-processing plant has poured huge quantities of raw mercury into Lake Managua, contaminated the city's water supply, and poisoned dozens of workers during the past decade.

The revolutionary government and the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) have been taking steps to put a halt to such practices, but they face big obstacles in doing so.

Electroquímica Pennwalt, S.A. is 40 percent owned by the big U.S. multinational corporation Pennwalt and 48 percent owned by two wealthy Nicaraguan families, the Montealegres and the Lacayos. The state owns a 12 percent share that it acquired when the banks were nationalized after the revolution.

Pennwalt produces caustic soda and chlorine, chemicals essential as raw materials for more than fifty other Nicaraguan factories that employ some 5,000 workers.

The plant was built in 1967 as part of a plan by the Central American Common Market to rationalize the production of raw materials for the region's industries. Imported from the United States, the factory uses technology based on mercury cells to produce caustic soda. This method was already considered obsolete in the United States in the 1950s; there it has long since been replaced by one that does not utilize mercury. Its importation into Nicaragua was a case of what is euphemistically called "transfer of technology"; in other words, U.S. imperialism transfers its outmoded and dangerous industrial processes to the Third World.

The plant was supposedly designed in such a way that the highly poisonous mercury would be contained. But in 1969, when the first study of water pollution in Lake Managua was conducted, investigators discovered that Pennwalt had been dumping a ton of mercury a year into the lake.

That study was filed away; nothing was done about it until after the revolution triumphed.

Forty Tons of Mercury

In November 1979 the newly formed Nicaraguan Institute of Natural Resources and the Environment (IRENA) carried out a new study of the lake's water. It was found to be grossly polluted with mercury. IRENA officials were appalled to discover that Penn-

walt had dumped forty tons of mercury into the lake during the thirteen years it had operated.

As the plant had aged, it had discharged increasing amounts of mercury.

The IRENA officials notified the Ministry of Labor, and inspectors from both were dispatched to Pennwalt's plant on the lake-shore at the northwestern edge of the capital.

They found puddles of mercury throughout the plant. Some workers were even playing with the dangerous substance.

A meeting of the Pennwalt workers was convened. It was soon discovered that in thirteen years the workforce had never even been informed by the management of the severe hazards involved in handling mercury.

Mercury is a heavy, metallic liquid at room temperature. But it gives off an invisible, odorless vapor, so that the workers were unaware that mercury was getting into their respiratory systems.

Mercury accumulates in body tissue, and eventually can destroy the nervous system. Victims begin by complaining of intestinal problems, rapid fatigue, loss of memory, and emotional instability. If not curbed, mercury poisoning can drive one insane.

Health examinations showed that of the 150 workers at the Pennwalt plant, 73 were suffering from various forms of mercury poisoning. Four were found to be permanently disabled; they had a history of repeated commitments to psychiatric hospitals but had never been correctly diagnosed.

Fifty-six workers—all from the mercury-cell section of the plant—were found to be suffering from "serious nervous damage." Thirteen more suffered from "moderate nervous damage."

Short-term Measures

After extensive discussions among the workers, the Labor Ministry, and IRENA, plans were drawn up to alleviate the most pressing aspects of the problem. The floor of the plant was thoroughly scrubbed down. The most badly affected workers were sent home at full pay. The working day was cut to six hours—with no loss in wages—for the remainder of the labor force.

A cafeteria separate from the processing area of the plant was established. (Workers who ate lunch on the plant floor had been found ingesting mercury that was trapped beneath their fingernails.) Toilet and shower facilities were built. Uniforms were issued for the first time, so that workers would no longer have to wear their mercury-laden clothing home for their wives to wash.

All mercury dumping into Lake Managua was halted.

A loan from the state financed 90 percent of these stopgap measures.

Solving the problem once and for all was to be more difficult. Some solutions, easy at first glance, were rejected. Simply shutting down Pennwalt would have meant cutting off the raw-material supply for fifty other plants and throwing 5,000 persons out of work.

Nationalization of the plant was a measure that the Pennwalt management itself was trying to provoke. It hoped in that way to evade responsibility for the damage already done and get the state to take on the company's huge foreign indebtedness.

Decapitalization

Careful examination of Pennwalt's books had shown a classic case of decapitalization. In 1976 the plant was showing annual profits of \$3.5 million. At that time, big investments were being planned to double plant capacity and take measures to control mercury discharge. A \$5 million loan had been received from the Inter-American Development Bank for those purposes.

But when the revolutionary upsurge that was to topple the Somoza dictatorship got under way in 1977, the plans to improve the plant were scrapped. The capitalists decided to try to get their money out quick.

Somoza, pressed for funds for his army, restricted access to dollars for the opposition bourgeoisie. So Pennwalt began buying caustic soda in the United States and Romania, selling it in other Central American countries, and receiving payment through a Guatemalan bank. From Guatemala its dollars were transferred to Miami.

While that was going on, Pennwalt was also running up huge debts by failing to pay its bills. When the revolution triumphed, the plant was in disastrous condition and the company was more than \$4 million in debt.

The workers returned to restart production after the insurrectionary war and found that most of the pipes in the factory had been rotted out by the chlorine compounds left standing in them.

In mid-1980 the Pennwalt case reached the newspapers here. Nicaraguans were scandalized to learn that the plant manager who shared responsibility for Pennwalt's coldblooded disregard for its workers and the surrounding community was none other than Jaime Montealegre, a leader of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise

(COSEP) and a vice-president of the Council of State.

Montealegre and the Pennwalt management tried to deny their responsibility during the formal investigation proceedings of the Labor Ministry. They even brought in a "medical expert" hired by Pennwalt USA—one Dr. Gordon Burdick—who claimed that the workers were never really contaminated. Burdick, it soon became known, was a protégé of Dr. Mitchell Zavon, medical director of the Hooker Chemical Company, the outfit responsible for the Love Canal and other chemical-waste disasters in the United States.

The Ministry of Labor challenged Bur-

dick's testimony. It also brought in a counterexpert from the United States, Dr. Molly Coye of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Coye's testimony gave the lie to Burdick's claims. It was so effective that Pennwalt's managers complained to the U.S. embassy about her presence in Nicaragua.

Criminal Charges Filed

On December 2, 1980, the Sandinista Workers Federation and the local union at Pennwalt filed criminal charges against Electroquímica Pennwalt, S.A. on behalf of Ramón Alberto Zamora Centeno, Moisés Antonio Rodríguez Lara, and Sebastián Cis-

neros Velásquez—all totally disabled as a result of their years working at Pennwalt.

The case is still pending in the Nicaraguan courts. Meanwhile, Washington has suspended the \$15 million in aid that it had promised to provide to Nicaragua in 1981. Part of that was to have gone for the renovation of the Pennwalt factory.

The workers of Pennwalt are still fighting for improvements in their working conditions and compensation for the physical damages they have suffered. Despite the objective difficulties that have prevented rapid progress, the revolutionary government's Labor Ministry and IRENA have stood beside them in this battle. □

Has U.S. Navy Lost its 'Slim Margin' Over Soviets?

Why Reagan Is Pushing a Massive Naval Arms Program

By Will Reissner

In early March, the Reagan administration announced plans to increase the size of the U.S. Navy by one-third and to assign it, in the words of the *Washington Post*, "a more aggressive world-wide military role."

In support of this move, a steady stream of naval officers have made the procession to Capitol Hill to testify that the interests of the United States are gravely threatened by a Soviet naval buildup.

According to Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, chief of naval operations, the United States has lost its "slim margin of superiority over the Soviet Union" in naval affairs for the first time.

The testimony of the naval officers is only part of a flood of gloomy reports to Congress from the Pentagon. As the February 6 *Washington Post* put it, "Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine leaders all seemed to sense that now is the moment to push for extra billions," and they have seized the opportunity with both hands.

Although the mass media in the United States has uncritically echoed the U.S. Navy's claims about the Soviet threat, the charges are patently false. To make even the semblance of a case, the Pentagon has to engage in gross distortions and false comparisons.

Is Soviet Navy Pulling Ahead?

One of the Pentagon's favorite claims is that the Soviet Navy is already far larger than the U.S. fleet.

According to the U.S. Navy, for example, the Soviet fleet has slightly over 1,000 combat vessels, while the U.S. Navy has only 456 ships. These figures would lead the unsuspecting to believe that the U.S. fleet is outnumbered by more than two-to-one.

But it took some fancy juggling for the U.S. Navy to make its figures come out like that. In order to distort the comparison, they take the total Soviet fleet (which includes vessels that in the U.S. would be assigned to the Coast Guard and Marine Corps) and compare it only to vessels assigned to the U.S. Navy. That immediately takes several hundred ships out of the U.S. side of the equation.

Interestingly, only a few months ago, the Pentagon was claiming that the Soviet fleet was about 800 ships. But even using the U.S. Navy's current figures of over 1,000 Soviet vessels to 456 U.S. Navy vessels, the composition of the two fleets shows the U.S. Navy is incomparably stronger. As the Center for Defense Information (CDI) has noted, Navy representatives "focus their public comparisons on numbers of Soviet ships versus numbers of U.S. ships to show an apparent gap in favor of the Soviets. But," the report argues, "the numbers include hundreds of very small Soviet ships."

Robert Komer, who was President Carter's third-ranking executive in the Pentagon, and who served in high government posts in Vietnam and elsewhere, gave a farewell interview on his last day in the Pentagon to the *Washington Post's* George C. Wilson. Komer stated that some of the thinking in the military "drove me up the wall. Like this business that the Navy must have 600 ships. The problem is capability, not numbers. We could have a 1,000-ship Navy if we built sub-chasers."

Comparing Combat Strength

If the number of ships is not crucial, what about the number of sailors? The Soviet Navy (including its Coast Guard and Marine functions) totals 422,000 peo-

ple. U.S. Navy personnel alone total 528,000, considerably higher than the Soviet total.

And if we add the 185,000 U.S. Marines, and the 38,000 in the Coast Guard, we come up with 751,000 troops, compared to the Soviet Union's 422,000.

But even this is reviewed as insufficient by Pentagon planners, who have been thinking about the possibility of swelling the ranks of the Navy through reviving the draft.

What about the composition of the fleets? The most powerful offensive weapon in modern naval warfare is the aircraft carrier. Right now the U.S. Navy has thirteen aircraft carriers in service, with plans to bring the total rapidly to fifteen. In addition, the U.S. Navy has eleven helicopter carriers.

By way of contrast, the Soviet Navy has a grand total of two aircraft carriers (each of which is less than half the size of the largest U.S. carriers), and two helicopter carriers. In fact, the largest Soviet aircraft carrier is barely the size of some U.S. helicopter carriers.

Soviet naval forces are by and large coastal defense forces. This fact is openly acknowledged by the Pentagon, except when it is asking for more money. For example, in 1980 retired Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, former head of naval operations, described the offensive capabilities of Soviet and U.S. forces in this way:

"If we examine the balance several hundred miles from the USSR: our marine corps far outnumbers the Soviet naval infantry [185,000 to 12,000]; the transport capacity of the U.S. amphibious fleet is three times that of the Soviets; our thirteen large aircraft carriers outclass the Soviets' smaller VTOL [vertical take-off and land-

ing] versions; the U.S. Navy has a much greater capacity for sustaining combat at sea than the Soviet Navy; Soviet air transports have a shorter range and lift capability and cannot be refueled in flight; in terms of ton miles per day, Soviet airlift capacity is only half that of the United States."

In addition, if we compare the total naval strength of the U.S. and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies with that of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, we find, according to the Center for Defense Information, that the NATO navies have a more than two-to-one advantage in total tonnage. The report adds that the Soviets' smaller ships have limited range, lack large fuel reserves or nuclear power, and have inadequate accommodation for food and ammunition for long missions.

Furthermore, the CDI report states that "in a global role the Soviet navy would suffer greatly from a lack of air cover in operations away from the Soviet land mass."

Why the U.S. Bulldup?

If the Soviet fleet is basically a coastal defense force, and does not threaten U.S. forces, why the Pentagon's big push to increase the U.S. fleet by one-third at a cost of billions of dollars?

The answer is really quite simple: Washington wants to improve its ability to intervene militarily abroad in defense of U.S. corporate interests, and it wants to have enough forces to be able to intervene simultaneously in several areas of the world.

The Pentagon's planners give particular emphasis to interventions in the Middle East and Central America, but they also want to have enough forces to spare so they can rush troops and aircraft carriers to Southeast Asia or Africa if imperialist interests are threatened by revolutionary developments.

This is obvious from the kind of vessels the Navy wants to add to its fleet. First it plans to increase the number of aircraft carrier task forces from the present twelve to fifteen.

Washington's traditional reponse to threats to imperialist interests around the globe has been to rush a carrier task force to the area. Each task force is composed of about a dozen ships. In Vietnam, aircraft carriers were permanently positioned at "Yankee Station" in the South China Sea, from which they launched their planes for bombing missions over North and South Vietnam.

The Pentagon also wants to bring two World War II battleships out of storage—the USS *Iowa* and the USS *New Jersey*. When the plan was first broached last year, the Pentagon noted that these battleships, with guns that can fire shells up to twenty miles, were well suited to providing



Loading bombs on a U.S. aircraft carrier during the Vietnam war.

support to Marine-type amphibious landings.

Now the Navy has revealed that the battleships will also be armed with up to 320 Cruise missiles, with a range of 1,500 miles.

These battleships are not strangers to interventions in the semicolonial world. Both have been taken out of storage before. The *New Jersey* was brought back for the Korean War and then again for the Vietnam War, where it sat off-shore, out of range of North Vietnamese coastal batteries, and pounded the Vietnamese freedom fighters. The *Iowa* was brought back into service for the Korean War.

Richard Halloran, writing in the February 28 *New York Times*, noted that "the Marine Corps is particularly eager to have them back to provide bombardment for amphibious assaults."

And the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 4 that Navy Secretary John Lehman wants to build new battle groups "around the remodeled battleships, or the smaller, recommissioned carrier *Oriskany*," to carry out "limited attack roles, such as fighting within the narrow confines of the Persian Gulf."

The Pentagon claims it needs to increase the size of the U.S. Navy and build a 110,000 member Rapid Deployment Force in order to stop a possible Soviet invasion of the Persian Gulf region that would threaten "our" oil. But Washington's real target is quite different.

When military strategists discuss among themselves, they talk and write about putting down internal threats to the Saudi and Kuwaiti monarchies, fighting "radical" Middle Eastern regimes, preventing a repetition of the overthrow of the shah of Iran (what they call the "Iran scenario"), and so on.

In May 1980, for example, the Institute for Contemporary Studies (ICS), a conservative think-tank with very close relations to the Reagan administration, published a 524-page book entitled *National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength*.

Two members of the Board of Directors of the ICS are now high-ranking figures in the Reagan administration: Caspar Weinberger, Reagan's secretary of defense; and Edwin Meese III, Reagan's White House counselor.

A number of the contributors to the volume are now high-ranking officials of

the State Department and Department of Defense. What they have to say about the Middle East and Persian Gulf is worth examining in some detail.

Reagan's Policy-Makers Tell It Like It Is

Their focus is not simply, or even primarily, the Soviet Union or some Soviet threat.

Here, for example, is what Albert Wohlstetter says about the dangers in the Middle East. (Wohlstetter, a member of the Executive Panel of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, twice received the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service.)

Some radical states inside the region threaten their neighbors either overtly or indirectly by supporting subversion or revolutionary forces. Even more or less spontaneously generated internal changes can be adverse. The radical Islamic transformation of Iran, for example, has done substantial direct damage already and has introduced further instabilities that could lead to something worse. . . . The collapse of the shah's regime in any case removed a considerable coun-

terweight to the long-standing ambitions of Iraq against Kuwait, and of South Yemen against Oman, North Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and so on.

Wohlstetter argues that an Iraqi move against Kuwait and/or Saudi Arabia "would substantially damage Western interests."

Henry S. Rowen, chairman of the Executive Panel of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, takes his turn describing the problems facing Washington in the Persian Gulf:

The instabilities within the region have grown substantially. [With the seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979] we have seen the first really major piece of evidence that the stability of the regime in Saudi Arabia may be not so enormously great. Oman is vulnerable. There is uncertainty about Egypt. Kuwait is uncertain. . . .

W. Scott Thompson, former assistant to the Secretary of Defense and present consultant to the U.S. Navy, warns that "recently the head of a friendly—and highly competent—military intelligence agency said that he did not really expect the Saudi

regime to last more than a short time. . . ."

Francis J. West, who has been the director of Strategic Research at the Naval War College, and was a former assistant to the secretary of defense, and now serves under Reagan as assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, worries that in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere there is the "probability that what we may be faced with, in the forthcoming decade, is equivalent to the Iranian model of gradual disintegration." He too points with concern to the Saudi rebels who took over the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979.

The French Connection

Kenneth L. Adelman, a professor at the Defense Intelligence School and former assistant to the secretary of defense, describes at length the role of the French government in defending imperialist interests in the Persian Gulf.

Noting that "France's security interest in the area has been growing apace," Adelman states:

Space Shuttle Columbia: Pentagon Prepares Star Wars

As the launching date for the first flight of the U.S. space shuttle Columbia approaches, publicity about the shuttle's purpose is focusing on its scientific and commercial potential.

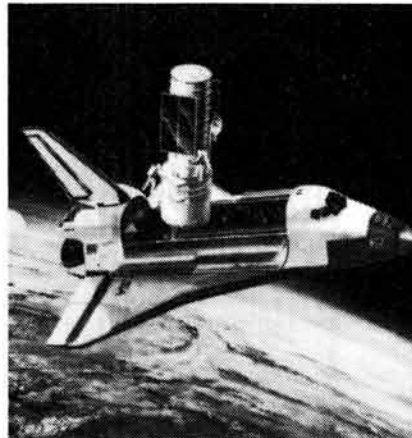
For example, a March 22 article in the *New York Times* states that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) "hopes companies will use the shuttle to put factories into orbit."

The article waxes poetical about the shuttle's potential for building and maintaining "gigantic orbiting communications satellites, solar-power stations that would transmit electricity to earth, and highly automated factories where industry could use the unique environment of space to make things that cannot be made as well, if at all, on earth."

But that is not the real purpose of the shuttle. It is a military vehicle designed to orbit the Pentagon's military satellites. Any commercial use would be icing on the cake.

Geoffrey T.H. Kemp, a consultant to the Department of Defense and former staff member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, discussed the real purpose of the shuttle in an article entitled "Defense Innovation and Geopolitics: From the Persian Gulf to Outer Space."

The article was published by the In-



Space shuttle. A remedy for "Vietnam Syndrome"?

stitute for Contemporary Studies, a right-wing think-tank with extremely close ties to the Reagan administration, in a book entitled, *National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength*.

Here is how Kemp describes the importance of the shuttle: "in the military sphere, the shuttle will permit the deployment and servicing of larger, more sophisticated, satellites which can perform a host of tasks including command, control and communications, navigation, reconnaissance, surveillance, electronic ferreting and eavesdropping, and antisatellite operations."

Kemp adds that "the impact of new space technologies on battlefield management and strategic [nuclear] warfare, including antiballistic missile defense, could have as significant an impact as the introduction of the telegraph and the wireless had on naval operations in earlier years."

According to Kemp, "ultimately, the space shuttle will permit the construction of large battle stations in outer space." He adds that "the idea that space will forever be a hostile environment for military operations needs to be carefully examined. There is no inherent reason why the United States should not be able to develop a superior military capability in space. . . ."

And the best thing about the whole program, says Kemp, is that it can "fire the imagination of a new generation of Americans who were too young to have been influenced by Vietnam but who have been raised in the *Star Wars* environment. . . . It would give the country a national goal. . . ."

"In short," Kemp maintains, "the United States needs to regain its sense of destiny. If this sounds jingoistic," he adds, "so be it. . . ."

Despite Kemp's enthusiasm, there is no evidence that the dreaded "Vietnam syndrome" can be blasted away by his "Battlestar Gallactica" fantasy.

—Will Reissner

Today in Paris [there] are detailed contingency plans for its own projection-of-power capabilities. And it has the means at its disposal: a modern division and a half (25,000 to 30,000 men) trained and equipped to move into the gulf region, and prepositioned equipment, including more than 250 French-built AMX tanks in Saudi Arabia. Contingency plans call for these tanks and similar equipment to be manned by French soldiers in times of crisis.

Adelman adds a glowing account of the French military intervention that enabled King Khalid of Saudi Arabia to retake the Grand Mosque of Mecca from the rebels, calling it "a small but critical demonstration of France's rapid deployment capability, which has been used on a larger scale in Africa to protect French interests."

He continues: "France could muster greater assistance in the Persian Gulf if the need arose. For a large portion of the French fleet, including one of its two aircraft carriers, stands on station in the Indian Ocean. . . ."

"Possible assistance from Britain," says Adelman, "is on a smaller scale, but is nevertheless important." He places particular value on the 600 British officers who command the Omani armed forces.

Role of Rapid Deployment Force

According to Francis J. West, "the concept of the RDF [Rapid Deployment Force] was put together piecemeal in reaction to external events, e.g., the fall of the shah, the war in Yemen, the Soviet brigade in Cuba, the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Iran, the attack upon Mecca, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, etc."

But West warns that changes in the world situation make the RDF alone not enough. The U.S., he contends, needs bases and troops in the area on a permanent basis.

West worriedly noted that "as the Iranian seizure of the U.S. embassy too graphically illustrated to the world, Third World nations are not awed by American power and will be quite prepared and able to fight the RDF when it lands.

He specifically points to the landing of U.S. forces in Lebanon in 1958 and in the Dominican Republic in 1965 as successful precedents, but warns that future counter-revolutionary interventions will not prove so easy.

Retired Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt took up the question of the weapons needs of the Rapid Deployment Force. He asked "whether U.S. 'light' forces would be effective (even without Soviet force opposition) against heavily armed proxies in the Middle East (Iraq, Syria). . . ." Many more statements about the real aims of U.S. intervention in the Middle East could be cited from *National Security in the 1980s*. But the point should already be clear. The Pentagon is building the Rapid Deployment Force, and expanding the U.S. Navy, to stop revolutionary struggles against despotic regimes like the Saudi and Ku-



U.S. Marine desert warfare exercise. Pentagon is worried about opposition.

waiti monarchies, not to stop some supposed Soviet invasion threat.

The real target of the U.S. naval buildup is not the Soviet Navy, but struggles for national liberation and social progress in the Middle East, Central America, Africa and Southeast Asia. And Washington is counting on its allies in Western Europe and Japan to shoulder part of the responsibility for protecting imperialist interests in

these areas.

Much to the dismay of the warmakers, however, these plans are meeting massive opposition from the working class around the world. Getting out the truth about the real targets of the RDF and the Pentagon's naval buildup will help to broaden that opposition and make it harder for the imperialist rulers to achieve their reactionary aims. □

U.S. Promises New Arms to Moroccan Regime

The Moroccan monarchy has received a green light from the Reagan administration to step up its six-year military campaign to put down guerrillas struggling for independence of the Western Sahara. The guerrillas are organized in the Polisario Front (People's Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Río de Oro).

On March 25, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Morris Draper told two Congressional subcommittees that U.S. arms sales to Morocco would no longer be made contingent on progress toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The State Department has already approved the sale of 108 M-60 tanks and twenty F-5E jet fighters to the Moroccan regime.

Spain withdrew from the Western Sahara in 1975, and the former colony was immediately occupied by troops from Morocco and Mauritania, who divided the territory between them despite the clear desire of the inhabitants to establish an independent republic.

In 1979 the Mauritanian regime was forced by guerrilla pressure to withdraw from the portion it had seized. But Moroccan

troops immediately occupied the area abandoned by the Mauritanian army.

The Polisario Front's struggle to establish an independent Saharan Arab Democratic Republic is supported by liberation movements around the world. The Moroccan monarchy, on the other hand, is a key imperialist ally in Africa. In the past it has contributed troops to protect imperialist interests in countries such as Zaïre. □

Poll Shows Fear of New Vietnam in El Salvador

A March 14-15 Gallup poll has confirmed that the American people are overwhelmingly opposed to Reagan's war threats against the rebels in El Salvador.

Two-thirds of those who said they knew about the Salvadoran conflict feared the situation could become "another Vietnam."

Twenty-nine percent said the U.S. should stay out of El Salvador altogether, while twenty-eight percent thought some form of assistance should be given. But just two percent said they favored sending U.S. troops!

Iranian Peasants Demand Implementation of Land Reform Law

[The following article appeared in the March 7, 1981, issue of *Hemmat*, the weekly newspaper of the Iranian Workers Unity Party (HVK). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Stopping the implementation of Section C of the Land Reform Law and what has come of this is a subject that has been taken up these past few weeks in all the mass-circulation newspapers. Most of these articles report that the working people of the countryside have demanded the immediate implementation of Section C, either directly or through local officials or Land Distribution Committees.

For example, the February 22 issue of *Kayhan* reported on a seminar of the Haftestan Land Distribution Committees, which was recently convened near Shiraz. It said, "They demanded the immediate implementation of Section C by issuing a statement at the end of the February 26 Shiraz seminar of Land Distribution Committees, which was attended by representatives from Fars, Isfahan, Bushehr, Hormozgah, Yazd, four Bakhtiari regions, Sistan, and Baluchistan."

But the demand for implementing this section of the Land Reform Law doesn't apply simply to the areas mentioned; the peasants throughout the country are demanding that government officials implement it.

In the Gonbad Plain region, which is mostly populated by Turkoman farmers, this demand was presented during a recent visit by villagers to Mr. Rajai, the prime minister. In addition to asking for the implementation of Section C, the representatives of the villagers asked the prime minister to recognize the (villager's regional) Islamic *shora* [committee] as soon as possible" (*Kayhan*, February 12).

Most important of all are the farmers of the war-ravaged region of Khuzestan, who see the urgent need for victory in the war against the invading Iraqi regime as connected with the immediate implementation of this section.

In the Idheh region, which contains over one quarter of the peasants of Khuzestan, the Land Distribution Committees have asked the government officials that Section C of the Land Reform Law be implemented immediately (*Kayhan*, February 18).

The immediate implementation of this bill is taken so seriously in connection with the mobilization of the peasants of Khuzestan against the Iraqi invasion and against its feudal supporters, that Mr. Mohammed Nasrulahi, a delegate from

Abadan in the *Majlis* [parliament] has announced his opposition to stopping the implementation of Section C. He correctly pointed out that this would set the stage for the growth of the counterrevolution (*Kayhan*, February 18).

What Is Section C?

But what is this Section C that all these newspapers and government officials are talking about?

Last spring, a Land Reform Law got final approval by the former Revolutionary Council. This bill, which had three sections, was supported by a three-man committee composed of Ayatollah Montazari, Ayatollah Meshkini, and Ayatollah Beheshti before being agreed upon by the Revolutionary Council.

Sections A and B of the proposed Land Reform Law were concerned with the division of fallow and virgin lands along with usurped and confiscated land. But Section C is the most important part of this bill. It calls for the land of the big landlords to be divided according to specific criteria among the peasants with little or no land. Ayatollah Meshkini, in an interview with *Kayhan*, February 3, said this about Section C:

"If we've come to the point where the fallow or confiscated land and such has run out, but the area in question has land as property, and for example it has 100 hectares of land and of these 100 hectares, one or two people control ninety or ninety-five hectares of it, and the rest of the people get one hectare or half a hectare each—then we have agreed that in the circumstances of such a situation, that surplus land must be divided, even if it is someone's property.

"It should be like this: the landlord should get about three times the ordinary amount of land, like about five or ten hectares, for himself, and the rest should be bought from him at a just price, or rented from him, and should be divided up among everyone else so that everyone has about five or six hectares of land and in this way, their needs can be taken care of.

"Similarly, if there is no fallow land, if we want to take care of the needs of the lower class, either we do something like this, or we drive them off their land and out of their country."

What Ayatollah Meshkini refers to as "ordinary" is the amount of land on which a farmer can secure his "accustomed standard of living."

In order to implement the proposed Land Reform Law, committees are set up in every region composed of seven representatives. These seven include representatives

from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Jihad for Reconstruction, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Religious Judge, and two "farmers with good reputations" from the region who are acceptable to the Ministry of Agriculture.

After the Revolutionary Council accepted the bill, these Committees of Seven started their work in various parts of the country. Since these committees have been operating, according to a report in the March 7 issue of *Jomhuri-e-Eslami* (Islamic Republic), they have only been able to "... divide 185,000 hectares of land between farmers with little or no land, 150,000 of which were covered by Sections A and B." Only 35,000 hectares of land were distributed on the basis of Section C.

It is clear that even before the implementation of this most important section of the Land Reform Law was stopped, its implementation had been quite limited. And now, with its being halted, as most of the activists of the Jihad for Reconstruction and the members of the Committees of Seven have noted, the big landlords have received new encouragement in their opposition to the advancement of the revolution and in confronting the peasantry.

Who Is Opposed to Implementation of Section C?

Just about the same time as the war which the Iraqi regime imposed on Iran began, the mutterings against the implementation of Section C grew louder, and this opposition became so loud among the landlords and capitalists and their spokesmen that Section C couldn't be activated.

Let's hear about who was opposed to the implementation of Section C in the words of Ayatollah Meshkini, from the interview referred to above:

"The Committees of Seven were chosen for the regions to accomplish their work. In some areas, these Committees of Seven were indeed busy with their work and land was divided. In the course of their work, these people encountered a whole series of excuses. For example, some of those in charge of their work made mistakes that led to a big uproar. The notables who were big landlords could make life miserable in many ways by making their voices heard throughout the world, since they controlled the telegraphs, and complained that taking my land in this way is not Islamic and is opposed to Islam."

Ayatollah Meshkini, continuing his remarks on the landlords, added: "Moreover, among their clerical friends, a number are opposed to this proposal from the religious point of view.

"We have given our views on this pro-

posal, but some of the gentlemen *Ulema* [clerical authorities] in the cities are opposed to it from a religious perspective, and have spoken about this conflict of views to the people—that this proposal is not good, it is not in accordance with the *Shari'a* [Islamic religious law], etc. Those whose land is in jeopardy or whose land has been taken by the Committees of Seven embraced the judgements of these gentlemen, which offered them relief.

"They scream about Islam all over the place and say that Islam is being abandoned and that the communists are coming, but the truth of the matter is that these people have nothing to do with Islam. These gentlemen only want their land, they want to secure their way of life and their interests, and that aside, they don't ordinarily have anything at all to do with Islam. . . .

"In any case, these problems have arisen, and the gentlemen *Ulema* have stood up in opposition to us and have criticized the proposal and said that this proposal is opposed to Islam or this proposal is a communist proposal and so on. Of course, the chief provokers of this great revolt are the capitalists and the landlords."

Mobilization of Peasants Is Needed for Victory in War With Iraq

What Ayatollah Meshkini said is a good illustration of how the capitalists and big landlords can deal blows to the revolution under the banner of "the defense of Islam!" In the same way, the above explanation shows that government officials also capitulate under the pressure and interference of this minority.

The fact of the matter is that the agents of the capitalists and the feudalists have become entrenched in most of the government bodies and are busy securing the interests of their masters and sabotaging, at the same time as the brothers of the Jihad for Reconstruction are carrying out their most inspiring activities.

The best way to confront these agents is by the independent mobilization of the peasants in rural shoras. Without such a broad organization throughout the countryside, the implementation of Section C would not automatically help solve the crisis of poverty of the villagers or save the farmers of Iran.

The necessity for such a broad mobilization is felt especially in this war imposed by the Iraqi regime. It is a fact that if the peasants, while defending the revolution against the invading Iraqis, were defending their own land, it would multiply their energy a hundredfold in confronting the invader. The immediate implementation of Section C would thus help to secure the defense of the revolution.

But another thing is that Section C, like all other progressive legislation, would remain merely a progressive law on paper if not accompanied by a general mobilization of the peasantry. So the experience of

organizing the Islamic peasant shoras, which were constructed in parts of the country through the determination of the brothers of the Revolutionary Guard and the activists of the Jihad for Reconstruction, must be extended everywhere.

Another measure which, along with Section C, would greatly help to mobilize and attract the villagers, would be for the state to secure the financial and material interests of the poor farmers.

Ayatollah Meshkini, in the above interview, points out that in some areas where Section C has been implemented, the production of agricultural goods has declined and this has become an excuse for the feudalists to oppose it. So one of the basic tasks of the state is to provide the farmers with the equipment necessary for their day-and-night struggle to till the soil.

Preventing the decline in agricultural production necessitates the securing of water, fertilizer, tractors and other agricultural machines, credit, and other sorts of state aid. But the first step in this direction is the immediate implementation of Section C.

The villagers of the Nayer area of Ardebil, in a letter bearing dozens of signatures, explained the connection between the implementation of Section C, the need to fight against the Great Satan, and crushing the internal counterrevolution. They said: "We the undersigned, while being supporters of the revolution and its gains, call for the implementation of Section C so that in this way, the rear lines would be made ready and the base of counterrevolution and the fifth column of American imperialism could be brought to nought." □

Black Workers Leader Freed in South Africa



Joseph Mavi, the president of the Black Municipality Workers Union (BMWU), carried aloft by supporters on March 4 after he and two other union members were acquitted of charges under South Africa's Black Labour Relations Regulation Act. Mavi, along with Phillip Dlamini and Gatsby Mazwi, were arrested shortly after a strike by 10,000 Black workers paralyzed Johannesburg's municipal services in July 1980. The workers were demanding official recognition of the BMWU. After the verdict of the Johannesburg Regional Court was announced, supporters in the courtroom shouted, "Amandla a wethu!" (Power to the people).

Women in the New Grenada

[The following interview is with Patsy Romain, a member of the National Executive of the National Women's Organization (NWO), which is affiliated to Grenada's ruling New Jewel Movement. She is also the NWO's coordinator for the parish of St. Andrews. The interview was obtained for *Intercontinental Press* on March 12 in St. George's, Grenada.]

* * *

Question. Can you tell us how the National Women's Organization was formed?

Answer. The NWO was started around 1972. We could not organize women to have meetings in the open, because of fear of victimization by the Gairy regime. From the different parishes, we had ten sisters all together. They went out to the different areas to organize women underground. They would go out speaking in the homes of people they knew. You had to be careful around that time. You had to know who would accept you in their homes, who would not put out the news that you were coming to their home.

We talked about how lower prices would be better for women and their children and husbands. We had pamphlets explaining why it was necessary for a change in Grenada, what the benefits would be if there was a government that was supporting working and poor people in Grenada.

Shortly after the revolution, we had about thirteen groups. We now have forty-six. We also have groups in the sister island of Carriacou.

Q. How many members do you have?

A. At present we have a membership of 1,500. The sizes of the groups vary. Sometimes you find a big village where no group has been formed; sometimes in a small village it has been.

Q. How young are women in the NWO?

A. From fourteen years.

Q. The breadth of support among women for the revolution seems very extensive. How do you explain this amount of support among women so early in the revolution?

A. Since the revolution, women in Grenada have seen many benefits coming from it. I think this is one of the reasons you find so many women in Grenada supporting the revolution.

You have equal pay for equal work. You have free medical attention. You have the lowering of secondary school fees to \$12.50, and these will be free in September

1981 on. You have more scholarships being given. You have women getting their equal rights in this society. You have women getting the Maternity Leave Law. The more benefits women see, the more they support the revolution.

Q. What are the day-to-day activities of the NWO?

A. The activities of the NWO are to push forward all programs of the People's Revolutionary Government. For example, the cooperatives, helping to ease the unemployment situation. We have the CPE, the Centre for Popular Education, trying to wipe away illiteracy in our country, which is higher among women.

We also have the community brigades. All around the island the NWO is actively involved in pushing these forward. Also there are a number of women playing an active part in the People's Militia and the People's Revolutionary Army.

Q. What are the long-range goals and projects that the NWO is thinking about?

A. As for this year, 1981, we are hoping to open the first day-care center in Grenada. For the time being, there are many preprimary schools that are being opened by the NWO. Presently there is a cooperative bakery at Bylands being formed by the NWO group there.

Q. Could you explain a little bit about the cooperative bakery and how it works?

A. At Bylands, I was vice-president of that group, and around that time we had a campaign going around "Grow More Food." It is a campaign that every inch of land in Grenada must be made to produce. It is the "Idle Lands for Idle Hands" program to help ease unemployment.

When we looked around Bylands, there were no idle lands. There was a high percentage of unemployment. So we decided that something had to be worked out in another way. We made different suggestions, trying to think just what would work at Bylands. Then the suggestion came for a bakery.

So we informed the cooperative officer at the National Cooperative Development Agency (NACDA) that we would like to have a little talk on cooperatives and how to go about it. He came up and did a feasibility study.

Sometime last year, everything was fixed up. The land was rented and we had the funds from NACDA. The bakery has helped to employ ten sisters from the NWO in Bylands and four men. The oven will

not run by gas or electricity, but will be one of the old-time brick ovens. It will hold a few hundred loaves at a time.

Q. How does it work with the profits?

A. I must say that the cooperative is not open yet. The building is just going ahead. But the profits will pay back the loan and then the shares will be equally divided among the people at the bakery. So after the loan has been paid back, these people will be the owners of the bakery.

Q. Does the NWO have relations with women's organizations in other countries?

A. Yes, we have. We have relations with many other women's organizations—Nicaragua, Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent, the United States, Canada. In some cases, when they have a conference, they will invite us to send a representative to speak on behalf of Grenada. Likewise when we have a conference we send them an invitation.

We, the women of Grenada, decided to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, as it is celebrated all over. We had the NWO groups in all the different villages going out to mobilize the women to come out to that rally. We sent invitations to different countries, asking them to send representatives to that rally.

It was a successful rally. Many people turned out to that rally. We had many visitors at the rally. Mrs. Mugabe [wife of Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe] was here. The success of that rally was very good for the NWO group in Grenada.

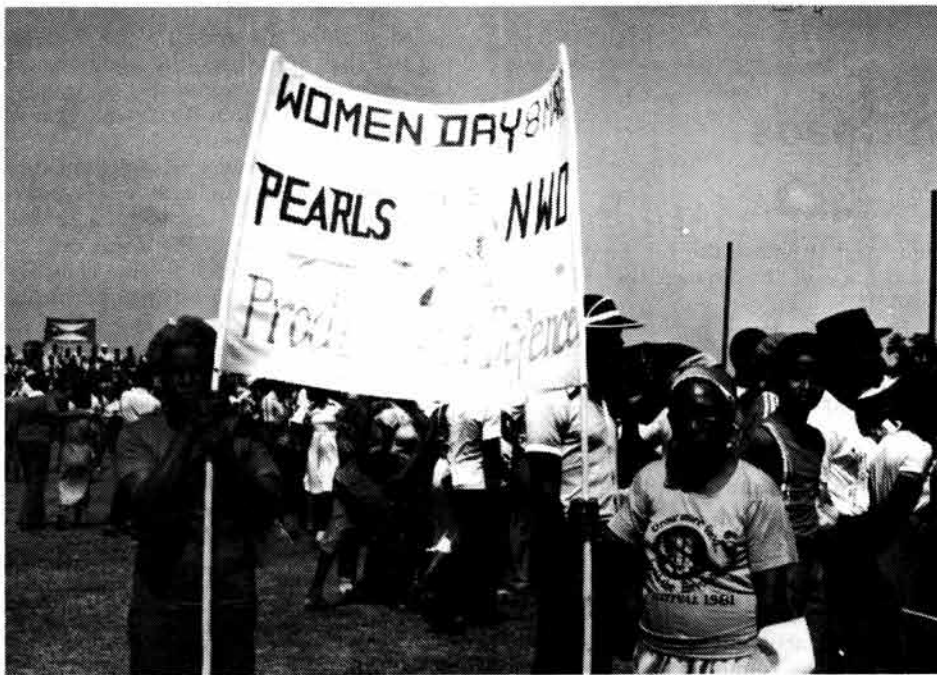
Q. You've talked a little bit about this already, but perhaps you could elaborate on the kinds of changes the revolution has brought for women, particularly in terms of the kinds of jobs they do?

A. Before women were never taken into consideration of being placed in high positions. Today in Grenada we see women are being placed, for example, in the Marketing Board. We have a woman who is the manager there. At the bakery at Bylands a woman will also be the manager.

Before, women would not take an offer to go to learn to be a dentist or to be an agricultural person. They would see this job as a man's job. But now when a scholarship is offered for a woman to learn to be a dentist, to go away and study and come back to teach the people about agriculture, engineering, mechanics, you see women coming forward and saying that they would like to be trained to do this.

We did not have this before. Women were not seen as being equal to men before in Grenada. That had an effect on women also not wanting to go out there, to be a dentist, because they were always thinking that their place was in the home.

But a lot of work has to be done and is



Kara Obradović/Young Socialist

being done to show women that their place is not only in the home, but to be equal, working alongside men. Not fighting against men, but to work alongside the men.

Q. What about day-care for the children of women who work?

A. Every place you have your farm cooperatives, you create jobs, and there must be places for the children in day-care or preprimary schools. We have plans for this. As you will notice in Bylands, there is a cooperative bakery being formed there, so we decided that it would be best to also have a preprimary school in that area to keep the little children while the parents are at work.

Q. Is birth control and abortion available?

A. For birth control, we have the Grenada family planning association responsible for this. Right now the NWO is not really controlling that. We are hoping in the year 1981 to push forward showing the women the need for birth control, how it will be good for them, the advantages and disadvantages in birth control.

As for abortion, there is no law in Grenada stating whether women have the right to abortion or not. We haven't worked this out yet.

Q. How have the changes in health care affected women specifically?

A. It has been good, especially after we had the help of twelve Cuban doctors and dentists. In Grenada, there was a time when some of the villages had never seen a doctor for weeks. Right now there is free medical attention in all government clinics

and hospitals. This has been a great ease.

Before the revolution there were times when there was no medicine at the hospitals and people going to the hospitals would have to buy their own medicine. Today it is better in Grenada. We have dentists. Dentists were very expensive, but now we have the Cuban dentists giving free attendance, so that will also be a benefit for women.

Q. Could you talk about the role of women in the militia?

A. From the very first day that the militia was formed, the NWO had the task to get all the women organized into the militia. We had cases where women said that they were too old to join the militia, so we organized classes for them, so that they could also be part of the militia. In case people get injured, everybody will not be

able to go out on the battlefield with guns in their hands, but some should be prepared to dress the wounded. Some should also be prepared to cook food to pass along. Some should be prepared to be able to run news to different parts of the country. So the militia is not just holding the guns in your hands, but also first-aid, cooking, and news running.

Q. How has the Center for Popular Education literacy drive affected women?

A. This drive was very successful. We had an emulation period of the first phase which ended last Sunday, the first of March. Unfortunately, women had a higher percentage of illiteracy.

Women also took a very firm stand in going out to help teach the unfortunate. We had a high percentage in that also. In most cases they went to the people's homes, because some people did not like going to a classroom. Instead of going in the open so that everybody could see that they could not read and write, they preferred it at home.

But from April, when we start the second phase, which will be teaching basic arithmetic, English, history of Grenada, and so on, this will be done on a larger scale, where people will come out to schools, night schools, whichever they prefer.

Q. What changes are there now in public school education?

A. The entire educational system has been changed since the revolution. We have a different kind of system, so as to train teachers better to also teach the children better.

Before the revolution, boys were taught to do more of the science work, and girls were taught arithmetic, sewing, cooking, and so on. This has been changed. They show the girls that they should do and can do the same amount of subjects as the boys. □

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The Polish Economy in Chaos

By Jaqueline Allio

[The following article appeared in the February 16, 1981, issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*, published in Paris. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

No one doubts that Poland is going through a very deep economic crisis. A few figures suffice to indicate its scope. Of course these figures are incomplete and must be handled with care, given the notorious problems of statistics in the Eastern European countries, and the unreliability of Polish statistics in particular.

- Per capita national income fell 2.6% in 1979 (the workers question the 1.8% improvement shown in the statistics for 1980).

- Net national production fell 2% in 1979 (the plan had projected an increase of 2.8% overall and a small rise in industrial production). Mining production in 1980 was 15% lower than in the preceding year.

- Agricultural production fell 1.4% in 1979 (and 3.8% for vegetables) while the plan had projected an increase of 4.8%, which was later lowered to 3.9%. The grain and sugarbeet harvests in 1980 were one-third lower than the 1979 levels. The drop in potatoes was even greater. It is expected that the number of livestock—which has been stationary since 1974—will decline in 1981.

- There has been a sharp rise in the debt owed to Western countries (the debt stood at \$1 billion in 1971, \$20.7 billion at the end of 1979, and \$23.5 billion at the end of 1980). The interest on that debt nearly equals the income from all exports, and 92% of the export income in 1979 went to pay off interest and principal on the debt to the Western countries. In fact, Poland has accumulated more than one-third of the entire debt of all the Eastern European countries to Western governments.

- There has been a sudden halt in investments in heavy industry. Hundreds of projects under construction, especially in the steel industry and mining, had to be completely stopped due to the catastrophic economic results for 1980.

It is useful to compare these statistics with the perspectives laid out in the strategy put forward in the early 1970s. That new strategy aimed to correct the situation inherited from the Gomulka period (1956-1970). Such a comparison makes it easier to see the objective basis for the tremendous workers mobilization that has been taking place these many months in Po-

land. And it shows the full scope of the bankruptcy of the Edward Gierek regime (1970-1980).

The Gierek regime projected rapid economic growth, primarily based on continuous growth in productive capacity, modernization of existing productive capacity, and growth in the standard of living through increases in wages, improvement in supplies of consumer goods, and growth of foreign trade.

The Polish economy did in fact experience rapid growth during the first half of the decade, and there was a jump in wages between 1971 and 1975. But the consequences of the unrealistic and overambitious policies of the ruling group were quickly seen. An enormous gap developed between the growth of investments and imports, and the much slower growth in productive capacity and exports. This is the root cause of the present level of foreign indebtedness.

Distortions in Industrial Sector

The investment policy virtually took on the character of a forced industrialization. Between 1971 and 1975 investments grew at an average annual rate of 18.4%, while investments in the capital goods sector rose more than 24.8% per year. The steel and electrical equipment industries were the most highly favored sectors of the economy.

There was some truth to Gierek's assertion that completion of these projects would create "a second Polish industry" alongside and equal in size to the existing industrial base.

But at the same time, the energy sector was totally neglected. Production of coal, the main source of electricity in Poland, rose by only 4.5% from 1971 to 1975, while the annual growth rate in the metallurgical industry (including steel) was 9.9% and 14.4% for the electrical equipment industry.

Even though the 1976-1980 economic plan was scaled down regarding investments in new productive capacity, the annual growth rate for the electrical equipment sector remained twice as high as the growth in electrical energy generation for the years 1976-1978.

The uneven distribution of investments and the absence of measures to rapidly increase energy production have resulted in the present situation where most factories suffer power cuts 300 days out of the year. This is one of the basic causes of the disorganization of production and places big limits on industrial productivity.

Furthermore, the technological obsoles-

cence of a large number of factories causes added wastage of electrical power. According to Polish specialists, the energy usage coefficient in Polish industry is twenty-four times higher than in the industrialized Western countries.

Besides the problems related to energy consumption, Polish industry is also characterized by excessive consumption of raw materials. The value of the metal used to obtain \$1,000 of national income is nearly twice as high in Poland (\$56) as in Italy (\$31), and three times higher than in France (\$19). Of course this is partially due to the industrial structure and the technological backwardness of a number of economic sectors and factories. But it is also due to waste stemming from the malfunctioning of the planning system and the lack of motivation for workers, who resort to "off the books" work to compensate for their low wages.

On the whole, Polish industry consumes two to three times more raw materials and energy per unit produced than France, Britain, or Italy.

These are some of the factors that explain why the rate of industrial productivity has not fulfilled the hopes of the authors of the 1971-1975 five-year plan, which has to be revised downward on nearly all points in late 1975.

This also partly explains why Polish foreign trade has stagnated. The country has difficulty winning new markets because of the mediocre quality of the goods aimed at export markets and their unsuitability in terms of the needs of the Western countries. That is why Poland's share of world trade in 1978 remained around 1% of total world exports, although its total industrial production had risen to 2.5% of world production.

Agricultural Swamp

Despite agricultural subsidies of about 180 billion zlotys* in 1978 and 250 billion in 1979 (about one-quarter of the state budget) agricultural production declined that year. The production of grains for the 1974-1979 period averaged less than 1974 production. While climatic conditions were partly to blame, it primarily reflected a very low yield per hectare.

The stagnation of Polish agriculture is the result of both the structure of agriculture and the policies of the bureaucracy. Several factors come into play in the present crisis. First there is the ridiculously low yields on the state enterprises. The state farms, with an average size of over 4,000 hectares, and the cooperatives, with an average size of 330 hectares, together cover a little more than 20% of the cultivated lands. Their share of the total agricultural production is about the same. But they receive the lion's share of agricultural investments—66% of the amount budgeted.

*100 zlotys equals U.S. \$3.30.

Despite this, their yields are hardly better than those on the private farms. True, the official statistics showed that in 1978 the rate of cattle production and grain production per hectare was about 25% higher on the state farms and that about one-half as much full-time labor was employed as on the same size individual farm. That should be no surprise given both the investments made in the state farms and the kind of production they specialize in. Large-scale grain production involves much more mechanization.

But a comparison of recent figures shows that the cost to produce a kilogram of meat on a state farm is twice as high as on a private farm, and the cost to produce a liter of milk is four times as high.

Part of the explanation lies in the amount of recent investments to build model farms of advanced technology. But the difference in cost of production also stems from the tremendous wastage in the state sector. For example, there are industrial facilities for raising pigs and cattle built without regard to common sense (there was a recent report on television about a "model" pig farm with 8,000 pigs, in which the workers who fed the pigs were unable to use a vehicle designed for that because it would not fit through the door and therefore they had to carry the food for 8,000 pigs into the building by hand).

The cost of feeding livestock on the state farms is also much higher because of the lack of attention paid to the cost of the grain or forage used (the salaried agricultural workers employed on the state farms say they often "salvage" from the troughs potatoes and other vegetables that they cannot find in the stores and eat them themselves).

This difference in the cost of producing foods such as meat or milk products makes it all the more absurd to practice a policy of discrimination against private farmers. It also shows the absurdity of not establishing a clearly defined division of labor between the thousand state farms, each with several thousand hectares, and the three million odd private plots, 85% of which were smaller than ten hectares in 1978.

Strangulation of Private Plots

Whatever one's opinion on the merits of maintaining a private sector of such size (nearly 80% of the land) in a workers state, the situation of the independent producers is intolerable. Although both Gomulka and Gierek called themselves supporters of an agrarian reform based on the maintenance and growth of small agricultural plots, neither was able to provide even the glimmer of a solution to the crisis that has wracked private farming for three decades.

Extreme parcelization of the land has taken place during this period, to the point where one-third of the individual plots total less than two hectares each. Most of these are subsistence farms producing

almost nothing for the market.

Another one-third is made up of farms of two to five hectares. One-quarter of the private farms are five to ten hectares in size, and less than 15% are ten hectares or larger.

This degree of parcelization makes it totally impossible to apply modern technology to agriculture, which was a clear priority in the last five-year plan. Nothing was projected to increase production in the private sector. On the contrary, for years the entire policy of the bureaucrats in power has simply been to increase the nonviability and atomization of private holdings. In effect, the discriminatory measures against private farmers and the small subsidies they get lie behind the increasing difficulties they encounter in exploiting their land.

Shortages of fertilizer, agricultural equipment, and construction materials are a permanent feature of Polish agriculture as a whole. But because the state enterprises are given priority access to whatever is available, the independent producers find it impossible to carry out measures needed to rationalize their labor.

In theory the farmers are free to sell their produce to the bodies or individuals of their choice. But if they want to have access to low-interest bank loans or receive coupons enabling them to get fertilizer, they have to deliver specific quantities of their produce—which can be as high as 70%—at very low prices. The prices are so low that it is sometimes advantageous to buy back the products in question at the official sales price—often below the cost of production—and then resell them at a higher price on the free market.

Under cover of a law passed in 1978 on buying out the land of farmers upon their retirement, the administration can at any time intervene to decree the "collectivization" of a farm. Under these conditions it is hardly surprising that many peasants decide not to invest in their farms, preferring instead to build a house, the ownership of which is guaranteed them.

Among the youngest layers, there is constant growth in the number of "farmer-workers," who have a factory job while continuing to work the farm, using the labor of the wife and the rest of the family. Their labor output—in the factory as well as on the farm—is of course affected, but this is often the only way to keep the family farm going.

All these inconsistencies and difficulties have simply led to an exodus of youth toward the cities. It has reached the point that the mean age of independent farmers is somewhere between fifty-five and sixty years.

All this gives us a better understanding of the low yields of independent farms. When we add the muddle in the state sector, we can see why the present crisis in agriculture is so deep.

According to official sources, in 1979 "the percentage of new projects that did not begin functioning in the time period projected rose to 58%, while it had never surpassed 35% in preceding years." It is likely that this percentage will be even higher for 1980. This shows that the Central Plan has been a work of fiction in the last period.

Even though they have big differences over what political objectives to aim for, in the present debate on reforming the economy we see that the majority of experts—from Solidarity as well as from the government—seem to agree on the need to decentralize the management system and replace most of the present performance indicators with others that provide a better gauge of reality.

The figure of net total production must replace the present use of gross production, which allows the factory managers to juggle their results to "prove" that they "fulfilled the plan." In line with that, the bonus for fulfilling the production figure of the plan—without worrying about the quality or the cost of production involved—must be replaced by a bonus for overall economic results.

The discussion on this is only beginning. To get a view of the muddle that now reigns in planning, we can take the example of how investments are portioned out.

Despite successive corrections to the 1971-1975 and 1976-1980 five-year plans to pay more attention to consumption, investments in the capital goods sector have continued to grow more rapidly than those in the consumer goods sector.

There has, however, been major progress in the fields of textiles and food, with the construction of plants to process meat, milk, vegetables, and so on. When added to the rise in consumer goods and imports and the growth of production in the household appliances sector, this led to a significant rise in living standards in the early 1970s. But the lack of a coherent plan for developing different industrial sectors—especially the energy sector—means that the level of return has significantly declined in recent years.

And, of course, this state of affairs was felt most immediately in the area of consumer goods since even at the height of the economic boom supply remained far below demand.

The bureaucrats' unrealistic policy of systematically giving priority to investments in new productive capacity was never dropped, even after the 1976 decision to abandon the "largest projects" in light of the growing economic stagnation.

For example, they continued to build the Huta Katowice steel complex, with a capacity of 9 million tons. The first part of the project, with a capacity of 4.5 million tons, came into service in 1979.

It took the outrage of the workers last year to stop this sullied, gigantic project. Lack of funds means the second stage will

undoubtedly never be completed (1.2 trillion zlotys would be needed to finish the project). The billions of zlotys already invested in the now terminated construction reflect the carelessness of the bureaucrats, who gave themselves the right—in the name of the collective whole—to undertake a project that has proved so catastrophic for the country's economy.

The consequences of this policy of excess are seen not only in the technological backwardness of economic sectors that were considered secondary, but also in the lamentable working conditions that exist in some of the most "up-to-date" enterprises like the Huta Warszawa foundry in Warsaw, where people around the blast furnaces work without any protection in the midst of unbelievable noise and atmospheric pollution.

It is also seen in the wage differences between sectors of production or sectors of the economy, and between different categories of workers. In a single factory the wages of manual workers can vary by a ratio of one to ten. The spread is as much as one to twenty between office workers and some highly skilled technicians. Of course women are at the bottom of the scale, with wages that are often around 2,000 to 3,000 zlotys per month (the average salary being around 5,000 zlotys after the first wage hikes in late 1980).

Decline in Social Services

The course adopted by the Gierk team in recent years has had especially significant repercussions in the social sphere. The government has always neglected "nonproductive" investments (housing, hospitals, child-care, etc.). This is seen not only in the terrible situation of most families regarding housing, the ridiculously low number of places available in the child-care centers, and the shortage of hospital beds, but also by a tendency away from free medical care toward private medical care.

The insufficient educational budgets have led to closing schools in small towns and a decline in instructional conditions for the poorest layers of the population. To overcome the shortages of teachers and facilities, many schools operate on double shifts—the morning shift and afternoon shift. Sometimes there is even an evening shift. Children on the "evening shift" begin their school day at 4:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. Until then they are "parked" wherever possible in the school, and watched by a supervisor.

The anger of the workers can be better understood when one knows that in 1979, in line with a Warsaw Pact resolution, it was decided from above to increase expenditures for "the country's security and defense capability," further reducing the budget available for improving the population's standard of living.

Because the big decisions by the bureau-

crats in power were made in secret, they could be made with total impunity, even when they contradicted the decisions and intentions embodied in the plan.

During the past decade the authorities never carried out a real reorientation of the plan, despite the growing evidence that errors were being made. Instead, they were content to adopt pragmatic measures and lower targets when the gap between projections and reality became too apparent and threatened to cause social tensions dangerous to the regime.

In late 1975 it became clear that the growth in debts to the Western countries was reaching alarming proportions. But the corrections applied to turn the situation around—cuts in imports and a partial investment freeze—primarily resulted in a decline in the supply of goods on the market. When the government decided to increase consumer prices in June 1976, the workers' anger stemmed especially from the fact that, after a period of growth, the attempt to impose these increases was being made at a time when food supplies were becoming increasingly scarce.

Pricing Policy

A central focus of the present discussion on economic reform is the inconsistency of the pricing system. But no technical decision can resolve the situation unless accompanied by a rapid improvement in productive capacity, especially in the area of food supplies. To understand the breadth of the economic wastage, it might be useful to examine more closely the mechanisms of the pricing policy, using the example of meat, which is one of the most striking cases.

As is the case for other basic products, the retail price of meat is lower than the cost of production (including transportation, administrative middlemen, and processing). It is quite correct for a workers state to decide to subsidize certain products sold below their cost. But, again, in making that decision one also has to know its repercussions on the economy in general, and on the mass of consumers in particular.

It is said that state subsidies on meat for 1979 totalled 91.4 billion zlotys, which is a subsidy of 34 zlotys per kilogram. The consumer pays between 100 and 150 zlotys per kilo, depending on the category of the meat, while the producer receives only 40 zlotys per kilo. The biggest portion of the difference between the two prices—to which we must add the 34 zlotys subsidy—is therefore absorbed by expenses for middlemen, transportation, and the meat processing industry.

Nothing was done to try to reduce the middlemen's costs or to challenge the prices charged by the processing companies. But the measures the government took to increase livestock production on the state farms increased the price of a kilo of meat and caused an uncontrolled increase

in the importation of feeds and grain to feed the animals.

This is one of the main causes of the rise in the foreign debt, and it required an increase in annual subsidies for food production, which now total 170 billion zlotys per year. In 1979 that represented slightly over 11% of total wages.

Meat is in a different category than other basic necessities such as bread, milk, and sugar. The statistics show, in fact, that in Poland those in the highest wage categories consume considerably more meat than lower paid workers.

To the extent that the meat subsidy comes out of the social surplus product, it means that the poorest are subsidizing those who are richer.

Therefore, the pricing policy, as it was applied until now for meat, seems to be a flagrant case of social injustice. The projected meat rationing must, therefore, correct this situation in the future. For the immediate present the rationing is largely a case of sharing the scarcity.

But there should be no illusions. Unless the institution of rationing is accompanied by information about existing reserves and by the ability of the workers to control the distribution of meat supplies, things will not change very much.

For the immediate period the basic priority is to improve supplies. However, there must obviously be a much more general review of the planning and pricing system in order to put an end to both the policy of privileges and the inconsistencies and waste resulting from superbureaucratic management.

A Simple Inquiry

A very instructive article in this regard appeared in the bulletin of the Solidarity union group at the Katowice steel mill (No. 24, November 26, 1980). Solidarity members organized an inspection tour of the food stores in Dabrowa Gornicza, the city where the Huta Katowice steel complex is located. The members of Solidarity learned that a number of stores had back rooms containing varying amounts of merchandise that was not placed on sale.

"It was impossible for us to know how long these goods were in the store. In this case [a grocery store], the amounts were not enormous, but we wonder who they were meant for, acquaintances, the shop employees (two people in this case)?"

In other stores the amounts were larger: "280 kilograms of margarine, 19 kilos of slab butter, 115 kilos of block butter, 72 kilos of vegetable butter, 80 kilos of flour, 10 kilos of spaghetti, 300 kilos of rice." The Solidarity newsletter noted: "This merchandise was not for sale."

In addition, their small inquiry led them to question the absurd way work was organized in a butcher shop: "4:50 p.m. The shop is open until 7 p.m. No customers. The windows are empty. We go to look in the back and . . . we find 280 kilos

of meat waiting to be carved. The manager explains that there is no one to do it (two bored clerks were sitting around while we carried out our inspection)."

The inspections made by other Solidarity committees, at the time when meat rationing cards were introduced for the holiday period, showed that merchandise was not divided equally among all categories of stores. In Radom, the amounts in the stores catering to the militia and police were systematically higher than what was found in ordinary stores.

On another level, workers at the Ursus tractor factory held direct meetings with representatives of Rural Solidarity to discuss the production of tractors, because they are familiar with the bureaucratic character of the commission in charge of recording orders and distributing the machines produced by the factory. The commission cannot take stock of the real needs

of the farmers and is an obstacle to improving the situation.

These are some examples of the scope of the tasks that await the Polish workers.

Improving the economic situation requires more than just eliminating the waste and the useless middlemen who increase production costs. It also requires transforming the entire management and planning system so that the producers and consumers can exercise direct and continuous control over all the decisions relating to the plan and the distribution of social wealth.

The establishment of a society set up on an egalitarian basis, a society capable of satisfying the needs and aspirations of the mass of workers, would mean the death of the bureaucracy. In that sense it involves not economic reform, but political revolution.

January 22, 1981

'Your Struggle Will Serve as a Model'

East German Oppositionists Hail Polish Workers

[The following statement addressed to the Polish workers was written in December 1980 by a group of socialist oppositionists in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It recently reached members of the Socialist East European Committee in West Berlin. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

We socialist oppositionists in the GDR hail the successful fight of the workers, farmers, intellectuals, artists, and party reformers against the ruling party bureaucracy in your country. We condemn the border-closing measures of the GDR re-

gime and especially wish to make known our solidarity with the Solidarity union, which has shown through its discipline and unbending firmness that it feels itself to be responsible for the future of Poland.

The leadership of the PUWP [Polish United Workers Party] would like to put the blame on the strikes for the economic shortages in the Polish People's Republic. But in doing that, it deliberately falsifies the real causes and effects in order to distract attention from its own complete failure.

For many people in the GDR it is difficult to get an exact picture of the situation in your country. The news reports in *Neues*

Deutschland [the central organ of the East German Communist Party] or on [East German] television unfortunately limit themselves exclusively to warnings against counterrevolutionary forces in Poland, which undoubtedly also exist, but which, as we see it, do not, even in the remotest sense, dominate the situation in Poland.

The information from West Germany is also greatly filtered, because no one in the news-editing departments of West German television is interested in reporting on the fundamental aspects of this process. To report on that would be to admit that the workers can be radical and even revolutionary.

It seems that both "East" and "West," together with the Catholic Church in your country, are interested in playing down the revolutionary experiences in your country, to blunt them and thus to deform them.

We hereby urge you to continue unremittingly in the struggle for the democratic organization of Polish society. The so-called "actually existing socialism" must be replaced in an evolutionary way by socialist democracy. To achieve this it is necessary that independent trade union organization be extended to every area; above all self-management of the factories must be undertaken. Only a strong movement can block intervention by the armies of the Warsaw Pact.

Even in the event of such intervention your struggle will serve us as a model. The old bureaucratic party regimes in our countries run themselves into the ground economically, politically, ideologically, and morally. Intervention would shorten their life-span rather than prolong it.

Nervousness is a symptom of the party apparatus. What characterizes us is the determination to realize, step by step, our dreams of freedom. □

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Fidel Castro's Speech at Soviet Communist Party Congress

[The following speech was given by Cuban President Fidel Castro at the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which was held in Moscow this February. The speech is taken from the March 8 issue of the English-language weekly *Granma*, published in Havana.]

* * *

Dear Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev;
Dear Delegates;
Dear Guests:

The new world—in which the old colonial empires were shattered, where socialism is being consolidated and extended, and an unprecedented era of liberation and independence for the peoples has emerged—has been possible thanks to the existence of the Soviet Union, to the firmness of its Marxist-Leninist and internationalist principles and finally, its power, which imperialism has been and will continue to be unable to ignore. (APPLAUSE)

That is why at this time, the 26th Congress of Soviet Communists is particularly important for humanity. (APPLAUSE) What is said or agreed upon here will have great repercussion on the international scene. (APPLAUSE) When the threat of war looms again, when aggression casts its shadow over the peoples and intervention threatens them, the Soviet Union and the glorious Communist Party you represent again emerge as a hope for peace and a guarantee that the imperialists will not be able to impose their domination and aggressive arrogance. (APPLAUSE)

Unfortunately, the language of the cold war is again being heard in the most influential country of the contemporary capitalist world. Détente is cast aside in favor of the senseless doctrine of military superiority. The results of the SALT treaties are replaced with the demand for new and sophisticated weapons which can only lead to an uncontrolled arms race. The Yankee imperialists arrogantly seek to deploy 572 medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe aimed at the Soviet Union. They are again talking about the neutron bomb and are making fabulous increases in the military budget, while reducing domestic social programs and their meager aid to the underdeveloped world, in a show of great selfishness, arrogance and force.

The start of a new arms race and the return to the cold war will further aggravate the serious crisis now affecting the world economy. The hopes of the great majority of the world's peoples for eco-

nomic and social development in order to win the battle against hunger, ignorance and disease in a climate of peace and international cooperation would be destroyed. Social conflicts, trouble spots and the danger of war would multiply. It would constitute a great crime against humanity.

Now the Yankee imperialists are trying to identify the movement for national liberation and the peoples' struggle for social change with terrorism. (As far as they are concerned, all revolutionaries and even progressives and fighters for democracy are terrorists.) With such fallacies and lies they cast aside, once and for all, the fig leaf of human rights and again shamelessly proclaim themselves the world's gendarmes. (APPLAUSE)

In Latin America, brandishing the sword of intervention, they threaten, first of all, the patriots in El Salvador and Guatemala with sinister plans of aggression. In those countries they arm bloody, genocidal governments while grossly slandering the socialist and progressive countries. They try to prove that what is happening in Central America is not the result of the just rebellion of the peoples against crime, long-term oppression and ruthless imperialist exploitation, but rather the product of alleged international plots. In an attempt to increase their brutal control over the entire hemisphere, they obstruct, harass and try to intimidate the revolutionary people of Nicaragua; aid and encourage the most corrupt and criminal dictatorships in the hemisphere; and undermine the work of any government that speaks with its own voice or tries to better the lot of its people.

Ninety miles from our country there are those who talk about the need to destroy us, openly threaten us with a military blockade and study even more drastic methods to eliminate the example of socialist Cuba from Latin America and punish the Cuban people for their friendship with the USSR and the socialist community, and for their unshakable solidarity with the peoples of Africa and the world revolutionary and progressive movement.

This same aggressive and threatening imperialist stand is manifested in southern Africa, the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Here, in the very heart of Europe, they seek to tear Poland away from the socialist community and openly encourage the political destabilization of the country, inflicting tremendous social, moral and material harm on that noble and dedicated people.

This arrogant unleashing of forces

would portend a grim future of new oppression for the peoples were it not for the fact that the forces of peace and national liberation are now backed by the firm and powerful forces of triumphant socialism. (APPLAUSE) The noble cause of socialism, the aspiration for a just, free, peaceful and humane world can never be wiped off the face of the earth. (APPLAUSE)

We know that the Soviet people and their Communist Party cherish peace. The call for peace was the first proclamation addressed to the world after the victory of the glorious October Revolution under Lenin's brilliant leadership. Peace is the motto and the cornerstone of the programs drawn up at the 24th and 25th Congresses. And the serene, firm and courageous Report, along with the new and brilliant initiatives of Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, tireless defender of these noble principles, (APPLAUSE) proves that for the Communists at this, their 26th Congress the struggle to secure peace for all peoples is still the center of attention. (APPLAUSE) Socialism has no need for war or the arms race. (APPLAUSE) That is one of the main differences between socialism and capitalism. (APPLAUSE)

The world wants and demands peace. This was confirmed a few days ago, in New Delhi, by the representatives of 92 countries and national liberation movements at the Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. That is why this Congress of Soviet Communists, supported by the just nature of the socialist cause and the strength of this great country, has reaffirmed that the USSR constitutes today, as it has in the past, the main guarantee of peace and independence for the peoples.

Socialism has shown it knows how to defend itself, (APPLAUSE) that it fears no enemy. (APPLAUSE) The revolutionary peoples will not hesitate to undertake whatever efforts and sacrifices are necessary to safeguard their right to life, independence and just ideas, and secure the well-being and peace of present and future generations. (APPLAUSE)

Cuba will never give in! (APPLAUSE) We are building the new socialist society with serenity and determination. We are involved wholeheartedly in creative work, but with the same determination we are preparing to defend the country we fought for over 100 years to liberate. (APPLAUSE) If imperialism dares attack our socialist homeland we will fight to the death for every inch of our soil. (APPLAUSE)

We will not reject the olive branch if it is proffered, but neither will we back away in the face of aggression. Principles are not negotiable! (APPLAUSE)

In this battle for our sovereignty and the permanent effort for socialist economic development, we have always had the internationalist and fraternal support of the Soviet Union, its people and Communists. (APPLAUSE) So we want to reiterate, on the occasion of your 26th Congress, our permanent gratitude. (APPLAUSE) We are not only grateful for what you have

done for us, but also for what this great country and people have done for all of humanity. (APPLAUSE)

At the 2nd Congress of our Party we showed the world how proud we are of our relations with the Soviet Union, which are an example of fraternal and respectful friendship. We are and will always be faithful friends of the generous and heroic people who helped us so much. (APPLAUSE) We will never harbor ingratitude, opportunism or betrayal! (APPLAUSE)

With the spirit of that deep friendship, we salute you at your Congress and say on behalf of Cuban Communists and all our people, who are also Communists:

Long live Lenin! (APPLAUSE)

Long live the glorious Communist Party of the Soviet Union! (APPLAUSE)

Long live proletarian internationalism! (APPLAUSE)

Long live peace! (APPLAUSE)

Patria o muerte! Venceremos! (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "FIDEL, FIDEL!") □

'General Consulate of the Resistance'

Bolivian Diplomat in West Germany Fights Dictatorship

By Mark Levy

HAMBURG—A unique center for solidarity with Latin America has been established here in West Germany.

After the Bolivian military seized power in July 1980, that country's consul general in Hamburg, Juan Emilio Sánchez, publicly denounced the coup but refused to resign his post or relinquish the consulate to the new regime.

With the aid of West German trade unions, political parties, and religious groups, Sánchez converted his offices into the "General Consulate of the Resistance."

In October, solidarity activists joined Sánchez in a sixteen-day hunger strike at the consulate to draw attention to the Bolivian dictatorship's brutality and to call on the West German government to halt aid to the regime in La Paz.

"The first reaction of the government of the Federal Republic [West Germany] to the hunger strike we carried out here in Hamburg was to suspend a loan of DM100 million" to the junta, Sánchez told *Intercontinental Press* in a recent interview. (DM 1 = US\$0.479.)

While the Foreign Ministry in Bonn has canceled Sánchez's diplomatic credentials, "the state of Hamburg still considers me the legitimate representative of the Bolivian people," the consul general said. The state government, which is controlled by the Social Democratic Party (SPD), "has refused to recognize any new envoy, any new consul general of the dictatorship."

The Bolivian junta was reshuffled in late February and Col. Luis Arce Gómez was ousted as minister of the interior. Arce and other top officers are widely believed to play leading roles in Bolivia's cocaine industry. According to Juan Emilio Sánchez, Arce was removed "to make the dictatorship acceptable to the State Department and to make it possible [for the United States] to recognize the junta."

"But the infrastructure of the terror has not changed," Sánchez said. "The machinery of repression is being maintained—the paramilitary groups and the concentration camps."

Nor has the dictatorship been able to gain a base for itself among the Bolivian population: "The military dictatorship is cut off from civilian support. And the civilians cooperating with the narcotics junta have been revealed as representatives of unscrupulous businessmen who have taken every opportunity to serve the dictators in order to arrange shady business ventures on a large scale for their masters, the private entrepreneurs."

The fight against the military regime "will be very difficult," Sánchez said. "The dictatorships of the Southern Cone are resolved to cooperate with their 'col-

leagues,' the Bolivian dictators." Nonetheless, "I place a great deal of confidence in the Bolivian people, because there have been occasions like the revolution of 1952, in which the people wiped out the army without weapons."

To aid in this fight, Sánchez said, "we want to maintain this consulate permanently, as a free territory of Bolivia and Latin America in order, first of all, to fight the Bolivian dictatorship and in addition to help the Latin American peoples in their struggle for democracy."

The address of the General Consulate of the Resistance is c/o Juan Emilio Sánchez, Postfach 605353, 2 Hamburg 60, West Germany. □

Labor Struggles on the Rise in Philippines

Since the Philippine regime of Ferdinand Marcos lifted martial law in January 1981, after eight years, there has been a renewal of political opposition and labor struggles. On March 21 some 6,000 opponents of Marcos held a rally in Manila to oppose constitutional amendments that would institutionalize Marcos's rule.

There has also been a rise in strikes since the martial law decree was lifted. In the first full month after martial law, strikes in the Manila area alone were running at what would be an annual rate of 276 per year, compared to an average of 150 a year nationwide before martial law was imposed.

Strikes have also been taking place in so-called vital industries, where they are specifically prohibited by law.

A major cause of the labor unrest has been the refusal of many employers to pay cost-of-living allowances decreed by the government. There have also been large-scale layoffs in Philippine industry in 1980 and 1981.



JUAN EMILIO SANCHEZ

France: Alain Krivine Fights for Presidential Ballot Slot

By Will Reissner

For months Alain Krivine has been crossing France, speaking to crowds in small industrial towns, big cities, and at factory gates. As the presidential candidate of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), Krivine has been hammering away at the need for working-class unity to bring down the rightist government of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and to fight against the offensive of the employers.

Krivine's campaign this year has received a markedly different response than his 1974 presidential bid. The crowds are larger this time. But they are also different in composition.

No longer is the audience primarily composed of youth and political activists from the student milieu. Today the meetings are filled with factory workers, often members of the Communist Party or Socialist Party, the two mass workers parties in France.

Currently the CP and SP, and the two major union federations they lead, are spending more time and effort attacking each other than the bosses and the bosses' parties. Krivine's campaign is making an impact with its call to overcome the divisions in the working class and forge a united workers response to the attacks by the ruling class.

Each time Krivine speaks, the meeting becomes an open forum for discussion of the concerns of the workers. At almost every meeting the same kinds of questions are raised from the audience: How can we force the Communist and Socialist parties to work together to defeat Giscard? How can we get the union federations to stop fighting among themselves and join forces in a common campaign against the bosses.

But recently another theme has emerged in Krivine's campaign: "We refuse to be reduced to silence!" As the filing date for the April 26 first round of election approaches, the LCR faces giant legal obstacles to appearing on the ballot.

New Election Law

When Krivine ran for president in 1974, a candidate needed the signatures of 100 elected officials to get ballot status. Since then the legal requirements have been considerably stiffened. Under the new law, a candidate needs the signatures of 500 elected officials, from a minimum of thirty departments of France, with no more than fifty signatures in any single department.

Despite the undemocratic character of the new law, the LCR was determined to get on the ballot. Nearly 1,000 LCR sup-

porters went out and visited 30,500 town halls, securing the signatures of 580 elected officials as sponsors of Krivine's candidacy.

But before the filing date for the signatures, another major obstacle suddenly developed. Although both the Communist and Socialist parties had voted against the new election law in parliament, branding it undemocratic, they recently instructed their local office holders not to sign for candidates from any other parties on threat of expulsion.

As a result, nearly 200 elected officials withdrew their signatures from Krivine's candidacy, leaving it far short of the 500 figure, with the filing date rapidly approaching.

The March 13 issue of the LCR's weekly newspaper *Rouge* noted that "the CP and SP, which had correctly refused to vote for this law because of its undemocratic character, are now applying it with a vengeance that makes it even harsher. Their measures mean that it is no longer enough to gather the signatures of 500 elected officials. Now you need 500 signatures of elected officials whose parties agree to let them sponsor one or another candidate!"

Rouge added that "we are not asking the CP and SP to give us signatures. . . . We are simply asking that they lift the inadmissible prohibition they have invoked, and let the elected officials who belong to their parties decide for themselves on the basis of their own feelings and conscience, whether or not to sign, without having to fear all kinds of reprisals."

Threats From Government Officials

As if the pressures by the CP and SP were not enough, government officials have also tried to get mayors to withdraw their signatures. Under the highly centralized French administrative system, the nationally appointed prefect of a department has tremendous power over the municipal councils in areas such as funding.

The prefect of one department, for example, sent a letter to all the mayors within his jurisdiction warning them that "the names of officials who agree to sponsor a candidate in the 1981 presidential election will be published by the 'Official Journal' of the French Republic."

The prefect added that some officials, "especially mayors of small towns, are not sufficiently aware of . . . the consequences implied in the support they might give." The letter ended, ominously, with the question: "Mayors, do you understand?"

Krivine stated that several mayors had telephoned to say they were being threatened by cutoffs in government funds if they persisted in supporting his right to be on the ballot.

As a result of all these pressures, the LCR estimates that it requires 150 visits to mayors to get a single signature. Despite this, the LCR is attempting to make up the deficit before the filing deadline. □

Emergency Appeal for Guatemalan Oppositionists

The U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (CSPG) issued an emergency appeal March 25 for the safety of six leaders of the Guatemalan Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR) arrested March 24 in San José, Costa Rica. The Costa Rican government has threatened the Guatemalan opposition leaders with deportation to Guatemala which would mean their sure death at the hands of the dictatorship.

Only three names of those arrested were immediately available: Israel Márquez, Miguel Ángel Albizurez, and Byron Barrera. Márquez was a leader of the embattled Coca-Cola workers union. He fled Guatemala after repeated threats against his life—several Coca-Cola workers' union leaders have been murdered in recent years in Guatemala.

Albizurez is a prominent labor leader and representative of the FDCR. Barrera is a Guatemalan journalist.

The six FDCR leaders arrested in Costa Rica were involved in publishing a weekly survey of the Guatemalan press, chronicling government repression and violations of human rights. Their activities were completely legal, and several of them have been living in exile in Costa Rica for several years. However, they were charged with carrying out political activity while in the country on tourist visas.

The CSPG is urging prominent individuals, organizations, and unions to immediately make telephone calls and/or send telegrams to Costa Rican authorities demanding that the six FDCR leaders be released and allowed to stay in Costa Rica or travel to the country of their choice, and that under no circumstances should they be handed over to the Guatemalan authorities.