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Black Youths in London Rebel Against Racism



Police grab demonstrator in London's Brixton district.

**FRANCE ON EVE
OF PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**

**JAMAICA'S FIGHT
AGAINST
U.S. DOMINATION**

**Northern Ireland: Hunger Striker Nears Death
SAVE THE LIFE OF BOBBY SANDS!**

Save the Life of Bobby Sands!

By David Frankel

Irish political prisoner Bobby Sands is on the brink of death.

As we go to press, Sands is in the fifty-first day of a hunger strike demanding political status for some 500 republican prisoners held by British authorities in Northern Ireland.

Never has there been a clearer case of people being imprisoned for political reasons.

- Until 1976, the British authorities themselves admitted the political status of republican prisoners, allowing them to wear their own clothes in prison, exempting them from normal prison work, and keeping them in special quarters.

- British authorities are forced *in practice* to recognize the difference between Republican prisoners and ordinary prisoners.

Republican suspects, unlike those charged with ordinary crimes, can be held incommunicado for up to seven days.

Republican prisoners, furthermore, are tried in special courts, without benefit of a jury trial, and under special rules of evidence. More than 85 percent of those convicted have been thrown in jail wholly or mainly on the basis of their own "confessions."

What are such confessions worth when the European Commission on Human Rights has found British forces guilty of using torture against republican suspects in Northern Ireland?

- To deny the political status of the republican prisoners in Northern Ireland is only possible if one shuts one's eyes to the entire history of British colonial rule and Irish resistance to that rule. To deny the political status of the Republican prisoners means to deny the beliefs and aspirations of the Irish people as a whole.

This reality was reaffirmed April 10 when Sands was elected to the British

Parliament. The spectacle of British authorities stubbornly refusing to concede the political character of the struggle in Northern Ireland and the political status of the republican prisoners after Sands's election victory would be ludicrous if it were not for the desperate plight of this courageous fighter.

If Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stands by and allows Sands to die, it will

Iraqi Regime Edges Closer to Washington

By Janice Lynn

In the midst of the Iraqi regime's war against Iran, Iraqi officials have begun to openly establish closer ties with U.S. imperialism and proimperialist regimes in the region.

In April, in response to signals from Baghdad, a senior emissary to U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig was dispatched to Baghdad for talks with high Iraqi government officials.

This followed a March 31 public announcement by Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat that he was sending thousands of tons of ammunition, missiles, artillery, and spare parts to Iraq.

These recent developments are further confirmation that the September 22 invasion of Iran by the Iraqi regime was a direct attack against the Iranian revolution that only served imperialist interests.

Baghdad, Washington, and the proimperialist Egyptian regime would like nothing better than to see the Iranian revolution reversed and thereby hinder any new advances by the masses of workers and peasants in the Middle East.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, along with Sadat, fears the dynamic set in motion by the Iranian masses who have weakened the imperialist stranglehold over their country and are moving along the road of taking the kinds of measures necessary to meet their economic and social needs. Hussein and Sadat know that their own regimes are threatened by the example set by the Iranian workers and peasants.

It is for this reason too that the most reactionary Arab governments in the region—from the Saudi Arabian and Jordanian monarchies to the conservative Persian Gulf shiekdoms—have all lined up behind the Iraqi war effort.

It is no coincidence that the April 12-13

be one more crime—and not the least—in the centuries-long record of British oppression and inhumanity in Ireland.

Nor will the British rulers be able to stop the struggle of the Irish people by such savage methods. Already other hunger strikers have joined Sands, and protests in the streets of Ireland—both North and South—are gaining momentum.

The response of British authorities has been to cancel police leave and place 10,000 troops on alert in their rebellious colony.

Our sisters and brothers in Ireland need the support of working people around the world. The Irish people need to hear our voices—and so do the imperialist rulers in London.

Save the life of Bobby Sands!

Grant the demands of the Irish prisoners!

Baghdad visit of the U.S. State Department's second-ranking Middle East official, Morris Draper—the first visit to Iraq by a top U.S. official in nearly four years—comes as the Iraqi regime continues its attacks against Iran.

Draper met with Iraqi Foreign Minister Saadoun Hammadi and other officials in Iraq's Foreign Ministry. But the contents of the meetings were not publicly revealed.

The April 11 *Washington Post* noted that, according to a well-placed Arab official, the Iraqi regime had made known its desire for restoration of full U.S. diplomatic relations, as well as encouragement for American businesses to sell technologically advanced equipment to Iraq.

The Iraqi regime severed formal diplomatic relations with Washington after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, although the U.S. government maintains a sizable interests section in Baghdad.

Draper went out of his way to state that, contrary to earlier media reports, diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Iraqi governments would not be resumed "in the early future." Draper did note that he was "frankly pleased" with the outcome of the discussions.

The Iraqi regime—which proclaims its opposition to U.S. imperialist intervention in the Middle East as well as the Camp David accords—fears the reaction from the Iraqi masses to openly restoring full, formal ties with imperialism. It also must consider its relations with the countries of the Nonaligned Movement.

But the rightward course of the Iraqi regime, which was apparent even before its military offensive against Iran, has become clearer.

Trade between the U.S. and Iraq has been steadily increasing. In 1980, U.S. companies sold Iraq some \$725 million

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worth of goods. And Washington has just decided to go ahead with the sale of five new Boeing jetliners to Iraq.

Following the Iraqi regime's invasion of Iran, the Soviet government refused to provide Iraq with any new weapons. Baghdad began to turn increasingly to Europe for major arms purchases, especially to France.

Sadat's March 31 announcement that the Egyptian regime was also supplying Iraq with needed weapons and ammunition confirmed earlier reports—all of which had been denied—that Egypt was in fact lining up behind Iraq.

According to the April 2 Paris daily *Le Monde*, the ammunition was badly needed by Iraq in its war against Iran. *Le Monde* reported that it was the Jordanian regime—with Washington's approval—that had made the request for arms and ammunition on behalf of the Iraqi government. An Iraqi delegation then visited Egypt and concluded the deal.

This is another sign of the Iraqi regime's rightward drift. In 1979, the Iraqi government had severed relations with Cairo to protest the Egyptian regime's betrayal of the Palestinian struggle in signing the Camp David accords with Israel.

The Iraqi regime's new relations with Washington and Cairo—coming in the context of its attacks against the Iranian revolution—is a real threat to both the Iranian revolution and the Palestinian struggle. And it dangerously paves the way for U.S. imperialist intervention in the Middle East.

This is especially so given Washington's March 26 announcement that it planned to spend \$100 million improving the Egyptian airfield and port at Ras Banas. U.S. government officials said the Reagan administration hoped to use the strategically located Red Sea base to support possible large-scale U.S. military moves that could become necessary in the Persian Gulf and the rest of the Middle East.

As the Iraqi regime's collusion with imperialism becomes clearer, it is important to demand an immediate end to Iraqi military aggression against the Iranian revolution and to call for all U.S. military troops, planes, and ships out of the Middle East. □

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Black Youths Rebel in London

By John East, Phil Hearse, and Hillary Tarr

[The following article is taken from a series of reports on the Brixton rebellion that were scheduled to appear in the April 16 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, a weekly newspaper published in London by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

LONDON—By late afternoon on Sunday [April 12], Brixton was under paramilitary occupation. Hundreds of police lined Brixton Road, the main road through the area, while thousands more were in surrounding streets. Convoys of police vehicles roamed the area, periodically stopping to charge groups of youths standing on street corners. A police helicopter circled overhead. Transport had stopped and the area was encircled with a cordon of police.

At the police station, 150 police vehicles were parked. A hundred dogs and fifty police horses were held at the ready. Railton Road, known as the front line, looks like the aftermath of a bombing raid, with burnt out cars littered among the gutted buildings.

As darkness descended, most of the street lights were turned out as hundreds of police waited in the side streets. The police surveyed the results of the week-

end's conflict.

What happened and why?

Not many people in Brixton can have been surprised by the weekend's events. Brixton has been in the front line of saturation policing for at least two and a half years.

During the week preceding the explosions the cops had been carrying out a massive stop and search operation in Brixton called SWAMP-81. More than 1,000 people were stopped and more than 100 arrested during this period. It amounted to an attempt to intimidate a whole community and it is just part and parcel of their policy of heavy policing of "troublesome" areas.

All day Friday [April 10], tension had built up in Brixton because of a heavy police presence. At 6:30 p.m. a Black youth was stabbed in a fight. Bleeding profusely, he was taken to a police van. But instead of driving him to hospital, police interrogated him in the van.

Incensed, Black youth attacked the police van, rescued him, and drove the injured youth to hospital.

The explosion that the heavy police presence had threatened to provoke had begun.

On Saturday, the police decided to show

that "We control the streets." Heavy police was the order of the day, as hundreds were drafted in from other areas. Brixton Road was thick with cops.

At 4:00 p.m., a mini-cab driver in Railton Road was stopped. The police insisted on searching his cab for drugs. Black youth reacted violently, provoked by a whole day's harassment by the cops.

The battle was concentrated on the front line—Railton Road—heart of the Black community.

By 5:00 p.m., riot shields were out and by 6:30 p.m. the first petrol bombs were thrown.

Youths began building barricades along Railton Road and Mayall Road, setting cars alight.

Although under heavy bombardment, the police were determined not to be driven out of the area, as they had been in Bristol a year ago.

The biggest targets of the youths were two racist pubs, one of which refused to serve Blacks. The shops that were attacked were mainly the big department stores, not the small local shops.

No hostility was displayed to whites on the street, just to the police. Many young whites fought alongside Black youth. But of course, the conflict was led by Black

Thatcher's Racist Policies

The rebellion in Brixton, one of Britain's largest and most established Black communities, should have come as no surprise to Margaret Thatcher's Tory government.

Almost exactly a year before, on April 2 in the St. Paul's section of Bristol, a similar rebellion had given notice that the Tory attacks on Blacks would not go unanswered.

With unemployment at the record level of 2.3 million—more than 10 percent of the workforce—and still growing, Blacks are coming under increased pressure. The unemployment rate for young Blacks is three times that of whites, and Black unemployment has doubled in the past year.

In addition, Thatcher—who as part of her campaign for election in 1979 used racist demagoguery about Britain being "swamped" by an "alien culture"—has sought to promote racism and make Blacks the scapegoats for deteriorating social conditions.

The most serious Government attack is the proposed Nationality Bill, which will come before Parliament this June. The bill is the latest of a series of racist laws designed to keep Blacks out of Britain.

The law would make it very difficult to become naturalized and would establish categories of citizenship. Some categories—consisting primarily of people from colonies or former colonies who now hold British passports—would not have the right to enter the country.

Children born in Britain but whose parents were not citizens would not have the right to automatic citizenship—even if this left them stateless.

The effect of the proposed bill would be to make all Blacks second-class citizens, suspect of being "illegal," and put them under the constant demands of police, employers, and government agencies to show papers and prove their status.

The Nationality Bill is being ans-

wered by the Campaign Against Racist Laws, which organized an April 5 demonstration in London of 20,000, one of the largest Black-rights demonstrations yet held.

In a report issued in February, the Joint Committee Against Racism documented 250 attacks over the preceding eighteen months, many of them by organized rightist gangs.

One particularly horrendous attack that the police have refused to investigate was the January 18 fire-bombing of Deptford, South London. Thirteen Black teenagers attending a birthday party died in the fire.

These murders and the police inaction on the case provoked widespread anger. On March 2, up to 15,000 marched from a site near the bombing through the streets of central London, resisting efforts by the police to keep the streets clear for rush-hour traffic.

—David Martin

youth because they are on the bottom of the pile—the ones who are particularly harassed by the cops. They are the victims of racist attacks, and find it hardest to get a job.

During the height of the fighting, people from the local community relations council got Black youths to agree that they would take down the barricades if the police would withdraw. But the cops would not, and the fighting continued.

The attitude of the police was typified by an incident that took place outside Brixton Library. A police van screeched to a halt by a group of Black youth. When the police jumped out, one of them slowly and deliberately stubbed out his cigarette in the face of a young Black.

On Sunday, at least 4,000 cops were in the area. Tension built up all day, until Home Secretary William Whitelaw and David McNee, the metropolitan police commissioner, visited the area. They were met with angry abuse from the community.

"Seig Heil," they shouted, as the home secretary and the commissioner were whisked into the police station by a side entrance.

After the departure of the top cop, fighting flared again. Unlike the night before, the police had a plan. They tried to force people out of the center of Brixton with heavy tactics and a cordon. But in the side streets, they were adopting a softer approach, talking to Black youth and urging them to go home.

What happened in Brixton was an uprising by a whole community, Black and white, against the police. A community which is sick of being treated like garbage by the cops, the bosses, and their government.

The Tories have cut back social services, slashed government grants to places like Brixton, and of course have hiked up unemployment. Government ministers have only expressed their concern at the fate of unemployed youth when they are faced with a community that fights back.

The Tories and the system they run, leaves them no option but to use repression to keep the lid on places like Brixton. They can offer no hope to the youth of the area. Their policies only create more unemployment, make more people homeless, close down more social services. There will be more Brixtons and more police repression.

Brenda Kirsch of the Lambeth Trades Council, who has investigated police brutality in her borough, told *Socialist Challenge*, "Black people see the police as an army of occupation. Their purpose is to keep the Black community in its place. Not only have there been arbitrary arrests, but the police contempt for the community is shown by violent public arrests, of which this weekend is a classic example. I've never been to Derry or to Belfast, but after seeing Railton Road today, I can imagine what it's like. Now they are going to present Brixton as an unpoliceable area

to justify using more paramilitary tactics."

The only way to prevent riots is to offer youth a future—jobs, housing, social services. Not the misery of the dole queue [unemployment line]. And that can only be done by getting rid of the Tories and the

'Jobs Not Bombs'

British Labor Protests Nuclear Missiles

By Davy Jones

[On March 28, delegates from 279 trade union branches, 300 local Labour Party organizations, 59 trade union councils, and other groups gathered in Manchester, England, for a Labour Movement Conference Against the Missiles, sponsored by the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

[Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has aroused massive opposition in the labor movement with her plans to allow the Pentagon to use Britain as a base for its new nuclear-tipped Cruise missiles, and to buy new nuclear-armed Trident submarines from Washington.

[Some 80,000 people marched in London on October 26, 1980, in a demonstration organized by the CND. The CND is organizing another protest for October 24.

[The following are major excerpts from an article on the March 28 conference that appeared in the April 2 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper of the International Marxist Group (IMG), the British section of the Fourth International. The IMG played a major role in initiating and organizing the conference.]

* * *

"We want to see the biggest ever demonstration on nuclear disarmament on 24 October." That was the closing appeal from John Cox, chairperson of the CND organising committee to last weekend's highly successful labour movement conference against the missiles.

More than seven hundred delegates from the unions and the Labour Party discussed the central role of the labour movement in combatting the Tories' missiles madness.

[Labour member of Parliament (MP)] Frank Allaun opened the conference bringing "100 per cent backing from the Labour Party national executive committee." He attacked the massive spending on military hardware: "Every family pays £15 a week already for the arms" race.

"Disarmament can only be implemented by a government," he continued, "that means a Labour government. I want to see a two-thirds majority for disarmament on a card vote at the next Labour Party conference."

system they represent.

Unemployed youth—Black and white—are right to rebel against it. The whole labor movement should defend them against the repression which they will now doubtless face in the courts. □

Allaun finished his speech quoting Victor Hugo, "Nothing can beat an idea whose time has come." He commented: "Comrades, our time has come. We are privileged to be part of the most important cause known to mankind."

Ron Todd, national organizer of the TGWU [Transport and General Workers Union], graphically described the meaning of missile madness: "Picture 4 giant submarines each with 16 Trident missiles, 34 feet long. Their 2 million horsepower engines thrust them to a speed of 14,000 miles per hour and a height of 700 miles, their course plotted by their own computers.

"Every Trident has 8 warheads, each with 6 times the destructive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Twenty minutes and 4,500 miles later they arrive on target to within 100 metres.

"And all this will cost us £5-6 [billion], rising as high as £9-10 [billion] with inflation," he added.

Gordon Will, west Midlands NUPE [National Union of Public Employees], took up the same theme, explaining that in 1974-5 for every £1 spent on defence, some 96 p[ence] was spent on housing. By 1979 the housing figure was down to 70 p and under the Tories it was planned to nosedive to 33p by 1984.

"What an appropriate date 1984 is," he said. "In George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* the minister of war was known as the minister of peace. Similarly today the 'Ministry of Defence' is really the Ministry for War."

Speakers from the floor stressed the theme of "Jobs not bombs." Raghieb Ahsan from the TGWU Rover Solihull linked the fight against Cruise missiles with the struggle for a 35 hour week which "would decrease unemployment overnight by one and a half million."

John Parkinson, secretary of Preston Trades Council and the Campaign against the Namibian Uranium Contract, argued for CND to be anti-imperialist.

"Uranium workers in Namibia are doubly oppressed, not just by the repression and work conditions in their own country but also from the threatened use of the

nuclear weapons their uranium had helped to create against their own revolution. It is Transport and General Workers Union members in British Nuclear Fuels who process Namibian uranium."

Theresa Conway from Islington NALGO [National Association of Local Government Officers] explained that 12 resolutions on nuclear disarmament were on the agenda for NALGO's annual conference, "every one of them has a position of unilateral disarmament."

"The debate on disarmament and on democracy in the Labour Party are inextricably linked," she added, "we must bind every Labour MP and councillor to party policy on unilateral disarmament." She urged support for Islington council and the other 41 councils that had declared their area a nuclear-free zone.

The afternoon session was opened by [Labour MP] Reg Race who outlined the barriers to be overcome to win the labour movement to nuclear disarmament. "Resolutionary politics is not enough," he said, "we have to win the labour movement ideologically to this policy."

He attacked the "independence" of the Parliamentary Labour Party from the party as a whole. They had to be made accountable to party policy. He also protested at the government secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons: "Parliament was not

told of the Chevaline project to update Polaris, nor was most of the Cabinet."

The same point was made by Bob Wilkinson, from the north west General and Municipal Workers Union: "When the Labour Party is in office, it's not really in power."

Resolutions passed by the conference included one from Edinburgh Labour Party calling for opposition to Cruise and Trident, for Britain out of NATO and unilateral disarmament, for boycotting all work on missile bases and civil defence, and for the expansion of social services.

A motion from the Magazine branch of the journalists' union called for support for the north west TUC [Trades Union Congress] march for jobs and for the establishment of workplace CND groups.

Another NUJ [National Union of Journalists] motion which called for opposition to both NATO and the Warsaw Pact was opposed by Jonathan Silberman from the AUEW [Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers] in Manchester. He explained that equal responsibility could not be attributed to Washington and Moscow for the escalation of the arms race. Nevertheless the motion was carried.

Brian Heron, conference publicity officer and a Socialist Challenge supporter, moved the final motion to conference.

He appealed for a mass campaign

against Cruise and Trident. The appeal was the only resolution carried unanimously.

Brian also took up the dangerous ambiguity in labour movement policies on disarmament. Frank Allaun had told the conference: "We're all multilateralists. Unilateralists are multilateralists who mean it." Such a position is hopeless. Multilateralists don't mean it. They oppose Britain renouncing nuclear weapons until the blissful future when everyone does the same.

Three hundred Labour parties represented at the conference is an important gain for the anti-missiles' movement. Labour Party activists must now take the issue into the unions and campaign for the leadership of the labour movement to head the campaign. The next conference should have [Labour Party leader Michael] Foot, [TGWU leader] Moss Evans, [Yorkshire miners' leader] Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn [MP] on the platform.

The demonstration for 24 October should be transformed into a mass labour movement mobilisation. As John Cox told the conference final session: "When we decided on last October's demo back in February 1980 we had just 100 local CND groups. Today when we launch next October's march we have 700." □

Seek to Retain British Ties for '15 More Years'

Rightists Mobilize Against Belize Independence Movement

By Ernest Harsch

In an effort to obstruct progress toward Belize's independence, proimperialist forces in the Central American country launched a series of reactionary demonstrations and work stoppages in late March.

The provocations came just a few weeks after a tentative agreement was reached in London March 11 between the Belizean, British, and Guatemalan governments that will pave the way for Belize's independence from Britain later this year. In the agreement, the Guatemalan government formally gave up its long-standing territorial claims to Belize, a predominantly English-speaking country of about 160,000 inhabitants.

On March 31, the Belize Public Officers Union, an organization of civil servants allied to the proimperialist United Democratic Party (UDP), called its members out on strike, paralyzing most government services.

The merchants and businessmen who lead the UDP organized gangs of young thugs to attack government offices and

supporters of the ruling People's United Party (PUP), which has led the struggle for independence. In Belize City, a dozen buildings were destroyed by arsonists, stores were looted, and the government-run radio station was stoned. Several persons were killed in the northern town of Corozal, and a policeman was murdered in Belmopan, the administrative capital.

On April 2, the British governor, at the request of Belizean Prime Minister George Price, declared a state of emergency. The British troops stationed in the country were placed on alert, a curfew was imposed, and local police moved in against the rioters, arresting several dozen.

By April 7, the civil servants called off their strike and began to return to work. The UDP, however, continued to boycott the negotiations in London aimed at hammering out the details of the independence agreement.

'Colonial Status Is Not Bad'

The UDP has been quite open about its reactionary aims. In an interview several

years ago, UDP leader Dean Lindo declared, "I'm not opposed to colonial conditions, and colonial status is not bad." Lindo reiterated this position following the announcement of the London accords, stating that independence would not benefit the Belizean people. He was quoted in the April 3 issue of the Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno* as accusing Price of not taking into account "the danger that faces us from the assault of communism, which is trying to take over Central America." He chided Washington for not intervening sufficiently in Nicaragua and El Salvador to "stop the advance of the reds."

Leroy Panting, a leader of the UDP's youth group, claimed that Belize would not be ready for independence for "fifteen more years."

In an attempt to gain some popular support for its antigovernment actions, the UDP demagogically condemned the agreement reached in London as a "sellout" to the Guatemalan dictatorship. It circulated rumors that the deal involved a cession of Belizean territory to Guatemala and de-

manded an immediate referendum on the question. Price offered to hold a referendum—but only after the final details of the agreement have been worked out and the population has been adequately informed about them.

The London agreement did include a few concessions to Guatemala: access to Belizean ports, transport routes through Belizean territory, and the “use” of some uninhabited cays off the Belizean coast. But for Belizeans, the most important point in the agreement is that the Guatemalan regime has at last given up all territorial claims to Belize.

Guatemalan Threats

The threat of a Guatemalan invasion had long been a key obstacle to Belize's struggle for independence.

Although neither Spain nor Guatemala had ever exercised effective jurisdiction over Belize, the Guatemalan regime maintained that it was the rightful ruler of the country, claiming that it had “inherited” Belize from Spain more than a century ago. Guatemalan maps showed Belize as part of Guatemala.

The Guatemalan claims to Belize have existed for some time, but Guatemalan interest in the territory was heightened during the 1970s, primarily for two reasons: the strong possibility that northern Belize may contain some significant oil deposits, and the fear that the Belizean independence movement could inspire the anti-imperialist struggle in Guatemala itself.

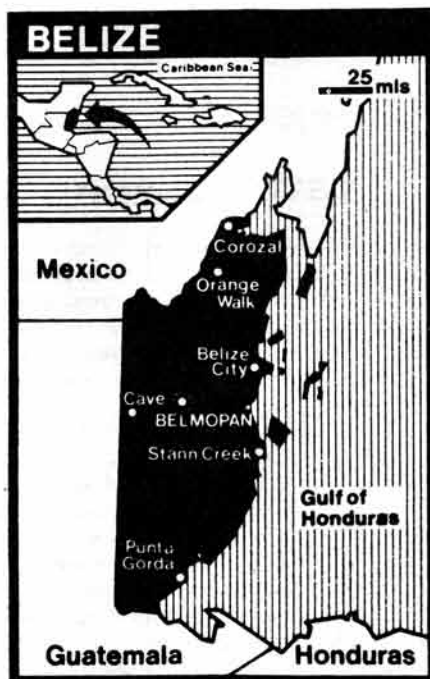
In 1977, the Guatemalan regime threatened to invade Belize if it gained its independence. Two years later, it built a road right up to the Belizean border.

The British colonialists sought to take advantage of these threats. They used them as a justification for delaying independence and for stationing 2,000 troops and a squadron of Harrier jump-jets and Puma helicopters in Belize. This British military presence constitutes a threat not only to the people of Belize, but to those throughout Central America and the Caribbean who are fighting against imperialist domination.

The Struggle for Independence

In the context of the rising class struggles throughout the region, the Guatemalan generals—and their imperialist backers—are also concerned about the political stance of the Price government and the kind of policies it may follow after independence.

Since its formation in 1950, Price's PUP has been the main party favoring independence. It campaigned for and won the right to universal adult suffrage in 1954 and a decade later compelled the British authorities to grant Belize internal “self-government.” The PUP has carried through some reform programs, including



agrarian reform and the virtual eradication of illiteracy. The party has won every election held in the country, and has the support of Belize's largest trade union.

The Price government has also taken an anti-imperialist stance on some foreign policy questions. Price has visited Cuba several times, and in July 1980 traveled to Managua for the first anniversary celebrations of the Nicaraguan revolution. In addition, a number of Belizeans went to Nicaragua to aid in the literacy campaign in Nicaragua's English-speaking Atlantic coast region.

In an interview in the April 5 *Uno más Uno*, Minister of Health Assad Shoman, who is a leader of the left wing of the PUP, declared that “an independent Belize will not allow any other country to interfere in its affairs, for the same reason that we condemn all types of interference, like that of the United States in Central America, especially in El Salvador. We believe that a direct intervention in El Salvador would be a catastrophe for the Central American region.”

The U.S. imperialists—who acted to overthrow the Michael Manley government in Jamaica for adopting similar positions—gave tacit backing to the Guatemalan junta's claims against Belize. Washington's official position was one of “neutrality,” but as George Price charged, that really amounted to “aiding and abetting” Guatemala.

The British colonialists, while maintaining a public posture of opposition to the Guatemalan claims, were at the same time quite prepared to barter away parts of Belize. Former British Foreign Secretary David Owen drew up a partition plan that would have ceded 20 percent of Belize's territory to Guatemala.

As the Belizean independence struggle

won wider international support, however, these bids to carve up Belize became increasingly isolated. In November 1980, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for Belize's independence, by a vote of 139 to 0. Washington, which had abstained on previous UN votes on Belize, felt compelled to vote for the resolution.

Guatemala's president, Gen. Romeo Lucas Garcia, was forced to admit that “circumstances have changed.”

Destabilization Drive

But the imperialists and their local allies have not abandoned their interventionist policies. They have just shifted gears.

Since the end of last year, there have been indications of a mounting destabilization campaign against the Price government.

Besides the provocative attacks organized by the UDP, the government has come under increased pressure from a newly formed group called the Anti-Communist Society (ACS), an alliance of businessmen that is headed by former Trade and Industry Minister Santiago Perdomo and backed by the wealthy Gómez family. It has indirect links with counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles, including Pedro Ramos, who was believed to have been involved in the January 1978 assassination in Nicaragua of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, a prominent critic of the Somoza dictatorship.

Agriculture Minister Florencio Marín has accused the ACS of being a front for the Guatemalan generals. Since late 1980, arsonists have set a number of fires, including one in December that burned down the PUP headquarters and the offices of the party newspaper, the *Belize Times*. The chauffeur of PUP left-wing leader Assad Shoman was gunned down by assassins.

Coming just before the riots and strikes organized by the UDP, such attacks point to a systematic effort to undermine the government's pro-independence stance and intimidate the Belizean people.

The workers and peasants of Belize, like those in the rest of Central America and the Caribbean, are discovering that efforts to improve their conditions or to decide their own future can meet with stiff opposition, both from the vested interests in their own country and proimperialist forces outside. Like other peoples in the region, they deserve the broadest possible international solidarity. □

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Puerto Rican Socialists Draw 'Lessons of Poland'

[The following article by Wilfredo Matos Cintrón appeared in the April 10-16 issue of *Claridad*, weekly organ of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The PSP is a major current in the proindependence movement in Puerto Rico. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

In a recent interview, the Polish workers leader Lech Walesa emphasized that the aim of the Solidarity trade union is to consolidate socialism in Poland. His statement was reported by the Spanish news agency EFE. But the Puerto Rican people will read about it only in the pages of *Claridad*, since this is the kind of news that finds no place in the press dominated by the capitalist and imperialist interests in this country.

By brandishing the specter of a Soviet invasion of Poland, the capitalist press seeks to ignore the true aspirations of the Polish masses organized in Solidarity. So, among other things, we face a classic case of distortion.

Such distortion consists of taking up a real problem but suppressing a vital part of its content. An effort is made to divert the meaning of the news toward something that fits the interests of those who set editorial policy. Thus, instead of the consolidation of socialism that Walesa spoke of, we have instead a revolt against socialism.

As evidence of such distortion, we can cite some significant aspects of the Polish situation that have perished under the scissors of the implacable ideological censors. For example, there is the case of the now-famous group of intellectuals, the KOR [Committee for Social Self-Defense]. Who are they? What positions do they hold? It is enough for now to note the continually suppressed but nonetheless known fact that the KOR is a group of *Marxists* who disagree with the official line of the PUWP, the Polish United Workers Party. Several other things can also be pointed out:

The program of demands of the Polish workers is entirely within the framework of socialist relations, and in no way points toward the return of capitalism. Poland is not a country trapped by underdevelopment and poverty but rather is one of the principal industrial powers of the world, a position it achieved under the leadership of the PUWP. And there are significant sectors of the PUWP itself that are promoting dialogue and renewal.

Some of the distortions also have to do

with positions that we Puerto Rican Socialists have taken on Poland. Last September 1, our Central Committee approved a resolution in support of the Polish workers who were on strike. [See *Intercontinental Press*, September 22, 1980, for text of this resolution.]

We understood that, far from calling into question the conquests of socialism, the workers' demands were directed at consolidating it by erradicating bureaucratic abuses both in the productive sector and throughout political life. We understood then, just as we do now, that when socialist aspirations are led astray it is the task of the toiling masses to pick that banner up again. This is precisely what the Polish working class has been doing.

Our resolution was made available to all of the country's press. Only the *San Juan Star* published a summary of it, adding a postscript so as to distort it. This is obviously a marvelous example of what "freedom of the press and information" mean in a country dominated by the bourgeoisie.

So what is our position? The situation in Poland is not an easy one—neither in the distorted sense projected by the capitalist press nor in the sense of a simple "consolidation of socialism." What is happening in Poland is extremely important for all of us who are committed to the struggle for a kind of socialism that can emancipate the working class from capitalist exploitation.

Socialism came into being historically, as a real social program, when the Bolsheviks took power in Russia in 1917. Under conditions of extreme poverty—produced by the First World War, the civil war, and a Tsarist regime that had not even developed bourgeois-democratic norms—the party of Lenin threw itself into the immense task of building socialism. They achieved great successes, but they also committed great errors. Over time, the old, backward, Tsarist Russia hung from their necks like a heavy tombstone. They became mired in deviations that still persist.

But if anything has demonstrated the enormous progressive forces that the socialist program gave rise to, it is the survival of the Soviet Union itself. It not only had to survive Stalinist degeneration, but also underwent terrible bloodshed and the consumption of its resources in the Second World War, which left 20 million dead. Once the most backward Eurasian power, the Soviet Union has achieved the place it now occupies in only sixty years' time.

In the course of that development, the Soviet Union has inspired revolutionaries throughout the world. It presided over the establishment of socialism in Eastern Europe. It collaborated closely so that Cuba and Angola could defend themselves effectively against fierce attacks by Yankee imperialism. Those are contributions to the development of humanity that can never be underestimated.

But it is not the angels of heaven who build socialism. We human beings build it, and we are limited by the material and subjective conditions that surround us and that find their expression in us. The great merit of humanity is the ability to rise above our past; our great flaw is to have to coexist with the past. Nonetheless, we learn. For Marxists, every social struggle, every movement, is a source of lessons. This is true for Poland as well.

What are the lessons of Poland?

We can point out at least two. First, that it is not enough for the socialist revolution to expropriate the means of production that were in the hands of the capitalists. It is necessary to go further, to the very heart of the relations that develop in the workplace, which Marx and Engels once characterized as the division between manual and intellectual labor.

Second, that the working class must develop its own rank-and-file democracy, on a basis that goes beyond the traditional structures of parliament and party. Must we recall that this was the most significant discovery of the Russian Revolution, emphasized by Lenin himself but later submerged by the practices of a bureaucratized state?

This is why we see such an important chapter unfolding in Poland today. We acknowledge that regressive forces are at work. How could it be otherwise? The enemy is always ready to fish in troubled waters, above all when our own errors make this easier. But it would be absurd to assume that such forces are the ones determining the course of events. More than thirty years down the road toward the construction of socialism, a massive movement unfolding in Poland, along with the program it upholds, is responding essentially to forces that are seeking to overcome a past that is no longer possible

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to live with. So what would be truly regressive—both in Poland and internationally—and what would be an error of historic proportions, would be for the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries to invade

Poland as they did Czechoslovakia in 1968.

We are convinced of one thing, however: Left to their own devices, the Polish working class will find its own road, and, as

Walesa said, "consolidate socialism." A new page in history is being offered to humanity, which, being realistic, aspires to things that go beyond its immediate concerns. □

Cracks Down on Exiles

Costa Rican Regime Comes to Aid of Guatemalan Junta

By Fernando Torres

Costa Rican authorities deported six exiled Guatemalan opposition leaders to Nicaragua April 8 after holding them in jail for more than two weeks. The six were arrested in the Costa Rican capital, San José, on March 24 when police—without any warrant—raided the offices of the External Commission of the Democratic Front Against Repression (FDCR).

Among those deported were Israel Márquez, an exiled trade union leader who heads the External Commission of the FDCR, and Miguel Ángel Albizu, leader of the Guatemalan National Workers Federation (CNT).

The activities of the deported leaders included publication of the weekly bulletin *Recortes de Prensa* (Press Clips), which documented the repression in Guatemala. Their activities were perfectly legal, and some of them had been living in Costa Rica for a considerable period.

This attack against democratic rights by the government of President Rodrigo Carazo Odio is part of a more extensive pattern of harassment against the pro-human-rights exile groups in Costa Rica, Honduran, Salvadoran, and Argentine exiles have been arrested, and many have been expelled from the country since mid-March.

One of the principal targets of these threats has been Radio Noticias del Continente (RNC—News of the Continent Radio), whose short-wave broadcasts reached the remotest areas of the Southern Cone.

RNC, which reported extensively on social issues and human rights, as well as on the revolutionary struggles in Central America, was closed at the beginning of March under orders from President Carazo. This action, without precedent in Costa Rica, has sparked national and international protests.

RNC's broadcasts continue, however, thanks to the establishment of an "International Network of Solidarity With Radio Noticias del Continente." Stations in ten Latin American and European countries transmit tapes produced by RNC, which is carrying out a legal battle to regain its right to broadcast.

Even before it closed the station, the government had declared war on the RNC.

It tried to close the station on previous occasions. Then it withdrew police protection from the transmission facilities, thus encouraging terrorist attacks such as those of November 7 and December 14, 1980.

In the first attack, an unidentified aircraft dropped an incendiary bomb. In the second, nine counterrevolutionary Nicaraguan exiles attacked the station.

The Association of Friends of RNC denounced the attacks as having been perpetrated by "Somozaist gangs, their Costa Rican allies in the fascist Costa Rica Libre movement, and agents in the pay of the Guatemalan, Salvadoran, Argentine, and Chilean dictatorships."

Meanwhile, in Guatemala the government of General Romeo Lucas García continues its campaign of terror against the workers, peasants, and Indian peoples of that country. The March 20 issue of *Latin American Regional Reports* stated that "the number of political killings increased sharply after President Reagan's election victory last November; official statistics show that almost 400 people were killed during the month of January."

A bulletin from the Guatemalan Church in Exile described one of the many massacres that have taken place. "In the first week of February," said the bulletin, dated March 1, "soldiers carried out raids in the villages of Papa-Chalá, Patzaj, and Panimacac, in the municipality of Comalapa" in Chimaltenango Province.

"The indignation of the inhabitants of Papa-Chalá was aroused," the Church bulletin continued, "by the stomping to death by the soldiers of a newborn child who was torn away from his mother. The incident ended with the massacre of 168 peasants—men, women, and children. The bodies were transported by truck to secret cemeteries, which were discovered in the following days due to their foul stench."

Such genocide has caused big protests inside Guatemala and abroad, resulting in the almost total isolation of Lucas García's regime. One sign of this is an international boycott of tourism, which declined by 25 percent in 1980, according to the U.S. embassy in Guatemala.

Along with the international repudiation and isolation of Lucas, the revolutionary organizations of the masses and their poli-

tical-military vanguard continue to register advances.

With the formation of the January 31 People's Front (FP-31) revolutionary unity took another step forward. This front includes the following organizations: Committee of Peasant Unity (CUC); Felipe Antonio García Revolutionary Workers Centers (NOR); Trinidad Gómez Hernández Neighborhoods Coordinating Committee (CPD); Vicente Menchú Christian Revolutionaries (CR); and the Robin García Revolutionary Student Front (FERG Secundaria). All these organizations have a long record of struggle and are rooted in the masses.

The name of the FP-31 commemorates the massacre at the Spanish embassy, personally ordered by Romeo Lucas, on January 31, 1980. Killed there were twenty-seven people who had occupied the embassy in order to expose to the whole world the genocide perpetrated against the peasants of El Quiché by the Guatemalan army (see *Intercontinental Press*, February 11, 1980, p. 128).

In its founding document the FP-31 characterized the present moment as one of "decisive confrontations, in which the organized and combative masses and the people in general must fulfill their role in the Revolutionary People's War."

At the same time the FP-31 views the process of unification that is being carried out by the Guatemalan revolutionary organizations "with deep revolutionary satisfaction." These organizations are: the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP); the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA); the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR); and the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT).

Guerrilla action has now spread throughout the country. Figures from the Democratic Front Against Repression indicate that in 1980 the political-military organizations carried out more than 2,000 actions, resulting in 946 government casualties.

The brutal repression and the direct and indirect support the Lucas García regime receives from Washington and from other governments in the region has thus been unsuccessful in containing the revolutionary struggle. □

Quebec Voters Give Sharp Rebuff to Liberals

[Quebec voters gave a stinging rebuff April 13 to Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his Liberal Party. The Liberals—led in Quebec by Claude Ryan—won only 42 seats in the 122-member Quebec National Assembly. All the rest were taken by the proindependence Parti Québécois (PQ).

[The PQ took 49.2 percent of the popular vote, compared to 46 percent for the Liberals. The Liberal vote was concentrated in the wealthier, English-speaking areas of Montreal.

[The defeat of the Liberals produced scenes of jubilation in Montreal, where more than 40 percent of Quebec's population is concentrated. Henry Giniger reported in the April 15 *New York Times* that "young nationalists danced for joy, waved Quebec flags, cheered passing cars whose drivers honked in celebration and shouted 'Quebec for the Quebecers!' Two men waved a huge banner that read, 'Nothing is more precious than freedom and independence.'"

[The following two articles on the issues at stake in the Quebec elections originally appeared in the March 30 issue of *Lutte Ouvrière*, the French-language newspaper of the Ligue Ouvrière Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Workers League), the Canadian section of the Fourth International. The translations are by *Socialist Voice*, the organization's English-language newspaper.]

* * *

As the Quebec provincial elections move past the half-way point, the federal government, the major corporations, and the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) have formed a reactionary coalition to drive the Parti Québécois (PQ) from power and replace it by a party more submissive to their dictates—the Liberals.

The stakes in this contest go far beyond normal electioneering. The main target of the right-wing bloc is not the PQ but the national movement in Quebec and the working class.

The corporations, the federal government, and the Liberals want to get rid of Quebec's language legislation, Law 101, and block any attempt to hold another referendum in which the people of Quebec could decide their own fate. They want to be able to step up their attacks on workers' standard of living. They are using blackmail and threats, in effect denying the Québécois the right to freely choose their own government.

Offensive of Employers, Federal Government

For several years now the employers across Canada have tried to place the burden of their economic mess on working people. They have gone at it tooth and nail

—with wage freezes, budget cuts, inflation, and unemployment.

Despite this arsenal of weapons, they have hit an insoluble problem. Working people aren't going along with it, especially in Quebec. Mobilized by their struggle against national oppression, Québécois workers are in the forefront of the fightback by working people.

That is why the federalist forces and the heads of the big monopolies began some time ago an all-out attack against the Quebec national movement.

Companies like Sun Life and Cadbury moved to Ontario. The Supreme Court of Canada outlawed sections of Quebec's Law 101. The solicitor general of Canada used the courts to limit the Quebec government's inquiry into the illegal activities of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police].

During the May 20, 1980 Quebec referendum* campaign, Ottawa spent millions to fight against the Yes vote; the major companies tried economic blackmail; and Prime Minister Trudeau insisted the federal government would not negotiate with Quebec in the event of a victory of the Yes vote.

The federal government is continuing this attack now through its attempt to unilaterally patriate the constitution. Trudeau's proposed Charter of Rights will abolish Quebec's right to adopt its own language legis-

*The May 20 referendum was organized by the PQ government, which asked for approval of its plan to negotiate for the sovereignty of Quebec with the Canadian government.—IP

lation. In the very middle of the provincial elections, the federal government is trying to take away essential powers from the Quebec government.

Quebec Liberals—Ottawa's Party

The spearhead of the federalist offensive is the Quebec Liberal Party. Parti Québécois leader René Lévesque explained accurately what the Liberals want: "A better deal for Quebec's exploiters, not for the population as a whole. A better deal for those who are against a French Quebec."

A particular focus of the Liberal attack has been Quebec's language legislation, Law 101. This law provides that all newcomers to Quebec, whatever their original language, receive their education in French, the language of the Quebec majority. Law 101 is designed to counteract the tendency for immigrants to be educated in English language schools, a factor which threatens to reduce the French to a minority in Montreal.

Ever since the adoption of Law 101, Quebec Liberal Claude Ryan has looked for ways to get rid of it. But while Trudeau and the bosses have openly attacked it, Ryan has had to adopt a more modest opposition because of the massive support for the law among Québécois.

The Liberals recently opted for the so-called "Canada clause," which allows children of parents educated in English-speaking schools elsewhere in Canada to go to English-speaking schools in Quebec. But Ryan does not hide the fact that for him this is on-



Parti Québécois supporters in Montreal celebrate election results.

ly a step towards his real objective—to open the English schools to all children of English-speaking immigrants, whether from inside or outside Canada. The clear thrust of Liberal proposals on language legislation is to undermine the position of the francophone majority in Quebec.

Ryan, who blames the PQ for the poor state of the economy, wants to reestablish the “creative and vigorous role in the economy” of the private sector. “Creating” more unemployment and inflation, no doubt!

The PQ is trying to nationalize American-owned Asbestos Corporation. Ryan says he will wait until after the election to decide what his position is, but the Liberals voted against nationalization in the Quebec parliament. The Liberals want to put even more limits on the right to strike.

Role of Multinationals

Ryan's campaign accurately reflects the positions of the *Conseil du Patronat du Québec* (CPQ, literally Quebec Bosses' Council). The CPQ wants a government with a “bias toward employers,” that is, a Liberal government.

The CPQ is the mouthpiece of the big multinationals—companies which, during the referendum, gave millions to the No campaign and threatened to fire employees who supported the Yes. CPQ members like the Royal Bank and Canadian Pacific have refused to submit their plans for changing the language of work to French as required by Law 101.

These companies are responsible for the 25,000 layoffs a year in Quebec. It's because of them that the Port Cartier population fell from 12,000 to 8,000 following the shutdown of the ITT-Rayonier pulp and paper mill. These companies are the source of the province's galloping inflation rate.

How Québécois Have Responded

Against this vast offensive of the multinationals and the federal government, the national movement and Quebec workers have gone into action. This winter, Solidarity Quebec mobilized the population against Trudeau's constitutional schemes. More than 700,000 Québécois signed its petition and 15,000 rallied at the Montreal Forum. A major campaign has been launched to free ex-FLQ [Quebec Liberation Front] member Paul Rose, still in jail after 10 years because he refuses to renounce his nationalist political opinions.

The struggle of Quebec loggers against wood industry monopolies shows that it is ordinary working people who are at the heart of the fightback. They are the ones most affected by national oppression and exploitation. They are the ones forced to speak English to find and hold a job.

They are also the people with the will and the power to go all the way in the struggle to free Quebec and form a government under their own control, a workers government. □

Why Parti Québécois Is Not the Answer

Quebec Workers Need Their Own Political Voice

By Michel Dugré

Most workers are going to vote for the Parti Québécois “because it is not as bad as the other parties.”

It is true that the PQ is very different from the other parties. The Quebec Liberal Party is the party of the multinational corporations and the federal government, the party of imperialism.

The PQ, in contrast, has implemented a number of measures in the interest of the population: Law 101, cultural zoning regulations, the dropping of fines and charges stemming from the 1976 Common Front union struggle, establishment of the Lazare medical clinics which provide abortions, government automobile insurance, the holding of the May 20 referendum, and leading the fightback against Prime Minister Trudeau's unilateral constitutional proposals.

It's because of these progressive measures as well as the PQ's sovereignty-association program that the federal government is so opposed to the PQ. Canadian imperialism needs a strong and centralized state, and a PQ government undermines that.

These initiatives have led workers to have a “favorable disposition toward the PQ.” Most Quebec workers will vote PQ, a position recommended by the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ).

However, nobody or almost nobody in Quebec seriously argues that the PQ is a party which consistently defends the interests of the workers. In fact, the PQ has behaved much like the previous Liberal government when it comes to dealing with the labor movement: injunctions, cuts in social services, and special laws against the right to strike. The PQ government even succeeded where the Liberals failed in striking hard blows against public sector workers.

Despite its claims, the PQ has not succeeded in improving our lot. Some claim it's because of the economic crisis. Others say it's because Quebec doesn't control its own economy.

But that isn't the whole answer. For even in a deep economic crisis the PQ could improve our standard of living if it were prepared to confront the multinationals and the federal government and to challenge their domination of Quebec.

That is exactly what the PQ refuses to do. The PQ claims to be the “party of the whole nation,” but its real goal is to use its control over the Quebec government in the interest of Quebec capitalists. It's the interests of the small business and the government-run corporations that the PQ puts first, not the interests of Quebec workers.

PQ Finance Minister Jacques Parizeau's recent budget demonstrates this. The spend-

ing cutbacks he has imposed on the social services sector are so drastic that essential services have to be cut to keep within the budget allocations.

Far from encouraging women's access to jobs traditionally reserved for men, the PQ's election campaign proposes a series of measures to entice women back into the home to have children.

The PQ continues to retreat with respect to Quebec independence. During the Quebec referendum Trudeau promised to reform the constitution by giving more powers to Quebec; in fact, his constitutional proposals do the opposite. The PQ, on the other hand, says it still considers itself bound by the referendum results and promises that if re-elected, it will not fight for sovereignty or hold another referendum during its next term.

The PQ passively accepted the Supreme Court of Canada's decision against sections of Law 101 and has done nothing to defend Quebec political prisoner Paul Rose.

In short, this party is not what we need; the interests it defends are not ours.

There are those like the FTQ leadership who argue that we should vote PQ anyway in order to stop the Liberals.

Isn't the PQ the “lesser evil”? Yes—if our only choice is the PQ. But it is not our only choice.

Moreover, the PQ is not a lesser evil—it is a major obstacle—with respect to the big task before working people in Quebec: building a party which defends our interests. Each time we support the PQ “for a lack of anything better” we take a step backwards because we're not taking any steps toward entering the political arena ourselves in defense of our own interests.

It's the trade union leadership which is responsible for this situation. They could offer an alternative leadership to working people but they refuse to do it.

Unlike the FTQ leadership, the leaders of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and the Quebec Teachers Federation (CEQ) have refused to endorse the PQ. But by refusing to take a position on how workers should vote, they are leaving them at the mercy of the existing parties.

If the union leadership were to organize a serious discussion on the question of a labor party, working people would not be in this situation for long. But instead of assuming their responsibilities, they are trying to smother the discussion.

We must ensure that we won't ever again be in this situation. The labor movement must begin a discussion now which can lead to the formation of a labor party in Quebec well before the next elections! □

France on the Eve of Presidential Elections

By Will Reissner

As the French presidential elections draw near, polls indicate that President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's once-commanding lead has been whittled away. Some polls show that his leading challenger, Socialist Party candidate François Mitterrand, has pulled ahead.

French elections take place in two rounds. In the April 26 first round, ten candidates will be on the ballot. The two front-runners will then face each other in the second round on May 10.

Most media attention is focusing on four of the candidates: Giscard, Mitterrand, Georges Marchais of the French Communist Party, and Gaullist Jacques Chirac of the Assembly for the Republic (RPR).

In the last presidential elections in 1974, Giscard barely squeaked past Mitterrand by a margin of 50.7 percent to 49.3 percent. At that time the Socialist and Communist parties were united in an electoral bloc, the Union of the Left, with Mitterrand as the candidate.

Disunity Among Workers Parties

But since the Union of the Left broke up in 1977, the Communist and Socialist parties have been deeply divided and mutually antagonistic. At the root of the break-up was the CP's feeling that the Socialist Party had gained most from the alliance and might permanently eclipse the CP as the leading workers party in France.

In this election, therefore, CP candidate Georges Marchais has been centering his fire on Mitterrand, hoping to improve the CP's vote showing versus the SP. Marchais has never stated explicitly that he would call for a vote for Mitterrand in the second round of the elections if Mitterrand should do better than he in the first round. A recent poll indicated that at least 20 percent of those voting for Marchais in the first round would not vote for Mitterrand in the second round. Given the expected closeness of the second round vote, that margin alone could insure the reelection of President Giscard.

To pad the CP vote totals, Marchais has also been waging a campaign that plays heavily on anti-immigrant prejudices and stresses "law and order" themes.

Mitterrand, in turn, has refused to state that he would include CP ministers in his government if elected, and has been making noises about cooperating with the Gaullists.

The acrimony between the CP and SP is reflected within the trade union movement

as well. The CP-dominated General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and the SP-influenced French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) spend as much time attacking each other as fighting the employers.

The divisions within the union movement run from top to bottom—from refusal to meet together to plan united May Day demonstrations, to refusal to work together on the shop floor.

Regarding the elections, the CGT has called for a vote for Marchais in the first round, but has remained totally silent about its attitude in the second round.

Giscard's Position Deteriorates

Although the divisions within the workers movement weakens Mitterrand's present position as compared to the 1974 elections, Giscard's position has deteriorated at least as much. In this election, Giscard does not start as a "new face." Rather, he must defend his seven-year record at a time when unemployment is rising sharply and inflation continues at a double-digit pace.

At the end of 1980, unemployment stood at 1.7 million, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies. The CGT puts the figure at nearly 2 million.

The unemployment rate is expected to continue to rise as the recession brings on a thoroughgoing shake-out of French industry. Many traditional industries will emerge from the recession considerably smaller, both in terms of employment and output. But employment is expected to decline faster and further than output.

In the steel industry, for example, more

than 20,000 jobs were eliminated in 1979 and 1980. But labor productivity in the industry rose 10 percent in 1980. Government jobs are also being eliminated—not all those who retire are being replaced.

The rising dissatisfaction with Giscard has been seen in a series of local elections to fill parliamentary vacancies, in which the government candidates have gone down to defeat.

The Giscard government and French employers hope to use the divisions in the workers movement and the rising unemployment to depress wages, improve productivity, discipline the workforce, and undercut gains workers have won in past struggles.

They have achieved a degree of success in holding down wages. The purchasing power of government workers fell by 2 percent in 1980. For most other workers, take-home pay has stagnated or declined.

Giscard's prime minister, Raymond Barre, has boasted that the government was able to hold down wages without provoking social turmoil.

During Giscard's first term there were also sweeping attacks on the Social Security system and heavy spending cuts for education and health care.

If the president wins a second term, the employers are likely to try to eliminate some provisions of the 1936 law on working hours in order to reinstitute weekend shifts, expand night shifts, and increase the use of part-time and temporary employees at the expense of full-time workers.

The government will also make it easier for employers to lay off workers and will try to limit the right of government workers to strike.

The Workers' Response

Because of the deep divisions within the workers movement, the response to the attacks on jobs and living standards has been sporadic and localized. There have been a number of long and hard-fought strikes. But because strikes in France tend to be highly politicized and run directly up against the government, workers have been loath to fight dispersed battles that have no perspective for bringing down the government.

According to the Labor Ministry, the number of strikes in 1980 declined less than 1 percent from the previous year. But the number of workdays lost in strikes dropped by 52.4 percent.

Although there is a real desire by workers to launch a fight against the attacks on their living standards and jobs, the div-



Mitterrand and Marchais, while still on speaking terms in 1974.

isions within the union movement and workers parties have had a dampening effect on the workers' ability to carry out such a fight.

In contrast to the practice in the United States, Britain, and other countries, where the union that has majority support among the workers in a plant becomes the exclusive bargaining agent for all the workers, in France all the union federations are present in each factory. Workers on a single assembly line may be members of a CGT union, a CFDT union, another union, or no union at all. The fact that all the union federations are present in all the plants means that disunity in the workers movement has a direct impact on the plant floor and makes it especially difficult to wage united struggles even within a single factory.

The constant fighting and bickering among the unions has had a demoralizing effect on the ranks, who favor unity in struggles. This has led to a marked drop in union affiliations.

At first glance it might seem that the Giscard government has been very successful in its aims. In addition to the economic attacks it has carried out against the workers, the government has also been able to deal heavy blows to democratic rights and has strengthened the repressive apparatus.

The government is clearly preparing for a showdown with the working class. It recognizes that the workers will not remain indefinitely passive in the face of the blows they are receiving.

The government's attacks have also been a way of testing the reactions of the unions and workers parties. Not only has the reaction been minimal, but each government provocation has simply increased the raging battles between the CP and SP and the CGT and CFDT as each tries to point the finger of blame at the other.

Although the response to the government's attacks has been weak thus far, French employers have a deep-going fear that the working class may stage a repetition of the May 1968 general strike, which nearly succeeded in toppling de Gaulle's government and capitalism itself. The 1968 upsurge took place over the heads of the leaders of the workers movement and against their wishes.

A Weak Government

The government is, in fact, far weaker than it appears at first glance. Giscard and a number of his cabinet ministers have been involved in a series of financial scandals. The two parties that supposedly make up the government majority—Giscard's Union for French Democracy (UDF) and the Gaullist Assembly for the Republic (RPR)—are bitterly divided. And, perhaps most important, Giscard has to defend his seven-year record in office.

As a result of the scandals and poor economic performance, Giscard's personal



President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Gaullist challenger Jacques Chirac.

prestige has fallen sharply. His prime minister, Raymond Barre, the author of the Barre austerity plan, is so unpopular that Giscard does all he can to keep Barre out of the public eye.

Giscard's biggest weakness has been his inability to solve one of the French bourgeoisie's key political problems: since the death of de Gaulle there has been no right-wing political party with a real mass base. Giscard's UDF is a tiny group, without any following of its own. The UDF owes its existence to its relationship to the presidency and its hold over patronage.

Because the UDF has no roots in any segment of French society, Giscard has been deemphasizing his partisan ties. His campaign is not being run through the UDF. Instead he has organized support committees for the "citizen-candidate" (himself). His themes include traditional French rightist dogma: nationalism, national security, strong criticism of political parties as divisive, and the need for a strong regime to fight off the chaos that threatens.

Challenge From the Gaullists

But Giscard does not have the support of the other large force on the French right—the Gaullist movement.

In fact, the Gaullist movement is deeply divided, with three candidates running in the first round: Jacques Chirac, Michel Debré, and Marie-France Garaud.

Debré's campaign is focusing on patriotic themes. He accuses Giscard of reducing French prestige in the world and calls on French women to bear more children in order to double the country's population to 100 million.

Marie-France Garaud states that she is running because no other candidate is sufficiently hard on "Soviet expansionism."

Chirac, the mayor of Paris, is the leading Gaullist candidate. Although he was Giscard's prime minister until 1976, and approved most of the measures Giscard has put into effect, Chirac is calling for "the defeat of the president" and refuses to say if he would vote for Giscard in a

second-round contest against the SP's Mitterrand.

The reason for Chirac's hostility to Giscard is not hard to fathom. Although Giscard was elected with the support of Chirac's RPR, over the years the president has pushed the RPR out of positions of power in the state apparatus.

RPR politicians believe that Giscard's reelection would be a death sentence for the RPR as a political formation. A conglomeration like the RPR has a hard time surviving without being able to "feed itself" from the state apparatus, as Mitterrand aptly put it.

The mere fact that the RPR has been able to survive as long as it has is something of a surprise. Since the deaths of de Gaulle and his successor as president, Georges Pompidou, the big questions dividing the Gaullists from the rest of the French right—concerning relations with the workers movement and the need for an independent French foreign and military policy—have largely been settled.

But although Chirac's campaign against Giscard is primarily motivated by the RPR's desire to maintain its separate existence and keep its positions in the state apparatus, the Gaullist leader is also seeking to exploit the anger of certain traditionally rightist layers who are suffering the effects of the economic crisis. Many of these people voted for Giscard in 1974 but have been stung by Giscard's policies.

Chirac is making a big appeal to the owners of the two million small and medium-sized companies in France. They are experiencing severe financial difficulties as a result of Giscard's policies of furthering European economic integration and giving priority to exports and to the most advanced sectors of the French economy. In fact, bankruptcies, mainly of small companies, rose last year by 42 percent.

Chirac's appeal to these layers is based on his promise to lower taxes and get government regulators off their backs.

Farmers are another target of Chirac's campaign. The last convention of the National Federation of Agricultural Producers' Associations (FNSEA) showed how

unhappy farmers are with the government's agricultural policies and with the Common Market.

While the Common Market agricultural commission calls for an increase of only 7.8 percent in agricultural prices, the FNSEA has called for an increase of 15.3 percent. Chirac has come out for a 15 percent increase, which corresponds to the current inflation rate in France.

Chirac also sharply attacks "the French government's capitulation" to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher over agricultural policies, and he opposes the entry of Portugal and Spain into the Common Market because they would compete with French farmers for European markets.

As a result of these positions, Chirac's support among farmers is growing. This worries Giscard, who won 60 percent of the farm vote in the 1974 elections.

Chirac is also calling for tax reductions to stimulate productive investments, reductions in state expenditures and government waste, reducing the number of government employees by replacing only half of those who retire each year, and limiting state aid to nationalized corporations and private industry. He often compares himself to Ronald Reagan when making such proposals.

Giscard and Raymond Barre have been provoked to counterattack. They stress that they have reduced corporate taxes for the past five years. Barre has also pointed out that Chirac's proposal to make up for lost revenues from a lowered income tax by increasing the value-added tax, a kind of super sales tax, would simply increase the taxes on the poorest segments of the population.

But despite the charges and countercharges from Chirac and Giscard, Chirac's proposals are simply an acceleration of what Giscard and Barre have already been carrying out or discussing.

How Far Can Workers Be Pushed?

The real difference between Chirac's proposals and Giscard's policies is not divergent economic assessments but rather disagreement on how far the workers movement can be pushed. In this sense they represent two currents of thought among French employers.

One segment of the French bourgeoisie clearly feels that now is the time to have it out with the workers movement. They believe that high unemployment and job insecurity, combined with the divisions in the workers movement, make this a good time to press home the offensive against wages and social services.

Another segment of the French ruling class fears, however, that an all-out attack on the workers movement at this time could spark a strong response. Giscard, who shares that view, has stated that "we can sharply reduce the rate of inflation, but only by accepting another 500,000

unemployed. This is what the result of a restrictive monetary policy would be. . . . But we have not followed the extremist policy of trying to 'break' inflation regardless of the social cost."

Giscard argued that such a policy could provoke a workers upsurge and result in a CP-SP government like the Popular Front government of 1936, or in implementation of the Union of the Left's 1974 Common Program.

Raymond Barre is even more explicit. He warns that focusing solely on inflation and allowing unemployment to rise drastically could even lead to another upheaval like the one in May 1968.

French bourgeois leaders are closely following the experiences of the Thatcher government in Britain. Many conclude from the British experience that applying strict monetarist policies is a very risky proposition.

They recognize that although the economic crisis, rising unemployment, and divisions in the working class are muting the reactions of the workers, the workers have not suffered a defeat. A false step by

the government could spark an upsurge that would sweep over the divisions in the workers movement and force a unity policy on the leaders of the CP and SP and the unions.

The sentiment for unity is clearly present in the workers movement, as seen by the establishment of local committees for unity in struggles and petition campaigns calling for unity.

Pressure is mounting on the CP and SP candidates to categorically state that they will call for a vote for the one who does best in the first round.

If Giscard wins a second term despite his unpopularity and the record of his first seven years, primary blame will fall on the CP and SP, who place their own sectarian interests above the interests of the French working class.

If Mitterrand wins, however, the French workers will take that as a sign that the time is ripe to launch a counterattack against the employers in order to win back what they have lost during Giscard's presidency. □

Antilles Revolutionists for Abstention

By Janice Lynn

The upcoming French presidential elections have provoked a good deal of discussion among residents of the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Located in the Lesser Antilles, these two islands are ruled directly from France. They were given the status of "overseas departments" following World War II. Thus, Martinicans and Guadeloupans can participate in electing the French president.

In the 1981 elections, the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), Antilles section of the Fourth International, is calling upon all working people on the two islands to abstain from voting. The GRS calls for the formation

of a United Front for Abstention to make the two election days—April 26 and May 10—days of action for the national and social liberation of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Both islands have experienced an upsurge in anticolonialist and labor struggles over the last several years. Sizable marches, rallies, and strikes have taken place to protest stepped-up repression by the French police and army and the deteriorating economic situation—especially the high unemployment rate that disproportionately affects the Black youth on the islands.

In a February resolution, the GRS Central Committee explained the organization's reasons for calling for abstention in the elections.

The GRS pointed out that more and more people are realizing that the French colonialist policy of assimilation with France has failed to solve the basic problems of workers in the Antilles. "Departmentalization"—that is, having the status of a department of France—has not provided jobs and a decent standard of living, ended racism and inequality, or allowed even the most elementary democratic rights.

"Since the 1978 elections, confidence in the system has declined," the GRS resolution stated, "while at the same time, little by little, the consciousness of belonging to a different totality has grown stronger—a people with a specific historical origin, common economic and social needs, and a specific culture and future. These are decisive factors for revolutionaries."



Explaining that the present situation had changed from what existed during the last French presidential elections in 1974, the GRS declared, "The situation calls for going on the offensive . . . as a way of strengthening the workers' confidence and making it possible to strengthen nationalist and class consciousness."

The GRS explained that participation in elections was a tactical question and noted that a call for abstaining in the 1981 elections would be the most educational way of advancing revolutionary consciousness in the Antilles.

"In 1981, the situation is not the same as it was seven years ago," the GRS resolution stated. "Due to the real deepening of the crisis of the departmental system, over the last several years we have witnessed not only greater and greater disbelief among the masses in departmentalist solutions, but also a decline in the viability of the reformists' slogans. A number of factors have begun to come together so that social explosions now have a direct impact on the political scene. The sentiment of belonging to a community of the Antilles—and even a Caribbean community—is steadily advancing, even if it has not yet been expressed by adherence to the idea of an independent Antilles."

The GRS explained that the fact that the Martinican and Guadeloupan Communist parties were openly debating whether or not to call for independence was a direct indication of how the political situation is evolving.

"Today, during the 1981 presidential elections, this evolution must be expressed," the GRS explained. "This is why the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS), Antilles section of the Fourth International, has decided to call on the Antilles working people to abstain on April 26 and May 10."



Demonstration in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, during March 30 general strike to protest repression and unemployment.

What GRS Is Campaigning For

In its campaign calling for abstaining in the French presidential elections, the Socialist Revolution Group outlined some of the demands it was putting forward to defend the needs of workers in the Antilles:

- Begin a big public works program and set up industrial establishments with public funds.
- No layoffs in the agricultural sector. Expropriate the big landholders. For an agrarian reform controlled by the masses of people.
- Nationalize the sugar industry, with no compensation or indemnities.
- For an end to poverty and the high cost of living. For massive, across-the-board wage increases, and cost-of-living

increases based on an index determined by the workers.

- For the right to organize trade unions and demonstrate in the streets.
- For freedom of expression on radio and television.
- For an end to racism against youth and an end to women's oppression.
- For the withdrawal of the French security police, special troops, and military police.
- For an end to colonialism. No French domination. For a National Constituent Assembly. For national independence and socialism.
- No integration into Europe. For a Federation of Socialist States in the Caribbean.

Other proindependence forces, as well as the Martinican Communist Party, are also calling for abstaining in the elections. The Guadeloupan CP, however, has called for a vote for the French CP's presidential candidate, Georges Marchais.

The Martinique Progressive Party (PPM), a populist, nationalist party led by the well-known poet Aimé Césaire (who is also the mayor of Martinique's capital Fort-de-France), is calling for a vote for Socialist Party candidate François Mitterrand.

The GRS noted that another important change from 1974 was the breakup of the Union of the Left—the 1974 electoral bloc between the Communist and Socialist parties. The last years have been marked by deep divisions between these two large workers parties and the trade unions in

which they are active.

"In 1974, we called for a vote in the second round for the Union of the Left's candidate, François Mitterrand," the GRS wrote, "... because we believed that important mass mobilizations would result . . . [and] that if there were an electoral victory, the working class would gain confidence in its struggles against the bosses, the cops, and the colonial apparatus."

In the first round of the 1974 elections, the GRS called for a vote for Alain Krivine, presidential candidate of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, supporting his revolutionary socialist program.

The GRS said of the LCR's current presidential campaign: "We salute Alain Krivine and the Revolutionary Communist League's campaign for working-class unity, against the Giscard-Barre government, for the right of the so-called Overseas Departments and Territories to be independent, for solidarity with immigrant workers, for women's rights, for support to the peoples of El Salvador and Grenada, and so on. . . . Our position for abstaining clearly indicates the desires of the people of the Antilles for a turning point in the political life of our country."

The GRS concluded that abstaining in the elections would:

- "be an expression of our dignity and our willingness to take our destiny into our own hands;
- "show our desire not to see our country transformed into a base of support for French imperialism's economic, military, and political expansionism; and
- "give impetus to a new enthusiasm for our national liberation struggle, by transforming the confusion, incomprehension, and distrust created by the government's policies into open hostility toward the regime, and from there, into revolutionary energy." □

Jamaica's Struggle Against U.S. Domination

By Ernest Harsch

The new governments in Washington and Kingston have wasted little time in consolidating their reactionary alliance.

On February 23—less than a month after President Reagan welcomed Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga to the White House—a U.S. destroyer pulled into the Kingston docks. Its visit was part of a series of U.S. naval maneuvers in the Caribbean aimed at intimidating the people of El Salvador and other countries.

Then in early March, a team of leading U.S. businessmen arrived in Kingston to discuss with their Jamaican counterparts ways to increase U.S. investment in Jamaica. The team—which was named by Reagan—included Chase Manhattan Bank Chairman David Rockefeller and the heads of Exxon, Gulf and Western, Alcoa, Kaiser Aluminum, Reynolds Aluminum, United Brands, and other large corporations, most of them with interests in Jamaica.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig has designated a senior adviser to the joint U.S.-Jamaican business committee to "help assure harmony with United States Government policy."

Jamaica News columnist Aggrey Brown commented, "Lest any natives continue to harbour the illusion that we are not for sale, let it be said, 'We are not for sale.'"

"We have been sold."

A Proimperialist Regime

Since Edward Seaga came into power in early November—following a brutal U.S.-inspired destabilization campaign against the previous government of Michael Manley—he has adopted policies very much to the liking of his mentors in Washington.

Job programs have been cut and prices have been raised, while more funds and arms are being allocated for the police and military. Repression has been unleashed against radical political activists.

Plans have been announced to turn some nationalized enterprises over to private concerns and to revise the country's rent control laws. Government supporters have called for steps to control Jamaica's restive trade unions.

On foreign policy questions, Seaga has lined up with Washington's offensive against the people of Central America and the Caribbean.

One of his first acts was to expel the Cuban ambassador to Jamaica and sharply reduce Jamaica's relations with Cuba. A witch-hunt has been launched against young Jamaicans who have studied in Cuba.

The imperialist governments and banks have shown their gratitude to Seaga by pledging hundreds of millions of dollars in loans. In addition, the International Monetary Fund has tentatively approved \$650 million in new credits to Jamaica. This is in sharp contrast to their attitude toward the Manley government, which they helped undermine through a severe financial embargo.

As Seaga's policies have already shown, his regime does not represent the interests of Jamaica's working population, the mostly Black workers and farmers who make up the vast bulk of the island's more than two million people. It represents the interests of the North American and British bankers and industrialists who dominate the Jamaican economy, plus the tiny elite of wealthy—and mostly white—Jamaican capitalists who are allied with the foreign companies.

The U.S. imposition of the Seaga regime was an attack against the sovereign rights of the Jamaican people. It marked the beginning of a new stage in the long conflict between the people of Jamaica and their foreign oppressors.

What Jamaicans want is to be able to decide their own future, and to be able to utilize the wealth they produce for their own benefit.

But the U.S. rulers have shown that they will not willingly accept that. What they want is unrestricted access to Jamaica's bountiful natural resources, including some of the world's richest deposits of bauxite, the raw material from which aluminum is made. They want to be able to employ Jamaica's workers at the lowest possible wages, without having to deal with strong unions. They want a government in power that will readily follow Washington's foreign policy dictates.

That is the same thing they are after in the rest of the Caribbean, a region of great political and economic importance, which the American ruling class has long considered an "American lake." And to protect its interests, it has repeatedly intervened in the Caribbean with troops and other means.

Jamaica is important to Washington in its own right. But it is even more important within the context of the Caribbean as a whole. It is the largest and most populous of the English-speaking islands. It is very close to Cuba and Haiti, and only 400 miles from Central America. Political developments in Jamaica have often had a big political impact in countries as far away as Trinidad and Guyana.

There are also historical links between the people of Jamaica and the struggle of U.S. Blacks. Marcus Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the first mass Black political organization in the United States, was a Jamaican.

Thus, the outcome of the struggle in Jamaica will not only decide the future of that island, but will have profound repercussions far from its shores as well.

A Century of US. Exploitation

American business has had a direct stake in Jamaica for nearly 100 years. The United Fruit Company, which later became notorious for its exploitation of Central America, first moved into Jamaica in the 1890s, at a time when it was still a direct British colony.

For several decades, the American companies were junior partners in the exploitation of the country. But American involvement in Jamaica grew. Gradually, U.S. imperialism supplanted the British as the dominant foreign influence over the island.

By the 1930s, however, the American and British imperialists began to face stiffer opposition from the Jamaican population, opposition that was fueled to a great extent by their deteriorating living standards.

The expansion of commercial export crops like bananas and sugar used up more and more land and drove tens of thousands of small farmers off their plots. The rural unemployed and landless flocked to the cities in the hopes of finding jobs. Huge shantytowns arose in the western areas of Kingston. Urban discontent became rife.

A similar situation prevailed throughout Britain's Caribbean empire. And almost everywhere the workers responded in the same way: through massive strikes and the organization of trade unions. Beginning in 1934, big strikes and urban uprisings swept through the region, hitting Trinidad, Guyana, St. Kitts, Barbados, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia.

In 1937-38, it was Jamaica's turn to explode. First, spontaneous strikes by sugar workers and banana cutters broke out in various parts of the island. Then, in May 1938, police fired into a crowd of sugar workers, killing four. Massive protest marches and demonstrations swept the country. Banana workers brought the industry to a halt, marching from plantation to plantation to bring the workers out.

Dockers paralyzed the wharves. Strikers and unemployed workers poured into the streets of Kingston, virtually taking them over. The mobilization of British troops and the arrest of the workers' main spokesman, Alexander Bustamante, just added to the ferment.

The upsurge was brought to an end only after Bustamante was released, the workers won wage increases, and the British authorities promised land reform.

Anticolonial Struggle

The 1938 rebellion marked a major turning point in Jamaica's struggle against foreign domination. It showed the power of the young Jamaican working class and gave a big spur to the organization of trade unions. Anticolonial sentiments were greatly sharpened.

Against this background, the first Jamaican political parties were established. In 1938, Norman Manley, a prominent lawyer who had played a key role in arbitrating between the workers and the authorities during the rebellion, formed the People's National Party (PNP).

The PNP declared itself a "democratic socialist" party similar to Britain's Labour Party. It adopted an anticolonial stance and demanded Jamaican "self-government" under the British crown. It launched a struggle to win universal adult suffrage.

Parallel to the emergence of the PNP, Alexander Bustamante built up the island's first large union, the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU). Bustamante was able to win a wide following, and the strength of the BITU forced employers to make concessions to the workers.

The effectiveness of the BITU as a workers' organization was seriously hampered, however, by the political orientation of its leadership. Bustamante himself was a businessman, and he administered the union like a business, from the top down. He enshrined himself as "president-for-life" and retained sole control over the union's funds. Most seriously, Bustamante tried to steer workers away from involvement in the anticolonial struggle, ridiculed the PNP's calls for self-government, and attempted to limit the BITU's concerns to solely economic issues.

But the anticolonial movement continued to grow. In 1942, the British authorities felt obliged to make some constitutional concessions. They announced that elections would be held for a House of Representatives in 1944.

Determined to block the PNP from winning office in those elections, Bustamante broke from his supposed "nonpolitical" stance and set up the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) to run against the PNP. Although the JLP claimed to represent the working class, few workers were among its candidates. The party won the backing of the planter class and businessmen.



The PNP likewise claimed to champion the workers' interests, and had an active left wing that included several leading unionists who were admitted Marxists. But the main leadership of the party was composed of petty-bourgeois nationalists and much of its funding also came from Jamaican business circles. Unlike the British Labour Party, which the PNP held up as its model, the PNP in that period had only a very small union base.

Most workers thus remained behind Bustamante, despite the PNP's more anticolonial positions. The JLP won office in the 1944 elections.

U.S. Companies Charge Ahead

It was during the JLP's first period in government that American business began to move into Jamaica on a truly massive scale. In the forefront were the U.S. aluminum companies.

Jamaica has some of the world's largest and richest deposits of bauxite. Lured by these deposits—plus the low wages of Jamaican workers and the incentives the Jamaican government accorded to foreign investors—American and Canadian aluminum companies began to establish major operations there. Reynolds, Alcan, and Kaiser sunk millions of dollars into mining and port facilities, and later into the establishment of bauxite refining plants.

Close on their heels came the U.S. banks. North American tourism to Jamaica skyrocketed. Jamaican trade ties increasingly shifted away from Britain and toward the United States.

While the bauxite firms reaped enormous profits, the conditions for the mass of Jamaicans remained abysmal. Unemployment was still high, and the acquisition of more than 100,000 acres of land by the bauxite companies drove even more small peasants off their farms. The wages of bauxite workers were very low, until they organized themselves and forced the companies to pay more.

The Jamaican economy experienced a rapid growth during the 1950s, but in a very deformed manner. Production was geared largely toward export. The few manufacturing industries that were deve-

loped had little relationship with each other or with Jamaica's still important agricultural sector. The Jamaican economy became more and more dependent on imperialist markets, capital, and finance.

A few Jamaicans did benefit from this, however: members of the old plantation aristocracy who began to diversify into construction and other industries. They formed the nucleus of a new industrial bourgeoisie that was closely allied with the imperialist companies and banks. Corrupt politicians and local managers also found numerous opportunities to enrich themselves.

Overall, the gap between the standard of living of the ruling class and the masses of working people grew wider. By the 1960s, Jamaica had one of the highest ratios of income inequality in the world.

Both of the main Jamaican parties, the JLP and PNP, defended the growing involvement of North American corporations in Jamaica. Although they claimed to speak to all Jamaicans, especially the workers, their leaderships more directly represented the political and social interests of the Jamaican petty bourgeoisie and capitalist class. Jamaica's top "twenty-one families" divided their support between the two parties, although the JLP traditionally enjoyed the greater share of capitalist backing.

The PNP still called itself socialist, and in 1951 became a member of the Socialist International. But the following year, at the height of the Cold War, the leadership of Norman Manley launched a witch-hunt against the left wing of the party. A number of prominent trade unionists, who also considered themselves Marxists, were expelled from the PNP.

By 1955, the PNP got its first chance to gain office. The JLP's popular support had declined considerably in the preceding years, and the voters demanded a change.

Once in office, however, the policies of the PNP and Norman Manley were little different. Manley launched a plan of "capitalistic expansionism," under which he sought to lure more foreign investors to Jamaica. Although it was successful in attracting some new capital, the plan brought with it few of the jobs that had been promised.

In 1959, popular frustrations led to an armed revolt by unemployed urban youth. Norman Manley called on British troops to help put it down.

At the same time, the PNP nevertheless managed to build up a strong trade union base. Supporters of the PNP had established the National Workers Union (NWU) in 1952. By the end of the decade the NWU was as large as the JLP-affiliated BITU. Although both were "blanket" unions, with membership open to workers from all sectors of the economy, the NWU had a much stronger base among the more socially powerful sectors of the working class, especially the industrial workers

employed in the bauxite industry and in manufacturing.

A Decade of Rebellion

The PNP's new trade union base did not save it from defeat at the polls, however. The policies followed by the Norman Manley government alienated voters, and allowed the JLP to return to power in 1962, the year Jamaica won its formal political independence from Britain.

The JLP's second period in office, from 1962 to 1972, witnessed an ever-widening class polarization within the country.

Bustamante—and after his retirement in 1964, Hugh Shearer—followed even more proimperialist policies than those of Norman Manley. "We are with the West," Bustamante proclaimed. Jamaica was thrown open further to imperialist economic interests. Between 1958 and 1969, Jamaican trade with the United States increased by more than four times.

Most of the new foreign businesses attracted to Jamaica were small or highly mechanized, creating few jobs for the growing work force. In the countryside, more and more peasants were driven off the land and agricultural production declined.

The JLP regime established closer political and military ties with Washington as well. In 1963, it signed a U.S.-Jamaica Defense Treaty, under which the JLP government received U.S. military aid and training.

This was in direct response to the successful socialist revolution in neighboring Cuba. The imperialists and their allies throughout the Caribbean feared that the example of Cuba could spread.

Within Jamaica, repression was stepped up. Some socialist literature was banned from Jamaica, as were the writings of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and other Black American radicals. The JLP engaged in widespread electoral fraud in 1967 to assure its "reelection."

The Jamaican capitalists rallied around the JLP as the best defender of the social order. In 1967, Sir Neville Ashenheim, one of Jamaica's most prominent businessmen, was given a cabinet post.

In response to this ruling-class offensive, popular frustrations and anger grew.

Workers in many sectors of the economy went out on strike. Although the JLP regime tried to enforce the Essential Services Act, which limited the right to strike, there were so many labor actions that it was forced to retreat.

In 1964, a major strike broke out at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation, leading to a series of solidarity strikes by bauxite, hotel, utility, and sugar workers. Tens of thousands turned out for support rallies.

In 1965, protests rocked downtown Kingston. The following year, clashes between slum dwellers and the police in Western

Kingston prompted the regime to declare a state of emergency.

The Rastafarian movement, a pan-Africanist cultural-religious current, gained much wider influence among young Blacks.

Numerous Black Power groups of a more openly political nature also emerged. These were inspired to an extent by the American civil rights struggle. They criticized the traditional policies of both the JLP and PNP, and the domination of Jamaica's largely white ruling class over the Black majority.

The vitality of this movement became evident in 1968. When the JLP government deported Walter Rodney, a popular Marxist lecturer at the University of the West Indies who first popularized the term "Black Power" in the Caribbean, widespread student protests swept the island. Police were sent against the demonstrators, and three people were killed.

PNP Shifts Course

Under the impact of this radicalization, the People's National Party embarked on a sharp change in political course. The growing militancy of the PNP's trade union supporters (especially among industrial workers), the criticisms directed at the party by the Black Power movement, and the mounting demands for change among young Jamaicans in general impelled the PNP to shed many of its proimperialist positions and policies. In the process, the party began to undergo an evolution.

In 1969, Michael Manley was chosen leader of the PNP following his father's death. Since the early 1950s, he had served as a central leader of the National Workers Union, playing major roles in the organization of the bauxite workers and in numerous strikes led by the NWU. He was one of the most prominent figures involved in building solidarity with the 1964 strike at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation.

Coming from this background, Michael Manley more directly felt the pressures of the PNP's working class members than did the old-time party leadership. He criticized both the JLP and PNP for ignoring the interests of workers and called for greater local control over Jamaica's natural resources.

The PNP under Michael Manley also adopted a new stance toward the Black Power and Rastafarian movements.

While his father called out British troops to put down the 1959 armed rebellion, Michael Manley—during the course of the 1972 election campaign—publicly associated himself with the central figure in that revolt, Rastafarian leader Claudius Henry. The party made political overtures toward the Rastafarians and Black Power groups and adopted many of their slogans and symbols. The younger party candidates began to address rallies in the dialect of the workers and peasants, rather

than the Oxford English of the ruling classes.

At a time of growing opposition to the JLP regime, the PNP's new course won it considerable popular support, greater than at any time before in its history.

Borne on the hopes of the Jamaican masses for some basic changes, the PNP was swept into office in 1972. With 56 percent of the popular vote, the PNP took thirty-seven seats in parliament, compared to sixteen for the JLP.

Popular Reforms

Responding to the widespread demands and expectations for social change, the new government soon instituted programs to create jobs, build low-cost housing, and make education and health care more widely available.

Given the wretched conditions of the masses of Jamaicans, and the extent of imperialist domination over the island, the reforms initiated under the Manley government were quite significant. Although they were often more sweeping on paper than in practice, they did improve the daily lives of many of the poorest workers and farmers.

Unemployed workers were hired by the government for public works projects, such as urban sanitation, reforestation, and swamp draining.

Low-income housing projects were begun, and a National Housing Trust was set up to provide mortgages and home improvement loans.

In 1972, charges for visits to public health clinics and hospitals were eliminated for those with the lowest incomes. Costs for basic food staples were subsidized, and in 1973 a free lunch program for elementary school children was instituted.

Free secondary and university education was introduced in 1973, although the number of openings to public schools were limited. An adult literacy program, carried out by volunteers, was launched. By 1975 some 100,000 Jamaicans had passed through the program.

In 1973, the government began to rent large tracts of unused land, which it subdivided and leased to some 14,000 farmers. Some government-owned cooperative farms were also set up. The land used for these programs was either already government-owned, or was acquired from the sugar and aluminum companies.

In contrast to the slavishly pro-American foreign policy of the previous JLP regime, the Manley government began to adopt independent positions on some international questions. None irked the imperialists more than its decision to establish close ties with neighboring Cuba.

When the PNP came to power, Cuba was still relatively isolated in the Caribbean region as a result of the U.S.-inspired diplomatic and economic blockade. But in August 1972, Jamaican officials accepted an invitation from Havana to inspect

Cuban dairy and livestock facilities. Three months later, the Jamaican government joined with several other Caribbean governments to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

The following year, Manley went to Algiers for a conference of the Nonaligned movement, traveling in the same plane as Fidel Castro, with whom he had extensive discussions. At the conference, Manley called for stepped-up aid to the Zimbabwean liberation movements.

The reforms initiated by the Manley regime during its first two years in office were widely welcomed, but they only scratched the surface of Jamaica's tremendous economic and social problems.

The subsidized housing introduced by the government was still beyond the financial means of many, and Kingston's vast shantytowns continued to grow. Tens of thousands acquired jobs through the public works projects, but that only made a dent in Jamaica's overall unemployment level. Despite the adult literacy program, more than a quarter of Jamaica's population still could not read or write. The limited land reform did not touch the holdings of the big Jamaican landlords, nor did it attempt to do anything for the country's numerous squatters and landless peasants.

But the masses did not hesitate to take matters into their own hands.

In 1972-73, unemployed youths in a number of areas led landless peasants in the seizure of unused land held by big landowners.

The PNP had promised in 1972 to support the establishment of cooperatives by sugar field workers to manage the sugar estates. But when it failed to implement that promise, the sugar workers organized themselves and won wide support. They were successful in overcoming the resistance of the large sugar cane farmers and the government bureaucracy, winning recognition for the Sugar Workers Cooperative Council in late 1973.

Urban workers, including members of the PNP-affiliated National Workers Union, continued to go out on strike.

'Democratic Socialism'

These pressures from below impelled the PNP to go further than it had initially intended.

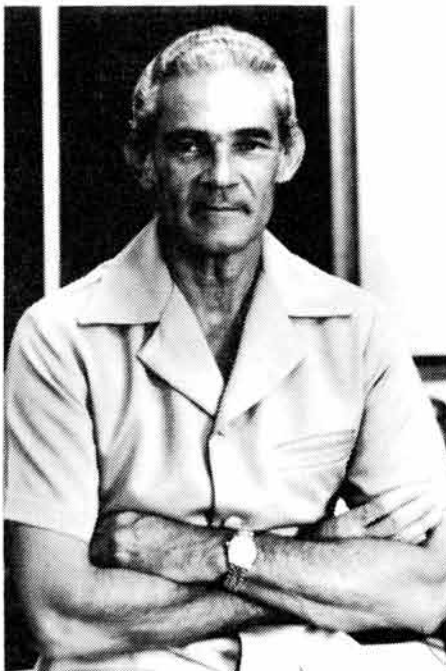
At a PNP congress in September 1974, the party for the first time officially adopted a program of "democratic socialism," although it already had been in the Socialist International for more than twenty years. It called for an increase in welfare programs, a greater government role in regulating the economy, and the nationalization of some key enterprises.

At the same time, Manley pointed out, private business was to retain an important and permanent place in the economy, on the stipulation that it "must be responsive to and subject to overall national

needs and interests."

"The days of capitalism are over," Manley claimed the following month. "Socialism is running the country now."

But to clarify just what the PNP meant by "democratic socialism," a government



MICHAEL MANLEY

brochure issued the same year listed "some examples of nations with democratic socialist governments"—Britain, West Germany, Israel, and Singapore.

During this period the PNP also took on a greater role within the Socialist International. Manley, who was chosen a vice-president of the Socialist International in 1978, urged the organization to pay more attention to the semicolonial countries.

The same year that the PNP adopted its program of "democratic socialism," it took its first steps toward trying to gain greater control over the key bauxite industry.

Until then, the North American aluminum companies had been able to get away with paying only minimal taxes on their operations. But in mid-1974, the government imposed a new production levy on all bauxite either exported or processed within the country. Government revenues from the bauxite industry rose by nearly five times.

The government next opened negotiations with the companies to acquire a majority stake in their holdings. After considerable resistance from the firms, it was finally successful in winning their agreement to sell the government 51 percent of their mining operations.

Manley also helped initiate the International Bauxite Association, which sought to coordinate the pricing and production policies of the major bauxite-exporting countries in an effort to obtain greater

leverage in the world market.

The PNP government also carried out other reforms. It took over a number of public utilities and services. It adopted laws setting a national minimum wage. It recognized the principle of equal pay for equal work for men and women.

Despite threats from Washington to cut off aid to Jamaica in retaliation for its Cuba ties, Manley visited Cuba in July 1975. Several hundred Cuban construction workers, education experts, doctors, and technicians were sent to Jamaica, and the Cubans provided training programs in Cuba for Jamaican youths studying construction techniques. Manley publicly supported the Cuban decision to send combat troops to Angola in 1975 to help defend that country from a U.S.-backed South African invasion.

At the same time, however, Manley made it clear that he was against a revolutionary transformation of Jamaican society as had occurred in Cuba. In a major speech in 1976, he accused the Cubans of practicing "authoritarianism" and declared that "the Cuban system cannot work in Jamaica. We have a different tradition."

What this "different tradition" meant, however, was that the Jamaican workers and peasants—unlike those in Cuba—were left with no real decision-making powers. They could pressure the government into enacting reforms, but they did not control it. The government, army, police, and civil service remained under the domination of the capitalists. Nor did working people have their own independent political organizations to fight in defense of their interests.

The government, while it promoted some desperately needed reforms, likewise attempted to contain popular initiatives from the workers and peasants. It did this partly through the PNP's political domination over the NWU, which it counseled to avoid strike action. It imposed wage "guidelines" at a time of rampant inflation. It adopted the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act, which gave the government the power to bar job action in any "essential" industry.

This approach inevitably weakened the government's own reform measures, and made it much easier for Jamaica's ruling class to resist or get around them.

Basically, the PNP's reform program was aimed at developing Jamaica's capitalist economy and bringing some social gains to the workers and farmers, while at the same time avoiding a sharpening of the class struggle and a direct confrontation with imperialism.

But despite the PNP leadership's aims, it was unable to keep the class struggle in check.

Pressure From the Masses . . .

The 1970s witnessed a widespread radicalization. The new ideas put forward by

the student militants and Black Power groups of the 1960s had begun to spread to broader layers of the population. The discussion of socialist ideas became more common, a discussion that was legitimized to an extent by the regime's own claimed adherence to socialism. The greater contact between Jamaicans and Cubans had a similar effect, and some Jamaicans began to look to the example of the Cuban revolution.

Faced with factory closings and steep inflation, workers often went out on strike, including workers belonging to the NWU. In some cases the workers occupied their factories. When the sugar estate managers continued to resist the takeover of the estates by the workers' cooperatives, the workers refused to cut the cane until they won their demand.

Among landless peasants, the seizures of unused land continued, and won widespread popular support.

Numerous left-wing groups emerged out of the Black Power movement and student radicalization of the 1960s and early 1970s. The most influential was the Workers Liberation League, which was established in 1974. It later changed its name to the Workers Party of Jamaica (WPJ). Initially based at the University of the West Indies, the organization grew. By 1978, WPJ members had been elected to leadership positions in more than 800 Jamaican youth clubs.

The WPJ openly called itself communist. Although it credited the Manley regime with enacting genuine reforms, it also criticized the PNP and government for going only "half-way" toward socialism.

WPJ leader Trevor Munroe accused the government of being "too soft" on "capitalists who are closing down businesses and laying off workers," on "colonialist elements inside the police force and inside the army," and on government ministers who were "friending up with the capitalists and who forget that it is the people and not the capitalists who put them into power."

Similar positions were echoed within the PNP, whose left wing grew in influence and popularity. One of the left wing's strongest bases was in the PNP Youth Organisation. In 1977, for example, the youth group criticized some of the regime's policies and called for the takeover of land, banks, and insurance companies and for a united struggle against capitalism and imperialism by the workers, poor farmers, unemployed, and students.

Jamaican women began to organize themselves and to fight for their rights. Numerous women's groups were established.

. . . and From Big Business

For the imperialists and their allies within Jamaica, things had gone too far. Their stranglehold over the island was being increasingly challenged. The Jamaican people were moving to assert their

national independence—and that was something the imperialists would not tolerate.

By 1975, Washington had begun to significantly step up the pressures against the Manley regime, and to encourage the local right-wing forces to act against the PNP.

The aluminum companies led the way. In 1975, they began to cut back production in retaliation for the imposition of the bauxite levy. This sabotaged government revenues and threw workers out of their jobs. The firms also provoked a series of strikes that further disrupted the economy.

Tourism—Jamaica's second largest foreign exchange earner—was seriously hurt by a vicious press campaign within the United States, which spread scare stories about alleged hostility and violence against American tourists visiting Jamaica.

During the same year, the U.S. Agency for International Development turned down a Jamaican request for a \$2.5 million food grant, and made it clear that it would lend no further funds to the Manley government unless it changed its political stance.

The Jamaican capitalists rallied to Washington's side. The PNP had won some support from sectors of the capitalist class during the 1972 elections—primarily from those industrialists who expected that higher taxes on the aluminum companies would lead to greater financing for their own ventures. But under the threat of the deepening radicalization within the country, most of them quickly turned against the PNP.

The Jamaican bourgeoisie went on strike. Many slowed their rate of investment, cut back production, or even shut down their operations entirely. Thousands of workers were thrown onto the streets. Emboldened by the imperialist hostility to the Manley regime, the ruling class dug in its heels against the government's reform measures while sectors of the state bureaucracy and police actively sabotaged them. Wealthy families refused to observe import restrictions and smuggled large amounts of money out of the country. Organizations like the Jamaican Chamber of Commerce became more and more critical of the government's policies.

In December 1975, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, accompanied by an entourage of seventy advisers, arrived in Jamaica on a "vacation." While he was there he presented Manley with an ultimatum: The Jamaican government would have to end its support for the Cuban role in Angola—or else. Manley rejected this crude attempt at blackmail.

In response, Washington gave the green light to a greatly escalated destabilization campaign designed to drive Manley from power.

The CIA went into action. Money and large amounts of sophisticated weaponry

were smuggled into the country. The Jamaica Labour Party—which by then had become more closely tied to the most proimperialist sectors of the Jamaican ruling class—organized gangs of armed thugs to attack PNP supporters and working class activists.

During the fighting, which spread through the shantytowns of Kingston and other cities, at least 300 persons were killed. Manley was the target of several abortive assassination plots. A number of Cuban targets were bombed.

The violence had become so great that by June Manley was forced to declare a state of emergency. A number of JLP members were arrested for involvement with a CIA-inspired paramilitary group called "Werewolf." In September, Phillip Agee, a former CIA agent, publicly exposed a team of CIA operatives working out of the U.S. embassy in Kingston.

Despite the intensity of this destabilization campaign, the Jamaican people were not intimidated. In December 1976 they went to the polls in greater numbers than in previous elections, and returned the PNP to power with an even wider margin of popular support and parliamentary representation.

PNP Vacillation

The elections, however, solved nothing. The Jamaican people continued to be the victims of a merciless imperialist drive to bring them to heel.

With Washington's plan to remove the PNP in favor of the JLP temporarily scuttled by the election results, the new Carter administration adopted an alternative course of using economic pressure against Jamaica.

The bauxite companies' decision to reduce production within Jamaica, combined with the rise in world oil prices, gutted Jamaica's foreign exchange reserves. Unable to pay for imports of industrial equipment, manufacturing was disrupted and key consumer items became increasingly scarce. On top of this, earnings from the tourist industry plummeted as a result of the politically motivated campaign by the U.S. government and press to scare away tourists. Jamaica's gross domestic product declined. Inflation drastically cut into the living standards of the Jamaican workers and farmers.

Jamaica desperately needed international financial assistance to help it ride out the crisis. Yet the Manley regime found it impossible to secure the kind of loans it needed—unless it agreed to pay a political price.

Faced with this dilemma, the PNP leadership vacillated.

For a brief period in early 1977, the PNP, fresh from its sweeping electoral victory, attempted to mobilize popular support and opened up a big national discussion on ways to overcome the economic crisis. The National Planning Agency invited the



Jamaican people refused to be intimidated by U.S. destabilization campaign.

public to help develop a "people's plan." Thousands of Jamaicans sent in suggestions for various steps to better utilize Jamaica's own resources. Socialists—both within the PNP left wing and outside the party—were able to present their own ideas.

In March, the government announced plans to take over the British-owned Barclays Bank.

This approach, however, soon ran into stiff opposition from sectors of the government and PNP leadership itself.

Although the PNP had evolved considerably since the beginning of the decade, those changes were least reflected in the PNP's parliamentary caucus and the government. Out of the forty-seven PNP members of parliament, only seven identified with the party's left wing; the parliamentary caucus was heavily weighted toward professionals and businessmen. The representation of the left wing was even weaker within the cabinet.

Fearing the mass radicalization under way in the country, those sectors of the PNP leadership who favored compromise with imperialism took advantage of Jamaica's extreme economic crisis to press for a change in course.

Under the pressures of imperialism and the PNP right wing, the Manley government agreed to make some concessions in exchange for international loans. In an April 1977 speech to parliament, Manley announced abandonment of the "people's plan" and revealed that his government would begin negotiations with the International Monetary Fund.

IMF Austerity

The agreement with the IMF, signed in July 1977, imposed extremely onerous con-

ditions on Jamaica. Under it, Manley was forced to cut social services and government employment programs, impose wage controls, and devalue the Jamaican dollar, a move that accelerated inflation. In return, the IMF agreed to provide some sizeable loans.

The turn toward the IMF brought a virtual end to any new reform measures. While thirty-six new public welfare programs were introduced between 1972 and 1976, only three were introduced between 1977 and 1980. Instead, for three years, the government tried to impose on Jamaicans the austerity policy demanded by the IMF.

As a result, the official unemployment rate climbed to 30 percent, while for young people it rose to 50 percent. Food subsidies were heavily cut, leading to increases in the prices of some food items by as much as 90 percent. In the sixteen-month period between June 1978 and October 1979, real incomes fell by a staggering 35 percent.

At the same time, the government put greater reliance on repression to control the opposition to these measures. Police and troops were sent against strikers and factory occupations. Within the PNP, a virtual purge was carried out against the left wing. Many of the most radical figures were forced to resign their positions, including D.K. Duncan, who stepped down as minister of national mobilization and PNP general secretary.

In a later interview, WPJ General Secretary Trevor Munroe stated that the Manley government had become "derailed" during this period, partly by "pressure from imperialism through the IMF" and partly "by the strength of the capitalist elements inside of the Party." He also noted the "insufficient confidence" of the Manley leadership "in the capacity of the masses of the Jamaican people to stand on their

own feet economically and politically in what is admittedly an extremely grave and difficult economic situation."

D.K. Duncan called it "a three-year experience of severe trials and crosses which brought a halt to the PNP's democratic and progressive reforms."

The Example of Cuba

The Manley regime was frequently accused by the JLP and the imperialists of seeking to take Jamaica down the "Cuban road." But the contrasts between the situations in the two countries could hardly have been more striking.

While the Jamaican government bent under the pressures of imperialism, the Cuban government stood firm—in face of much greater and more sustained opposition—by mobilizing the masses of working people to defend their country and to advance the revolutionary process. While social services, education, health care, housing programs, and other reforms were being cut back in Jamaica, they were being expanded just 100 miles away to the north, in Cuba.

Because of the U.S. blockade of Cuba, few Jamaicans were able to learn about the example of the Cuban revolution during the 1960s. This began to change somewhat in the mid-1970s following the establishment of relations between the two countries, which made travel and communications much easier. But knowledge about Cuba was still limited.

In October 1977, however, tens of thousands of Jamaicans were able to hear from Fidel Castro himself about the benefits the Cuban revolution had brought to its people. During a six-day tour of Jamaica, Castro was able to speak on numerous occasions.

At one rally in Montego Bay on October 17, Castro was greeted by a crowd of more than 100,000. He explained to them:

"In 1959, the Revolution triumphed in Cuba and for the first time our country achieved total sovereignty. . . . We nationalized all the land, all the factories, all the mines, all the banks, all the ports, all transportation; we nationalized everything. All wealth and all natural resources became the property of the people. That is what we call the socialist revolution.

"In our country, there were many illiterates. We began the struggle against illiteracy. We did away with illiteracy. We sent teachers all over the country, and at present all children in our country attend school. . . . We began the struggle against disease. Today, the life expectancy is almost 70 years, and we have the lowest infant mortality rate in all of Latin America and the Caribbean. We fought against unemployment and we have eradicated unemployment. We have fought to develop our agriculture and our industry.

"Now, we have not been able to do these things in peace. The imperialists did not want a revolution in Cuba, the imperialists

said and the imperialists believed that they were going to crush the Cuban Revolution. They established an economic blockade, they committed military acts of aggression, and they forced our country to make a lot of sacrifices, but our country, our people, a people like this one right in front of us, a people like you, fought and won."

The repeated applause that interrupted Castro's speech showed that the picture of revolutionary Cuba that he was providing was indeed an inspiring one.

Castro made it clear, however, that he was not in Jamaica to preach, to propose to Jamaicans how they should carry through social changes in their own country. "We won't tell the Jamaicans how to do it," he said, "you know how to do it."

Castro also reaffirmed Cuba's solidarity with the Jamaican people in their struggle against U.S. imperialism. He offered buses for a Cuban-built school, tractors for a sugar cooperative, prefabricated housing plants for construction workers, and Cuban doctors, teachers, and technicians wherever they were needed.

'No' to the IMF

As the enthusiastic response to Castro's visit to Jamaica demonstrated, the Jamaican people were inspired by the vision of a better future. As such, they were not willing to passively accept the attacks against their standard of living that were part of the IMF-imposed austerity program.

As the impact of the austerity measures became felt, Jamaicans rebelled.

Workers in many different sectors mobilized against the wage controls. In defiance of the government, they went out on strike, and in some cases were successful in breaking the 15 percent wage ceiling.

While Jamaica's trade-union movement had long been dominated by the NWU and BITU, several smaller, independent unions started to win a greater following among workers.

The WPJ became more openly critical of the government and raised the possibility of running its own candidates in the next elections.

The mounting discontent among the urban youth erupted in January 1979 in a series of rebellions in Kingston, Spanish Town, and Montego Bay that resulted in the erection of some 500 barricades and clashes with the police that left several people dead.

As the PNP's popularity sagged, the JLP saw an opportunity to expand its own base. It took a demagogic stance against the IMF policies, while seeking to whip up an anticommunist hysteria against the Manley regime and its close ties with Cuba. JLP supporters were active in many of the strikes, as well as the January 1979 rebellions. They initiated a series of provocative demonstrations against the Cuban presence on the island.

Meanwhile, sensing that the Manley

regime was weakening, the imperialists sought to wring even more concessions out of it. In September 1979, a consortium of mainly North American banks turned down a Jamaican request for \$650 million in loans. A few months later the IMF demanded that Manley introduce even more austerity measures in return for a continuation of funding.

The strength of the workers' resistance to the IMF policies once again bolstered the left wing of the PNP. At a party congress in September 1979, it managed to recapture some important leadership posts, and under the pressure of the party rank and file D.K. Duncan was once again elected general secretary.

That same month, Manley spoke at the Sixth Summit Conference of the Non-aligned Movement in Havana, giving one of his most anti-imperialist speeches yet. He praised Fidel Castro, condemned the U.S. blockade of Cuba, greeted the overthrow of the shah of Iran, and demanded the independence of Puerto Rico from the United States.

On other occasions, Manley expressed the Jamaican government's solidarity with the revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua.

The widespread sentiments against the IMF were also making themselves felt within the party. At a special PNP delegates conference in January 1980, the 2,500 participants called for an alternative economic policy to that of the IMF. Then, on March 22, the National Executive Council of the party decided by a 2 to 1 margin to break with the fund. Although all but two of the cabinet ministers voted against that decision, the cabinet itself was forced to go along with the shift in policy a week later.

Pointing to some of the factors in the PNP's rejection of the IMF, Duncan declared in a speech in May 1980:

Under the IMF Agreements, we paid a severe economic price. We also paid a severe political price because IMF policy is at variance with democratic socialist principles and objectives. The IMF supports dependency on international capitalism—not national self-reliance and economic independence. . . .

Naturally, the people became confused and disheartened as the forces of reaction became more and more strident and demanding. The people could not see the connection between the 1976 mandate for democratic socialism and what was taking place under the IMF.

Consideration of the economic price and the political price under the IMF and the fact that we had gained nothing but bitter experience, led the People's National Party, supported by the entire Jamaican progressive movement, to say "No" to the IMF on March 22 of this year.

Destabilization Into Full Gear

This renewed defiance of imperialism's dictates set off alarm bells in Washington.

Although the Manley government did not announce any new radical economic or social policies, its break with the IMF; its

growing solidarity with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada; and the likelihood of a further radicalization among the Jamaican workers and peasants convinced the U.S. ruling class that it was necessary to oust the PNP from power.

With elections called for later in 1980, the U.S. rulers initiated another major destabilization campaign designed to deny Jamaicans the right to freely choose their own government.

Citing sources within the State Department, a series of articles in May 1980 in the New York Black weekly, *Amsterdam News*, reported, "The destabilization plan appears to be two-fold, sources said. The National Security Council is pressing industry and investors to refrain from 'supplying assistance or capital' to the Manley government. Secondly, industrialists are being urged to support the election of Edward P.G. Seaga, who has promised to reinstitute relations with the IMF when he becomes prime minister."

The U.S. intervention against Jamaica was not limited to economic pressures, however.

The CIA bolstered its presence in Kingston. According to Louis Wolf, an editor of the Washington-based *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, there were at least fifteen CIA agents working out of the U.S. embassy there, making it the largest CIA station in the Caribbean. These agents maintained contacts with Seaga's JLP and with right-wing sectors of the military.

Seaga himself had close links with U.S. government circles. According to an official of the National Security Council, "Seaga is one of our best intelligence sources."

It was such ties that earned Seaga the popular nickname of "CIAga."

The right-wing *Gleaner* newspaper, which supports the JLP, initiated a systematic slander campaign against the government, and spread all sorts of disinformation.

As in 1976, gangs of armed thugs went into action. Loosely organized by the JLP and armed with sophisticated weapons, they attacked PNP supporters, working class activists, and almost anyone else in Kingston's large shantytowns. The aim was to terrorize and intimidate the Jamaican people.

This terror campaign reached massive proportions. From the beginning of the year until the elections in late October, nearly 900 persons were killed, many of them by gunmen or police.

In May, arsonists torched a nursing home in Kingston, killing 144 elderly women. The fire came almost four years to the day after a similar one set during the 1976 terrorist campaign.

As the tempo of the election campaign accelerated, more and more units of the army and police openly sided with the JLP. They either turned a blind eye to the JLP's armed attacks or brutalized PNP

activists who began to defend their communities. Some former military officers were put forward as JLP candidates.

In June, a plot by some military officers to overthrow the government was uncovered at the last moment.

In early October, Roy McGann, a PNP leader and parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of National Security, was murdered in cold blood by a group of policemen.

There were several attempts to assassinate key leaders of the PNP left wing, including Dudley Thompson and Hugh Small. Manley himself was the target of an assassination attempt.

The government, however, was incapable of mounting an effective defense against the imperialist-JLP offensive.

Despite the clear danger of a rightist military coup and the connivance of the police and military with the JLP, Manley sought to rely on them to combat the terror.

Although the Workers Party of Jamaica and PNP left-wingers called on the government to strengthen local community self-defense groups to fight off the terrorist gangs, Manley did not do this.

Nor did the PNP put forward a program for confronting imperialist and local sabotage of the economy, a program of mobilizing the working class. The workers themselves did not have the kind of mass organizations that could do that.

As a result, a layer of workers and PNP supporters became intimidated, demoralized, and confused.

But the PNP was nevertheless able to mount a number of large and militant rallies. Wild applause greeted speakers who emphasized the PNP's stands against the IMF and imperialism, for "socialism," and against the "big man" (the capitalists).

The main problem facing the Jamaican people was not the elections as such, but developing an effective defense against the imperialist and capitalist offensive. Although a PNP electoral victory would not have solved that problem, a PNP government would nevertheless have provided more favorable conditions for workers to develop a program of mass mobilization and class independence.

Consequently, class-conscious workers, the most militant youth, fighters for women's rights, revolutionary socialists, and other anti-imperialist forces supported the PNP campaign and the party's reelection.

But the PNP did not win.

On election day, JLP thugs invaded polling places in some traditional PNP strongholds and stole ballot boxes. Soldiers and police took others away to the counting stations, but prevented PNP poll watchers from accompanying them, as allowed by law. Unexplained last minute fluctuations in announced voting results

threw apparently secure PNP seats to the JLP.

On top of these voting irregularities, there was the continued JLP terror campaign, which undoubtedly intimidated some voters. In the weeks immediately preceding the elections, the police and military stepped up their own attacks and threats against the population, particularly in areas of strong PNP support.

In addition, a layer of working people had become confused and demoralized by the PNP's vacillations, making them vulnerable to the JLP's demagogic claims that it would be able to lift Jamaica out of its economic crisis.

All of this helped to deny the PNP an electoral victory. The announced results gave the JLP 57 percent of the popular vote, which was translated into a lopsided fifty-one seats in the sixty-seat parliament.

With Washington's direct backing, the proimperialist Edward Seaga was ushered into office.

Working Class Not Defeated

This change of government was a setback to the people of Jamaica, and of the entire Caribbean.

The installation of the Seaga regime reflected a reassertion of Washington's grip over Jamaica, and one of the few significant successes it has had in the region in recent years. It gave a green light to Jamaica's ruling class to try to move against the gains the workers won during the decade of the 1970s.

But the election results did not register a decisive defeat. While Washington's destabilization campaign against the Manley regime bore many similarities to the one against Allende in Chile, it did not end in a coup and a massive bloodbath.

The vanguard of the Jamaican working class remains intact. The workers have strong unions, and have gained considerable experience in defending their class interests. They have the solidarity of class-conscious workers in the rest of the Caribbean, and in the United States itself.

Since Seaga came into power, there have been a number of strikes and workers demonstrations in various parts of the country.

The government's attempts to denationalize some industries, revise the rent control laws, raise prices, and implement other unpopular measures have met with vocal protests. The regime's campaign to victimize radical activists in the news media and civil service has not silenced dissent. Socialist ideas can still be openly discussed.

Because of such opposition, Seaga has not been able to go as far and as fast as he would like in implementing his reactionary policies.

Working class activists and anti-imperialist fighters in Jamaica have also begun to examine the political lessons of

the past decade. They are discussing how best to move forward.

In the process, they are looking more closely than before at the revolutions in Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua.

What they see are three underdeveloped countries that have been able to break free of imperialist domination, initiate major social programs to benefit the working population, and defend themselves from foreign aggression.

They are learning what kind of government it takes to successfully carry through such measures—a government based on the workers and peasants.

They are learning what kind of strategy it takes to put such a government in power—a revolutionary strategy of independent working-class action and organization, a strategy of totally dismantling the pillars of capitalist rule (the army, police, courts, etc.) and replacing them with new institutions of workers' rule.

And they are learning what kind of leadership it takes to head such a process—a revolutionary party based among the workers and poor farmers. They are looking toward the examples set by the Castro leadership in Cuba, the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua, and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada.

In a speech in Cuba on July 26, 1980, several months before the Jamaican elections, Fidel Castro explained what it was that distinguished Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua from other countries in the region: popular revolutions. There were "other progressive governments . . . like that of our friendly Manley, in Jamaica," Castro stated. "But three of us have shaken the yoke of imperialism in the last 20 years in a radical way, once and for all. . . ."

It is that revolutionary example that is becoming more and more attractive to fighters in Jamaica and throughout Central America and the Caribbean. □

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Polish Farmers Secure Union Rights

By Ernest Harsch

Within just a few days in mid-April, the Polish revolution registered two more significant advances.

The government finally agreed to recognize the legality of the independent farmers' union, Rural Solidarity. And rank-and-file Communist Party activists from around the country held their first national conference to discuss ways to democratize the party and get it to adopt pro-working-class policies.

The official recognition of Rural Solidarity—formally known as the Independent Self-Run Union of Individual Farmers, Solidarity—capped a six-month struggle by the farmers for their right to organize. The announcement came on April 17, after a series of all-night talks in the northern town of Bydgoszcz between farmer and worker representatives and Minister of Trade Union Affairs Stanislaw Ciosek.

Jan Kulaj, the twenty-three-year-old chairperson of Rural Solidarity, hailed the agreement as a "great victory" for farmers. "We have reached our goal," he said. "At first they refused to allow us to operate as a union—but at last we've been recognized. The problem now is definitively solved and we can leave this building with honor."

The ten-point agreement opens the way for Rural Solidarity to become the official bargaining agent for Poland's 3.5 million private farmers, who own three-quarters of all farm land and account for a big majority of agricultural production. The farmers' organization already claims half of them as members.

These farmers will now have organizing rights similar to those won by industrial workers. Rural Solidarity is structured on the same democratic basis as the ten-million-member independent labor union, Solidarity.

According to the agreement, the government is to provide Rural Solidarity with offices and technical facilities, and allow representatives to participate in the redrafting of the country's labor laws. For its part, Rural Solidarity agreed to call off sit-ins by farmer activists in Bydgoszcz and Inowroclaw.

In winning the right to organize legally, Polish farmers are now in a much stronger position to negotiate with the government on matters ranging from pricing and distribution of agricultural commodities to allocation of credits, fertilizers, and farming equipment.

Although these farmers account for most agricultural production, a majority of them work under extremely difficult conditions. The bureaucratic government has long discriminated against them, giving priority in

the distribution of machinery, feed, and fertilizers to the less efficient state farms. The private farmers have argued that agricultural production could be raised if they were able to benefit from such assistance.

Inspired by the victories of the Polish workers, farmers have been organizing and raising their own demands since late 1980. The government, however, tried to dig in its heels and refused to recognize Rural Solidarity. In February, the Supreme Court denied the farmers' union official registration.

But the farmers were determined. With the backing of Solidarity, they staged demonstrations and sit-ins to bring attention to their demands. A brutal police attack on one such action in Bydgoszcz on March 19 led to a four-hour national protest strike by Solidarity that paralyzed the country. The bureaucracy was once again compelled to give in.

It is this example of determination that has become a powerful pole of attraction to all layers of Polish society that have suffered from years of bureaucratic mismanagement, corruption, and authoritarian rule.

Not least among those affected have been the worker activists in the ranks of the Communist Party itself.

On April 15—two days before the signing of the accords on Rural Solidarity—some 750 delegates from rank-and-file Communist Party organizations around the country converged on the city of Torun for a national conference.

After opening the conference with a singing of the *Internationale*, the delegates got up, one after the other, to condemn the bureaucratic policies of the top party leadership, to demand democratization of internal party life, to call for freedom of the press, to express support for Solidarity, and to demand that the party adopt a political course in the interests of the working class.

"We are not challenging Communist ideology, but we are challenging the gap between theory and practice," declared Lech Witkowski, one of the conference organizers.

Tadeusz Neckowicz, a delegate from Bydgoszcz, sounded a similar theme. "The authorities should not present the changes going on in our country as the work of antisocialist forces," he said, "but as a proper restoration of Marxist-Leninist principles. Our movement is fighting against distortions and deformations and this should be made clear to our neighbors."

Time after time, the participants lashed out at the party leadership. "We are fighting for an idea," declared a speaker from Szczec-

in. "The top people in the party are only fighting to stay in their positions."

"We want to find out who the real antisocialist forces are," a delegate from Wroclaw said. "We see the forces that brought our economy into ruin and they are in our party. These are the antisocialist forces. There is no confidence in the Politburo."

According to a speaker from Bydgoszcz, "We have to break radically with 36-year-old habits of inner party life. We are convinced that the biggest brake on reforms is the party apparatus itself."

The conference adopted a resolution calling on the next meeting of the Central Committee to expel from the Political Bureau "those members who have lost the trust of the rank-and-file." It also approved a resolution demanding direct election of new leaders at the upcoming congress of the party, which is slated to be held before July 20.

The conference in Torun was the outcome of a growing movement among the party ranks for the establishment of workers democracy in Poland. It began with the massive labor strikes of 1980, when local Communist Party activists joined with their fellow workers to fight for recognition of Solidarity.

Since then, well over a million of the party's three million members have joined Solidarity.

At the same time, rank-and-file party organizations began to spring up in cities around the country—Torun alone has forty of them. Many have held local party elections by direct and secret ballot, removing from office party bureaucrats who had previously been appointed. Gradually, they established links with each other, culminating in the Torun conference.

Under the pressures of this movement, the party leadership has been forced to give ground. It originally tried to postpone the party congress indefinitely, but was compelled to promise that it would be held by July. Even more importantly, the leadership was forced to concede changes in the delegate selection process: under the new rules, there will be an unlimited number of candidates elected through secret balloting.

If the congress is held under such conditions, the present bureaucratic leadership could be swept out of office. That would open up a new stage in the development of the Polish revolution. □

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