

Intercontinental Press

combined with **imprecOR**

Vol. 19, No. 18

May 18, 1981

USA \$1

UK 40p



Mark Lichtman/Militant

More than 4,000 took part in May 5 protest in New York City.

Bobby Sands, 1954-1981

Worldwide Protests Blast British Role in Ireland

Socialist Victory Has Bosses Worried

French Workers Celebrate Defeat of Rightist Regime

Demand Sweeping Reforms

Rank-and-File Polish Communists Fight to Democratize Party

Reagan's Race With Time

By Ernest Harsch

The sense of urgency being projected from the corridors of the White House and Pentagon is almost palpable. Confronted by the new rise of the world revolution, the U.S. rulers are searching—and not without a certain note of desperation—for some way to stem the tide.

Hardly a week now goes by that the Reagan administration doesn't find some new right-wing dictatorship or band of counter-revolutionary terrorists to come out in support of. Hardly a week goes by that it doesn't commit some new outrage against an independent government or a people struggling for their freedom.

Take the first week of May.

The State Department told the news media May 2 that the Reagan administration was planning to step up U.S. support to the counterrevolutionary forces fighting against the Heng Samrin government of Kampuchea. Two days later, it announced plans to resume military aid to the blood-soaked Guatemalan dictatorship.

Then on May 6—partly to divert attention from such aggressive moves—the White House ordered the Libyan government to close its embassy in Washington, accusing the Libyans of being engaged in “provocations and misconduct, including support of international terrorism.”

The Real Terrorists

But as Washington's recent actions toward Kampuchea and Guatemala have reconfirmed, it is the U.S. ruling class that is the greatest source of terrorism in the world today.

For years, its bombers raked the countryside of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, obliterating entire villages, destroying much of the region's agriculture, and killing and maiming untold numbers of Indochinese workers and peasants.

Following its defeat in Vietnam, Washington moved toward an alliance with the brutal Pol Pot dictatorship in Kampuchea, which was responsible for the deaths of literally millions of Kampuchean. And after the ouster of Pol Pot by the Vietnamese army and the Kampuchean forces around Heng Samrin, the White House stepped up its assistance to the right-wing military regime in Thailand, through which it funneled aid to the remnants of the Pol Pot army.

According to the State Department officials, Washington's aim now is to forge a broader front against the Heng Samrin regime, possibly with Prince Norodom Sihanouk or Sihanouk's former Prime Minister

Son Sann providing a “liberal” cover. The basis of the front, however, would remain Pol Pot's terrorist bands, who are deeply hated by the Kampuchean people.

The government of Gen. Romeo Lucas García in Guatemala is another example of the kind of regime that Reagan prefers.

A recent Amnesty International report on Guatemala pointed out, “Nearly 5,000 Guatemalans have been seized without warrant and killed since General Lucas García became President of Guatemala in 1978. The bodies of the victims have been found piled up in ravines, dumped at roadsides or buried in mass graves. Thousands bore the scars of torture, and death had come to most by strangling with a garrote, by being suffocated in rubber hoods or by being shot in the head.”

It is when people begin to rebel against such oppression that they become “terrorists” in the eyes of Washington. And governments that criticize or oppose U.S. aid to these brutal dictatorships become “supporters of terrorism.”

That is the real “crime” of the Libyan regime. For years it has defied the U.S. imperialists by giving support to the Palestine Liberation Organization and other national liberation movements. More recently, it has supported Iran against the Iraqi regime's invasion and has sent troops into the Central African country of Chad to help the government there fight off French-backed rebel forces.

What probably angered Washington the most was the Libyan regime's decision on April 24 to provide Nicaragua with a \$100 million credit—shortly after the Reagan administration had cut off all aid to Nicaragua as part of its campaign to try to isolate and weaken the Nicaraguan revolution.

A Record of Aggression

The White House's most recent foreign policy moves are just a few of the whole series undertaken since Reagan's inauguration in January. They include:

- The provision of \$35 million in military aid to the Salvadoran junta, the lifting of trade sanctions against the Chilean junta, and an offer of up to \$1 billion in weapons sales to the Argentine junta.
- Renewed threats against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, and support to counter-revolutionary forces opposed to the regimes in those countries.
- The cutoff of all food aid to Mozambique, and threats to step up backing to terrorist bands fighting against the Angolan

government.

- New overtures to the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the sale of tanks and jet fighters to the repressive monarchy of King Hassan in Morocco.

- The establishment of closer ties with the dictatorships in South Korea and the Philippines, and an offer of \$500 million in military and economic aid to the Pakistani junta.

- The strengthening of U.S. military forces in the Indian Ocean region, the continuation of earlier steps to establish a Rapid Deployment Force, and an escalation of the U.S. arms buildup.

As has become increasingly obvious to everyone, there has been a marked shift in U.S. foreign policy since Reagan came into office. The “human rights” rhetoric of the previous administration has gone out the window and open support to the most reactionary forces around the globe is now the order of the day.

The limits of Washington's ability to hold back the world revolution have been shown by the example of Vietnam. But U.S. imperialism is still a powerful force and can inflict considerable suffering, a fact that the people of El Salvador know too well.

It is hardly surprising that warnings about the danger of a “new cold war” have been raised by some of those opposed to such policies.

However, Reagan's foreign policy shift does not reflect any weakening of the anti-war sentiments among the American population. Rather it underlines the concern of the U.S. ruling class over its diminishing political influence internationally and new signs of a sharpening class polarization within the United States.

The Offensive at Home

Unlike the cold war of the early 1950s, this new international offensive of U.S. imperialism is not being accompanied by a steadily rising standard of living within the United States. To the contrary—it comes at the same time that the capitalists are carrying out an offensive against the American working class itself.

The dual character of the Reagan administration's offensive was best exemplified by the budget he introduced in February. While jacking up arms spending to 32 percent of the total budget (up from 24 percent), he also spelled out cuts in social expenditures—a staggering \$41.4 billion worth of cuts in medical care, social security and pension benefits, school lunches, education, unemployment benefits, and many other social programs.

And this attack does not come just from the Republican Party. It is bipartisan.

The differences over the budget raised by Democrats in Congress involved *how much* should be cut, not whether there should be cuts. And the Democrats agree fully with Reagan over the sharp escalation in military spending.

Increasingly, American workers are mov-

ing into action to defend their living standards from such attacks. And as they realize the interconnection between the ruling class's domestic policies and its aggressive moves abroad, more and more are being drawn into opposition to Reagan's arms program, and to other aspects of government policy.

It is no longer unusual to see workers demonstrating in the streets of major U.S. cities.

On March 28, nearly 15,000 trade unionists and other opponents of nuclear power demonstrated in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It was the first labor-sponsored demonstration against nuclear power ever held in the United States, and was led by a contingent of striking coal miners. At the rally, International Association of Machinists President William Winpisinger called for opposition not only to nuclear power but nuclear weapons as well.

About three weeks later, on April 18, thousands of persons across the United States demonstrated against U.S. intervention in El Salvador. At the New York action, a representative of the Coalition of Labor Union Women ridiculed Reagan's claims that he was opposing terrorism in El Salvador. She then went on, "There is real terror, though. The 200,000 auto workers laid off are feeling real terror, old people who will lose their benefits are feeling terror, the families of the young unemployed who see this for their children's future are in terror, there's terror in Atlanta. Because this is real terror, the people of the U.S. will not accept intervention in El Salvador."

On April 25, a representative of the United Mine Workers gave greetings to a rally of 5,000 in Denver, Colorado, called to protest against a nearby plant that produces plutonium triggers for nuclear weapons. In Chicago that same day, some 200 Steelworkers headed a protest against nuclear power.

Four days later, on April 29, 20,000 to 25,000 rail workers marched on Washington, D.C., to protest against budget cuts that could lead to the layoffs of 70,000 rail workers. One demonstrator summed up the feelings of many with his hand-lettered sign that read, "Money for railroads, not El Salvador."

'U.S. Out of El Salvador!'

Then on May 3, also in Washington, up to 100,000 demonstrators marched and rallied to demand "U.S. Out of El Salvador!" It was the largest and most important antiwar demonstration since the end of the Vietnam War. One union contingent marched behind a banner that read, "American trade unionists say: money for human needs, not war machines."

Besides influencing the trade unions, such popular sentiments against Reagan's military policies have spread to other sectors of the American population as well.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, one of the

main Black rights organizations in the country, has come out for an end to U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran junta. This is a notable shift from its stance during the Vietnam War, when it failed to take an official position against the war.

On May 5, the Mormon Church, which is notorious for its conservative positions on social issues, came out in opposition to the deployment of the MX nuclear missile system in Utah and Nevada. The church, with a membership of 4.7 million, branded the construction of "a mammoth weapons system potentially capable of destroying much of civilization" as contrary to the church's gospel.

This is a striking shift in the church's stance. It championed the U.S. aggression in Vietnam, has come out against the Equal

Rights Amendment for women, and in general backs the buildup of a strong U.S. military force, including a nuclear weapons stockpile. But on the question of the MX system, the Mormon Church has come under tremendous pressure from its members, who make up a majority of the population of Utah. There is currently an epidemic of cancer in Utah as a result of nuclear weapons tests during the 1950s, and there is massive opposition there to the construction of the MX system.

It is such signs of growing opposition to Reagan's policies that help account for the speed with which the White House is moving to implement its rightist international policies. Reagan knows that such opposition will escalate even more the further he gets into his term.

Time is not on Washington's side. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: May 11, 1981

FRANCE	508	Workers Celebrate Defeat of Rightist Regime —by Claude Rodier
IRELAND	509	100,000 Turn Out in Belfast for Bobby Sands's Funeral—by Gerry Foley
COLOMBIA	513	Regime Steps Up Repression—by Fernando Torres
	515	Political Prisoners Organize in Jail —by Socorro Ramirez
USA	516	U.S. Government Intervenes Against Fourth International
GUATEMALA	518	Reagan Moves to Arm Terrorist Regime —by Fred Murphy
CUBA	520	Revolution Replies to New U.S. Threats —by Anibal Yáñez
POLAND	522	Ranks of Communist Party Demand Sweeping Reforms—by Ernest Harsch
ITALY	528	New Attacks Against Abortion Rights —by Anna Libera
IRAN	532	"Workers Are Still Fighting for Their Demands"
	533	"Iraqi Forces Must Be Defeated"
MIDEAST	536	Israeli Regime Threatens Syria—by Janice Lynn
DOCUMENTS	526	Stormy Discussion at Polish Communist Party Plenum
BOOKS	530	Marxism and the U.S. Labor Movement —Reviewed by David Frankel
STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	534	Defend the Political Revolution in Poland!

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

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

Editor: Mary-Alice Waters.

Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio
Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

Managing Editor: Steve Clark.

Editorial Staff: David Frankel, Ernest
Harsch, Janice Lynn, Fred Murphy, Will
Reisser.

Business Manager: Sandi Sherman

Copy Editor: David Martin.

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

Signed articles represent the views of the
authors, which may not necessarily coincide
with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar
as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned

material stands on the program of the
Fourth International.

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

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

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ire-
land, and continental Europe send \$50 for
one year; \$25 for six months. Write for
subscription rates to all other countries.

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

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

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

French Workers Celebrate Defeat of Rightist Regime

By Claude Rodier

PARIS—On Sunday, May 10, at 8 p.m., the television news announced the results of voting in the second round of the French presidential elections: 52 percent for Socialist Party candidate François Mitterrand, 48 percent for incumbent President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

As soon as the results were reported, there was an outpouring of joy. On Sunday night, the streets belonged to the workers.

In Paris, where the Socialist Party called on people to gather in the huge Place de la Bastille, more than 100,000 people responded. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International, had a contingent there.

Neither rain nor the closing of the subways for the night could disperse the immense and enthusiastic crowd. The only reason they gave up the idea of a triumphal march through the streets of Paris was that the streets were blocked by the massive traffic jams made up of the streams of horn-blowing workers in their cars.

On Monday morning, the new mood could already be felt in the factories. President Giscard's defeat was also a defeat for the bosses. The two candidates in the second round had been from two camps. And the bosses's camp had lost.

To show the bosses that the relationship of forces had changed, workers used company time to drink toasts to their victory and discuss the results among themselves.

Why this enthusiasm among working people? For the first time in twenty-three years, the workers had been able to place their representative at the head of government. The institutions of the Fifth Republic erected by Charles de Gaulle in 1958 do not readily allow for a calm alternation between bourgeois parties and workers parties. The Fifth Republic's institutions protect the regime from social protest movements. The constitution gives the executive branch overwhelming power, and gives it a considerable advantage in elections.

That is why the workers were unable to overcome all the hurdles in their path through the general strike of May 1968 or the election campaign by the Union of the Left in 1974. Mitterrand's election to a seven-year term as president is therefore a decisive turning point.

The victory over the right was at the same time a victory over the divisions and disunity that have plagued the workers movement. Despite three years of unchecked political and trade-union disunity, the number of votes for the workers parties grew.

This shows, first, how widespread the de-

sire for unity is. Voters who supported the Communist Party candidate in the first round overwhelmingly cast their votes for Mitterrand in the second. It also shows that the attacks carried out by the bourgeoisie under Giscard had reached an intolerable level and affected ever wider layers of the population, who were radicalized under the impact of the economic crisis.

At the same time, the bourgeoisie was in the midst of a serious political crisis. Jacques Chirac, the leader of the Gaullist party (the Assembly for the Republic—RPR), and himself a former prime minister under Giscard from 1974 to 1976, had waged a first-round campaign that was extremely critical of Giscard's performance. Chirac had accused Giscard of weakness in foreign policy and laxity on economic questions.

The Gaullist leaders did not mobilize their supporters behind the incumbent president in the period between the two rounds. Some even called openly for a vote for Mitterrand.

It appears that the Gaullist party had bet that a victory by Mitterrand would allow the RPR to regain its position as the major group on the right, which Giscard had taken from them. In this way the Gaullists paid Giscard back for his having contributed to the fall of de Gaulle in 1969 in favor of Pompidou.

The new president has already announced that he will dissolve the National Assembly and order new legislative elections before summer vacations begin. Mitterrand hopes to profit from the enthusiasm created by his victory to increase the number of deputies from the Socialist Party. At present the Giscardians and Gaullists between themselves have a majority in the assembly.

But the SP faces two problems in the legislative elections. The first is that those elections are held on the basis of one deputy for each geographic election district, and these districts were drawn up in such a way as to give an advantage to candidates of the right. The elections do not take place on the basis of proportional representation, where in a party's parliamentary representation is in direct proportion to the overall percentage of votes it receives. Under the present set-up a candidate of a workers party always needs more votes to get elected than the candidate of a bourgeois party.

The second problem for the SP is that even with the best results, the SP will not win a majority in parliament. A parliamentary majority will have to be established through alliances with other forces.

Among the potential partners in such a



FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND

coalition are the Communist Party, the Left Radicals (a small bourgeois party), or certain Gaullist deputies who go over to Mitterrand.

Given this situation, on the morning after the election the LCR began massively distributing leaflets in the factories. The leaflets focused on three immediate objectives.

First, that the workers' parties win a majority in the legislative elections, and that this majority be translated into a parliamentary majority through a proportional representation system.

Second, that a government be organized based on the main workers parties and them alone, meaning a government of the Communist Party and Socialist Party, without any renegade Gaullists or Left Radicals.

Finally, the leaflets called on Mitterrand to take steps that will encourage the mobilization of the workers. These steps include an immediate halt to layoffs, an increase in the minimum wage, and the abrogation of existing measures that restrict democratic rights.

All these things can be done very quickly if the president and his party are willing.

The defeat of Giscard will have profound repercussions for all the workers in Europe. The workers in Spain will receive powerful encouragement in their struggle to defeat the fascist challenge. The workers in Ireland and Poland will see the election result as an aid to the struggles they are waging.

In the French colonies in the Caribbean, where the proindependence movements made a widely followed call for abstention in the presidential elections, the mobilization of the workers in France itself will open up new perspectives for them.

It is up to French internationalists to push their government into giving active support to the revolution in El Salvador and throughout Central America. French revolutionists face very large tasks and very heavy responsibilities. For that reason, strengthening the Revolutionary Communist League in the course of the coming struggles will be an on-going, continuous objective. □

100,000 Turn Out in Belfast for Bobby Sands's Funeral

By Gerry Foley

BELFAST—One-fifth of the entire nationalist population of Northern Ireland—100,000 people—attended Bobby Sands's funeral in Belfast on May 7 according to the most conservative press estimates here. It was the biggest nationalist demonstration in Northern Ireland's sixty-year history.

Sands died May 5 on the sixty-sixth day of a hunger strike demanding political status for republican prisoners in Northern Ireland's jails.

There were extensive shutdowns of busi-

nesses and factories in the nationalist areas of the north. In Derry, the second city of the north, a march of thousands was held at the same time as the funeral in Belfast.

In the south, an estimated 150,000 people took part in actions mourning Sands's death. On the southern side of the border, the counties of Cavan and Monaghan, and the largest frontier town, Dundalk, were shut down. The major industrial center in the region north of Dublin, Drogheda, was also stilled.

The largest border county, Donegal, was

shut down from one end to the other. About 5,000 people marched in the small town of Letterkenny in central Donegal.

In Dublin, most building workers walked off the job and bus service was disrupted.

About thirty factories and some shopping centers closed down in the Irish capital. In the Janelle clothing factory, all 300 young women workers walked out and joined the demonstration. The shop stewards committee presented a poem in honor of Bobby Sands at the rally.

Many center-city shops also closed. About 10,000 persons marched silently through downtown Dublin in heavy rain. Their route led them from the General Post Office, the site of the 1916 insurrection, to the premier's office and back to the Garden of Remembrance, a park commemorating the dead of 1916.

Workers Join Protests

In Limerick, a town of some 60,000 inhabitants, about 4,000 people marched. Their numbers were swelled by the workers from Alcan, the largest plant in Ireland. They walked off the job en masse to join the demonstration.

In Cork city, the mayor and the president of the local council of trade unions knelt together in a memorial mass for Bobby Sands, attended by some 4,000 persons. In the nearby town of Cobh, 90 percent of the workers at the Irish Steelmill Development Site, the major employer, walked off the job.

In the town of Waterford, the other major industrial center in the south, about 3,000 persons marched in a demonstration called jointly by the Council of Trade Unions and the H-Block Committee. Waterford has a total population of less than 30,000.

In Clara, County Offaly, the two local factories closed. The mining center of Mavan was entirely shut down. The giant Arigna mines in County Leitrim closed. In the towns of Sligo and Tralee there were demonstrations of about 10,000 persons.

The extent of industrial and business shutdowns was thus substantially larger than on the December 10 National Day of Action, when the first H-Block hunger strike was going into its critical phase. It remained far short of a general strike, but the protests are mounting.

In Drogheda, for example, a rally of 5,000 persons on May 7 adopted by acclamation a resolution calling for a general strike. A motion for an official strike in the city had been only narrowly defeated in the local trades council.

The three other hunger strikers are becoming seriously ill. Francis Hughes, who

International Protests

The death of Bobby Sands has provoked protests throughout the world. In the United States, protests occurred in front of British consulates in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, Chicago, and other cities.

In New York, more than 4,000 people gathered at the British consulate on the day Sands died. This was followed by daily protests at the consulate, culminating in a demonstration of more than 5,000 people on May 9.

The 35,000-member Transport Workers Union Local 100 in New York called on bus drivers to keep their headlights on all day May 7 to protest Thatcher's callous policies.

The International Longshoremen's Association, whose members work the docks on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, declared a twenty-four-hour boycott of all British shipping May 7.

One day before Sands's death, the New Jersey State Assembly passed a resolution hailing Sands for his "courage and commitment" and denouncing the "irrational and inhumane" policies of Thatcher's government.

The Massachusetts Senate passed a resolution proclaiming Sands the "most recent and conspicuous victim of British injustice to the Irish people." The resolution added that "the British government persists in its occupation of that portion of occupied Ireland which it seized by force and rules with systematic injustice."

Prior to Sands's death, the New York City Council unanimously passed an April 27 resolution calling "upon the Government of Great Britain to grant political status to Robert Sands, M.P., and his colleagues in the prisons of Northern Ire-

land," noting that "the British government has persistently and dogmatically refused to grant political status to these prisoners. . . ."

Thousands of people also took to the streets in three cities in France following Sands's death, and in Athens, Greece. Protests were also reported in Oslo, Norway; Brisbane, Australia; and many other cities.

The Iranian government announced that the name of the street on which the British embassy in Tehran is located had been changed to Bobby Sands Street in honor of the "heroic death of the IRA freedom fighter."

Iranian Prime Minister Abolhassan Bani-Sadr predicted that Sands's death would turn the youth of Northern Ireland into "beacons to light the path of the liberation struggle."

In the European Parliament, the 120-member caucus of the Social Democratic representatives, including British Labour Party figure Barbara Castle, condemned Thatcher for failing to take "positive action" to end Sands's hunger strike.

The Soviet news agency Tass condemned the British government for refusing to grant Sands's demands "despite large-scale protests by world public opinion."

The British government, fearing that Bobby Sands's now vacant seat in the British Parliament will be won by another hunger striker if elections are held soon, is considering postponing them to the end of the year and is drafting legislation that would disqualify certain convicted felons from running for parliament.

began his protest two weeks after Sands, is now said to be nearing death. The condition of the other two hunger strikers—Raymond McCreesh and Patrick O'Hara—also continues to deteriorate. And it has been announced that another prisoner—Joseph McDonnell, the father of two children—began a hunger strike on May 9.

The pressure against the British colonialists and the conciliationist Irish politicians are building up in the South. Since the eve of Sands's death, the edge of editorial opinion in all the major national dailies has been turned against the British government.

Who Are the Hunger Strikers?

Francis Hughes began his hunger strike on March 15, two weeks after Bobby Sands. Hughes, however, is deteriorating much more rapidly than Sands did.

Francis Hughes comes from a staunchly republican family from South Derry. His parents, six sisters, and three brothers have all been active supporters of Hughes's hunger strike for political status.

The twenty-five year old prisoner was arrested in March 1978 following a shoot out with British troops in which he was severely wounded in the leg. The battle took place near the small farm where Hughes grew up. Hughes is serving a life sentence for the death of a British soldier.

Raymond McCreesh, twenty-four, began his hunger strike on March 22. He was born in the village of Camlough in South Armagh.

After leaving school, McCreesh served a two-year apprenticeship as a sheet-metal worker. At the age of nineteen he was arrested by British soldiers following a battle between British soldiers and IRA members in June 1976. After nine months in custody on charges of attempting to kill British soldiers, conspiracy to kill British soldiers, possession of firearms, and membership in the IRA, McCreesh was sentenced in March 1977 to fourteen years imprisonment by a non-jury court, which the prisoner refused to recognize.

Prior to beginning his hunger strike McCreesh spent four years "on the blanket," refusing to wear a prison uniform. During that time he has forfeited his visiting rights rather than put on a prison uniform for the half-hour per month he would have been allowed visitors.

Patrick O'Hara, twenty-four, also began his hunger strike on March 22, was born in Derry city. At the age of eleven he took part in the big civil rights march in Derry on October 5, 1968, which was attacked by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. He became active in the republican movement in 1970 and joined Sinn Féin in early 1971. A few months later his eldest brother Sean was interned by the British.

At the age of fourteen, Patrick O'Hara was shot in the foot by British troops at a

There have been sharp editorials in the *Irish Press*, the daily associated with the ruling Fianna Fáil party, historically the more nationalist of the two bourgeois parties. And the criticisms it raised against the British government have been broadened.

In the May 8 issue, the *Irish Press* editors responded to the main propaganda counter-attack against the H-Block campaign, the argument that the death and sacrifices of representatives of the oppressed nationalist people are cancelled out by the deaths of humble Protestants who happen to be members of the repressive forces.

barricade in the Brandywell area of Derry, spending five weeks in the hospital.

In October 1974 he was interned by the British. After his release in April 1975, O'Hara joined the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Two months later he was rearrested and spent ten months in jail before being acquitted.

His family, however, continued to suffer harassment from the British and Unionist authorities. In 1976 his brother Tony was arrested and subsequently sentenced to prison on the basis of an alleged confession. Tony is now "on the blanket" in prison.

Patrick O'Hara himself was arrested again in September 1976 and charged with possession of firearms and ammunition. He was released four months later when charges were dropped. In June 1977 he was arrested in Dublin, held six weeks, and then acquitted of the charge of holding a police officer at gunpoint.

In May 1979 O'Hara was again arrested and charged with possession of a hand grenade. He was convicted on the basis of accusations by two British soldiers. Sentenced to eight years imprisonment in 1980, O'Hara immediately went on the blanket in protest.

The latest republican prisoner to go on a hunger strike is **Joseph McDonnell**, who is taking the place of Bobby Sands. McDonnell, thirty, is married and the father of two children. He is serving a fourteen year prison term for firearms possession.

The newest hunger striker joined the IRA in 1971 and was arrested along with Bobby Sands in 1976. He began his hunger strike on May 9.

The Irish Republican Army has vowed that the hunger strikes will continue until the five demands for political status are met. Each hunger striker who dies in prison will be replaced "by a procession of volunteers," according to Gerry Adams, vice-president of Sinn Féin, the political arm of the IRA.

Adams added that "the situation has not ended with the death of Bobby Sands. Another hunger striker is there and there will be another and another." □

In fact, on the day of the Sands funeral, a memorial service for Protestant members of the security forces who have been killed drew only 2,000 spectators in Belfast's city center. But Irish and British television gave it equal play with the Catholic march of 100,000 persons. Only Irish television mentioned the actual number of those who attended the Protestant ceremony.

The *Irish Press* said that Unionist politicians "are now decrying the publicity given to Bobby Sands' death because they say it detracts from the death of UDR [Ulster Defence Regiment] and RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] victims of terrorism.

"The fact is that the deaths on either side of the community could have been avoided had the Unionists not imposed a cruel, bigoted, blind regime on Northern Ireland in which political development, civil rights and ordinary human dignity were denied the Catholics. . . ."

Although the editorial did not put the blame squarely on British imperialism, it did attack the major argument that is used to justify passivity in the south—that the conflict in the north is a senseless, fratricidal one, between the two equally worthy sections of the Irish people. The more openly proimperialist of the bourgeois parties, Fine Gael, for example, made a special point at its recent convention about its support for the "embattled Protestants of Fermanagh and South Armagh."

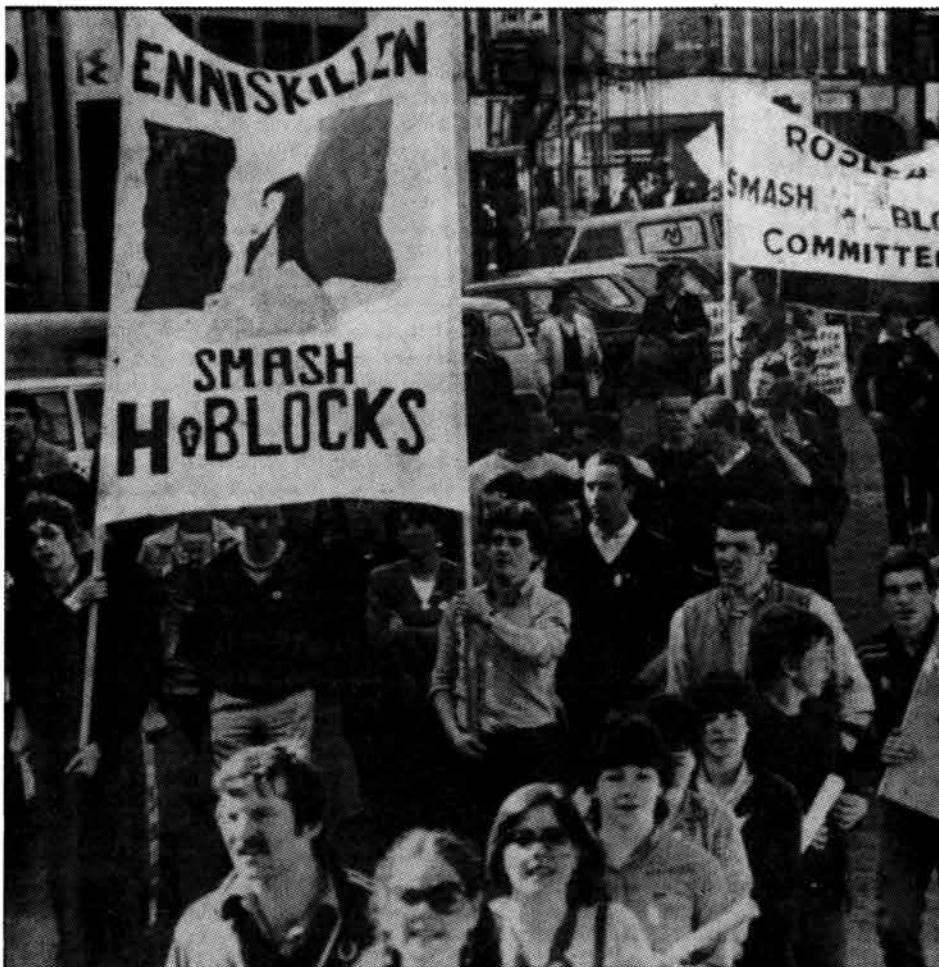
Real Relationship of Forces

The idea that the Protestant settler caste can be seduced into unity with the Catholics if the nationalists approach them ever-so-politely, is the keystone of the perspective that bourgeois nationalists offer in Ireland. The proimperialist Protestant politicians and murder-gang leaders are well aware of this and take full advantage of the illusions that this notion creates.

But the real relationship of forces is not so favorable to the rightist gangs, and they know it. For example, the head of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), Andy Tyrrie, told former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark in late April that the UDA would not attack the Catholic ghettos as long as the security forces were able to deal with any response to Sands's death because they feared above all touching off a wave of emotion in the south.

Tyrrie made it clear that he thinks of Ireland as one unit. He said: "We are only 20 percent of the population of this country." The UDA leader, however, openly justified the assassination attempt against Bernadette Devlin McAliskey: "She deserved it. She's a soldier." Tyrrie told Clark that he should understand how dangerous she is because "your government has a full file on her."

The May 8 *Irish Press* gave greater solemnity to its statement on the Sands funeral by running an editorial in Irish under the one in English. Interestingly the editorial in Irish was more directly aimed against Britain.



April 18 protest in Dublin.

An Phoblacht

It said:

"Because of Bobby Sand's death and the merciless face that Thatcher has shown to the world, more young people will join movements such as the IRA. . . . It is not just the H-Block problem that has to be solved, although that should be gotten out of the way quickly. The problem of the system that drives thousands of Bobby Sands's into the IRA and into throwing stones in the streets must be solved.

"There comes a time in the life of a people when patience and discipline are exhausted. And since 1969 the Catholic people of the north have never been so close to that point. The British government has made another big mistake in Ireland. . . ."

Nationalist Sentiment Runs High

Even the *Irish Independent*, the daily associated with Fine Gael and the most conservative forces in Irish life, found it opportune in its May 6 issue to recall the words of the executed Irish patriot Roger Casement, a northern Protestant who broke from Unionism to become a Republican:

"Ireland has seen her sons suffer from generation to generation, always for the same cause, always meeting the same fate, and always at the hands of the same power, and always a fresh generation has pressed

on to withstand the same oppression . . . Irish hope . . . renews with each generation the claims of the last."

In 1916, the *Irish Independent*, which represented the same social forces then that it does now, called for the execution of the Irish revolutionists, including Casement. It is obviously feeling the heat.

In fact, even the ruling Fianna Fáil party, which is in a better position to ride the wave of nationalist feeling, finds itself in an increasingly awkward position. Nationalist sentiment runs high among its local workers and followers. A general election must be held by the first week of June. Given the depressed state of the economy, Fianna Fáil's only hope of winning is to play the

Green card, to stress its nationalist credentials.

But the government is incapable of facing up to Britain. In the last days before Sands's death, Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey pressured the hunger striker's sister, Marcella Sands, into appealing to the European Commission, an action that was exposed as a diversion by the courageous action of a dying man.

Sands refused to see the Commissioners without having witnesses of his own present. He pointed out that only Britain could grant his demands. And he denounced Haughey for browbeating his sister into going along with a move that only diverted attention from his impending death and took the pressure off Britain at a critical time.

Now the Dublin government has refused even to declare an official day of mourning for Sands, and Haughey's credibility as a nationalist is being rapidly tarnished.

Futile Outbursts Contained

In the North, all the authority of the H-Block movement and the republican movement, as well as the formidable moral authority of the Sands family, is being brought to bear to prevent any outbreak of violence that would impede the growth and broadening of mass protests.

The extent of the demonstration on May 7 shows how widespread the anger was at the British government's intransigence and callousness. But this anger is being contained. There is only scattered violence.

The obvious efforts of the republicans to stop futile outbursts of rage did not, however, prevent the hypocritical British press from portraying the essential quiet of the Catholic ghettos as a defeat for the militant nationalists.

The British press is also harping on the theme that Sands did not represent anything and that his protest left "responsible" Irish leaders as cold as it did their counterparts in London.

But the British press and government are refusing to recognize that a fire is being built under the Irish politicians. And that fire is also rapidly burning away a lot of fog generated by imperialist propaganda and bourgeois nationalist conciliationism.

Moreover, the extent of international sympathy for the Irish hunger strikers is beginning to come through, even in the British press, which is devoting a lot of space to ar-

"I was only a working-class boy from a nationalist ghetto, but it is repression that creates the revolutionary spirit of freedom.

"I shall not settle until I achieve the liberation of my country, until Ireland becomes a sovereign independent socialist republic."

Bobby Sands, 1954-1981

guments that the growth of protests in the U.S. in particular does not really mean anything. The second story in the London *Economist's* American Survey feature this week is about the reaction in the U.S. to Bobby Sands's death. It ends by stating that Reagan is unlikely to intervene on behalf of the hunger strikers. No doubt this is a reassuring certainty for British Conservatives. But the magazine does not explain why the so-called Four Horsemen—Senators Edward Kennedy and Daniel Patrick Moynihan,

Congressman Tip O'Neill, and New York Governor Hugh Carey—are now directing the sharp edge of their statements against Britain and not against the IRA as they did in the past.

International Support

In fact it is obvious that a fire is being built under them too. And the results of this blaze are less predictable than the reflexes of the truculently reactionary American president, who by some accident of birth

happens to bear an Irish name.

For the first time since the Irish War of Independence, we can see the people of Irish origin and identification everywhere uniting in support of a struggle in Ireland and the growth of international sympathy on a very wide scale.

Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa's praise for Sands was noted with considerable interest in Ireland. Also much commented on is the Iranian government's gesture of renaming the street in Tehran where the British embassy stands. From now on every letter to the British Embassy in Tehran will have to be addressed to Bobby Sands Street. □

Labour Party Leaders' Double Betrayal

Responsibility for the death of Bobby Sands lies squarely with the government of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher's refusal to meet the just demands of the hunger strikers has sparked growing protests throughout the world.

Sands, a twenty-seven year old member of the Irish Republican Army, died on May 5, the sixty-sixth day of his hunger strike demanding political status for nationalist prisoners in British jails in Northern Ireland. In April, while on his hunger strike, Sands was elected to the British Parliament by voters in Fermanagh/South Tyrone.

Sands and his fellow hunger strikers were demanding elementary rights, rights they had had between 1972 and 1976.

While the Conservative Party government bears direct responsibility for Sand's death, the opposition Labour Party has been scandalously complicit.

Following Sands's death, Labour Party leader Michael Foot strongly endorsed Thatcher's hard-line stance. Foot claimed that restoring political status to Irish nationalist prisoners would be tantamount to "the Government itself giving aid to the recruitment of terrorists" in Northern Ireland. It was a Labour government that ended political status for republican prisoners in March 1976.

As the British Parliament cheered Thatcher's hard line following Sands's death, only one member of the House of Commons, Labour left-winger Patrick Duffy, rose to criticize that policy.

Struggling to make himself heard over the jeers of Conservative MPs, Duffy told Thatcher that "you have spectacularly illuminated . . . your Government's moral bankruptcy and the colossal and criminal incompetence of Conservative governments of all times in their dealings in Ireland."

On the day after Sands's death, eleven Labour MPs broke with their party's support for Thatcher's intransigent stand against the hunger strike.

Although Tony Benn, the leader of the Labour Party's left wing, has in the past

expressed support for Irish rights in general, he has failed to speak out in behalf of the hunger strikers.

Despite the near unanimity for Thatcher's policy in Parliament, within Britain there is growing support for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. A recent poll commissioned by the British daily *Guardian* indicates that 58 percent of those questioned want to see British troops brought home from Ireland. Even voters who back Thatcher's Conservative Party support withdrawal by a plurality of 47 percent.

The Labour Party's refusal to oppose Thatcher's policies regarding Northern Ireland is not only a criminal betrayal of the rights of the Irish people, it is also a blow against the rights of British workers.

In its attempt to crush the Irish nationalist struggle, the British government has used a whole range of draconian measures that could be applied in Britain as well as in Northern Ireland.

Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for example, people can be held without charges for up to seven days. This act was used in early May to round up hunger-strike support activists in Northern Ireland.

Suspected members of Irish nationalist groups are tried in special "Diplock" courts. These are juryless courts in which the normal rules of evidence do not apply. A person can, for example, be convicted on the basis of the testimony of an accuser whose identity is never revealed. The accused is denied the right to confront the accuser.

While these provisions are now being applied only in Northern Ireland, they are the law in the entire United Kingdom and could be used in the future against opponents of Thatcher's policies in Britain, against nuclear arms protesters, striking workers, or Blacks fighting racism.

By giving Thatcher a free hand in Northern Ireland, the Labour Party gives ground to her reactionary offensive in Britain as well.

—Will Reissner

Grenadians Rally to Defend Airport

In the largest mass rally held in Grenada this year, some 12,000 Grenadians turned out at the construction site of the new international airport April 12 to protest against Washington's attempts to sabotage the project.

"Today we show the world that we have decided to build our international airport, regardless of who vex [gets upset]," declared Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

"There is no doubt that this project—the most important in Grenada's history—will benefit the entire people. . . ."

The airport is one of the key aspects of revolutionary Grenada's economic development plan. It will greatly boost the island's tourist industry, which is a main pillar of the Grenadian economy.

Realizing this, the Reagan administration in Washington has sought to make it more difficult for Grenada to raise the finances it needs to complete the airport project. The White House tried to pressure the European Economic Community into boycotting a conference in Brussels organized to raise funding for the airport.

Despite such pressures, the EEC sent a representative to the conference, as did a number of governments and international organizations. The conference issued an appeal for international assistance to Grenada's airport.

Out of the projected cost of some US\$71 million for the airport, US\$41 million has already been granted by the governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Algeria.

Don't you know someone who should be reading *Intercontinental Press*?

Why not ask a friend, family member, or co-worker to subscribe?

For rates, see inside cover.

Colombia—Regime Steps Up Repression

By Fernando Torres

At the same time that it is stepping up repression and militarization inside Colombia, the regime of President Julio César Turbay Ayala is also playing an important role in the U.S. government's campaign against Cuba.

On March 23, citing the supposed confession of a member of the guerrilla organization M-19 (April 19 Movement) to the effect that his group had received weapons and training from Cuba, Turbay announced that he was suspending diplomatic relations with Havana. The Cuban government termed Turbay's accusations "cynical" and pointed out that Colombia has a tradition of guerrilla struggle that dates back long before the Cuban revolution's 1959 triumph.

The Colombian president's accusations had to do with fighting between the army and a group of guerrillas in the southern part of the country near the border with Ecuador. In an effort to evade encirclement by the army, the José Antonio de Sucre Squadron of the M-19 took refuge in Ecuadorian territory.

The Ecuadorian military, denying the guerrillas' request for political asylum, turned forty-eight M-19 members over to Colombian troops. Among those captured were two top leaders of the M-19, Rosemberg Pabón Pabón and Carlos Toledo Plata.

Faithful to its traditions of yellow journalism, the Bogotá daily *El Tiempo* carried extensive and hysterical reports on the events in the south. It hailed the conduct of the Colombian army, which it said had faced an "invasion."

The Truth Comes Out

Only later did the truth come out, as a result of a series of interviews obtained in Ecuador by Socorro Ramírez, a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) of Colombia. Her articles were published in late March by Bogotá other leading daily, *El Espectador*.

Ramírez reported that, contrary to the army's assertions the guerrillas had entered Ecuador unarmed. Without violating any of that country's laws, they had requested political asylum from the proper authorities.

Not only was their request denied, but several wounded guerrillas were violently removed from a hospital.

In addition to this gross violation of the right to political asylum, Colombian helicopters were allowed to enter Ecuadorian air space. They bombed dwellings and killed at least one person. It is noteworthy that only weeks before the Ecuadorian armed forces had whipped up a big chauvinist campaign over a border conflict with Peru. But they

failed to protest the incident involving Colombia in any way.

Diverse reports have since indicated that the captured guerrillas were tortured. Toledo Plata and Pabón Pabón were transferred to Bogotá, where they were added to the list of M-19 defendants being tried by an army tribunal at the La Picota prison. (See accompanying article.)

The Colombian authorities launched a broader wave of repression when the guerrillas were captured. Even the famous novelist Gabriel García Márquez, who had just returned to his native country after a twenty-five-year absence, was forced to seek asylum at the Mexican embassy upon being warned that the army was planning to interrogate him. The author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* later left the country for Mexico under diplomatic protection.

Disappearances and Decapitations

On March 27 the Standing Committee of Defense of Human Rights announced that in previous days it had received reports of "disappearances of persons captured by services attached to the military authorities."

One example of what has been happening in Colombia can be cited from the Standing Committee's April 14 news bulletin. Referring to an incident that took place in Caquetá Province March 27, it states:

"Army patrols captured Emma Rubio de Herrera, a leader of the Communist Party; her husband Joaquín Herrera, treasurer of the Communal Action Council; the council's president Reinerio Gutiérrez, a member of the directorate of the Alvarista wing of the Conservative Party; and Luis Hernández. All were executed by the soldiers. Their bodies were discovered the following day; those of the Herrera Rubio couple had been decapitated as well as shot."

Such an account vividly brings to mind the period from the 1940s to the 1960s known as "La Violencia" (The Violence), when army units and paramilitary gangs murdered more than 300,000 Colombians. Killings of this sort have occurred frequently since the regime promulgated the Security Statute at the end of 1978.

One of Turbay Ayala's first measures upon taking office, the Security Statute was aimed against the workers movement, which had just held the combative and united citizens' general strike on September 17, 1977. Under cover of the new law, troops have committed all kinds of assaults on Colombians. More than 10,000 persons have been detained—trade unionists, workers, peasant and Indian leaders, priests, housewives, students, journalists, and others.

Many cases of torture have been documented, with a brutality equal to that of the worst butchers of the Southern Cone or Central America.

Amnesty International Denounces Torture

In January 1980 a delegation from Amnesty International traveled to Colombia. In its report for that year, the prestigious organization noted that its mission had "visited 11 prisons in seven cities and met more than 400 political prisoners" and had "concluded that political prisoners were being systematically tortured in military installations in Colombia."

Similar denunciations were made at two National Forums for Human Rights held in Colombia in 1979 and 1980, in which political organizations, trade unions, peasant groups, the church, and relatives of repression victims all participated.

The government has been especially brutal in its treatment of the rural population and Indian groups. In addition to arresting and murdering leaders on the pretext of trying to dislodge guerrillas, large-scale military operations have been carried out in the interior of the country. In the southwestern region known as El Pato, for example, thousands of peasants have been driven off their lands by helicopter and artillery bombardments and operations involving hundreds of soldiers. (See *Intercontinental Press*, October 20, 1980, p. 1088.)

Similar military drives have taken place in Caquetá, Urabá, and other parts of the country—zones where strong guerrilla groups have existed at various times in Colombian history.

During the 1950s and 1960s thousands of Colombian peasants formed part of guerrilla armies. While guerrilla activity has not reached comparable levels at present, throughout the country there has been resurgence of armed actions that is concomitant with the stepped-up violence of the government.

Turbay's Phony Amnesty

Facing pressure from national and international public opinion, the Turbay government announced in June 1980 that an amnesty law would be put into effect. Within two weeks, a message from the legendary guerrilla leader Manuel Marulanda Pérez ("Tiro Fijo") of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) responded:

"The government must demonstrate that it is willing to lift the state of siege, rescind the monstrous Security Statute, put an end to the improper army tribunals that judge civilians, release the hundreds of political prisoners detained throughout the country, demilitarize the besieged agrarian zones, and provide indemnities to the peasant victims of military and landlord violence."

Leading political and trade-union figures rejected Turbay's "amnesty" offer in similar terms.

It is no secret that the worsening social and economic situation in Colombia is the

real cause of discontent. Even Gen. Fernando Landazabal Reyes, the country's top military officer, recently stated that "subversion will continue so long as no modifications are made in the objective and subjective conditions in the economic, political, and social fields, which continually deteriorate and thus give rise to unrest."

So why, then, does Turbay blame Cuba for guerrilla activity and break relations with Havana?

Because Turbay Ayala's government is a key ally in Washington's plans to counter the Central American and Caribbean revolutions, in which attacks on Cuba play a central role.

In fact, this is nothing new. In 1979, Colombia sabotaged Cuba's efforts to gain a place on the United Nations Security Council. Cuba was due a seat as the presiding nation of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, but Colombia aided Washington by presenting itself as a rival candidate despite Cuba's having the support of nearly two-thirds of the U.N. membership.

The attacks on Cuba are generating as much intense opposition inside Colombia as the violations of human rights have.

Many sectors of Colombian society have condemned the breaking of relations. The Colombian-Cuban Friendship House has declared it will continue to work in solidarity

with Cuba.

In the same way, there is great support for the political prisoners. Trade-union delegations have visited the prisoners and are organizing to help their families.

The mounting poverty suffered by the majority of Colombians is forcing more and more people into struggle against the current situation. General strikes have occurred in various localities, and workers struggles take place continually throughout the country.

In this sense it is important to note the decision made in December by the congress of the Union of Colombian Workers (UTC), one of the main trade-union federations. The

Colombian Revolutionary Socialist Party Holds Congress

BOGOTÁ—The third congress of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), Colombian section of the Fourth International, took place here April 16-18. About 150 people, including some thirty elected delegates, were in attendance.

The congress came at a time of deepening class struggle in Colombia. Gripped by rising unemployment and inflation, workers have begun to look for alternatives to the two-party Liberal/Conservative political system. At its recent national congress, the country's largest trade-union federation, the Union of Colombian Workers (UTC), called for a break with the two capitalist parties and the creation of a labor party.

Armed guerrilla organizations—particularly the April 19 Movement (M-19)—are also active in various parts of the country.

Add the effects of the revolutionary upsurge in Central America and the Caribbean to this and you get an explosive mixture.

The response of President Turbay Ayala's government has been a general crackdown on democratic rights and a more open alignment with imperialism. Much of the countryside has been militarized in an effort to combat peasant organizing. Truckloads of soldiers are a common sight in the streets here, and the army routinely stops and frisks young men at busy downtown intersections.

Turbay recently broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, falsely claiming that Cuban instructors were training guerrillas for fighting in Colombia.

The PSR has a wide and well-deserved reputation as a defender of democratic rights. Its national secretary, Socorro Ramirez, frequently appears on television on behalf of human rights.

PSR members have themselves been victims of arbitrary arrests. One member, Stella Paredes a leading pea-

sant organizer, was freed only after a big struggle was waged.

The first point on the congress agenda was a discussion of the international situation. The report and discussion focused on the unfolding revolution in Central America and the Caribbean, tracing in particular the development of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenada revolutions.

A document from the central committee, which was presented in a report by Socorro Ramirez, explained that the revolutions in those countries have been made by the workers and peasants, and that the Communist Party of Cuba, the FSLN in Nicaragua, and Grenada's New Jewel Movement were all revolutionary leaderships.

The document and report noted that there were bureaucratic deformations in Cuba, which constituted a problem for the revolution, but that this in no way changed the nature of the leadership or undercut the vital importance of unconditional support to and solidarity with the Cuban revolution.

A rich and thorough discussion followed the report, with delegates freely expressing political differences.

With an amendment labeling Cuban foreign policy fundamentally internationalist and revolutionary despite certain errors, the document and report were unanimously approved.

The congress next took up the question of building a revolutionary party in Colombia. The report from the Central Committee described the employer/government offensive and said this had put the workers movement into retreat. The report projected campaigns around the need for a labor party and a single, united trade-union federation.

A counterreport proposed instead trying to form a revolutionary-democratic front around a specific, limited program.

It argued that such a front could take the lead in the struggle for power, and counterposed this strategy to the labor party concept.

Delegates supporting this idea tended to view it as a way of broadening the revolutionary movement by allowing the inclusion of bourgeois currents or individuals that could be convinced to support a revolutionary program.

These delegates asserted that this was precisely what had allowed revolutionary successes in Cuba and Nicaragua. They were answered by other delegates who pointed out that, in both countries, the bourgeoisie in fact opposed—and in Nicaragua continues to oppose—the revolutionary process.

The majority resolution was approved by a margin of about 2 to 1.

Finally, the congress took up the immediate tasks facing the PSR. Although two reports were given, a single resolution was unanimously approved. It called for stepping up party intervention in the mass movement and carrying out a drive to win 5,000 new readers for the PSR newspaper *Combate Socialista*.

During the discussion, Central Committee member Ricardo Sánchez proposed holding a special party congress later in the year to begin the process of rooting the PSR in industry. This was enthusiastically received and approved as part of the report.

A new Central Committee of nineteen members was elected by the delegates.

The congress showed that the various political currents that came together to form the PSR in 1978 are thoroughly united and able to discuss political differences in a serious and comradely way.

The party is in an excellent position to take advantage of the growing political opportunities in Colombia.

—Arnold Weissberg

UTC called for a workers party based on the trade unions, pointing out that "the workers movement needs political power, which it has not been able to attain by means of the traditional organizations"—a reference to the bourgeois Liberal and Conservative parties.

The crisis of the traditional parties can also be noted in the high levels of abstention

in recent elections.

The Colombian ruling class has made it clear in recent years that it can be as brutal as the Guatemalan dictatorship or the Salvadoran junta. But in the same way, the Colombian masses have demonstrated a heroism and readiness to struggle equal to that of the Central American peoples. It is this power that will put a halt to the atrocities. □

Government Attempts to Isolate M-19 Defendants Fail

Colombian Political Prisoners Organize in Jail

By Socorro Ramírez

[An army tribunal in Colombia is currently carrying on a trial of ninety-three political prisoners accused of belonging to the April 19 Movement (M-19) and other armed groups. Eighty-one of the prisoners are men and twelve are women.

[The trial, which began on November 21, 1979, has been described as the biggest in Colombian history.

[On February 22 and 28, 1981, a delegation from the national leadership of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) of Colombia visited the political prisoners in La Pico-ta prison in Bogotá.

[The following is excerpted from an article in the March 23, 1981 issue of the PSR's newspaper, *Combate Socialista*.]

* * *

The cellblocks in the prison are opened at 5 a.m. Then for one hour the prisoners exercise, jog, do calisthenics—the males in the courtyard near their cells, the females in the corridor-lounge near their block—all trying to overcome the destructive effects of prison life.

Many people are under the impression that no one does anything in prison, that the prisoners are constantly idle, inactive. But that is not the case with the men and women accused of membership in M-19. Those prisoners have organized themselves into commissions to take care of cleaning, food preparation, culture, and education.

The M-19 prisoners don't spend their time bemoaning their fate. Rather they hold discussion groups and conferences and organize literacy classes. They have set up a library. They make handicrafts to sell to prison visitors, and they stage cultural and political activities on visiting days.

Right now a great deal of their time is taken up by the army tribunal that the military has set up to deal with them.

At one point the authorities decided not to allow the works of Simón Bolívar into the prison, even though Bolívar is the "Father of the Country." They felt that since Bolívar's writings form the basis of the M-19's ideology, they must be "highly subversive." The

authorities even forced the prisoners to paint over a portrait of Bolívar that had been painted on the prison yard wall.

But the prisoners have won the right to education, to engage in sports, to freely express themselves through slogans painted on the walls of the cell block, the corridors, and the yard.

They can also keep up with national and international events by pasting up clippings and the text of speeches by their leaders on the walls.

They organize political and cultural meetings on the major dates that are of symbolic importance to the M-19 and to Colombia.

In prison they have established a public headquarters of the M-19, an office for those members of the leadership who are prisoners (although they insist they remain subordinate to the leaders who are still free).

Even the government has been forced, from time to time, to come to the M-19's prison offices to deal with problems like the occupation of the Dominican Republic's embassy in Bogotá last year.

All sorts of people come to the jail to discuss matters with the M-19—the drafters of the proposed amnesty law, trade-union leaders, church figures, the press, and others. In this respect the M-19 is the only political movement in Colombia, with the exception

of the two official parties, that has a headquarters paid for by the government.

The prisoners have organized themselves by cellblock and deal with the prison officials through their elected representatives. The authorities had hoped to be able to keep the prisoners in solitary confinement, isolated from each other, in order to demoralize them at a time when the M-19 was obviously going through a difficult period in 1979 as a result of the large number of arrests it suffered.

The authorities had also hoped to be able to break the prisoners' spirits and isolate them from developments in national life outside the prison. And the prison officials still try to do that to this day. Whenever struggles develop in the country, the authorities place the M-19 in what is, in effect, a prison within the prison, under military control.

But the prisoners have been able to break through this isolation. They continue to carry out political activity. They are able to intervene in national life through drafting proposals for organizing and mobilizing the masses. Their main activities are directed not toward the prison, but rather toward the country as a whole. They discuss politics with everyone who visits them, and follow developments in the unions, in politics, in sports, and other areas of national life.

But the most important thing is the unity that has developed among all the political prisoners—those from the M-19 and those accused of membership in the other guerrilla movements.

One prisoner explained to me that "the political prisoner does not die when taken into custody. Rather the prisoner moves into a new trench in the battle. . . . Jail can be a center for studying, for the transmission of experiences and ideas. Those on the outside should reap the fruits."

The gains the prisoners have won come from the constant battles they have fought. The first battle was over the right to work. Today what they produce pays for cleaning and repairs and for their food (prison food being unfit to eat).

The conduct of the political prisoners has had an effect on the other prisoners and on the guards too. One of the ordinary prisoners told me that "we are going to unite to win the same things the political prisoners have won, because we are not going to get anything by hustling." They have begun to hold joint meetings and protests against arbitrary measures. Often the ordinary prisoners attend the meetings held by the political prisoners to respond to one or another attack.

Because of the struggles waged by the political prisoners, the guards have begun to treat all the prisoners with more humanity. One guard described the political prisoners to me in these terms: "These people are not thugs or hired guns as they have so often been described. Whether their actions were wrong or not, they were motivated by the ideal of change." □



Colombian President Turbay Ayala.

U.S. Government Intervenes Against Fourth International

[The following appeared as an editorial in the May 15 issue of the U.S. Socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

The United States government has directly intervened to prevent the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from participating in the next important leadership gathering of the Fourth International—an International Executive Committee (IEC) meeting scheduled for May 7-14 in Europe.

Government lawyers in the trial of the lawsuit brought by the SWP against secret police spying and harassment have subpoenaed central SWP leaders who had planned to attend the IEC meeting and present reports there. Those subpoenaed are legally required to be available to appear in court on twenty-four hours' notice when the government presents its case. They cannot leave the country.

Among the fraternal IEC members subpoenaed are Mary-Alice Waters, Barry Sheppard, Doug Jenness, Larry Seigle, and Pedro Camejo.

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes, along with Malik Miah, Fred Halstead, Andrew Pulley, and José G. Pérez are important witnesses in the SWP's direct case and are subject to recall to the stand on twenty-four hours' notice.

Points Under Discussion

Waters, a national cochair of the SWP, was planning to give a counterreport at the IEC meeting to the draft resolution on the Cuban revolution and the Castro leadership being presented by a majority of the United Secretariat. (The United Secretariat is an elected executive body of the IEC.)

Sheppard, also a national cochair of the party, intended to present a counterreport to the United Secretariat majority's draft resolution on the world situation and the tasks of the Fourth International.

Jenness, who is assigned by the SWP's National Committee to be resident in Europe to participate in the bureau of the United Secretariat, would have presented a report on Afghanistan, outlining the SWP's views on this disputed question in the International.

Miah, a national cochair of the SWP, had planned to present a counterreport on implementing the turn into industry adopted at the 1979 World Congress.

In addition, SWP leaders would have given counterreports on Poland and Nicaragua.

The IEC is the highest body of the Fourth International between world congresses. The IEC meeting, set for May, is



Susan Muysenberg/Militant

SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters was to give counterreport on Cuban revolution and its leadership at meeting.

the first since the November 1979 World Congress.

The government knew full well about the May IEC meeting. It knew about the IEC agenda, the issues under dispute, and that SWP leaders were planning to attend and present reports.

In fact, Waters was handed a subpoena by U.S. Attorney Edward G. Williams immediately after a pretrial deposition in which she indicated that she was one of the likely persons to attend the May IEC meeting. She explained that she had been a fraternal member of the IEC since 1969 and had attended many previous IEC meetings and world congresses.

IEC Meeting Raised at Trial

The IEC meeting was again brought up by the government during the trial itself.

During cross examination, Williams asked Barnes when he planned to visit Europe next.

"I hope to go to Europe for the next meeting of the International Executive Committee, which is scheduled for May because of very important political questions being debated there," Barnes replied. "But I don't know if I will be able to because of obligations connected with the trial." Barnes added that he hoped the IEC meeting would be postponed.

At that point, Williams submitted into evidence a December 4, 1980, letter from

the United Secretariat Bureau to sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. The letter pertained to the dates and the proposed agenda of the IEC. It indicated that resolutions were being prepared on important disputed questions. The letter stated that the United Secretariat had "decided to propose the following agenda:

"The international situation and the present stage of building sections of the Fourth International;

"The Cuban revolution and the Castroist current;

"The turn to industry and the political/organizational implications of this;

"Finally, a point dealing with some events of immediate importance, which will be decided later on the basis of four possibilities: Nicaragua and Central America, Poland, Afghanistan or Iran."

Williams particularly drew Barnes's attention to one paragraph in the letter. It reported that the November 1980 United Secretariat meeting had decided to change the dates of the IEC meeting from February to May in order to allow more time for preparations.

The paragraph noted that "an initial proposal of postponing it to April was made by the Bureau; but information we received on the dates of the law suit trial of the SWP against the U.S. government, which must start on the 16th of March, raises another difficulty. Finally, the USec decided on the 6-12th of May. These dates are now definitive; they won't be changed (except for possible minor modifications in case of unforeseen technical difficulties), even if the SWP case goes on beyond the date presently foreseen."

And this was not the last time that the government raised the question of the SWP delegation to the IEC meeting. When Andrew Pulley, the SWP's 1980 presidential candidate appeared as a witness for the SWP on April 29, Williams also asked him whether or not he was planning to attend. Then, right after Pulley left the stand, Williams handed out another subpoena, this one to IEC member Larry Seigle.

Voorhis Act

The SWP, one of the founding parties of the Fourth International in 1938, was forced to disaffiliate in December 1940, after Congress adopted the undemocratic Voorhis Act on the initiative of President Franklin Roosevelt.

This disaffiliation means that the SWP is barred from making financial contributions to the International or casting decisive votes. Both Barnes and former SWP

national secretary Farrell Dobbs testified at the current trial that the SWP has continued in every other way to politically support the International and actively participate in its meetings. The SWP has continued to serve in a fraternal capacity on leadership bodies such as the IEC and United Secretariat.

At the time the Voorhis Act was passed and the SWP disaffiliated, the international center of the Fourth International was functioning out of New York City. It had been moved there in 1939 because of the outbreak of the war in Europe. SWP leader George Breitman testified during the current trial that the international center remained in New York, and SWP leaders continued to collaborate closely with it, until the end of World War II.

Previous Government Interference

For more than forty years, the federal government has sought to intervene in and disrupt the SWP's democratic right to meet and collaborate in this fashion with its co-thinkers in other countries.

During the witch-hunt of the early 1950s, the government used its powers to exacerbate difficulties inside the Fourth International. In 1953 and 1954 the struggle over a series of political and organizational issues led to a split in the International and the formation of two public factions.

Speaking about these events in a talk in 1975, Joseph Hansen, a long-time leader of the SWP and the Fourth International, stated, "It is possible that the split could have been avoided. [SWP leader James P.] Cannon was certainly of the opinion that we should try to avoid it. But among other handicaps, it was not possible for the top leaders of the SWP to go abroad. That was during the height of the McCarthyite witch-hunt, and the State Department banned known radicals from leaving the country—unless, of course, they were being deported. Consequently we were unable to argue our case at the congress where the international struggle culminated; and Pablo [Michel Pablo, the central leader of the International Secretariat faction] took factional advantage of this situation." (See *James P. Cannon: the Internationalist*, by Joseph Hansen, Pathfinder Press, 1980.)

Hansen himself unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a passport to attend this congress.

In 1962, when discussions were far along in reunifying the Fourth International, an article appeared in the Columbus, Ohio, *Dispatch* that had all the earmarks of a government plant. Released from the *Dispatch's* Washington Bureau, the May 15, 1962, article was headlined, "'Fourth International' Revival Being Watched."

"Efforts by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to reunify the 'Fourth International' are being watched by high government sources," the article said. Developments that were particularly noted were Hansen's trip to South America in October

and November 1961, his trip to Paris in December, and a trip by an unnamed Belgian leader to the United States to discuss with SWP leaders.

Bans on Entering U.S.

The government has also banned many leaders of the Fourth International from legally entering the United States to attend conferences, give public speeches, and

Workers Win Wage Hikes

Bermuda Shaken by Mass Labor Upsurge

By Ernest Harsch

"No law is going to make economic slaves out of us," declared a picket sign carried by one of the thousands of striking workers in Bermuda, a British colony in the Atlantic Ocean, nearly 600 miles east of the United States.

That is the message that the island's largely Black working class gave to the white employers and white-dominated government for nearly a month, as one sector of workers after another walked off their jobs to demand higher pay.

On May 7, after winning a 20 percent wage increase, the unions called off their strikes.

The first signs of the labor upsurge—one of the most massive in the country's history—came in March with a mass demonstration through the streets of Hamilton, the capital, by hotel workers protesting against a new tax proposal. After the march, Prime Minister David Gibbons decided to "defer" the proposal.

Following this victory, workers began to demand wage increases. In Bermuda, they face a very high cost of living and an inflation rate of 15 percent. Many have to work two and three jobs to make ends meet.

In early April, some 1,500 hospital and blue-collar workers struck over a pay dispute. By the beginning of May, the strike had spread to dockworkers, hotel employees, postal workers, bus drivers, garbage and sanitation workers, dry cleaners, agricultural and quarry workers, supermarket employees, teachers, and others.

As of May 6, some 8,000 workers were out on strike, more than a quarter of the island's workforce. The Bermuda Industrial Union (BIU) was threatening to call out the rest of the workers in solidarity with the strikers.

Prime Minister Gibbons attacked the workers, charging that the strikes were "illegal, irresponsible and reprehensible." The hotel owners responded by sacking 3,000 striking hotel workers.

But through their determination, the workers forced the government and employers to back down. Although the 20 percent wage hike they won was less than the 22 percent the BIU had been demanding, it was

meet with SWP members. It has sought to obstruct entry by many other leaders of the International.

Now the government is taking advantage of the trial of the SWP lawsuit to interfere once again in the discussions of the International. This is the latest in the long record of harassment and reprisals by the capitalist rulers against the SWP and the Fourth International. □

closer to the unions' demand than the government's original offer of 16 percent. "We have won and there is no doubt about it," declared BIU President Ottiwel Simmons.

The main demands of the strikers were economic, but the upsurge also reflected a sharp political and social conflict. Bermuda's population is 61 percent Black (and the bulk of all workers are Black), but the government and economy are controlled predominantly by whites. Prime Minister Gibbons himself is one of the island's wealthiest men.

As one striking postal worker told *New York Times* reporter Leslie Bennetts, "Whites think the black people are happy, but it's an illusion. The feeling never goes away that they control everything—business, communications, it's all pro-establishment, pro-white, pro-Government."

And the government, according to Delano Ingham, leader of the largely Black Progressive Labour Party (PLP), is "really only a modernised version of the government which instituted slavery, indentured service and segregation."

A central aspect of this national oppression is Bermuda's colonial status. Most Blacks have clearly expressed their support for independence, in part by voting for the PLP, which is in the forefront of the struggle for independence; the party now holds eighteen seats in the thirty-nine-seat parliament.

The success of the strike wave can only strengthen those who favor independence, particularly since the PLP is closely linked to Bermuda's unions. The head of the BIU, Ottiwel Simmons, is also head of the PLP.

Following the mass demonstration in Hamilton in March, Alvin Williams wrote in a column in the March 30 *Workers Voice*, the newspaper of the PLP, that "the Bermudian worker has turned the corner, and is awakening from a long slumber!"

He pointed out, "The attack on the Bermudian worker is part of a pattern that is worldwide in scope. This is a plan to slaughter the poor to subsidize the rich. . . ."

"We, as workers, must be prepared to fight on all fronts." □

Reagan Moves to Arm Guatemalan Terrorists

By Fred Murphy

The Reagan administration is preparing to resume military aid to the right-wing terrorist regime of Gen. Romeo Lucas García in Guatemala.

Claiming that the Lucas regime faces a "major insurgency" with "strong Communist worldwide support," John Bushnell of the State Department told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee May 4 that Washington "is disposed to support Guatemala."

Two days later, the State Department announced that Gen. Vernon Walters (ex-deputy director of the CIA) and former U.S. ambassador to Guatemala Frank Ortiz would soon travel to the Central American country to work out arrangements for resuming military aid. On May 7, Lucas García's foreign minister, Rafael Castillo Valdez, left Guatemala for talks in Washington on the same subject.

Guatemala's military rulers have not received U.S. arms aid since 1977, when they rejected a \$2.1 million offer because of State Department criticisms over human-rights violations. Since then, however, the Pentagon has helped Lucas and company secure arms, training, and technical aid from Israel, Chile, and Argentina.

The regime has also purchased aircraft from France, uniforms from South Korea, and artillery from Yugoslavia. Recent news reports have asserted, however, that the Guatemalan military has an especially pressing need for spare parts for its fleet of U.S.-built Huey helicopters.

'Gross and Consistent' Violations

Current U.S. law bars shipments of such military goods to governments that commit "gross and consistent" violations of human rights. Even Bushnell had to admit in his Senate testimony that it is "questionable" whether the Reagan administration could legally resume aid to Guatemala.

New York Times correspondent Warren Hoge pointed out in a dispatch from Guatemala published May 3 that the phrase "gross and consistent" human-rights violations "precisely describes the situation" in the country today:

"Killings of people in opinion-making positions have decimated university faculties, student groups, moderate and left-of-center political organizations, rural cooperatives, newspaper and radio staffs, peasant leagues, unions and churches. In recent weeks there have been massacres in Indian villages aimed at frightening residents into ignoring guerrilla calls for support. . . ."



"The number of killings in the Lucas García years [since July 1978] now exceeds 5,000, but there have been no arrests or investigations."

A detailed report on Guatemala issued by Amnesty International in February made it clear why no one has been prosecuted for such massive crimes—they are carried out "under the direct supervision of President Lucas García."

"Policy decisions and the selection of who is to 'disappear' and be killed are said to be made after consultations between the top officials of the Ministries of Defense and the Interior, and the Army General Staff, who command the forces responsible for the abuses," the human-rights organization reported.

In recent months Lucas's killers have even targeted the Christian Democratic Party, the Guatemalan counterpart of the very political current the State Department claims to be backing in neighboring El Salvador. Seventy-six Christian Democratic leaders have been slain by death squads in the past ten months in Guatemala, and the party has declared it will not participate in the 1982 elections.

The Reagan administration is aware of the Lucas García regime's justly deserved image as an international outlaw. For this reason the moves to restore aid have not been accompanied by the kind of propaganda blitz launched in February and March around El Salvador. In fact, they have been portrayed as part of an effort to get the Guatemalan government to clean up its act.

Before restoring aid, Bushnell of the State Department told the Senate committee, "we would need to see an indication that things are going to be different in Guatemala than has been the case." In announcing the Walters-Ortiz mission,

State Department spokesman Dean Fisher asserted that Washington wanted "to work with [the Guatemalan government] to control indiscriminate violence of all kinds."

U.S. Advisers Helped Death Squads

The *Washington Post* lent credence to this dubious proposition in an April 22 editorial. After acknowledging that "American intelligence quietly confirms Amnesty International's charge that the government runs an immense murder and torture campaign," the *Post* editors asserted that the U.S. arms embargo now in effect "makes it difficult to apply pressure to make [Lucas García] change his ways."

"Could the United States conceivably buy back influence in Guatemala by resuming military contacts?" the *Post* editors asked. "Could the Reagan administration manage to pull off such a gambit without simply becoming partners of Guatemala's gorillas in fighting real or imagined guerrillas?"

The *Post*'s implicit answer was yes, but when the outlines of Reagan's policy became clear a few days later, the liberal daily expressed second thoughts.

"Frankly," the *Post* editors wrote May 10, "when we suggested the other day that the United States consider resuming military aid to Guatemala in order to acquire influence with which to tame the government's repression, we were quite aware that the idea is subject to abuse, but we did not know the administration was heading so fast toward potential abuse of it." The editorial declared "unthinkable" any U.S. military aid "not tied tightly to specific measures on limiting official violence. . . ."

The reality is that Reagan's promises of aid during the 1980 campaign were themselves enough to put wind in the sails of Guatemala's terrorist rulers. "Disappearances" and assassinations mounted soon after the November U.S. elections and have not let up since.

The *Washington Post*'s April 22 editorial claimed that it is "difficult to blame the United States for President Lucas' atrocities." But the model for the current reign of terror in Guatemala is the one carried out there in the late 1960s under the guidance of the U.S. embassy and advisers from the U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets). The army occupied villages and executed peasant leaders, while "death squads" such as MANO Blanca and NOA¹ were unleashed

1. *Mano Blanca* means "White Hand," and MANO is an acronym for Organized Nationalist

against trade unionists, intellectuals, journalists, and others suspected of opposing the regime. According to Amnesty International, 20,000 Guatemalans fell victim to the repression between July 1966 and February 1977.

Renewing Old Friendships

Several of the Guatemalan architects of that earlier terror campaign have close ties to the Reagan administration. Two were invited guests at the new president's inauguration in January: Col. Carlos Arana Osorio, who founded MANO Blanca and supervised the slaughter of more than 8,000 Guatemalans as chief of the Zacapa Military Zone; and Mario Sandoval Alarcón, who heads the extreme-rightist National Liberation Movement (MLN) and boasts of his 3,000-strong private army.

Top Reagan foreign-policy advisers such as Roger Fontaine and retired generals Daniel Graham and John K. Singlaub visited Guatemala during the U.S. election campaign.

Singlaub has been quoted as criticizing the Carter administration for failing to aid the regime and thus "prompting those who are dedicated to retaining the free enterprise system . . . to take matters into their own hands"—a reference to the death squads.²

Amigos del País (Friends of the Country), a powerful group of right-wing Guatemalan businessmen and landowners, has carried on a lobbying campaign in Washington for restoration of military aid. The group paid some \$120,000 in fees to the public-relations firm Deaver and Hannaford, which also handled advertising for the Reagan election campaign. Michael Deaver, head of the advertising outfit, is now deputy chief of staff at the White House.

In February, U.S. newspaper columnist Jack Anderson wrote that "President Reagan has decided that the Guatemalan military regime, however deplorable its record on human rights, should get U.S. help to prevent a takeover by leftist elements" (*Washington Post*, February 22).

So it would seem that the decision has already been made to uphold Reagan's campaign pledges. But creating a political justification for doing so will not be easy.

Lucas's 'White Paper'

General Lucas García tried to lend a hand in early March. He went on nationwide radio and television with a dramatic story about "secret documents" supposedly

captured from the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP). The EGP is one of four organizations engaged in armed struggle against the dictatorship; along with the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), it has drawn growing support from Guatemala's doubly oppressed Indian majority.

Lucas charged that the captured documents proved that a recent unity agreement among the EGP, ORPA, Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), and Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT) had been signed at the behest of Cuba and Nicaragua.

According to the fortnightly *Noticias de Guatemala*, published by exiles in Costa Rica, Lucas also alleged the existence in Cuba of 243 camps "where a considerable number of Guatemalans are being trained as military and political cadres for leading companies, platoons, and squads."

Lucas claimed that "sophisticated armaments on a large scale" were being channeled through Nicaragua into Guatemala, and that 1,800 French rifles and 100,000 rounds of ammunition had already arrived.

Bad Timing

Unfortunately for Lucas, his revelations came just as the Reagan administration's "White Paper" on El Salvador (to which the Guatemalan president's gambit bore a none-too-coincidental resemblance) was backfiring by stirring fears of a new Vietnam among American working people. Since then, Washington's moves to "draw the line against Communism" in Central America have called forth wide protests

such as the massive antiwar march on the Pentagon May 3.

In Guatemala, Reagan cannot even point to Christian Democratic "moderates" to cover up a murderous military dictatorship. Openly arming Lucas García's assassins will be even less popular than the intervention in El Salvador.

Nonetheless, Reagan has little choice. Guatemala is the most populous country in Central America and the one where most imperialist investments are concentrated. Recent oil discoveries mean that Guatemala "could supply 10 percent of United States needs," as the *New York Times* emphasized May 3.

Hence Guatemala is too rich a plum for the imperialists to let slip without a fight. The terrorists in power there understand this, and have resisted Washington's past efforts to rein them in or replace them with more respectable elements. As Christian Democratic leader Vinicio Cerezo put it, the extreme rightists "want to remove us because they know that the United States cannot accept another leftist government after Nicaragua, and that will leave them as the only alternative. For this they kill us."

At his first news conference back in January, Secretary of State Alexander Haig asserted that "international terrorism will take the place of human rights in our concern. . . ." By moving to renew military aid to Guatemala, Haig and Reagan offer fresh confirmation that their real concern lies in fostering terrorism rather than in stamping it out. □

Parents of 'Disappeared' Defy Argentine Regime

On April 30, some 1,000 parents in Buenos Aires demonstrated to demand an accounting of the whereabouts of their children, who had "disappeared" after last being seen in the custody of Argentine security forces. The parents were joined by 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel.

The march, one of the largest human-rights demonstrations in Argentina since the military seized power five years ago, took place despite week-long warnings from the police that it was illegal.

Every Thursday for four years mothers have gathered at the Plaza de Mayo in the Argentine capital to dramatize their demand that the military government reveal the fate of their children. The April 30 activity marked the fourth anniversary of the weekly demonstrations.

The government has stated that the 15,000 or so people who disappeared while in custody should be presumed dead.

Argentina is ruled under a state of siege that gives the government the right to arrest people without charges. But most of those who disappeared were not formally ar-

rested. Rather they were seized by plainclothes agents of the various branches of the military, who drive around in cars with no license plates.

The military claims that those who disappeared are casualties of what it admits is its "dirty war" against terrorists. While it acknowledges that the missing should be presumed dead, it is unwilling to explicitly state what happened to them as individuals since that would require disclosure of what units and what individuals were responsible for their murders.

Since 1978 Argentina has been denied U.S. military aid because of the human rights abuses of its military regime. The Reagan administration, however, recently called on the U.S. Congress to repeal that law so that military sales can be resumed.

You won't miss a single issue if you subscribe.

Anticommunist Movement. NOA—New Anticommunist Organization.

2. Singlaub is quoted in a study of the Reagan administration's ties to Guatemalan rightists prepared by Allan Nairn of the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs. A version of Nairn's report was published in the April 1981 issue of the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*.

Cuban Revolution Replies to New U.S. Threats

By Anibal Yáñez

HAVANA—"Girón marked the first time in history that U.S. imperialism was unable to impose its will on a people of Our America," declared Fidel Castro at the celebration here April 19, the twentieth anniversary of the victory of Cuban revolutionary forces over the CIA-sponsored mercenary Bay of Pigs invasion.

"At last, a people—it didn't matter how small or how poor—living next to that powerful neighbor, was able to establish and then defend their sovereignty and independence, which is what the Revolution meant to us," Fidel noted.

Now twenty years later, "the imperialists are beginning to use against Nicaragua the same tactics they used against us, beginning with sabotaging the economy, canceling credits, the anti-Nicaragua propaganda campaigns, the concentration of Somocista mercenaries in the vicinity of Nicaragua and the establishment, in the United States of camps to train Somocista elements.

"At the same time, the imperialists are arming and supporting the genocidal regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala, which have murdered tens upon tens of thousands of their best citizens.

"The imperialists are again threatening our country. They're at it again! They're talking about naval blockade and eventual military attacks," he emphasized.

Three days before this speech, Fidel gave another one on the twentieth anniversary of the proclamation of the socialist nature of the Cuban revolution on April 16, 1961. He explained Cuba's stance in the face of the new threats.

"Exactly 20 years have passed and we have the same answers to the same questions; faced with the same threats, the same people have the same determination to struggle and to win."

Today, Fidel underlined, "our Revolution is stronger and more solid than ever before."

"We're not trembling, we're not scared by the imperialists' threats," Fidel said. "On the contrary, we turn those threats into a force, and we could say to the imperialists—who made so much of the slogan 'Remember Pearl Harbor' and remember many other things—a few slogans of our own like 'Remember Girón,' 'Remember Girón!'"

Following his speeches on April 16 and 19, aimed primarily towards the Cuban people, Fidel gave two more, one on April 21 to the Presidential Committee of the World Peace Council meeting in Havana, and the other on April 26 to the Second

Congress of the Association of Third World Economists, also in Havana.

He spoke to prominent figures from eighty-five countries and numerous international organizations at the first, and to hundreds of economists and sociologists from around the world at the second. He addressed himself to the entire world, denouncing the threat of a world war provoked by the imperialist policies of the United States. He condemned the "absolutely criminal and irresponsible" way in which the ruling groups in the U.S. "try to play with the survival of humanity," and explained the mechanisms and the consequences of imperialism's aggressive policies in the sphere of international economic relations.

"Socialism does not need war," Fidel explained to the World Peace Council. "Arms are only a resort imposed on us by the need to defend ourselves from enemy threats and aggression."

And at the commemoration of the proclamation of the socialist character of the revolution, he said, "The imperialists should know that, whereas our people were strong in the days of Girón, today they are 100 times stronger and better prepared militarily, politically and psychologically."

All over Cuba working people listened attentively to their radios or watched Fidel on television when he spoke. They read,

discussed and assimilated his words.

The evidence of what the Cuban people thought about the issues was not hard to find.

In Santiago de Cuba, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution throughout the city—in the neighborhoods, the workplaces, the main avenues and side streets, the public buildings—all display posters and signs proclaiming the determination of the Cuban working people to defend their revolution.

"Defense and Production" is the slogan. But it is not simply an official slogan. It is the deep-felt conviction of every Cuban worker and student we meet, of all we have discussions with. There is a profound understanding of the tasks faced by the Cuban people in these days of increasing international tensions brought on by imperialism's war threats. What predominates is a calm confidence in the strength of a mobilized people.

In the main parks of Santiago, such as the centrally-located Parque Céspedes, there are hand-lettered signs marking various gathering points. Here, on April 25, thousands of workers and their families will meet to take part in the March of the Fighting People for Production and Defense. The mobilizations are to take place all over the island, in every province, building up towards May Day in Havana. Under the banners of proletarian internationalism, of production and defense in the face of imperialism's economic and military threats, Cuba is ready to defend itself.

In Holguín, contingent after contingent of children, young people and adults, workers and students parade through General



Prensa Latina

Cuban militia members marching in Havana May 1.

Calixto García Plaza in this city, mobilized in the April 25 March of the Fighting People.

"The revolution today is stronger than ever. Long live May Day!"

"We will defend the lives of present and future generations!"

"We are a people of workers and soldiers."

"Cuba is for workers."

These are some of the signs held high by the crowd, hand-made ones or posters printed by the CTC, the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions, expressing the feeling of the people as they march building for May Day.

The Cuban people all over the country, like the 100,000 we are seeing in Holguín, are mobilizing. We read and see the photographs in the press: more than 190,000 in

Camagüey, more than 120,000 in Santa Clara, more than 80,000 in Matanzas. Thousands upon thousands in all the provinces and municipalities. And everywhere, as here in Holguín, those marching are the neighborhood committees, the unions, the women's organizations, the Pioneers, the students.

The most striking is the contingent of Territorial Troop Militias. In their ranks we can see the Cuban working people, young and old, men and women, but now in uniform, more disciplined, and well-armed.

The whole parade is an explosion of festivity, songs and chants, but also of combativity, of determination to work harder, to produce more for the defense of the revolution, and to deal blows to the U.S. imperialists. □



Prensa Latina

May Day in Havana

One Million March for Production and Defense

By Melvin Chappell and Aníbal Yáñez

HAVANA, May 1—One million Cubans on a Fighting March for Production and Defense fill Paseo Street to celebrate International Workers Day and to show the world their determination to advance the revolution in their country and abroad, in spite of the U.S. government's threats of aggression.

Contingents began to form at around 5:30 a.m. at various points throughout the city. At 8:15, as we walk down Twenty-third Street, we are with thousands of people headed for the march. There is an air of gaiety, banners and signs of all colors waved around by everyone. Countless portraits of Lenin, Marx, Engels, Che Guevara, Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, José Martí, Lázaro Peña—heroes of the international working class, of Cuba's wars of independence, and of the Cuban revolution.

Slogans held up high. Cuban flags, banners of contingents of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) from all over Havana.

"We're keeping our guard up."

"U.S. Out of the Caribbean—CDR #9."

Couples, families, young and old. A grandmother with her red CDR beret. The children on their father's shoulders, waving flags and chanting.

"Millions of human beings don't know anything about this," one Afro-Cuban worker tells us gravely, "because of the control imposed by the information monopolies in other countries." He is satisfied that we are seeing it with our own eyes.

Along the march route, thousands of compañeros and compañeras from the CDRs, wearing red armbands, form lines as marshalls to help maintain order and to close off certain side streets, but despite the huge

shoulder to shoulder crowd, the masses of people display nothing but enthusiasm and discipline.

We hear the words of Roberto Veiga, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and general secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), who gives the only speech, a short one at that.

Veiga reaffirms the willingness of the Cuban workers, peasants, and people in general to hold high the banner of socialism, and to fully meet the slogans of production and defense.

It is the twenty-third May Day the Cuban workers celebrate having freed themselves forever from the yoke of capitalist exploitation. Their parade this year is headed by 127 cane-cutter brigades who harvested a million or more *arrobas* of cane this season—they are the representatives of the vanguard in the battle on the economic front.

It is the opposite of exhortations for productivity under capitalism. As Fidel noted on April 16, "socialism means that we are the owners of our factories, our mines, our railroads, our ports, our merchant fleet, our lands, our natural resources. Everything in our country belongs to our workers, our peasants, our students, our men and our women! We own everything we have and we have the right to do our best with what we have."

The march takes some three hours to parade through the Plaza of the Revolution, in front of the platform where Fidel and other leaders of the revolution are standing. We also see Sandinista Commander of the Revolution Bayardo Arce.

Bringing up the end of the parade are nineteen regiments of the Territorial Troop

Militias.

Thousands and thousands of militia men and women are marching in the recently formed militia units. They are Cuba's response to the U.S. imperialists' threats. Students, professionals, workers, youth, old people, men and women. Organized, trained and armed thanks to the efforts of the people themselves.

The training of the militias takes place when the volunteers have time off. Roberto Veiga reports in his speech that workers and the entire Cuban people have donated 17 million pesos to finance the militias.

The women's regiments, armed like all the rest with automatic weapons, are the ones that receive the most enthusiastic applause. □

Your library should get *Intercontinental Press*.

Intercontinental Press is a unique source for political developments throughout the world. *IP* is the only English-language magazine with a full-time bureau in Managua, providing weekly reports on the development of the revolutionary upsurge in Central America. *IP* correspondents provide our readers with in-depth coverage of events such as the Iranian revolution, the freedom struggle in South Africa, and the workers struggle in Poland.

Many of the documents, speeches, and interviews we publish appear nowhere else in English. Why not ask your library to subscribe? Make sure others get a chance to read *IP* too.

Ranks of Polish Communist Party Demand Sweeping Reform

By Ernest Harsch

"Socialism should not be for the benefit of an elite. It should not comprise the privileges of an exclusive ruling layer held together by narrow interests. Socialism means people's power, elected by the working class and representing its interests."

Such views, contained in an open letter to the leadership of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP, the Communist Party) from a party branch in a huge aircraft factory in Mielec, are now becoming commonplace among rank-and-file members of the party.

In hundreds of meetings in factories and workplaces throughout Poland, party members are boldly standing up to voice their opinions, on a scale unprecedented in the party's history. Inspired by the enormous gains won by the Polish working class since the strikes of August 1980, they are insisting that the party be completely transformed, that it base itself on the revolutionary changes taking place in Polish society.

Resolutions, open letters, and proposals drawn up by scores of party organizations—many of them based in the factories—are calling for punitive action against corrupt party and government officials and for full internal democracy in the PUWP. They are insisting that the party represent the interests of the workers—not the privileged bureaucrats who govern the country—and that it collaborate closely with the ten-million-member independent union federation, Solidarity, to which many party members now belong.

In short, they are demanding that the party live up to its name. They want it to become—in reality, and not just in words—a revolutionary workers party based on authentic Marxist principles.

This was pointed to by one PUWP member at the giant Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. In a play on the party's name, he was quoted in the April 10 issue of *Zycie Warszawy*, the main Warsaw daily, as saying, "We must do everything to ensure that our party becomes truly Polish, truly united, truly of the workers, and truly a party."

Lech Witkowski, one of the leaders of the rank-and-file movement in Torun, put it in a different way. "We are not challenging Communist ideology," he said, "but we are challenging the gap between theory and practice."

To the top officials of the party, government administration, planning bodies, and secret police, the demands being raised by the ranks of the party are devastating. For it is precisely through this "gap between theory and practice" that the Polish bureaucracy tries to safeguard its privileged social

position, relying on totalitarian and anti-Marxist methods of rule.

These bureaucrats are especially worried that this is now being widely challenged by members of the party itself—the very political instrument through which they seek to maintain their control over Polish society.

A Bureaucratic Leadership

Since the overturn of capitalism and the establishment of a workers state in Poland following World War II, the leadership of the Polish Communist Party has ruled in the name of the workers.

In actuality, however, it is the party of the privileged bureaucratic caste that feeds like a parasite on Poland's progressive property relations. Special material privileges, favoritism, and corruption became the rule for most party and government officials.

At the minimum, these included access to "yellow curtain" shops, where scarce goods unobtainable by most workers can be purchased. Disparities in income between factory managers and ordinary workers were quite large.

But it was the top officials who benefited the most. Through their control of the state apparatus, party leaders were able to divert goods and resources for their own enjoyment. While public hospitals or workers' housing were inadequate or rundown in many provinces, these officials were able to build posh homes and exclusive holiday resorts, often at government expense. As several recent corruption scandals have revealed, some even managed to siphon off millions of dollars into foreign bank accounts.

The maintenance of such extensive social inequities are incompatible with workers democracy. So to safeguard their privileges, the party leaders prevented workers from exercising any real decision-making powers, or even from expressing their opinions. The most basic democratic rights were violated. All key economic and political decisions were made exclusively by the top bureaucracy.

Zbigniew Iwanow, the first secretary of the party branch in the Towinor machine tool plant in Torun, put it this way:

Today they say that the factories belong to us, but that is not true. They are in the hands of the government. The government is led by a very limited group, not even by the entire Political Bureau of the party, but only some of its members. And they are the ones who make the decisions. Society as a whole has no influence, but it feels all the consequences of all their decisions.

This denial of workers democracy in the

country as a whole was naturally reflected within the party itself. Like other workers, rank-and-file members of the party had no say in determining the party's policies. All key posts were filled from the top, through mock elections in which candidates were carefully screened and often ran unopposed.

According to Ryszard Krasowski, the secretary of the party organization in the assembly section of the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk:

The party higher-ups just weren't interested in what we thought. Communication was all one way, with them telling us what to do. As far as ideological and propaganda work was concerned, our party cell just had to obey orders. The propaganda we were ordered to spread was nonsense. We didn't carry out half the instructions, but still we got the blame when things went wrong.

J. Ojrzanowski, a worker in the shipyard in Gdynia and a party member for thirty years, expressed similar views. "There was no way for the rank and file to go to the top," he said. "There was no initiative."

Such bureaucratic methods made the party increasingly unattractive to workers. While the size of the Polish working class has expanded considerably since the end of World War II, the proportion of party members listed as workers declined from 64.7 percent in 1946 to 39.6 percent in 1973 (the proportion of working farmers likewise declined, from 23.2 percent to 10.1 percent). In the meantime, the proportion of members from "white collar" or "other" backgrounds grew substantially; by 1973 they were just over half of the membership.

Today, some three-quarters of a million of the party's three million members are full-time functionaries, most of whom enjoy material privileges to one degree or another. They are the most conservative layer in the party, and they use their control of the party apparatus to help defend their social position.

According to Iwanow, "Most of them know that all the changes toward democratization of the party must result in the eventual removal and loss of their privileged position. This is what they are really fighting for, not the good of the party."

In its struggle to maintain its parasitic grip over Poland, this bureaucratic caste also rests on the direct backing of the Soviet bureaucracy, to which it remains politically subordinate. The policies of the PUWP leadership are often decided under the "guidance" of Moscow, and the Kremlin has repeatedly intervened directly in the affairs of the party when those policies strayed too far from what Poland's Soviet oppressors wanted. (In the late 1930s, for example, Stalin

dissolved the Polish Communist Party entirely and executed the majority of its key leaders. In 1956, Khrushchev threatened to invade Poland, but was forced to back down.)

Workers Shake the Party

There were periodic protests against the bureaucratic methods of the party leadership from the ranks, most notably the 1965 "Open Letter" to party members issued by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, two members from the University of Warsaw. But such protests were met with swift reprisals in order to intimidate the ranks as a whole. (Kuron and Modzelewski, for example, were expelled from the party and jailed.) As a result, discussion among the membership remained limited.

All this changed, however, with the outbreak in August 1980 of the most sustained and widespread strikes the country had ever seen.

Although the leadership of the PUWP was cut off from the workers, the ranks were not. Many, in fact, were themselves workers. They were thus inevitably attracted by the powerful example of working-class action unfolding in Gdansk, Szczecin, Warsaw, and other cities.

From the very beginning of the strikes, party members in the factories became involved, and some even took leadership roles. In the Towinor factory in Torun, for instance, most party members supported the strike and one became a delegate from the local strike committee to the Interfactory Strike Committee based at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk.

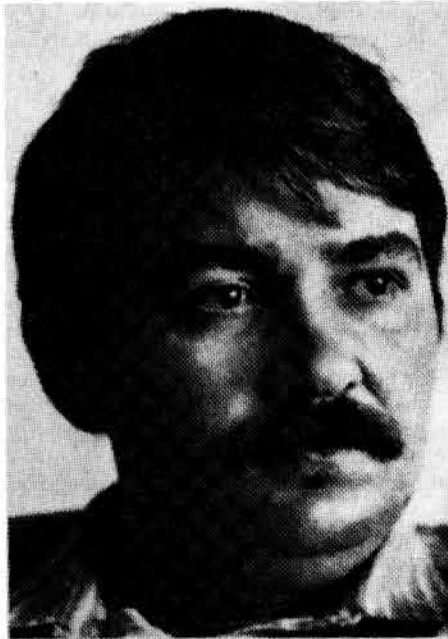
Even some members of the party who were not in the factories—journalists, professors, low-level functionaries—were drawn into supporting the demands of the workers. A declaration issued on August 21 in support of the strikers was signed by scores of prominent intellectuals, writers, and scholars, including PUWP members.

The victory of the workers in forcing the government to finally recognize Solidarity threw the PUWP leadership into a crisis. Some sectors of the party hierarchy reacted in desperation to Solidarity and sought to provoke confrontations with it. Others—while no less fearful of the workers upsurge—argued that it was necessary to adapt to a certain extent in order to retain some authority.

Following the official recognition of Solidarity, tens of thousands of PUWP members in factories around the country began to join the new independent union. Today, more than a third of the party's members also belong to Solidarity.

The Movement for 'Renewal'

Since the end of September 1980, nearly 140,000 party members have resigned in disgust over the policies of the leadership. Others, however, decided to wage a fight for democratic rights and social reform from within the party, taking as their model the



ZBIGNIEW IWANOW

rank-and-file democracy on which Solidarity is based.

The first signs of this movement came during the August strikes. According to a report in the August 24-25 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, "Meetings called by the party in factories and workplaces to discuss the situation turned into explosions of criticism."

On August 26, some 100 party activists signed a manifesto demanding greater decision-making power at lower levels of the party.

Following the ouster of Edward Gierk in early September 1980, the new party leadership of Stanislaw Kania sought to placate the rebellious workers and discontented party ranks through talk of a "renewal." Many officials who had gotten caught in particularly blatant instances of corruption or abuses of power were booted out of the party (more than 70,000 by April 1981).

Party members, however, were not content with new promises or a limited purge of the bureaucracy. They began to carry through their own renewal.

In Gdansk, Szczecin, Torun, Wroclaw, and other cities, the ranks of the party organized internal party elections on the factory level by direct, secret ballot. The officials who had earlier been chosen by the party leadership were removed from office and replaced by new rank-and-file leaders, some of whom had been active in the strike wave.

At the Towinor factory in Torun, Zbigniew Iwanow, who had been a leader of the strike in his plant, was elected first secretary of the factory party organization. He has called for a "thorough housecleaning throughout Poland" and has insisted that "the factories must have greater autonomy and the workers must be able to make the decisions."

For his radical views, Iwanow was ex-

pelled from the party by higher bodies, but was reelected to his position by the defiant ranks of the factory party organization.

In November 1980, a discussion document was presented to the party organization at the Fonica radio factory in Lodz, and subsequently was discussed in other party organizations in the region. The document pointed out:

They [the workers] are saying that the dictatorship of the proletariat should not be a dictatorship over the proletariat, that the broad masses' right to free expression must be guaranteed in law and in fact.

Up to now, the bureaucratic and bloated apparatuses running the state, the party, and the economy have imposed their arbitrary and subjective decisions upon the nation. We can no longer govern in this fashion. . . .

Today the party must be the motor force of the revolution and must take the lead in it. If it does not, it will end up in the dustbin of history. Therefore, it must act to carry out redistribution of personal income and private wealth.

In order to do this, the document proposed, the party had to be changed "from top to bottom." The party, it insisted, had to be based on the workers, "meaning above all representing the population that lives from wage labor: the working class and the intelligentsia."

The bourgeois press in the West, which often tries to distort what is going on in Poland in an effort to discredit socialism, frequently portrays such demands for democratization of the party as attacks on the Leninist concept of democratic centralism.

But what the demands actually aim for is the restoration of the rights to full democratic discussion within the party that was an inseparable aspect of Lenin's concept and that had been suppressed with the rise of Stalin and the bureaucratization of the Communist parties.

What the ranks of the party are saying is that without such discussion and without the right to freely choose a leadership in which they have confidence, the PUWP's "democratic centralism" is an empty shell, a cover for arbitrary decisions by an entrenched leadership that refuses to take into account the thinking of the membership or the interests of the working class.

The Bydgoszcz Crisis

The extent to which the party leadership's authority has been weakened among the ranks was dramatically revealed during the crisis provoked by the brutal police beating of a number of activists of Solidarity and Rural Solidarity (the farmers' union) in Bydgoszcz on March 19. Declaring the assault an attack on all workers and farmers, Solidarity called a four-hour "warning" strike on March 27. The protest strike was a complete success, drawing out millions of workers and paralyzing the country.

Despite a ruling from the PUWP tops a few days earlier forbidding all party members from participating in "political" strikes, an estimated 95 percent of those

who were members of Solidarity did so anyway.

"Party organizations in the country have demonstrated they want a clear answer to the present crisis," one party member said at the time. "They are demanding to know who is for 'renewal' and who is not."

Two days after the strike, a plenum opened in Warsaw of the Central Committee of the PUWP, which has some 140 members. The rifts within the party could hardly have been more glaring.

Kazimierz Barcikowski gave a report on behalf of the Political Bureau condemning supposed "anti-Communist tendencies" in Solidarity and branding the protest strike as "an open struggle against our party and state power, against socialism." But some members of the Central Committee, mostly representing factory or provincial party organizations, reflected the deep opposition within the party to the policies of the top leaders.

One, a committee member from the large aircraft factory in Mielec, got up and read his party organization's open letter to the leadership (see box).

Another, from a computer factory in Wrocław, explained why her party organization had decided to join the strike despite the leadership's ruling. Others blasted the leadership's bureaucratic methods, its detachment from the masses, and its failure to get rid of corrupt officials. Most insisted that the "renewal" had to be pushed forward. (See following document for excerpts from these speeches.)

Under the pressure of the ranks, the leadership of the PUWP finally agreed to con-

vene an extraordinary congress of the party July 14-18 (the regularly scheduled congress was not due until 1985).

Torun Conference

In preparation for the congress, rank-and-file organizations in different parts of the country began to establish closer links with each other, both to discuss their ideas and to press for as democratic a congress as possible. These groups call themselves "horizontal" structures, in contrast to the present "vertical" structure of the party, in which directives are handed from the top down.

On April 15, the first national conference of the movement was held in Torun, drawing 750 delegates from rank-and-file party organizations around the country. After singing the *Internationale*, the delegates stood up to express support for Solidarity, to demand democratization of the party, and to condemn the bureaucratic policies of the leadership.

"The authorities should not present the changes going on in our country as the work of antisocialist forces," declared Tadeusz Neckowicz, a delegate from Bydgoszcz, "but as a proper restoration of Marxist-Leninist principles."

The conference adopted resolutions calling for the expulsion from the Political Bureau of "those members who have lost the trust of the rank-and-file" and demanding the direct election of a new leadership at the upcoming congress.

Although the official Polish press relegated its coverage of the Torun conference to a few perfunctory reports, the April 21 issue of *Zycie Warszawy* carried a long article dis-

cussing the kinds of demands that are being raised by party organizations throughout Poland.

Since August 1980, Zbigniew Sufin reported, the PUWP Central Committee has received 455 resolutions, letters, and proposals concerning the "socialist renewal" from numerous party organizations.

Many of the demands related to reform of internal party life and the selection of delegates to the extraordinary congress. They called for new party statutes to provide for the direct election by the ranks of leaders at all levels of the party, secret elections of delegates to the congress, a limitation on the number of terms an individual can serve in a particular post, greater access to information, and the separation of government and party functions.

"It should be recognized that the function of the party is to serve the nation," declared one document. "Control over the activities of the party should be assured through the central aim of turning the party over to the ranks."

Some of the most common demands raised in the documents were for legal action against the officials responsible for the country's economic and political crisis and for the expulsion from the party of those who have been "compromised" or who have a "low moral or ideological level." One demanded the "liquidation of the foreign bank accounts of ministers and directors, as well as party leaders, who have enriched themselves at the expense of the people."

A full seventy of the letters and resolutions specifically demanded punishment for former party chief Edward Gierek and

'Democracy Is an Integral Part of Socialism'

[At the March 29-30 plenum of the PUWP Central Committee, Kazimiera Gromada, an alternate member of the Central Committee and a metalworker in the communications assembly section of the Mielec aircraft factory, got up to read an open letter to the plenum from the factory party organization. The following are the excerpts of the letter that were published in the March 30 issue of *Zycie Warszawy*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

In the difficult situation facing our country, a growing majority of people are becoming anxious, not only with concern about the future of the country, but also about the very survival of the nation. Unqualified people allow themselves the luxury of carrying out provocations against the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski. They try to manipulate public opinion. They seek to walk a tightrope in the face of a growing social storm.

Most members of the party's factory organizations in Rzeszow Province have expressed their direct support for General Jaruzelski's measures and general stance of seeking justice along a Polish path—through a socialist renewal of society and an economic revival of the country. At the same time, they express their regret that the leaders of the party are becoming detached from the masses; they cannot or do not want to understand them.

Democracy cannot be a gift from the leadership. It is an integral part of socialism, and belongs equally to everyone.

Socialism should not be for the benefit of an elite. It should not comprise the privileges of an exclusive ruling layer held together by narrow interests. Socialism means people's power, elected by the working class and representing its interests.

The party must be a revolutionary party, for that is the need of the moment. It must be revolutionary not through bloodshed, but in thought and action. It

must demonstrate good sense, but also determination. It must rid itself of fortuitous elements—those who have been compromised, who have violated the law, and who have squandered the dignity of the name "party member."

But it is already difficult to regain confidence in the organization. There are people at the highest levels of the party who have been able to maneuver for years, who have already survived many a crisis and renewal and still know how to applaud new ones.

We demand that the Ninth Plenum find a way out of the crisis, and avoid a confrontation from a position of strength. We also demand qualitative steps to purge the party's ranks, especially through the holding of democratic elections to all leadership positions, by developing a political program and carrying the extraordinary congress through to the end, and by bringing to trial and punishing in accordance with the law all those who are responsible for our country's economic and political crisis.

former Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz, both of whom have come under fire for corrupt practices and high living while they were in office.

The documents did not limit themselves to party affairs. They also discussed various aspects of the country's social and economic problems, including wage policies, rent levels, pension plans, and so forth.

Moscow Charges 'Revisionism'

The ferment within the ranks of the PUWP has alarmed the bureaucrats in the Kremlin, who fear that the revolutionary example of the Polish workers and rank-and-file party members could become contagious.

An April 25 Tass press agency report charged in a threatening manner, "Revisionist forces in the party are demanding reform of the party, abandonment of its present organizational structure and the creation, under the guise of so-called horizontal structures, of various unconstitutional forums that would replace the party's leading organs."

The purpose of these "revisionists," Tass claimed was to inspire "a campaign aimed at discrediting party workers, seeking to create difficulties between the various party bodies, between the Central Committee and the primary organizations."

But it has not been the positions of the rank-and-file activists of the PUWP that have discredited the party or created "difficulties" between the Central Committee and the local party organizations. It has been the actions of the PUWP leadership over more than three decades—often carried out under the direct "advice" of the Kremlin itself.

Rather than reflecting a "revisionist" current, the activists organized in the "horizontal" structures represent those elements in the party who are beginning to discuss aspects of a revolutionary alternative to the years of bureaucratic misrule of the current party leadership. As this process continues, the positions of authentic Marxism—not the caricature upheld by Moscow and the Polish authorities—will become increasingly attractive.

That is exactly what Moscow fears. Its attacks on the demands for democratic reforms within the PUWP are intended as a warning to these activists not to go too far, as well as to the current party leadership not to let them. The Soviet authorities are thus continuing their interference in the internal affairs of the Polish party, as they have done for so long.

Such constant interference is the reason why some activists in the PUWP have been raising direct demands for the party to be able to determine its own policies, without being subjected to outside meddling.

The document that circulated among the party organizations in Lodz proposed that the party become "independent, flowing from the experience, traditions, and history of the Polish nation."

Zbigniew Iwanow has stated, "If we could vote freely, I am absolutely certain we would have socialism in Poland. But it would be a *Polish* version of socialism."

In a similar vein, a party member in Gdansk was quoted as saying, "The Kremlin and the party leadership are faced with a choice. Either this remains a puppet party loyal to strict Soviet ideology but divorced from the population, or it becomes a real workers' party with mass public support."

Despite the pressures from Moscow, many leaders of the PUWP, including party chief Stanislaw Kania, have concluded that it is more prudent for the time being to make some concessions than to adopt an inflexible stance.

At an April 29-30 plenum of the Central Committee—coming just days after the Tass attack—Kania reiterated his promise to support the "renewal," both in society as a whole and within the party. "Without democracy," he said, "the party is empty and shallow." He praised Solidarity as "a workers' organization, comprising millions of people of goodwill, in which many hundreds of thousands of party members operate."

More significant than such fine-sounding phrases, however, was his failure to attack the "horizontal" bodies, as Moscow has done. In fact, he said that the "new forms of contact that have appeared in the last few months" were "generally positive."

Kania also endorsed changes in the party statutes to provide for the election of leaders by secret ballot, freedom of debate, and limitations on the term of office. Other concessions included permitting factory and university party organizations to directly elect their own delegates to the congress (comprising about half of the total number of delegates) and the placing of local control commissions—which hear charges of corruption and handle other internal party affairs—under the supervision of the local party organizations.

These are all important gains in the struggle of the rank-and-file party members. Besides strengthening their position for the congress, they help legitimize

discussion of further changes in the party and in Polish society.

Some leaders of the PUWP, however, are clearly hoping that they will be able to ride out the groundswell of demands by party members and obstruct the momentum of the new "horizontal" structures.

At the April 29-30 plenum, for instance, Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski proposed incorporating aspects of the rank-and-file movement, while rejecting others. Three Central Committee members, including one former member of the Political Bureau, Andrzej Werblan, went so far as to attend the conference in Torun.

Attempts to coopt and derail reform movements within the party are not new. In 1956, for example, Wladyslaw Gomulka, under tremendous pressure from workers and party members, promised extensive democratic reforms. But a few years later he turned around and suppressed most dissent and critical discussion.

The situation today, however, is quite different. For one thing, those who favor an end to bureaucratic rule have learned from the experiences of the past and are not relying on simple promises from the top.

But much more importantly, the mobilization of the Polish workers is qualitatively greater than in 1956, their political consciousness is higher, and they have their own independent organization—Solidarity—through which to defend their gains. The ranks of the party, particularly those who are members of Solidarity, are greatly strengthened by this mighty working-class movement.

As the July congress of the party approaches and the pre-congress discussion heats up further, the influence of this movement among the party ranks will become increasingly evident.

Together with Solidarity and Rural Solidarity, it has the potential to help sweep away the bureaucratic caste that governs the country. That will open the way for the Polish workers state to realize its full economic, social, and political potential and set it firmly on the path of workers democracy.

Don't miss a single issue of Intercontinental Press! Send for your subscription now!

- Enclosed is \$35 for a one-year subscription.
- Enclosed is \$17.50 for a six-month subscription.
- Enclosed is \$8.75 for a three-month subscription.
- Please send information about first-class and airmail rates.

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Country _____

Make checks payable to
Intercontinental Press
410 West Street
New York, N.Y. 10014 U.S.A.

Stormy Discussion at Polish Communist Party Plenum

[The following are excerpts from some of the speeches given during the March 29-30 plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). They are taken from the March 30 issue of *Zycie Warszawy*. The translations are by *Intercontinental Press*.

* * *

Janina Kostrzewska

Full member of the Central Committee and a shift foreman at the Mera-Elwro computer factory in Wrocław.

I take the floor on behalf of my party organization. The feeling of the workers at Elwro is that our country is on the edge of a precipice. There is increasing social anxiety, an abysmal state of consumer distribution, and—related to this discontent—growing resistance to the renewal, as seen in the frequent provocations. All this is surely pushing the country toward catastrophe.

The events taking place in the country, especially those in Bydgoszcz, are seen by people both within the party and outside of it as provocations against the nation and party, the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski—and against the working class. Our party organization considers the Bydgoszcz events as a clear infringement of the constitution, freedom, and civic rights.

My party organization participated in the Friday [March 27] strike, and members of the Executive served on the strike committee. We participated in the strike even though we knew we were breaking party discipline. We are part of the working class, and we will never go against that class.

We do not encourage strike action. However, the blame for the recent strike does not rest with the determined people who went on strike, but with those who brought them to such determination.

Kazimierz Cypryński

Alternate member of the Central Committee and first secretary of PUWP Provincial Committee in Szczecin.

To improve the functioning of the economy, it is essential to streamline the organization of production and to involve the energies of the whole people.

Since last year, however, the functioning of the economy has been getting worse and worse. I think that one of the main reasons for this is that after the end of the August [1980] strikes, we did not manage to end the crisis of confidence in our party. As a result, the party could not act at its full strength to mobilize the social and political life of the country.

It is crucial that we open our eyes: Month after month, the party is getting further out of touch with political events. The management and central control of the party is weakening. Distrust between rank-and-file members and party leaders is deepening. This negative phenomenon will not disappear by itself. It must be eliminated—and quickly. A central condition for the rebuilding of the party's ideological and political cohesion is to carry through the campaign of review and internal party elections, as well as to hold the Ninth Congress of the PUWP.

Indeed, the lack of clarity in defining the role and place of the trade unions in our existing socialist system is the basis on which misunderstanding—and thus tension and social conflict—arises. Such imprecision does not favor the development of mutual trust, especially between the people in authority and Solidarity. The ranks, finding that this state of affairs produces tension and disorientation in society, agree that the trade unions—irrespective of the existing trade-union laws—should define the areas of union activity. Since the trade unions recognize our principles of government, there is no reason for them to encounter difficulties in finding their place within our socialist system.

As another source of social conflict, there are people who, both knowingly and unknowingly, propagate hatred toward the party and socialist government and toward our state institutions. This is destructive. Therefore, we should continue to limit the strains on authority, as well as reinforce good sense and national concord.

It has been stated that people who are labelled as anticommunist are trying to act through Solidarity. But Solidarity has grown out of the protests of the working class against authority. Its actions are therefore seen as legitimate in the eyes of public opinion.

In order to see and appreciate the danger flowing from this stance, we must remember that Solidarity is, in the first place, the entire working class, a class that has learned through experience to struggle against anyone who abuses its confidence.

Albin Siwak

Alternate member of the Central Committee and a foreman at the East Warsaw Municipal Construction Enterprise.

In order to recover trust in the party, it is necessary to alter the party's program and methods of functioning and to complete the change of leadership.

The party is continuing to get weaker.

Many members and entire party organizations are disoriented. They have been deprived of a strategic orientation and disarmed by the blundering actions of the top echelons of the party. Our leading members do not have any conception of how to lead the party out of the crisis, but are engaged only in tactical maneuvering. Comrades in the leadership only trust each other. They don't have the ability to think and act in a modern way, in accordance with the needs of the present situation.

We are continually covering up for the top officials, citing reasons of state. Maybe this is just cowardice and incompetence.

Where is the conflict in the party going? Why do the top comrades avoid meeting with the party organizations in the provinces? Why don't they want to listen to those who are on the frontlines of the battle for the party?

The feeling in the party is that we cannot retain the confidence of society unless we quickly purge those who have discredited the party and abused their authority. The feeling among party members and people in general is that we have fallen short of the promises we made after last August that we would stand in the forefront of the renewal.

Unfortunately, all that has taken place over the past seven months may not affect the actions of the leadership in a positive way. Things are moving forward, and determination is needed. But if we cannot catch up with the present situation, then the fortunes of the party will only decline. This present plenum must make major decisions that will bring about radical improvements in the party's style and methods of functioning.

At present, a considerable part of the working class is against us, against the party leadership. The old slogans, methods, and activities are no longer accepted by anyone in the country. The party leadership must understand the real situation and change its approach. There is still time. There is still a party that is firm in so many things, that has the ability to help the government of Comrade Jaruzelski. But we demand determination and wisdom by the party leaders. They should stop sticking their heads in the sand.

On Saturday [March 28] at the Warsaw Polytechnic, a meeting of a section of the Warsaw organization decided to appeal directly to the Ninth Plenum of the PUWP Central Committee. We demand that the date for the convocation of the extraordinary congress of the party be set as soon as possible. We demand that the congress not be postponed and that there be no more delays

in the renewal process. Such delays only add to the emergence of political tensions, and may cause social disintegration and the disintegration of the party itself.

Ignacy Drabik

Full member of the Central Committee and a worker at the Predom-Mesko metallurgical factory in Skarzynsko-Kamienna, Kielce Province.

During the 1970s, the internal work of the party was weakened, while the bureaucracy consolidated itself. There was a lack of unity that affected the organization of propaganda and ideological work. At a time when the party and country are faced with a national catastrophe, the party has not seen how to act with dignity, on the basis of democratic centralism.

We must clearly state that there are many people holding various positions who simply want to hang on to them, without making an active commitment and at the expense of the working class. They are prepared to use force.

It is no accident that Solidarity activists have been able to turn to their advantage the threats and repressive actions by some of those in authority. Why push them to take desperate measures and to arouse the workers?

Such actions have affected a section of the party membership. They identify more with the positions of Solidarity than with those of the party. The strikes are a clear example of this.

Adam Baldys

Full member of the Central Committee and a miner and blasting instructor at the Czerwone-Zaglebie coal mine in Sosnowiec, Katowice Province.

Millions of people in Poland are extremely anxious. They have to stand in long lines to get food, matches, and other everyday necessities. They often ask: When will it end? That basic question has made me—along with other comrades—become aware of the fact that the problems of strikes are not being resolved.

Because of the great authority of and confidence in the prime minister, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, people expected things to change. Speaking simply, the government of Poland should govern, and it should use resolute means.

Besides the thousands of everyday questions about different things, I am very often asked when the self-flagellation within the party will end. When can we correctly say who is who, and thus restore the authority of the party and the confidence in the government?

We cannot make changes in personnel only after Solidarity has pointed them out. We have to do it ourselves. This task will often be thankless, and we have to show complete respect for our party activists. But in cases of abuse and violations of the law, we must be hard; we must act openly and without regard to position or rank. □

Falls in with Reagan's 'Strategic Offensive'

Honduran Military Threatens to Invade Nicaragua

Key sectors of the officer corps of the Honduran armed forces are behind recent attacks launched against Nicaragua by counterrevolutionary Somozaists operating from southern Honduras, a report in the May 5 *Washington Post* confirmed.

Writing from the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa, correspondent Christopher Dickey pointed to "deep divisions" among the military rulers there "as November elections for the first civilian government in more than a decade approach and economic problems worsen."

Citing "well-informed Army and political sources," Dickey said that "a group of militant commanders who might regard war—or the very near presence of it—as beneficial to their own interests and the nation's is steadily consolidating its power."

The *Post* reporter outlined a "scenario" being discussed by Honduran officers that dovetails ominously with projections for a "strategic offensive" against the Nicaraguan revolution offered last year by foreign-policy advisers to Ronald Reagan. (See *Intercontinental Press*, April 13, p. 352.)

According to Dickey, the Honduran regime "would wait for the already serious economic difficulties faced by the Sandinistas to grow worse. If, as is expected, Nicaragua experiences major food shortages during the summer and early fall, then widespread riots and discontent with the Sandinista government could be expected. In such a case the counterrevolutionary Nicaraguans could begin to take major initiatives and Honduras could support them logistically, and possibly tactically with air power, while avoiding a direct invasion. . . .

"A direct Honduran invasion of Nicaragua remains a distinct possibility, however, as Honduran military men have come to believe that Nicaragua presents a threat to all of Central America."

Honduras recently purchased sixteen British tanks. An army major told Dickey that these "could be especially effective in the relatively flat Guasaule area." Guasaule is a principal border crossing between the two countries; it was the site of a major attack by counterrevolutionaries on April 29.

The Reagan administration is stepping up arms aid to the military rulers in Tegucigalpa. Foreign military sales credits are to increase this year to \$5 million and to \$10 million in fiscal 1982, making Honduras the third largest recipient of U.S. military aid in Latin America after El Salvador and Colombia.

In condoning and encouraging the So-

mozaists and preparing for more direct moves against Nicaragua, the Honduran rulers and their sponsors in Washington are playing a very risky game.

"In my opinion," a former senior officer in Tegucigalpa told Dickey, "war with Nicaragua would be the end of the Honduran Army. In Nicaragua you have commanders who fought in the revolution and who have a kind of mystique about them. Here soldiers are rounded up into the Army from buses and movie houses and concerts. And you have a high command that would send them out to fight, then take off for Miami the minute things got bad." □

Mexico Reaffirms Support to Sandinista Regime

As military threats to the Nicaraguan revolution from the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Honduras continue to mount, President José López Portillo of Mexico has reiterated his government's commitment to maintain close ties and provide extensive aid to the Sandinista regime in Managua.

"Mexico will defend the cause of Nicaragua as its own," López Portillo declared on May 6, during an official visit to Mexico by Commander Daniel Ortega, coordinator of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction.

The Mexican president assailed Washington for "presenting Nicaragua as a passing domino in a vast plot to destroy Western democracy." He also expressed "deep worry" over recent attacks on Nicaragua by counterrevolutionaries operating with impunity from Honduran territory.

Ortega and López Portillo signed a series of agreements under which Mexico will increase its economic, commercial, technical and cultural assistance to Nicaragua. Such aid will reportedly total some \$200 million during the next two years.

One hundred twenty Mexican doctors arrived in Nicaragua in early May to help organize a huge vaccination campaign. "Blessed would be interventions if they were all like this across the globe," said Commander Ortega when he arrived in Mexico.

Ortega also warned while in Mexico that U.S. intervention in El Salvador was blocking "the efforts of those of us who support a political solution to the crisis" in that country. El Salvador's situation, Ortega said, is "not the result of East-West tension or of disputes over spheres of influence or the export of revolutionary models" but rather of "anachronistic structures of exploitation, underdevelopment and oppression that are ill native to this region."

New Attacks Against Abortion Rights in Italy

By Anna Libera

On May 17, Italians will vote on two referendums that challenge the gains for women embodied in law 194 concerning the termination of pregnancy. Law 194 was adopted in June 1978, following huge mobilizations of women who succeeded in drawing the large workers organizations to their cause.

In all there will be six referendums on the ballot on May 17. There are the two referendums on abortion (one sponsored by the Movement for Life and backed by the Catholic Church hierarchy and the other sponsored by the petty-bourgeois Radical Party), one referendum on bearing arms, another on life imprisonment, one on military courts, and one on the antiterrorist law. (In Italy, a referendum must propose the repeal of an existing law and in order for a referendum to be on the ballot, 500,000 signatures must be obtained.

Both abortion referendums represent an attack against a woman's basic right. But they should also be seen in the context of a more general attack by the Italian capitalist class and the employers against the gains won through workers struggles and mass movements over the last twelve years.

The first area in which this attack took place was on the issue of jobs, where we saw the disguised firings of thousands of FIAT autoworkers who technically were put on extended layoff. In this case too, women are the first who are affected, the first to be sent back to the home.

The second area of the employers' attack is the austerity policy, entailing cuts in public spending, especially spending for social needs and health-care. Here also, women are special targets of an attack that affects medical clinics, nurseries, and development of health centers where abortions can be performed.

The connection between these two areas of attack and the abortion rights issue is clear.

But the employers' offensive goes even further. In recent weeks there were proposals to limit the right to strike and proposals challenging the escalator clause for wages. The Italian capitalist class is certainly in no position to launch an all-out attack against the workers movement. Therefore it has launched these trial balloons and carries out probes on issues around which it thinks it may have some success—whether around the escalator clause, where the workers organizations have been shown to be “sensitive” to the capitalists' arguments, or in the case of abortion, where the capitalists attack the “weakest link”—the youth.

If the anti-abortion referendums are approved on May 17, not only would this be a serious defeat for women, but it would be a

signal to the capitalists that they can go on the offensive around other issues.

The Catholic Church to the Forefront

This is the reality and these are the stakes in the battle around the referendums.

The church is the central force in the attack. And we should not place the Movement for Life's referendum and the Radical Party's referendum on the same plane, either in terms of their content or in terms of the social forces that support them.

The referendum sponsored by the Movement for Life demands the repeal of all provisions in the law that allow abortions and would limit the possibility of terminating pregnancies only to cases where the mother's life would be in danger. It would mark a return to the legislative situation prevailing before Law 194 was adopted.

At the outset, the Catholic Church hierarchy was not caught up in this battle. Following Law 194's adoption, the Italian bishops conference was divided over what course to take. Certain bishops (Benneli and Siri) favored immediately conducting a referendum drive to repeal the law.

But a majority of the bishops refused to become directly involved in this fight. This was the section of the hierarchy most closely linked to the Christian Democracy. The Christian Democrats did not want such a confrontation at the same time that they were painfully engaged in building a governmental alliance with the Italian Socialist Party (SP), which favored abortion.

The bishops conference, however, left the door open when it declared that it was prepared to support any initiatives taken by others.

At the beginning, the Movement for Life had enormous difficulties gathering the 500,000 signatures that were needed. By mid-September 1980, only 100,000 signatures had been secured. The Catholic hierarchy, with the pope in the lead, then understood that a defeat for the Movement for Life would reflect on the entire anti-abortion front, and especially on the church.

In a speech at the end of September, the pope urged his entire flock, and especially all Catholic organizations, to join the fight. Within a few days, the church apparatus was able to make up for the Movement for Life's deficiencies by collecting the necessary signatures.

From then on, the entire church network was mobilized: 60,000 priests, 150,000 nuns, one million lay men and women who belong to Catholic organizations, 30,000 parishes, *Famiglia cristiana*—which is Italy's best-selling publication—and the main televi-

sion channel. This formidable instrument of propaganda was placed at the disposal of a fight that the Christian Democratic Party does not think it can presently carry out in its own name.

The Radical Party's Referendum

The motives of the Radical Party, which we should recall was one of the pioneers in the struggle for liberalized abortion, are completely different, even though it proposes repealing some of the same articles in the law as does the Movement for Life. But under the pretext of abolishing all the restrictions placed on the right to abortion, their referendum in reality worsens the situation of women.

The Radical Party's referendum calls for repealing Article Four of the law which specifies the different cases where abortion is authorized. But this clause, which allows virtually every woman who wants an abortion to have one, is not the clause that limits the application of the law. The limiting clause is the article concerning moral objections, about which the referendum says nothing.

At the same time, the Radical Party calls for eliminating Article Eight which stipulates that abortions must be performed in public health facilities. This article means not just that women must go to a public hospital, but also that the public health centers must respond to the woman's demand.

With the Radical Party's referendum, a situation could arise where doctors could refuse en masse to perform abortions in the public hospitals, in order to perform them at a higher price in the private clinics. This would mean a return to the dual market for abortion: abortions at sky-high prices in private clinics for those who can pay for them, or recourse to unsafe abortionists for those who cannot pay.

The Radical Party referendum therefore limits itself to stipulating the “right” to abortion, without saying anything about the conditions under which it would be carried out. The “right” to abortion would therefore be determined by a woman's ability to pay rather than by her wishes. Once again money would determine the law.

The result would be similar for minors. In calling for the repeal of Article Twelve concerning women under eighteen years old, the referendum throws minors back to the regular legislation, which demands parental authorization for any medical operation.

The meaning of the Radical Party's referendum didn't fool anyone. It was best revealed by the Radical Party leader Panella when he declared a little while ago, that if

people did not want to vote for the Radical Party's referendum, they should at least vote for the Movement for Life's referendum that would abolish all abortion legislation! It is not surprising that none of the pro-abortion forces support this referendum.

A Political Battle That Must Be Won

The important stakes, as well as the political situation in which this confrontation takes place, make this a central political battle. But precisely for this reason, the various political parties—who are too worried about maintaining their fragile balance—are reluctant to become deeply involved in the struggle.

The Christian Democracy is isolated on this issue, having the support only of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI). Its nonclerical allies in the government, and especially the Socialist Party, are in favor of Law 194 and are in a bloc with the Communist Party (CP) against repeal. It is easy to see the difficulties this creates for the Christian Democrats, accentuating the internal divisions that have come to light over the question of governmental alliances.

Certain sectors are again raising the idea of working out an agreement with the Communist Party. But we should not have any illusions. Even if the Christian Democrats do not throw themselves into the middle of the battle, they know they can count on the church apparatus to do their work for them.

The Christian Democrats' governmental allies are also in a difficult situation. While they want to defend Law 194, at the same time they are also for austerity measures and against a confrontation with the church and the Christian Democrats. This situation is especially pressing for the Italian Socialist Party. Certain sectors of the SP are very sensitive to the Communist Party's speeches about setting up a "democratic alternative" to the Forlani government and, in any case, they cannot understand why their party is not massively mobilizing to defend Law 194.

The situation is somewhat different for the Communist Party. The campaign against both referendums has allowed the CP to emerge from the isolation it has experienced over the last few months and to outline the "democratic alternative" it proposes. It is also clear that a defeat on May 17 would be much more serious for the Communist Party than for the other parties because it would be seen as such by all those sectors of the population that look to the CP. A defeat would undoubtedly provoke sharp discussions within the CP itself.

Thus the CP must do whatever it can to prevent the anti-abortion referendums from winning, while at the same time avoiding a heightened confrontation with the Christian Democrats that a mass movement against the referendums would undoubtedly stimulate. So the Communist Party mobilizes its entire electoral apparatus, but proposes no framework for mobilizing masses of women—not even its own women's organization—the Italian Women's Union (UDI).

It is particularly reticent to do this because it has seen that the slightest call to mobilize women gets a mass response, as the March 8 demonstrations revealed.

So, the CP has set up a "Committee of Parties to Defend Law 194," which it conceives of as a body to bring leaders together. In no way does it project broadening out this committee by building grass-roots committees in workplaces, communities, and regions.

The CP's policy is made much easier by the crisis in the women's movement that has existed for the past several years. This crisis has totally paralyzed the women's movement and threatens to keep it out of this struggle.

Paradoxically, the crisis in the women's movement developed just when it had won some significant victories—such as the abortion law and the law for equal rights for women on the job. This crisis is the result of the difficulties that many of the mass movements have experienced in the absence of any leadership willing to propose solutions encompassing the demands of all the sectors of the population that are in struggle.

The crisis was also compounded by the specific character of many of the feminist demands, which were difficult to translate into political terms. The movement was totally broken up into small circles, isolated from one another, sometimes even on a totally individual level where the women limited themselves to "living their feminism" individually. They left questions that require political solutions to the political parties and trade unions.

This is an illusory and especially dangerous situation. Recent history has shown that the gains women have won were a result of their own mobilizations and can only be defended by such mobilizations. The passivity of the women's movement gives a free hand to those parties that only defended women's rights when they were forced and coerced into doing so by women themselves and which, if left to themselves, would only defend those rights if they saw some advantages for their own partisan battles.

However, the lack of an organizational framework or any coordination or mobilization of women does not mean that women are not affected by the struggle being waged. Along with the atomized but real feminist movement, new sectors of women have been mobilized. There are the young high-school and college women, as well as women workers who are becoming active in their unions. These women do not consider themselves part of the women's movement as it existed, but are ready to mobilize to defend women's rights and the gains that have been won.

On March 8, these women came out in massive numbers: more than 40,000 in Rome, and tens of thousands throughout the rest of Italy, even in those areas that had been hit by the earthquake. In recent weeks, these women have also begun to mobilize against the two referendums, especially in the workplaces—getting resolutions passed

by their unions and organizing local committees to defend Law 194.

Defend Law 194 In Order to Improve It

The conditions are favorable for building a large, mass movement to defend the gains won as a result of the passage of Law 194 on abortion. The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the Italian section of the Fourth International, has made this campaign a priority for the entire organization in the present period. The LCR is aware of the stakes involved: the need to defend a woman's basic right, remobilize masses of women, and nip in the bud the capitalists' offensive in this area in order to improve conditions for struggling in other areas.

The LCR has put forward the need to defend Law 194 in order to make it better. In fact, the struggle to improve the law is an absolute prerequisite for defending its positive aspects. In order to combat the effects of moral opposition to abortion, it is important to fight together with the health-care workers' unions for the hiring of health-care workers who do not have moral objections to abortion, so that the law can be implemented.

In the same vein, only by struggling to extend the right of abortion to minors, can young high-school and college students be mobilized in massive numbers. Otherwise, they may not be as concerned about the struggle being waged.

In order to win a victory, women must be massively mobilized. This struggle could lead to the reemergence of a united women's movement, which the present struggle and the struggles yet to come show is needed more than ever.

The struggle against the anti-abortion referendums clearly spotlights the absurd situation that Italian working men and women are forced to put up with. They face a weak government, one that in recent months has been in a minority in parliament on every important question. And yet this weak government feels it can launch the heaviest attacks against the gains won by the workers—the right to a job, the right to strike, the escalator clause for wages, abortion.

The government is able to get away with this because the workers organizations give it a free hand, when they are not directly helping it. For example, the Socialist Party, which participates in this government, is the principal accomplice in the antiworker attacks.

The Communist Party, which uses every opportunity to call for a new government, does nothing to make the old one fall.

The struggle against the two referendums, however, provides a good opportunity for this. For in order to defend the gains won by the workers, it is necessary to struggle against the government that is launching these attacks. □



Marxism and the U.S. Labor Movement

Reviewed by David Frankel

Since its earliest days, the working-class movement in the United States has faced three great tasks. These tasks, which continue to confront American labor today are:

- The struggle for the economic organization of the working class into trade unions, and for organization along industrial rather than craft lines.

Although the American working class took a gigantic step forward with the establishment of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) during the 1930s, it has by no means solved the problem of economic organization. In fact, the percentage of unionized workers—always a minority—has been declining in recent years, and or-

Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S., the Early Years, 1848-1917, by Farrell Dobbs, (New York: Monad Press, 1980). 221 pp. \$5.45 paper.

ganization of the unorganized has today taken on a new urgency with the intensification of the capitalist offensive.

- The fight for political and social consciousness and action by the workers movement. This is summed up by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as the need for the working class to think socially and act politically.

- The struggle for the independent political organization of the working class—for a labor party that would fight for the interests of the workers and their allies against those of the ruling capitalist minority.

As Farrell Dobbs explains in the introduction to his latest book, the political process of coming to understand these three tasks, and of figuring out how to advance their realization, has been at the center of the efforts of the Marxist wing of the U.S. labor movement to build a revolutionary proletarian party capable of leading the fight to end capitalist rule.

Drawing the Political Lessons

Dobbs is particularly well-suited to write on the development of Marxist leadership in the United States, since his own life has been so much a part of that process. Through his experiences in the labor movement Dobbs joined the revolutionary socialist movement in 1934. He was a central leader of the Minneapolis Teamster strikes that helped pave the way for the rise of the CIO, and he served as national secretary of the SWP from 1953 to 1972.

In his introduction, Dobbs calls this first volume in his history of revolutionary Marxism in the United States “a sketch of the revolutionary continuity” from which that history stems.

And Dobbs does give a bare-bones sketch of the American working-class movement from 1848 to 1917. There are not a lot of quotations from the participants. There is not a lot of historical color, a lot of anecdotes. What comes through is the politics.

The fact is that this is the only attempt by a major leader of the American socialist movement to go back and systematically draw the main political lessons from the history of the workers movement in the United States.

Dobbs briefly reviews the objective factors that shaped the U.S. labor movement in the nineteenth century. The development of a hereditary proletariat in the United States was retarded by the availability of free land in the West and the continuous flood of immigrant labor from Europe.

Chattel slavery and the division between Black labor and white labor that was perpetuated following the defeat of radical reconstruction in 1877 were also key objective factors.

These obstacles to the development of working-class consciousness cannot be underestimated. As Dobbs notes, with the bloody defeat of radical reconstruction “not only Afro-Americans but the entire working class had suffered the worst setback in its history.”

The Crisis of Leadership

Despite these objective difficulties, there were repeated attempts by important sectors of the working class to organize an independent political party. These attempts failed to produce an enduring mass party of labor not only because of the objective difficulties, but also because of the crisis of leadership within the working class.

The gulf between the objective tasks facing the labor movement and the capacities of the existing leadership became especially glaring in the period following the radicalization of the 1890s. Extensive labor struggles and the development of a mass socialist movement provided the objective basis for the working class to make big gains. But the leadership that could take advantage of this situation did not exist.

Insofar as the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) or Daniel De Leon attempted to intervene in

the class struggle beyond propagandizing for socialism in general, its sterile sectarianism repeatedly set back the development of the labor movement.

On another front, the establishment of the Social Democratic Party of America in 1898 (later to become the Socialist Party) drew together an important core of class-struggle militants under the leadership of Eugene V. Debs. But Debs saw no need to build a mass labor party based on the trade unions. He thought that the Socialist Party could serve as the vehicle for independent political action by the masses of workers.

At the same time that he failed to see the need for a labor party that could unite the broad masses of workers on the political arena, Debs also did not see any need for a revolutionary party based on a clear Marxist program.

As Dobbs explains, the left wing of the Socialist Party, led by Debs, “had a class-struggle outlook.” It “understood that the workers had to take political power nationally in order to carry through a revolutionary transformation of society. The left wing assumed, however, that nothing more was involved than gaining control of the existing governmental apparatus through the electoral process.”

Debs's view of the party flowed from this perspective. He saw it as an instrument for socialist propaganda, and as a vehicle for mobilizing the workers, not as a combat party in the Leninist sense.

Anarcho-syndicalism

Finally, Debs and the left-wing socialists who looked to him were also strongly influenced by anarcho-syndicalism. In January 1905 Debs joined with De Leon and William D. Haywood in founding the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The IWW was marked by syndicalism from the beginning. It assigned the role of leading the struggle against capitalism not to a political party, but to revolutionary industrial unions, which it set out to organize.

Big layers of the working class were being forced into militant struggles around basic trade-union issues in this period. But the syndicalists, Dobbs explained, “conducted themselves as though the very fact of a strike implied rejection of the capitalist system by the union ranks. They sought to promote an uninterrupted struggle with the boss class and were against signing union contracts with employers.”

Even when reality forced them to accept compromises with the bosses, "the IWW organizers failed to follow through with day-to-day enforcement of the strike settlement and with continued guidance of the workers in maintaining a stable organization."

Another side of the IWW's ultraleft and sectarian approach was that it turned its back on the existing trade union movement, organized in the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The class-collaborationist AFL leadership was being subjected to increasing pressure from the ranks, but the revolutionary wing of the labor movement defaulted on its obligation to provide leadership for this fight.

Disastrous Results

The policies followed by the IWW, the SLP, and the left wing of the Socialist Party proved disastrous.

No labor party was built—the leadership did not see the need for such a formation and did not try to bring one about.

Promising opportunities for the organization of industrial unions came to naught because the IWW did not distinguish between the task of building trade unions and the task of building a revolutionary party.

Since no section of the revolutionary left saw the need for a proletarian revolutionary party based on a clear Marxist program, no such party developed. Certainly the objective conditions did not make building such a party in the United States more difficult than in tsarist Russia, for example.

By the time World War I broke out the socialist movement in the United States had reached an impasse. Although leaders such as Debs and Haywood courageously opposed the imperialist war, they could offer no revolutionary perspective on how to fight it.

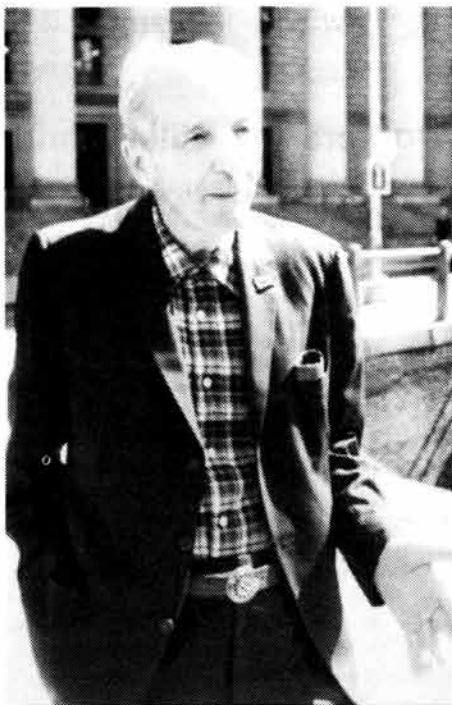
The Test of War

Once again, the problem was not that objective possibilities for effective action were lacking. There was massive opposition to U.S. entry into the war, and Woodrow Wilson was even re-elected president in 1916 under the slogan, "He kept us out of war."

What was lacking was leadership that could mobilize this sentiment against the war plans of the rulers. As Wilson moved toward entry into the war, the majority in the Socialist Party retreated more and more from any confrontation with the government. Debs's previous refusal to fight within the party for a Marxist program had left him and the other left-wingers in a minority.

Furthermore, even if Debs had been in the majority, the program he advanced would not have been effective.

As Dobbs explains, Debs "still clung to the concept of acting solely within the confines of the capitalist-rigged electoral system. Debs did not appear to perceive that the war posed in sharpest form the need to project a revolutionary course toward the seizure of power by the workers and their allies; for his programmatic outlook on the war issue did not extend beyond urging continued pro-



FARRELL DOBBS

tests against militarism."

In practice, the Socialist Party left wing focused on encouraging individual resistance to conscription, a stance that was the same as that of the petty-bourgeois pacifist movement.

There was no revolutionary Marxist leadership in the U.S. labor movement capable of charting an alternative course. The initiative that would enable the working-class movement in the United States to break out of its crisis and move forward was to come from tsarist Russia.

Lenin's Concept of the Combat Party

The decisive event that opened new perspectives for the socialist movement around the world was, of course, the October 1917 revolution in Russia. A key lesson of that revolution was the need for a revolutionary combat party such as the one built by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Dobbs points out that Debs's concept of the party as an all-inclusive formation embracing socialists with diverse—and even contradictory—views on basic programmatic questions was prevalent throughout the Second International in the period leading up to World War I.

"As later events were to show," Dobbs says, "this was an overall prescription for a disoriented, amorphous, vacillatory movement utterly incapable of leading decisive proletarian action when the hour struck."

Lenin counterposed a politically homogeneous party based on Marxist principles. Such a party could democratically discuss and decide questions of strategy and tactics, and then implement its decision in a united way because of its political homogeneity and firm roots in the working class.

Lenin's concept of party organization led to a split in the Russian Social Democratic Party in 1903. At that time Leon Trotsky favored retention of an all-inclusive formation. Later, Dobbs notes, Trotsky "established a centrist current around the particular issue of advocating reunification of the warring factions in a single party. Trotsky did not entirely shed this centrist stance until the opening of the Russian revolution in early 1917."

Trotsky Becomes a Leninist

Trotsky's evolution toward Lenin's idea of the party was influenced by two key factors. First of all, there was the experience of World War I, in which Lenin and Trotsky found themselves fighting together against the reformist and centrist currents in the Second International.

Not only did Trotsky see how the Bolsheviks stood firm in their opposition to the imperialist war, he also saw how the worker members of the party, which constituted its mass base, had played a decisive role in the overthrow of the tsarist regime in February 1917.

In the period that followed the overthrow of the tsar, Lenin and Trotsky agreed on the basic tasks facing the Russian working class. "The political basis for this agreement," Dobbs remarks, "had been laid twelve years earlier following the defeat of the 1905 revolution in Russia. Whereas the events of 1905 deepened the Mensheviks' conviction that the liberal bourgeoisie must be at the helm of the revolution, Lenin and Trotsky drew the opposite conclusion. They both argued that the working class, in alliance with the peasantry, would be the leading force. . . ."

Although the Bolshevik leaders inside Russia initially adopted a conciliatory stance toward the bourgeois Provisional Government installed after the overthrow of the tsar, Lenin was able to correct this political orientation following his return from exile without having to carry out a struggle against a large class-collaborationist wing of an all-inclusive party.

As Dobbs points out, "Lenin had already won a majority on the key questions under dispute in the Bolshevik leadership when Trotsky arrived back from exile in May, a month after Lenin."

Clearly, the events had vindicated Lenin's fifteen-year fight for a politically homogeneous combat party.

The Bolsheviks in Power

By leading the working class and its allies to governmental power, the Bolsheviks laid the basis to build the world's first workers state. Dobbs explains:

"Although the October insurrection ended capitalist use of the government against the workers, it did not follow that they could achieve full economic supremacy in one stroke. More was involved than the seizure of capitalist industry by the soviet regime. For this step to become practical, the

workers first needed to gain experience in administering the national economy while most factories remained temporarily capitalist owned.

"To carry out the desired measures in the industrial sphere, Lenin explained, revolutionary democracy had to be applied so the masses could develop confidence in their own strength. In addition to their other functions, the trade unions had to become schools for managing the economy. The workers had to be schooled in the art of administration in handling overall management of production and distribution."

In a process similar to the one being carried out by the Sandinista government in Nicaragua today, the Bolsheviks established workers control over the capitalist-owned industries. "Committees elected by the workers in these enterprises were authorized to keep a constant eye on company books, records, inventories, etc.; ferret out secrets kept from them by the bosses; and see that all operations were conducted in the public interest."

If the Bolsheviks had been able to carry out the economic transformation at their own pace, they would have moved gradually in order to minimize economic dislocation and gain the maximum time for the working class to familiarize itself with the tasks of economic management.

But the workers and farmers government was denied this desperately needed respite. Under the pressure of imperialist intervention, civil war, and economic sabotage by the bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks were forced to step up the rate of nationalization.

By the end of 1918, Dobbs notes, "almost every capitalist enterprise of decisive economic importance had been nationalized and placed under administration of the workers, who schooled themselves for the task at a forced pace.

"With this step bourgeois property relations were definitively abolished."

Since the Russian revolution, the entire history of the working-class movement in the United States—and throughout the world—has revolved around the attempts of Marxist leaders to assimilate the lessons of Bolshevism and to apply these lessons to their own circumstances. That will be the subject of future volumes in Dobbs's history of Marxist leadership in the United States. □

Attention Foreign Airmail Subscribers:

Due to a 60-to-80-percent increase in U.S. airmail postage rates, we have decided to ship your subscription a more economical way. It will now be first air cargoed to Amsterdam, arriving every Thursday, and then mailed out from there. You can expect a three-to-five day delivery time from Amsterdam.

Interview With Iranian Socialist

'Workers Are Still Fighting for Their Demands'

[The following interview with a member of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) appeared in the April 2 issue of the British weekly *Socialist Challenge*. The HKS is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.]

* * *

Question. What was the effect of the war with Iraq on the Iranian workers?

Answer. The war was a gift for the capitalists. Nationalistic feeling increased dramatically. At first the people were enthusiastic to go to the front and fight since they saw the war as an imperialist threat to their revolution.

The Islamic Republican Party (IRP), which represents the hard-line religious wing of the capitalists, set up its own reactionary militias—the "revolutionary guards," the "Crusade for Reconstruction" and so on.

Bani Sadr, who leads the "liberal" wing of the capitalists, has tried hard to build himself a base in the army—with some success among the more junior officers.

We didn't see the war as a directly organized imperialist intervention, but the imperialists certainly stood to gain from the defeat of Iran.

Some people took an abstentionist position, but we argued differently. Under the Shah, Iran was the gendarme of the region for imperialism, but now the situation is completely different.

Although previously the mass of the people had illusions in Khomeini, these are rapidly being dispelled as the economic crisis gets worse. But at this stage they see Bani Sadr as the alternative.

Working class mobilisation and struggle is still continuing. During the anti-Shah revolution the demands of the masses were mainly economic. Now they are fighting for democratic rights.

Q. What position did the HKS take on participation in the war?

A. Our line was to demand of the government that they arm the people to fight Saddam Hussein and the Baathists in Iraq—the reactionary army couldn't defend the revolution.

The government constructed ideological "tests" for those trying to get into the army. But despite this, quite a number of revolutionaries went to the front—especially the Mujahadeen. Many of them were arrested and harassed by the Islamic zealots of the regime.

Q. What is the state of workers' self-organisation? Do the workers' committees still exist

in the factories?

A. Before and during the revolution strike committees were set up in the factories around the fight for the 8-hour day, and better wages and conditions. Often these demands were won.

After the revolution many of these turned into genuine workers' councils. In some factories they even locked up the management and ran the factories themselves. The Islamic Republican Party began a campaign for "Islamicisation," that under Islamic law workers couldn't run factories.

Bit by bit the IRP dismantled many of the councils and replaced them with Islamic councils which work hand in hand with management.

But workers are still fighting for their demands, and in many places people are demanding new elections to the factory councils to replace the "Islamic" delegates. Our position is for the regeneration of the councils, leading to regional councils and a united national workers' council.

A good example of continuing workers' militancy has been the series of struggles over the new year bonuses. Under the Shah workers were paid bonuses over the Islamic new year. Workers realised that these weren't real bonuses—they relied on them as an integral part of their income.

This year the government said that they couldn't afford any bonuses. But the workers are saying: "Why should we pay for the crisis?"

The Tehran bus drivers went on strike, but the government brought in 5,000 drivers from the army and the front to defeat them. But many workers in the factories won the demand to be paid their bonuses.

Q. What is the state of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination?

A. The Kurds have had effective autonomy since the time of the revolution, despite the government's furious military attacks on them. The Kurds have taken an abstentionist line on the war, which we think is wrong.

We advocated that they demand a ceasefire from the central government and propose a joint fight against the Baathists. The Kurds are far from defeated. They are still at the heart of the Iranian revolution.

Q. What is the situation of women in Iran now?

A. The veil is the least of our problems. The IRP is trying to push through very reactionary measures against women. One is called "ghassas," Islamic punishment.

If a man kills a woman, all he has to do is pay the "price" of her blood to the family.

And women can't be called as witnesses for a murder trial.

The second thing is the institution of "temporary marriage." After the revolution the "red light" areas were demolished—prostitution was "against Islam." But now men can go to a "temporary marriage" centre.

There are other important battles women are fighting like the right of inheritance, for equal wages and nurseries.

Q. What about the forces of the left?

A. The most important force on the left is the Mujahadeen—they have been in the forefront of fighting for democratic rights

and against reaction. They have mass support in the big cities. The problem with them is that they are uncritical of Bani Sadr.

When Bani Sadr raises the demand for democratic rights, then we support that. But we shouldn't forget that he represents another wing of the capitalist class. The IRP is holding a revolver against us, but Bani Sadr is waiting in the wings with a cup of poison.

That's why the HKS says that the fight for democratic rights can't be dependent on any section of the capitalists, but must be fought for by the unity and independence of the workers. □

Interview With Iranian Soldier

'Iraqi Forces Must Be Defeated'

[The following are excerpts from an interview conducted April 7, 1981, with an Iranian soldier stationed in Ilam, in western Iran. It appeared in the April 20 issue of *Kargar*, newspaper of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International. The translation is by the HKE.]

* * *

Question. Can you tell us about your arrival at the front and your observations there?

Answer. I was drafted into the army and arrived at Ilam on September 19, 1980. At first we were on the outskirts of Ilam, around Maimak, a strategically important mountain town. After three months, I was sent to the outskirts of Mehran where I have been ever since.

Due to the mountainous nature of the area, there has been no drive forward. We have taken one or two hills, but due to the mountainous situation, we cannot use any artillery.

The biggest problem is the lack of a unified command. There is no coordination between the forces at the front and the backup forces. Right now there is a lull in the fighting. But all the men at the front would like to go into battle and defeat the Iraqis. The basic problem is the lack of coordination among the fighting groups at the front.

For example, on the anniversary of the revolution [February 11], the army was supposed to launch an all-out attack. But they kept delaying it. The Pasdaran [Revolutionary Guards] could not accept the army's passivity. And for four or five days this issue was a bone of contention between the army officers and the Pasdaran.

Finally, the Pasdaran said we will attack with or without the army's backing. So the Pasdaran launched a surprise attack from behind the Iraqi lines. Although they were few in number and lacking in equipment,

they took back four or five strategically important hills.

What was clear to all was that if the army had backed up the offensive, or at least coordinated with it, or even sent one offensive division (about 100 soldiers), then all those positions which were retaken at such high costs would have stayed in our hands.

But there was no army backup, no units arrived, and no soldiers arrived. The Pasdaran held out for awhile, but with the Iraqis' constant attacks, they had to retreat and suffered heavy casualties.

Q. What other forces are at the Ilam front besides the army and the Pasdaran?

A. First there is the Bassigh [the mobilized militias] made up of volunteers from the town of Mehran. Youths from Ilam have also volunteered and take part in much of the action. They know the area very well and they have very high morale. Wherever you go, you see them.

The Jihad for Reconstruction is the other component. They do all kinds of things, such as repairing army automobiles and vehicles, and building roads. They have put construction materials and bulldozers at the disposal of the army. And the mountain passes they have cleared play an important role in the operation.

There are also workers from factory militias in the area. Right now there is a group of volunteer workers from the automobile factory in Arak, who are working for a month with the Jihad in building a bridge over a river so food and equipment can be brought in.

The other component is the Western Tribes militia, who have very close working relations with the troops at the front. They are especially useful in the mountain areas because they know the passes and mountains of the region perfectly. In attacks and

reconnaissance operations their help is very useful.

All these forces at the front are anxious to make advances and win the war. But due to the lack of coordination that I mentioned before, many resources are left unused and a lot of energy goes to waste.

For example, we had to build a road for tanks to go over. There was a lot of pressure to finish this road for the planned attack. But the roadwork has been completed for three months now and tanks can easily roll through and shell the enemy positions. But they have not moved an inch.

Also, we do not have access to a lot of needed equipment. When we were training in the barracks, they would give us all the equipment. But in the front, we don't get to use any of it.

Q. How is morale after the Iraqi aggression?

A. In our region, the closest city is Ilam. Although Ilam has been bombarded time after time, and has come under rocket attack, the whole population has remained. They have not left the city.

We were in the city the day after the first rocket attack. People had gone on a demonstration and were chanting, "No compromise with Saddam!" [Iraqi President Saddam Hussein]. We really admired the morale of the people.

But the problems in the rear and the disputes among the government officials reflect themselves at the front in a worsening of the fighters' morale. Talking to fighters at the front, they all think that our main problem is the war and that we should organize all our forces and coordinate them in order to be victorious.

Even on the question of peace, most fighters at the front would under no circumstances accept peace as it has been proposed. What they say is that the Iraqi regime is only resorting to peace negotiations now because it has been so weakened, and that the regimes friendly to Iraq have realized that Iraq is incapable of doing anything and cannot strike at our revolution.

There is a similar feeling among soldiers in the army. Most soldiers believe that Iraq must be defeated and that the only way for peace to come about is by the military defeat of Iraq.

But there is a different feeling in the higher ranks of the military—among the officers and higher ranking personnel. All of them sit waiting for the peace negotiations and because of this there is a lull at the war front.

If we had an organized commanding staff, made up of representatives of the Pasdaran, the army, the soldiers, the militias, and the Jihad, (in short, all the representatives of the forces active at the front), we would surely have a speedy success. □

You won't miss a single issue if you subscribe.

Defend the Political Revolution in Poland!

[The following declaration was issued April 3 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

More than 200,000 troops are still on maneuvers in Poland. *Pravda*, the Soviet bureaucracy's central organ, is now directly attacking leaders of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). In a dispatch from the Polish capital, *Pravda* explained that "the party organizations in Warsaw have not mounted any ideological response to the oppositionists."

In addition, the PUWP leaders have clearly stated their view of what is at stake. In a report to the March 29, 1981 PUWP Central Committee plenum on the general strike projected by Solidarity, the reporter from the Political Bureau explained that "what we are seeing is no longer pressure on the government, but an open struggle against our party, the state, and socialism—it is already a struggle for power."

Confronted by a mass revolt, which is now also being taken up by an opposition movement within the PUWP itself, the Polish bureaucracy has less and less control over the situation. It will take advantage of any temporary weakening of the mass movement, any hesitation by the movement's leaders, to carry out its attempt to "reverse the course of events," as the Kremlin has asked it to do. Therefore the workers movement in Poland and throughout the world must prepare for a confrontation with the bureaucracy.

Safeguard Workers Unity, Extend Democracy Within the Movement

The fact that the call for a March 31 general strike was suspended by Solidarity's negotiating team, without consultation with the National Coordinating Commission (KKP), opened up a crisis within the union. The threat of a split in the movement has surfaced at the very moment when the union has the greatest need for unity to oppose the bureaucracy's maneuvers.

The only way Solidarity can emerge strengthened from this crisis is through a broad and democratic discussion on the current tasks and a clear demarcation of the role of its leaders.

Within this context, there must be a clear definition of the prerogatives of a national leadership, a leadership elected after such a discussion and composed, in its majority, of activists who agree with the decisions. In particular, the practice of secret negotiations must be done away with, as in the August 1980 strike.

In regard to the use of experts, they must be clearly at the service of the union: because they are not elected and not mandat-

ed, they cannot at any time substitute for the trade-union bodies. They cannot make contact with representatives of the authorities unless they have a mandate from the union. If they go beyond these prerogatives, it must be made clear that Solidarity will place no trust in them.

Strengthening Solidarity also means fighting to see that it grows in those areas where it still has a weak presence, for example among government workers. It means fighting for the right of all state employees to join unions, especially soldiers and members of the militia. It means supporting Rural Solidarity's fight for registration.

The Best Way to Avoid the Confrontation Is to Prepare For It

Today Solidarity encompasses the immense majority of the Polish working class, and it represents a hope for a large segment of other social layers. It is, therefore, a mortal threat to the bureaucracy. If necessary, the bureaucracy would not hesitate to use the Kremlin's help in breaking the union.

Preparing for the possibility of an armed invasion, which no one on the workers' side could wish for, involves opening up a discussion in Solidarity on the concrete ways to oppose intervention, carrying out the discussion from the ranks up, in all the factories and regions as well as on the national level.

It means asserting that the 10 million Solidarity members are ready to defend the gains of August 1980 by whatever means, including a general strike with occupation of the factories and the stoppage of all public services. It means vigorously reacting against any repression; against any arrest of national, regional, and local leaders, cadres, or militants. It means reactions against any constraints on the free functioning of the unions or on the free election of their leaders by the members and only the members.

Develop and Strengthen International Solidarity

The surest ally of the Polish workers is the international workers movement. It has shown this by lining up on their side since the beginning of the struggle in Poland.

Today, faced with the growing threats to Solidarity's gains, including threats to its very existence as a united union that is independent of the state power, the workers of all countries must intensify their support to Solidarity. Their interests are the same as those of the Polish workers: to build a society run by the producers themselves, meaning to build socialism.

The Fourth International calls on all workers organizations, parties, unions, and associations to develop and increase workers solidarity with Solidarity! Their

victory will be your victory! If they were crushed it would be a grave defeat for all of us!

We must forcefully reject and publicly brand as a slander the pretext now being used by representatives of the bureaucracy to justify military intervention in Poland: the supposed "threats" that Solidarity poses to socialism and to people's power in Poland. Nothing could be further from the truth. Solidarity represents the overwhelming majority of the wage workers in Poland. The independent, democratically controlled union and its members have clearly come out for retaining collective ownership of the means of production, of all the basic elements of the economic system in force in Poland. Moreover, they have stated on innumerable occasions that they are for the consolidation of the worker-farmer alliance, the basis of people's power in Poland.

Under these conditions, those who assert that Solidarity's agitation is "antisocialist" are identifying socialism not with the abolition of capitalist property, not with the abolition of the bourgeoisie's political power, not with the leading role of the working class in the economy and the state, but exclusively with the bureaucracy's monopoly of power!

The Polish authorities are trying to blackmail the Polish workers. They are using the economic difficulties that they themselves are responsible for to tell the workers: "If you go on strike there will be famine in the country. If you go on strike we will not be able to pay our debts and foreign food aid will stop." The Western capitalist governments provide support to this blackmail. The workers movement must take up the challenge by demanding: *an immediate moratorium on the Polish foreign debt and debt service! No use of famine as blackmail against the Polish workers! Unconditional food aid!*

The Polish bureaucracy is trying to deprive the union of the resources needed to function. The union still does not have access to the official media. It has very few material means to be able to counter the lying statements of the government-censored media.

The bureaucracy is also trying to cut Solidarity off from the world workers movement, to prevent the Polish workers from being able to absorb the lessons of the experiences that the world workers movement has gained in decades of struggle. The world workers movement can, and must, stand up to that by developing direct factory-to-factory contacts, direct region-to-region contacts, direct ties between their trade-union branches and Polish union branches, using these contacts to provide the Polish workers with the material aid they need, especially printing supplies.

In face of the threats of repression against the Polish workers movement, the workers organizations around the world must immediately make a commitment. They must warn those who are ready to resort to repres-

sion that they will intensify their support to the Polish workers if those workers are forced to move to open struggle, that the international workers movement will defend the Polish political revolution, as it has defended the Russian revolution, the Spanish revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, as it

is defending the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions.

Hands off the Polish workers! For a united front of all the workers organizations on the side of the antibureaucratic revolution in Poland! □

Solidarity With Irish Hunger Strikers!

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

* * *

Bobby Sands's election is a tremendous victory for the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland. Despite efforts by the capitalist press to brand Sands and the other republican prisoners as "criminals and terrorists" the vast majority of the oppressed national-ist population has shown that they recognized the prisoners as fighters against British occupation of the Six Counties of the North of Ireland.

The victory has thrown the British government into confusion. For the last twelve years Britain failed to impose its solutions in the Six Counties. Now they are faced with a republican prisoner on a hunger strike elected to the British Parliament in an unprecedented show of mass opposition to their rule. Continual rioting in the streets of Derry and Belfast shows how explosive the situation has become.

The campaign in support of the prisoners has won important backing. The day of action in December called by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee resulted in virtual shutdowns in many areas in the North and important solidarity actions in the South led by rank-and-file workers. For the

first time since 1968 young people have organized themselves in the campaign as "Youth Against H-Block Committees." The women's movement has been drawn into the campaign through highlighting the case of the women prisoners in Armagh. The anti-imperialist movement has remobilized and regained its confidence. The task of creating a new leadership for the Irish working-class movement has become more and more urgent in this context.

The Tory government in Britain continues with its callous and intransigent stance. Yet they are forced to look for new allies for imperialism in Ireland. The Unionists in the North have shown that they are not prepared to go along with Britain in achieving stability in the Six Counties unless their privileged position is retained intact. The Tory government has been forced to look to the Dublin government for their allies.

Charles Haughey, prime minister in Dublin and leader of the ruling Fianna Fáil party in Ireland, supposedly the pronationalist of the two main parties, has stepped up cooperation on the "security" of the border. Despite the outspoken statements of some of the members of his party, most notably Sile De Valera, in support of the prisoners, Haughey has refused to openly call on the British government to grant their demands.

The imminence of an election in the South creates difficulties for Haughey. He cannot go to the country on the back of dead prisoners. His apparent success in forcing Britain into talks on the possibility of a new all-Ireland solution for the situation in the North would be lost.

The task of the solidarity movement internationally must be to create mass pressure on Britain to meet the prisoners' demands and to force British imperialism and its military occupation out of Ireland and allow the Irish people to take control of their own affairs.

British troops out now! □

China: Demand Release of Xu Wenli and Yang Jing

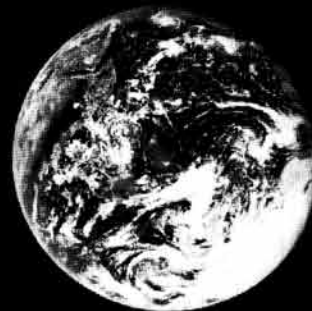
The editor and former editor of the unofficial Peking journal *April 5 Forum* were arrested without explanation April 10 after police broke into their homes.

April 5 Forum had become one of the most influential journals of the democratic movement in China. Launched in December 1978, the journal described its role as "putting into practice what is already laid down in the Constitution, namely for the people to exercise its right to oversee and manage their own country; shouting aloud for democratic and legal reforms."

The two arrested were Xu Wenli and Yang Jing. Xu, 36, a Peking electrician, was chief editor of *April 5 Forum* before it was forced to cease publication in March 1980. Yang, a steelworker in his 30s, was editor after the journal resumed publication.

Telegrams to Chinese embassies and consulates demanding the immediate release of Xu Wenli and Yang Jing are needed.

To keep up with a constantly changing world, you need... Intercontinental Press



The *Intercontinental Press* staff follows periodicals from all over the world to keep you on top of key international developments. *IP* also publishes regular reports from international correspondents. Readers find *IP*'s incisive weekly socialist analysis of world events indispensable.

Yes! Start my subscription now!

- INTRODUCTORY OFFER.** Send me three months of *IP* for \$8.75.
 Send me six months of *IP* for: \$17.50. Send me one year of *IP* for \$35.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Canadian Rates: \$41 for one year; \$21 for six months. Send for rates to other countries.

Make checks payable to:

Intercontinental Press

Mail to:

Intercontinental Press

410 West Street

New York, N.Y. 10014

Israeli Regime Threatens Syria

By Janice Lynn

The Israeli regime has stepped up its military threats against Syria, moving closer to provoking a full-scale war in the Middle East.

During the last week, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin repeatedly warned that Israel would resort to "military action" if Syria did not withdraw its anti-aircraft missiles from Lebanon.

The Syrian regime moved these missiles into eastern Lebanon April 28, several hours after Israeli warplanes shot down two Syrian helicopters, killing four Syrian soldiers.

The Israeli rulers complain that the Syrian missiles could prevent their warplanes from conducting daily reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. In fact, the Israeli Air Force has long depended on such freedom of movement to conduct brutal air strikes against Palestinian refugees and Lebanese villagers.

As Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khaddam pointed out May 5, the Israeli regime just "wants security for its planes to bomb and strafe Lebanese population centers and Palestinians. So Israel wants the uncontested right to strike at peaceful Lebanese. . . ."

The main problem, Khaddam said, was Israeli aggression. Israeli warplanes have no business flying in Lebanese airspace to begin with, the Syrian regime pointed out.

A Syrian Defense Ministry representative issued a statement May 8 suggesting that the missiles might not be needed in Lebanon if Israel halted its air raids.

The Israeli regime holds full responsibility for the latest confrontation in Lebanon.

According to the May 6 *New York Times*, even Western diplomats admit that "the Phalangists began the current crisis by trying to extend their military position." The right-wing Phalangists are openly backed and supplied by the Israeli regime.

The Zionists used the outbreak of fighting as the pretext to step up their attacks on Palestinian and Lebanese Moslem villages in southern Lebanon. The Zionist provocations escalated when Israeli jet fighters shot down the Syrian helicopters.

The Israeli regime has continued its provocations. On May 7, Israeli radio broadcast a false Associated Press dispatch that claimed that two Syrian armored brigades had entered southern Lebanon. This was intended to serve as a pretext for further Israeli aggression. But these reports were fabrications, as verified by numerous observers.

Several days earlier, U.S. President Ronald Reagan had received a letter from the Israeli prime minister. In the letter, Begin compared the present situation in Lebanon

with the period leading up to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Although Begin later denied making the comparison, he had already made his point.

The 1967 war was provoked by the Israeli regime. It began on June 5, 1967, with a series of Israeli air strikes against the Egyptian air force. This was immediately followed by the destruction of the Syrian and Jordanian air force, and the capture of large pieces of territory by Zionist forces.

The 1967 Israeli aggression was aimed against the Syrian regime and against the regime of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. It was part of a wider imperialist offensive.

For example, in 1964 the Goulart regime in Brazil had been overthrown in a military coup; in 1965 the Sukarno regime in Indonesia was brought down by a military coup that resulted in the slaughter of some one million people; that same year, a coup in Ghana deposed Nkrumah; and in early 1967 there was a military coup in Greece.

In addition to these right-wing coups there was the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and the escalation of the war against Vietnam.

It was in this international context that the Israeli aggression of 1967 took place. The Syrian regime's support to the Palestinian movement and the anti-imperialist stance of the Nasser regime plagued both Washington and Tel Aviv.

For nearly a year before, the Israeli regime had carried out a series of provocative actions against Syria. On July 14, 1966, Israeli planes bombed Syrian developmental installations along the border. In August 1966, Israeli jets pursued Syrian planes within a dozen miles of Damascus. In September 1966, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol announced that the Syrian government would be held accountable for any Palestinian raid on Israel, no matter what country the Palestinians were based in.

In early 1967 Israeli raids across the Syrian border multiplied. In April 1967, Eshkol authorized Israeli settlers to begin cultivating disputed land along the Syrian border and Israeli bombers began to penetrate deep into Syrian territory. The Zionist rulers began to make preparations for an invasion of Syria.

Nasser was forced to react to these Israeli threats against Syria. He hoped that Moscow and Washington would intervene to stay Tel Aviv's hand.

Two Egyptian divisions were sent to the Sinai—certainly not sufficient to launch an offensive. But this set in motion a chain of events that Nasser could not control. On

May 22, 1967, Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping.

This was the pretext the Israeli rulers used to give a defensive cover to their June 5 offensive, claiming they had been "compelled" to resort to military action.

But in a December 22, 1967, interview, Israeli army chief of staff Yitzhak Rabin admitted that the Egyptian regime was not preparing for war when it sent troops into the Sinai.

As Rabin explained, "there is a difference between concentrating forces in order to get into a war and making a move that, while it might end up in war, is not aimed at war but at something else. I think this was what was at the basis of Nasser's thinking."

Eshkol also testified that "an Egyptian defensive formation was being built" in the Sinai. (*Yediot Aharonot*, October 18, 1967.)

In six days, Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria and the West Bank from Jordan.

"There is no question but Begin is telling us that he is ready to repeat 1967," a senior U.S. official told *New York Times* correspondent Bernard Gwertzman May 8.

Israeli troops, armor, and heavy artillery are now reported to be massing along the border with Lebanon.

And in the most explicit threat so far, Israeli Prime Minister Begin warned May 10, "If they don't remove the anti-aircraft missiles . . . an order will be given to the Israeli Air Force to act. And when our air force goes to work, it gets results," he menaced.

"America is responsible for what is happening in this region," said an editorial in the official Syrian newspaper *Tishrin*, "because of the American attempt to impose its hegemony on the Arab world and because of the American full dependence on Israel, which leads to aggressive Israeli policy."

But the international context in 1981 is different than that which existed in 1967. With the changing relationship of forces on a world scale, it is not as easy for the imperialists to get away with their plans.

Israeli aggression is bitterly opposed throughout the Arab world and by the struggling masses in other parts of the world as well.

If Washington wants to "make a useful move," declared Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam, it must pressure Israel into stopping its attacks against Lebanon. □

Copies Missing?

Keep your files of *Intercontinental Press* complete and up-to-date. Missing issues for the current year may be ordered by sending \$1 per copy. Write for information about previous years.

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor
410 West Street
New York, New York 10014