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Rebel
Diplomatic
Offensive
Isolates
Salvadoran
Junta

Ireland Polarization Deepens as Two More Hunger Strikers Die



Dublin march in support of demands of hunger strikers.

An Phoblacht

EYEWITNESS REPORT

A U.S. Coal Miner Looks at Workers Struggles in Poland



French
Revolutionists
Call for
United
Workers
Government

Allies Balk at Reagan's Arms Drive

By Will Reissner

Since taking office in January, Ronald Reagan has accelerated the campaign, initiated under Carter, to pressure U.S. allies to shoulder a greater share of the military defense of imperialist interests around the world.

Washington's NATO allies have been urged to increase their annual military spending by 3 percent after inflation and to agree to the deployment of 572 U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe, targeted on the Soviet Union.

The imperialist powers in Asia—in particular Japan and Australia—are also being pressed to boost their arms spending and are being urged to increase military cooperation with the Pentagon.

While the governments involved have been willing to cooperate with Washington, the people in those countries have been considerably less enthusiastic. Reagan's problems in driving his policy forward were illustrated by a number of developments in May, beginning with the giant march on Washington May 3 against U.S. military aid to the murderous Salvadoran junta. That was the largest such protest in the United States since the end of the Vietnam War.

Soon after Reagan's weak position at home was brought to light, a storm of opposition was unleashed in Japan by the May 7-8 summit talks between Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki and Reagan. The very survival of Suzuki's government is at stake, owing to the prime minister's pledge to increase military cooperation with Washington.

Then, on May 10, French voters threw out President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, one of Washington's firmest allies. The new president, Socialist Party head François Mitterrand, is a NATO supporter but will be under considerable pressure from the workers and farmers who elected him to distance French foreign policy from Washington, especially in Central America and Africa.

Finally, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has come under such heavy fire for his support to the missile deployment decision that he has threatened to resign in order to try to mute criticism within his own party. Following in Suzuki's footsteps, Schmidt arrived in the United States May 20 for two days of talks with Reagan.

Reagan-Suzuki Talks

Before arriving in Washington, Japanese Prime Minister Suzuki had warned the Reagan administration not to press too hard for an increase in Japanese arms spending.

Suzuki explained that such a move would provoke strong opposition among the Japanese people, and he argued that any commitment the Reagan administration forced him to make could result in the fall of his government.

Arms spending in Japan now stands at slightly less than 1 percent of the country's Gross National Product, compared to the Pentagon's 6 percent share of the U.S. GNP. The Carter and Reagan administrations have waged loud campaigns to force a substantial boost in Japanese arms spending.

Because of Suzuki's resistance to any specific commitment to increase his military budget, the joint communiqué issued after his meetings with Reagan simply referred to Japan's commitment to make "even greater efforts" to increase its military capabilities. Suzuki did, however, agree to expand Japanese naval operations between Guam and the Philippines, in order to replace U.S. warships that have been shifted to the Persian Gulf area.

The communiqué also referred to "the alliance between the United States and Japan."

At the close of the meetings, both Reagan and Suzuki expressed satisfaction at the outcome. Reagan noted that they had reached "agreement on a number of broad issues," while Suzuki described their "basic convergence of views and perceptions about the important matters facing the world today."

When Suzuki returned to Japan, however, he found that his meeting with Reagan had touched off a storm of opposition. One major Tokyo daily, *Asahi Shimbun*, bluntly stated that "before the summit we cautioned Prime Minister Suzuki against involving Japan in the cold-war strategy espoused by the Reagan administration.

"The results," the newspaper argued, "have been even worse than we feared. Despite what Suzuki has said, the joint communiqué and the expressions used in the various meetings indicate that the US-Japan relationship has taken a great step toward becoming one of military cooperation."

Faced with the huge public outcry over the joint communiqué's reference to the "alliance" between the United States and Japan, Suzuki backtracked rapidly. He categorically denied that there was any military alliance with Washington. He asserted that the meeting with Reagan had resulted in no new military commitment by Japan, and blamed the foreign ministry for the wording of the communiqué.

In fact, the communiqué accurately reflected what Reagan, Haig, and Suzuki had wanted to come out of the meeting. But under the pressure of public opinion, Suzuki was forced to disavow the entire result.

Haig Not Welcome

Foreign Minister Masayoshi Ito and his top aide then resigned in protest against being blamed for the wording of the communiqué. Ito was replaced by Sunao Sonoda, whose first news conference on May 17 was devoted to an attack on the way the U.S. navy operates in Japanese waters.

In April a U.S. nuclear submarine rammed and sank a Japanese freighter and left the scene without rescuing the survivors. Two Japanese sailors drowned. Then, on May 16, U.S. warships on maneuvers damaged the gear of Japanese fishing vessels.

"I cannot understand why U.S. naval vessels are freely cruising around Japan, causing damage to our people," Sonoda declared.

The biggest blow to U.S.-Japanese military cooperation, however, came on May 18. It was revealed that for more than two decades Japanese governments have been aware that U.S. warships bring nuclear weapons into Japanese ports, despite Japan's laws against the introduction of such weapons onto its territory.

Following those revelations, the Tokyo stock market suffered its biggest decline in six years. Investors feared the Suzuki government might fall. Antinuclear and socialist groups announced plans for massive protests against the U.S.-Japan mutual security treaty and the existence of nuclear weapons in the country.

Sentiment against the U.S. military is running so high in Japan that on May 28 Secretary of State Alexander Haig announced he was canceling plans to visit Japan in June.

One day after Haig called off his visit, Tokyo abruptly halted joint Japanese-U.S. naval maneuvers that were in progress.

Schmidt Comes Calling

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt arrived in Washington on May 20 for talks with Reagan. Schmidt is in serious political trouble at home, with opinion polls showing his support at an all-time low.

New York Times columnist James Reston described Schmidt's importance to the Reagan administration in the following terms:

"With the defeat of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in France, and uncertainty about his successor, François Mitterrand, with the alarming economic difficulties in Britain and the rise of neutralist sentiment elsewhere in Europe, the thought of losing what is regarded here as the stabilizing experience of Mr. Schmidt is a major concern to the Reagan Administration in general and to Secretary of State Haig in particular."

The immediate cause of Schmidt's problems is his support for the December 1979

decision by NATO to deploy 572 U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe, with a large percentage to be stationed in West Germany.

At the time of that decision, the NATO ministers linked the deployment of the missiles to U.S.-Soviet arms limitation talks, in hope of defusing massive opposition among Europeans.

But since then Washington has refused to ratify SALT II or to begin new arms talks with Moscow. This has severely undercut the position of Schmidt and other supporters of the missiles.

Within Schmidt's Social Democratic Party there is growing opposition to the NATO decision. Recently, for example, the party's Bonn organization called for a ban on all nuclear weapons and for nationalization of the arms industry. The state conference of the SPD in Baden-Württemberg also voted to review the missile decision, and the party's youth organization has called for cancellation of the deployment.

SPD member of parliament Manfred Coppel stated that the Reagan administration's opposition to serious arms limitation talks means that "in the present situation, the main danger to peace comes from the policy of the U.S. government."

One recent poll of West Germans found that 60 percent of those surveyed believed that West Germany should distance itself from the Reagan administration's "harder policies" toward the Soviet Union.

In an attempt to still his critics within the SPD, Schmidt threatened to resign if criticism of the missiles continues. But this is unlikely to silence opponents of the plan. Ulrich Lang, chairman of the SPD in Baden-Württemberg, has even argued that if a revision of the NATO decision "in the interests of peace" meant the collapse of the Schmidt government, "it would just have to collapse."

Hoping to strengthen Schmidt's position, the Reagan administration made some verbal concessions to the idea of arms limitation talks during the Washington meeting. The joint communiqué that came out of the meeting is full of references to the importance of such talks with the Soviet Union.

Schmidt then went home to Germany with the communiqué in hand to tell his critics that the Reagan administration is seriously committed to new arms negotiations with the Soviet Union. In reality, although Reagan and Haig may be forced by the pressure of their allies to begin such talks, even the appearance of arms restraint runs counter to Reagan's propaganda drive against Moscow and his attempts to jack up the military budget. That is why Reagan is refusing to go along with the Salt II agreement, even though the pact would have allowed continued growth of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Just one day before Schmidt arrived in Washington, the U.S. State Department issued a statement maintaining that "the United States has no legal obligation to

abide by either [the SALT I or the SALT II] agreement." This confirmed a statement made by White House aide Edwin Meese on television on May 3; he declared that "we feel there is no legal or moral commitment to abide by SALT I and SALT II."

The Reagan administration has stated on numerous occasions that the 1979 SALT II agreement is dead. It has not withdrawn the treaty from the Senate simply in order to avoid cutting the ground out from under al-

lied regimes like Schmidt's that are trying to sell the NATO missile plan by stressing a supposed commitment to arms control.

However, Reagan's cosmetic concessions to Schmidt are unlikely to fool anyone as to Washington's real policies toward the arms build-up. Opposition to this among the workers in the imperialist countries continues to be the single biggest obstacle to the rulers' militarization drive. □

In This Issue

Closing News Date: May 23, 1981

FEATURES	584	The Fourth International and World War II
IRELAND	572	H-Block Activists Discuss Way Forward —by Gerry Foley
	573	International Protests Say, "Save Lives of Hunger Strikers!"
POLAND	575	A U.S. Coal Miner Looks at Poland Today
EL SALVADOR	578	Diplomatic Offensive Isolates Junta —by Fred Murphy
NETHERLANDS	580	Dutch Women Protest Reactionary Abortion Law—by Rienke Schutte
ITALY	581	Abortion Rights Victory—by Janice Lynn
FRANCE	582	For a Government of the Workers Parties —by Alain Krivine
	583	Now Is the Time to Join the Revolutionary Communist League—by Alain Krivine
DOMINICA	588	Invasion Plot Uncovered—by Janice Lynn
BRITAIN	590	The Economic Disaster—by Brian Grogan
USA	600	Reagan Votes Against Preventing Infant Deaths—by Janice Lynn
DOCUMENTS	594	Vietnam Since the Revolutionary Victory—II By Nguyen Khac Vien
NEWS ANALYSIS	570	Allies Balk at Reagan's Arms Drive —by Will Reissner

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Ireland: H-Block Activists Discuss Way Forward

By Gerry Foley

DUBLIN—Two more Irish political prisoners, Raymond McCreesh and Patrick O'Hara, are dead, victims of the British government's criminal policy in Northern Ireland. McCreesh and O'Hara, both in the sixty-first day of their hunger strikes, died within hours of each other on May 21.

These two deaths, following those of hunger strikers Bobby Sands and Francis Hughes, bring to four the number of deaths among republican political prisoners in the past three weeks.

Kieran Doherty, twenty-five, who is serving a savage twenty-two-year sentence for the possession of a firearm and explosives, replaced McCreesh in the hunger strike. Kevin Lynch, who is also twenty-five and is serving ten years for arms offenses, replaced O'Hara. Two other republican prisoners, Brendan McLaughlin and Joseph McDonnell, had previously replaced Sands and Hughes.

With the latest deaths, the H-Block movement has reached a critical stage. Polarization in the North has increased substantially, as was indicated by gains for both the right and left in local elections held May 20.

On May 22, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey spoke to a packed hall at the Mansion House in Dublin, along with other leaders of the H-Block movement. The crowd cheered and rose to its feet as she appeared on the platform.

McAliskey, however, did not give an emo-

tional or rousing speech. She spoke quietly and soberly, analyzing where the H-Block movement stands and what it has to do now.

'Was Our Strategy Wrong?'

"After the death of four prisoners," she said, "we have to ask ourselves, did we do it wrong? Was our strategy wrong? Were our tactics wrong? After so many deaths, if feelings are high in Dublin, you can imagine what they are in the North. It's understandable that some people will say what we did didn't work—we have to do something else.

"But before we do that we should ask ourselves—was what we were doing the wrong thing? I don't think it was. We tried to save the lives of the prisoners by building a single-issue campaign."

She asked, "Was this the wrong thing to do?" Shouts of "no" came from the audience. "Then," she said, "we have to ask ourselves why we failed to save the lives of the four hunger strikers, we have to answer that question if we are to save the lives of the other hunger strikers."

She described the obstacle represented by the bias of the Dublin media, which opposed the struggle of the oppressed Catholic population of the North under the pretext of the need to be "fair" to the Protestants.

"You get daily doses of Harold McCusker [a loyalist member of the British parliament] and you would think that there is no one being killed in the North except for his constituents, and that they never killed any-

body."

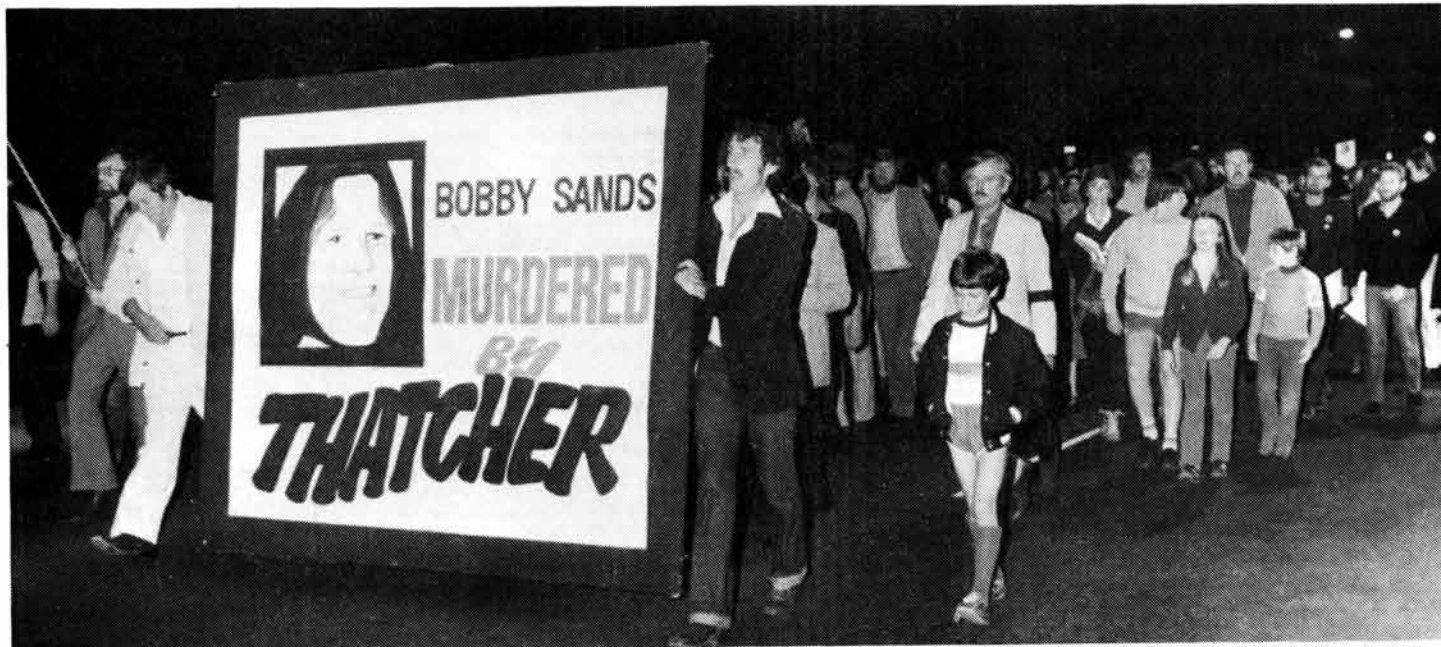
McAliskey continued: "Our problem was that we had to build a mass movement and give it political muscle and a cutting edge in the time it took men to die. [British Prime Minister Margaret] Thatcher claims that the Provisionals ordered men to die, but if that were so, they certainly would have given themselves more time."

The H-Block movement had begun to show that the prisoners have broad support. "Mrs. Thatcher and [Irish Prime Minister Charles] Haughey cannot have their cake and eat it too. Either the prisoners are supported by many people who are not Provisionals, or there are 30,000 Provisionals supporters in Fermanagh/South Tyrone," McAliskey stated, referring to Bobby Sands's election to the British parliament.

Hypocrisy of British Government

The Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election and its aftermath showed the hypocrisy of the British government and the Irish conservatives who claim that the prisoners and those who support them are the ones who represent a threat to democracy.

The British and Irish governments ignored and mocked the decision of the majority in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Now the acolytes of "British democracy" are determined to disenfranchise the voters of the district for three years, since not a single British MP can be found to move a writ for a new by-election for fear that the voters will



May 5 protest in Sydney, Australia.

Protests Demand, 'Save Lives of Hunger Strikers!'

Outrage at the Thatcher government's criminal disregard for the lives of the republican prisoners in Northern Ireland has continued to give rise to protests in many parts of the world.

In New York, picket lines have continued at the British consulate, where more than 5,000 protested after the death of Bobby Sands on May 9 and some 3,000 demonstrated on May 16, after Francis Hughes died. Also on May 16, 300 persons picketed the British cruise ship *Queen Elizabeth II* at its berth in New York.

The protests in the United States have won support not only from Irish-Americans but also from the Black and Latino communities. Members of the National Black United Front marched at the head of the demonstration in New York on May 9. In San Francisco, Black, Latino, and Irish demonstrators jointly bore a symbolic coffin in a May 6 protest of 500.

Two thousand persons attended a requiem mass for Bobby Sands in Sydney, Australia, on May 8. In Melbourne, thirty members of the Victoria state parliament placed an advertisement in the *Melbourne Age* "in tribute to our fellow parliamentarian, Bobby Sands. . . ."

Australians have also joined protests in Adelaide and Brisbane.

In Jerusalem, on May 11, eighty persons picketed the British consulate. The protesters included relatives of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

Demonstrations have also taken place in Paris; Belgium; Oporto and Lisbon in Portugal; and Copenhagen.

In Managua, the Nicaraguan Committee for Solidarity With the Peoples organized a picketline at the British consulate on May 7. The Sandinista daily *Barricada* has been carrying extensive front-page coverage on the republican prisoners' hunger strike and the struggle for self-determination in Ireland.

On May 6, *Barricada* carried an editorial column by Arqueles Morales entitled "The Crime of London." Morales wrote:

"The death of Sands, after sixty-six days of a heroic hunger strike demanding political status for the Irish republican

prisoners, has moved the entire world. It raises serious questions about the political future of Northern Ireland. . . .

"The entire modern history of Europe encompasses—with pain but with admiration—the struggle of the Irish for their independence, for liberating themselves from the British yoke. This is the most obvious reason, but the one least taken up by the reactionary news media: In Ireland the struggle is between a people fighting for freedom and the English occupation troops. The latter, with unheard-of brutality, repress every manifestation of rebellion by that heroic peo-

ple. . . .

"The intransigence of Thatcher's government, which led to the death of Sands, makes clear the need for a solid international campaign to force London not to repeat the same crime with Francis Hughes, Patrick O'Hara, and Raymond McCreech. . . ."

Hughes, O'Hara, and McCreech have now all been murdered, along with Sands, by the intransigence of the British government. But continuing international protests are needed more than ever to save the lives of the other hunger strikers. □



Demonstration at British consulate in Jerusalem.

once again expose the false pretences of the British government. The problem therefore, for the H-Block movement is to extend the victory of Fermanagh/South Tyrone.

"Our strategy was right," McAliskey concluded. "We mobilized tens and tens of thousands of people. But we had problems. We did not mobilize enough people. By and large we mobilized the broad Republican family, those who believe in fighting for a

united Ireland. But we did not cut deeply enough into those sections of the population who support Fianna Fáil in the South [the ruling party] and the SDLP [Social Democratic and Labour Party] in the North. We did not cut deeply enough into the Fianna Fáil ranks to force that party to act."

McAliskey explained: "Mrs. Thatcher will give in only when the political cost of not giving in is greater than the cost of doing it.

That is why we have tried to drive a wedge between Mrs. Thatcher and the SDLP and Fianna Fáil, the forces she must rely on to create the sort of settlement she wants here in Ireland."

The rioting that developed after the death of the hunger strikers, although it was an understandable reaction of an infuriated people, did not help open up this wedge. In fact, McAliskey maintained, it had the oppo-

site effect. It widened the gap between the H-Block movement and sections of the population it still had to reach.

McAliskey argued that it had to be explained politically why such actions were wrong: "I don't think that any useful purpose was served by calling the rioters hooligans in disguise. I think that these people break windows because they are angry, they see prisoners dying and they cannot think of any way of saving them. They cannot think of anything else to do, and they think 'Well, they aren't our windows anyway.'

"I know the feeling. I felt the same way before Frankie Hughes's death. I was walking around, practically banging my head against the wall, thinking 'the second prisoner is going to die and there is nothing we can do about it.' There are some things we have to accept, and one of the hardest is that we have lost four prisoners, and we cannot bring them back."

McAliskey continued: "We cannot stop thinking now, out of bitterness and frustration. This is a crucial time in the history of this movement and of this country. Because, if we keep our nerve, we can change the course of history in this country."

H-Block Sentiment in Elections

The depth of support for the hunger strikers was shown once again in the Northern Ireland local elections held May 20. The oppressed Catholic population of West Belfast threw out Gerry Fitt, demonstrating that this collaborator with British imperialism did not represent them. This news was greeted by a huge cheer from the Mansion House crowd. Fitt is the politician most hated by H-Block activists; one of their favorite chants in every march is "Who's a Brit? Gerry Fitt!"

Fitt's comeuppance has been a big morale-booster for the H-Block campaign. It was Fergus O'Hare of People's Democracy, the Irish Trotskyist organization, who defeated him at the polls. O'Hare, one of the leaders of the H-Block movement, got nearly four times more first preference votes than Gerry Fitt received, although Fitt had been a member of the British parliament and is a veteran machine politician.

Fitt was especially obnoxious because he justified his collaboration with British imperialism in the name of socialism, in the name of working-class unity on the "bread and butter issues," which he viewed as the only ones of concern to working people.

The other pro-imperialist "socialist," Paddy Devlin, was also humiliated. He barely squeaked in at the bottom of a poll topped by John McAnulty of People's Democracy.

The Sunday newspapers published following the elections reported that Fitt was thinking of leaving Belfast in search of "a quieter life."

Oliver Hughes, the brother of hunger striker Francis Hughes, ran as a candidate of the Irish Independence Party and also topped the poll in his district.

"Everywhere that clear H-Block suppor-

ters stood [for election], they won," McAliskey noted. She mentioned two candidates standing for the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the republican group hardest hit by the repression. The IRSP, which was Patrick O'Hara's organization, now has two representatives on the Belfast city council.

McAliskey also mentioned the electoral victories of Plunkett O'Donnell of Dunganon, a veteran republican political campaigner, and Pat Fahy, of the Irish Independence Party, a militant nationalist leader.

Blow to Distortion by Irish Media

"Now," she said, "when Irish radio and television say that they have to talk to elected representatives about the situation in the North, we'll bring them down some." The elections dealt a major blow to the censorship and distortion of the Northern struggle by the Irish media.

The petty-bourgeois proimperialist sect that calls itself the Workers Party-Republican Clubs, the Northern branch of Sinn Fein-the Workers Party, was nearly wiped out in the elections. In recent years this grouping's major role has been as a proimperialist pressure group in the media, the trade unions, and some local bodies. It ran twenty-six candidates and was afforded major party coverage on Irish television. Despite this, it got only three seats, and its leader, Seamus Lynch, was defeated. The end of his "distinguished" and "promising" political career was greatly lamented by the capitalist press.

In contrast to the generous attention given to the Republican Clubs' candidates over Irish television, the Trotskyist and militant nationalist campaigners who later won smashing victories were barely mentioned.

Although there was great enthusiasm after the electoral victory won by Sands, the confusion, frustration, and impatience that set in after his death and the death of Hughes led most activists to forget about the elections. Thus, the SDLP was not challenged in most places, and was allowed once again to maintain the appearance of a mandate from the oppressed population.

The Dublin capitalist dailies are finding their consolation in the SDLP's maintenance of its electoral support. The *Irish Times* said, for example, that the SDLP remains the heart of the northern minority.

But the victories by supporters of the H-Block campaign show that if a full slate had been run, an even greater victory than in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election would have been won, making it even harder for the treacherous, conciliationist SDLP to speak in the name of the oppressed Catholic population.

Proposal for Electoral Activity

The up-coming general elections in the twenty-six counties of the South, however, offer supporters of the H-Block campaign a new and greater opportunity. McAliskey proposed running candidates supporting the

H-Block campaign in all forty-one constituencies. Her call was enough to touch off a furor in the daily press. The main headlines the next day were about the possibility that the H-Block movement would intervene in the elections.

Such an operation would obviously be a difficult one and a decisive challenge to the movement. But the campaign is beginning to show new strength and determination and has met the test of the period of disorientation and frustration. The Mansion House meeting, moreover, launched a campaign to strengthen the local action committees by urging all H-Block supporters to join them.

At the May 22 meeting, Owen Carron, Sands's campaign manager and the contact between the dying republican prisoners and the outside world, spoke passionately, invoking the suffering of the prisoners and the victory they won, at the cost of the ultimate sacrifice, over the forces of oppression that were trying to humiliate them and crush them.

In fact the crowd was not downcast by the deaths of the prisoners. It was moved and angry, but uplifted by the example of their resistance. It was triumphant. This response shows that by their determination to sacrifice themselves for their principles and for the dignity of their people, the prisoners have fought and won a great victory for humanity. They have shown that human beings who dedicate themselves to the cause of the freedom of their fellows and have the support of their community, cannot be broken, even by the most ruthless and scientific methods of repression.

And by their victory they have opened up the way for further advance, for the greatest of human victories, the fusing of will and consciousness for masses of people. That is the power that can bend the most unyielding oppressor and, as McAliskey said, "change the course of history." □

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A U.S. Coal Miner Looks at Poland Today

[The following interview with DeAnn Rathbun, a coal miner and member of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party who recently returned from a trip to Poland, is scheduled for publication in the June 5 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Question. Do the people you spoke to think that there have been any positive accomplishments since the Communist Party came to power in Poland?

Answer. There are the gains that have been made over the last thirty-six years that are the result of nationalizing the economy.

Before World War II, Poland was a poor, mainly agricultural country. Much of its industry was destroyed during the war. But today it is one of the leading industrial countries in the world, and the people have made big gains. Things like free medical care, free education, that kind of thing.

People get a month off paid vacation every year. Usually they have a place set aside, a lodge in the mountains, a lodge on the sea shore at a very reduced rate. Almost every household has a stereo and a TV—at least in the cities. Records and books are cheap.

A student at Torun who is also a member of the Communist Party summed up what many people felt about these gains by saying that "the activity undertaken by the government such as land reform and nationalization of industry, general education for everybody, medical care for everybody—these are of such importance that they cannot be abolished. And it was these achievements that convinced people that socialism should be accepted. It was a great step forward compared to the conditions that existed before the war."

But he paraphrased Lenin about the parties gaining power in the name of the interests of the nation and then acting only in their own interests. People talk a lot about the need for workers democracy.

Q. What do people mean when they use the phrase "workers democracy"?

A. First of all it means free and open elections. The Polish United Workers Party (Communist Party) dominates both the government and the political life of the country.

On another level it means deciding what is produced and overseeing the way production is going. There are great complaints against mismanagement. Working people in Poland have the attitude—which I think is a very correct one—that they can run things better than the bureaucrats.

But in order to do this they need freedom of information. Censorship makes it difficult for them to get correct information. There is

a feeling that the country is in bad shape but the workers feel they need accurate information to know what to do about it.

Q. In what way is Poland in bad shape?

A. The economy is in real shambles. The most obvious thing is the problem with getting food. There are shortages of meat, milk, butter, cheese, sugar, and coffee. All these things and more are rationed now. We were told that rationing would be extended to other items as well, such as fish.

The problems are also reflected in the tremendous shortage of housing. You have to wait 15 years to get your own apartment. They are very small apartments. The new ones have no separate room for a living room.

Q. Do government and party bureaucrats live better than the people do in general?

A. It is very commonly known that the bureaucrats have certain privileges, and people talk about the social wealth of the country being exploited for private purposes. The one thing I was surprised about was the extent to which these bureaucrats abuse that social wealth.

Q. Do they actually live like millionaires?

A. The bureaucrats certainly try to mimic the life style of the superrich in this country. One story we were told was that Gierek's wife [this refers to former Communist Party chief Edward Gierek, who was forced to resign after the strikes last August] used

to fly to Paris in the Central Committee's airplane once a week to have her hair done. And once a month to go on a shopping trip to buy clothes there.

There was one bureaucrat with a vacation house in Africa, an expensive flat in London, as well as several nice houses in Poland. They have special hunting rights in areas that nobody else can use.

Q. Do they actually have foreign bank accounts?

A. While we were there, a minor official was arrested on charges of corruption. This was an attempt to make it look as if the government is trying to rid itself of corrupt elements. But then they allowed the press to interview him in jail.

So this guy spilled the beans. He started talking about all the things he had arranged for the higher party and government bureaucrats. Things like setting up a separate, private bank account in an Austrian bank.

Also we were told that there is actually an act, a formal act that was passed in 1972 that guarantees certain privileges to top-level party officials that run the government. And not only does that act guarantee them certain privileges, but is also extended to their close relatives down to their grandchildren.

Q. Have people moved against some of these privileges since last August?

A. Yes. One of the things they have done is to take over these bureaucrats' mansions

American Socialists Tour Poland

In mid-April, two members of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP), DeAnn Rathbun and George Saunders, went to Poland for several weeks to gather information on the unfolding revolution in that country and to talk to Polish workers. They were later joined by another SWP member, Bruce Lesnick.

While in Poland, they visited Warsaw, Torun, Gdansk, Bydgoszcz, Wroclaw, and the mining region of Silesia. They talked to many members of the independent trade union, Solidarity, including workers from a textile mill and auto plant in Warsaw, the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, and a coal mine near Katowice.

They interviewed such leading figures as Anna Walentynowicz, a Solidarity leader at the Lenin Shipyard; and Jacek Kuron, another key figure in Solidarity. They also spoke to members of the Polish

United Workers Party (the Communist Party) who are waging a struggle for democratic rights within the party and in Polish society as a whole.

DeAnn Rathbun, who is a member of Local 1190 of the United Mine Workers of America and the SWP's candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, will be speaking at meetings in the United States to explain to American workers the significance of the Polish workers' struggle.

George Saunders is the editor of the book *Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition*, and a contributor to *Intercontinental Press*.

Intercontinental Press has already published the interview Rathbun and Saunders obtained with Jacek Kuron (in the May 25 issue). In coming weeks, we will feature other coverage of Poland based on their visit.

and turn them into things like hospitals.

Q. Do people see themselves as defenders of socialism, or have thirty-six years of bureaucratic rule and Russian domination pretty much discredited the concept of socialism?

A. People have different ideas about socialism, and the issue is certainly confused by the Communist Party's claim to be socialist. So some say that they are against socialism, some say they are for it. Some qualify their attitude by saying "if what we have been living under for the last thirty-six years is socialism, then I am anti-socialist." Some insisted that the most anti-socialist elements were the top party officials themselves. But whatever the opinion on socialism per se, everyone we talked to said they were for workers democracy.

Q. How is the trade union, Solidarity, organized?

A. Every factory has an elected leadership committee. These committees negotiate disputes with the management. When we were there, the committees were composed of those who came to the fore during the strikes.

Elections were coming up in May and June and July in different factories and in different parts of the country. Even the way it is now these committees are composed of people who are delegated by departments. Each department elects a delegate to serve on one broad body. On the broad body they elect the leadership committee; these are the people who usually negotiate with management.

There are regional bodies of Solidarity call MKZ, or Interfactory Committees. These in turn elect a presidium that functions as a steering committee. Each member of the presidium heads up a specific subcommittee.

Q. What are the functions of these committees?

A. To carry out the work of Solidarity, on a regional basis. One of the committees that Solidarity has in all big factories and on a regional basis is an intervention committee. These committees respond to problems outside of the workplace.

For example in a small town near Katowice, in Silesia, there was a store in a rather elite neighborhood. Silesia is in an area from where a lot of the party officials have come, Gierek and some others. And there is a neighborhood that is somewhat elite. There was a shop that served that neighborhood. People from all over the city would come there to shop because it was usually well stocked.

We were told how the day before the rationing began of a lot of goods like coffee and sugar, people were lined up to buy food items in the store. They noticed while they were standing in line that there were cars

driving around to the back of the shop, people leaving with bags full of meat and other stuff, and then getting into the cars and driving away.

They discovered that this manager had only put 10 percent of the stock that was in the store out on the shelves, and had 90 percent of the stock in the back room—shelves full of sugar, coffee, bread and meat. People with connections were coming to the back door and getting their sacks full and leaving.

The manager claimed that she was saving the goods for the day of rationing. But nobody bought that line.

These people from the intervention committee demanded that all of the goods be brought out into the front. They also demanded that the store remain open until everything from that store had been sold and that the manager pay the shop workers, who were also members of Solidarity, overtime for all the hours they had to stay there that night. The funds for the overtime came, at Solidarity's insistence, from the local party committee.

Q. But don't the police crack down on Solidarity for doing this sort of thing?

A. I got the impression that the cops keep a pretty low profile after the Bydgoszcz incident [when leaders of Solidarity were beaten by police, leading to a four-hour national strike].

Q. What actual gains have been made inside the factories?

A. The thing we heard about most often was that now any work-related proposal that management wanted to implement had to first be approved by the local Solidarity organization at the factory, or an agreeable compromise had to be reached.

Q. What happens if Solidarity and the plant management can't come to an agreement?

A. People sort of laughed at us when we asked them that question, as if the answer was only too obvious. If Solidarity didn't approve, the proposal simply did not go into effect.

Q. Have they taken any measures to prevent a new bureaucracy based on Solidarity from growing up?

A. We encountered some discussion about this question. One miner told us that if the workers concluded that their leaders in Solidarity were becoming corrupt, becoming bureaucrats, they would just vote them out and vote in new leaders. Apparently they're considering limits on the terms in office, especially of national leaders. Solidarity officers are paid by the factories, at the average wage, as I recall.

But key to keeping the movement democratic, of course, is for the ranks to participate constantly and actively in the move-

ment. Democratic elections and procedures, such as the right of recall, rotation in office, and limits on how much officials are paid, wouldn't count for much if the ranks became inactive.

The workers, and people in general, bring all sorts of problems to the Solidarity offices. The phones are ringing all the time. And the leaders and staff are constantly responding and intervening, trying to solve the problems.

In general, the impression we got was that the leaders and office staffs were very open and responsive, there was an extremely democratic atmosphere, like you find in a movement headquarters here when a big protest action is coming up. But there it's going on all the time.

Q. Is there freedom of the press in Poland today?

A. That's one of the big things that has happened since August. Censorship has eased a lot, although it's still in effect. Every Solidarity unit, on a factory or regional level, puts out a paper. These are internal, "for members only," and therefore are uncensored. But anyone who comes to the office can read them.

In April national Solidarity began to issue a national weekly, which does have to undergo preliminary censorship. One of the biggest problems of Solidarity is the problem of information.

Related to this is the shortage of paper. The party never has a shortage of paper. They want to publish something, a Central Committee document, there is always plenty of paper. But for example the national newspaper of Solidarity, called *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* (Solidarity Weekly), can print only 500,000 copies. Solidarity itself has 11 million members and there are 35 million people in Poland. But they can only print 500,000 papers.

In both the factories and the university there are information bulletins that come out daily or once every few days. Then there may be a general paper that comes out once a week.

Q. Have people in Poland put forward any proposals of how the economy could be reorganized in the workers interest?

A. A lot of people think that each factory should be made accountable for its own gains and losses. That each factory should be made profitable and should be responsible for that, rather than have a broad national plan. Other people realize that when industry is nationalized there has to be an overall plan. The ranks of Solidarity are not in agreement on everything.

Some of the people we talked to think the extreme shortages are caused on purpose in an attempt to blame Solidarity for creating a worsening situation.

There is a shortage of tractors in Poland. Yet one miner told us there are 40,000 tractors out of use in the country because of lack

of planning, lack of parts or machinery to repair them or finish manufacturing them. People complain that they don't have the supplies that will enable them to work.

We were told that two years ago the government had a group of university economists draw up proposals for economic reform. The government rejected these proposals and buried the report. Now Solidarity has presented its own program of economic reform.

Q. Is there any support for private ownership?

A. Whenever we asked this question—whether large industries, like mines and factories, should be returned to private owners—the notion was rejected out of hand. People said of course not. They want to control the factories themselves, to have workers control.

I met only one person who spoke in favor of private ownership of large scale industry. She was very young, just out of school, and really had no idea of what private ownership meant. For example, she thought that if someone owned a factory they would care about the welfare of their workers, and then asked me about my coal mine, Wasn't that so?

I told her that Rockefeller owned my mine, the same guy that owned all the oil, and he couldn't care less about what happened to us down there, that he couldn't see beyond the money that we made for him.

On the other hand, there is a small layer of people who own shops, both craftsmen and retailers. These businesses can employ up to six people. Not only was there support for these, but also talk about expanding the number of such small enterprises, the idea being to increase the availability and the quality of consumer goods. You should know that the craftsmen, too, have petitioned for registration of their own Solidarity, to work hand-in-hand with the workers and farmers.

And, of course, there is a lot of support for the independent farmers, who in fact produce the bulk of Poland's food.

Q. The press here gives a lot of emphasis to the role played by the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. How do the Polish people feel about the church?

A. Poland has been divided so many different times by so many different countries, between Prussia and the Russian tsar, and they have always had to fight to keep themselves together. That is part of the element of Catholicism in this revolution. In my opinion, it's part of this Polish national identity. Almost as though the fact that 90 percent of the population is Catholic is a rebellion against the Stalinist attempt to eliminate religion through repression.

Q. Do workers have a sense of solidarity with workers in other countries? Do they identify with the peoples of the semicolonial



DEANN RATHBUN

world who are fighting against western imperialism?

A. They make a point of solidarizing with workers all over the world. Even if they don't know about third world liberation struggles or strikes in the West, they really do think the problems of the working class are the same the world over, whether you have a capitalist government or a bureaucratic, so-called socialist, government. Those were points made to us by Anna Walentynowicz, a Solidarity leader in Gdansk, and by a coal miner in Silesia.

However, most Poles lack information about events in the world as a whole. They get radio broadcasts from European countries. Information they get about events further away like El Salvador comes from one of two sources, one is Radio Free Europe and other Western government radios, like the BBC.

The other source is the official Polish or Soviet press. But they tend to distrust what the party or the Soviet Union say. To the extent that the Soviet government backs the Salvadoran rebels, the Poles don't know what to think, because they don't believe anything that the Soviet government is for is good. So the consciousness about international events on a broad scale and especially in the colonial world was generally not very high.

Q. Except for the role of certain individuals like Walentynowicz, the press here has said virtually nothing about the role of women in Poland. Is there anything like a women's liberation movement over there? Are women playing a leading role?

A. I didn't get a sense that there was a women's liberation movement there, but in the general drive for workers democracy women were coming forward as leaders.

In some regards, they have a long way to go. For example, women aren't allowed to do manual labor underground in the mines, and the Polish miners were surprised that I worked underground. They said that it was against international labor law for women

to work underground and I explained to them that we had fought for the right, here in the United States, to hold high-paying industrial jobs.

There is a lot of sexism in Poland, like there is here, and it is reflected in the kinds of jobs you can get. They have only one woman railroad engineer in all of Poland. And there are mixed attitudes, some pretty backward and chauvinistic, and some pretty forward looking.

On the other hand, I think it will be easier to achieve women's liberation there than here. Already, abortion is free and legal, and divorce is an option that is exercised. The respect that people have for the church doesn't seem to extend to social issues like these. And women have been very active in Solidarity. They called and led strikes in many factories last summer just as the men did.

Even in the mines, women can go underground to do nonmanual work, like a geologist making inspections, and women work hard above ground, like in the cleaning plants. And at the mine we visited, one of these women had been elected to the miners' strike committee.

During the strike, workers said, women were more radical and quicker to take action. At the same time they were seen as more practical in a tactical sense, in terms of how far to push and when to say, "OK, that is all we can get right now."

We interviewed a member of the presidium of Solidarity in the Mazowsze region in the central plains around Warsaw. He works in the Rosa Luxemburg textile mill, which was 80 percent women. One of the incidents he recalled was that Solidarity published a document that they got hold of dealing with the security police's plans to deal with striking workers. And they printed it. The printer, who was a member of Solidarity, got arrested.

So, this presidium member spoke to the workers at his mill. He didn't make any proposals but simply explained what happened to the women textile workers. They decided to go out on strike. They decided they just couldn't let the government officials get away with arresting anybody, because if they could arrest one, they could arrest others.

Q. Did the women in Poland have any advice for the women of America?

A. Bruce and George interviewed a woman in an auto plant near Warsaw. She was the head of Solidarity's women's committee there. She said that there were forty-two such committees in the factories around Warsaw, and that they met once a week to discuss issues of particular concern to women. Issues like child-care, housing, and women's health services.

And when she escorted these two men to the gate, her parting shot was: "Send our greetings to the women in America. Tell them to fight for their rights like our Polish women do." □

Diplomatic Offensive Isolates Salvadoran Junta

By Fred Murphy

The U.S. State Department declared May 4 that it was opposed to any negotiations that would lead to the formation of a new government in El Salvador.

Such a development, Washington said, "would prevent the people of El Salvador from choosing their own leaders in open elections."

Victor Guerrero, a leading spokesperson for the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), immediately denounced the U.S. statement as "irresponsible and ridiculous." He pointed to El Salvador's fifty-year history of military rule punctuated by electoral frauds.

The army officers who wield power in El Salvador today are the heirs of Gen. Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, who butchered some 30,000 Salvadoran peasants in 1932. Martínez had seized power the previous year from President Arturo Araujo—the only ruler the Salvadoran people have ever voted into office in a democratic election.

With its May 4 statement the Reagan administration was publicly endorsing the stance taken by its puppets in El Salvador. The military/Christian Democratic junta there has repeatedly rejected efforts by the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) to open talks aimed at a political solution to the Salvadoran civil war.

'To Prevent Further Bloodshed'

Nonetheless, the FMLN's Victor Guerrero reaffirmed the rebels' position: "We are seeking to prevent further shedding of the blood of the people. Thus we are ready to propose various formulas for agreement, and to listen to other proposals."

Guerrero's statement was in the framework of the diplomatic offensive the Salvadoran opposition has been pursuing internationally since February. By publicizing the aims of their struggle and making clear their willingness to enter into talks with the junta or with Washington, the FMLN and FDR have been able to deepen the regime's isolation and put the onus for continuing bloodshed squarely on the military.

The rebels' stance has been particularly effective in neutralizing Reagan's propaganda campaign around the theme of "drawing the line against Communism" in Central America. Support for Reagan's policy has come only from the world's most reactionary regimes; Washington and the junta have found themselves increasingly isolated. The FMLN/FDR diplomatic offensive has helped accelerate

this process.

Support for the opposition's call for a political solution in El Salvador has come from the governments of Mexico and Nicaragua and from leaders of the Socialist International. Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, vice-president of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany, toured Central American and Caribbean capitals in April to gain support for international mediation in El Salvador. President López Portillo of Mexico and Herrera Campins of Venezuela met in Mexico City in early April and offered their services as mediators; this put Herrera Campins at odds with the "no talks" stance of the government he supports in El Salvador.

The FMLN and FDR have listed some conditions for opening talks with the junta. They called on the regime to lift the state of siege, halt repression, release political prisoners, restore press freedom, and reopen the national university.

The regime reacted to the opposition's initiatives in a contradictory way, reflecting its internal divisions. In early March it was made known in San Salvador that President Napoleón Duarte would travel to West Germany for preliminary talks with the FDR. Extreme rightists with influence in the officer corps then openly called for a coup, and Duarte abruptly cancelled his trip. He then denied that it had ever been planned.

To further squelch any moves toward negotiations, the military published the names of 138 prominent Salvadorans whom it branded "traitors to the fatherland." Under current conditions, this amounted to a "hit list" for the death squads. Those singled out were not only persons identified with the FDR but also former government officials and other independent figures who might have played a role in seeking a political solution.

The junta's foreign minister, Fidel Chávez Mena, acknowledged in early April that the junta had a bad image in public opinion in the United States and Europe. It would therefore be disadvantageous, he said, to accept international mediation of the conflict.

'Elections in the Graveyards'

On April 24, Duarte held a news conference and flatly rejected the demands of the FMLN and FDR for lifting the state of siege and reopening the university. Duarte claimed that no political prisoners were being held. He further stated that there could be no dialogue with the rebels until

the latter put down their arms.

Armed Forces commander Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez said a few days later that the junta would accept no outside mediation and would proceed with its own plans to hold elections in 1982.

Referring to this maneuver, FDR President Guillermo Ungo said May 2, "If we wait until then, we will have to hold the elections in the graveyards."

Ungo was speaking at the Socialist International's World Leaders Conference in Amsterdam. After that gathering, Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski announced that his organization would launch a new campaign for a political solution in El Salvador. Ed Broadbent, leader of Canada's New Democratic Party, was delegated to represent the Socialist International and was to visit El Salvador, Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Cuba beginning May 23.

The Salvadoran rebels' diplomatic offensive has enhanced the FDR's standing internationally and has focused the blame for bloodshed in El Salvador still more clearly on Washington and the military regime. "Those who seek excuses for not negotiating will be left with the blame," Wischnewski put it recently.

Along with their diplomatic efforts, the rebels have pressed their military resistance to the junta's tyranny. The FMLN's forces have successfully withstood repeated attempts by the army to dislodge them from their strongholds along the northern tier of the country.

No Victories for Junta

Earlier this year, the U.S. capitalist press was gloating over the "failure" of the FMLN's January offensive and heralding the progress the Salvadoran army would make once U.S. aid and advisers were in place. Such reports have long since given way to more sober assessments. For example, this account from Morazán Province appeared in the May 25 issue of *Time* magazine under the headline, "The guerrillas are back":

Seven months ago, the Salvadoran army believed it had pushed the guerrillas in this rugged eastern department north, up to the Honduran border, and rendered them incapable of causing trouble for a long time to come. Now, however, the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Army of the People (E.R.P.)* are back in large numbers, and the armed forces have also returned for a new

*The ERP is one of the five guerrilla organizations that united in late 1980 to form the FMLN.—IP

offensive with some 2,000 infantrymen, backed by U.S.-made helicopters, trucks and armored vehicles. It is an indication of how well the guerrillas are dug in and how well they are fighting that this time the army's goal is to drive them north of the Torola River, leaving much of the department in E.R.P. control.

At the moment the offensive appears to be in trouble, and government forces are taking high casualties. . . .

Roads going north out of San Francisco Gotera [the provincial capital] are blocked. Red Cross drivers have not been able to get supplies to Torola, a town 20 miles to the north, for six months. E.R.P. forces occupied the town of Villa el Rosario (pop. 2,000) for two weeks until a large government force moved in and surrounded it early this month. Then the guerrillas slipped away in the dark, avoiding a fight. Early last week guerrilla ground fire for the first time forced down a U.S.-made Huey helicopter carrying troops over the battle area.

Likewise, Steve Frazier reported from El Salvador in the May 7 *Wall Street Journal* that "it's clear that Salvadoran armed forces are far from controlling the guerrilla threat. . . ." Frazier continued:

The guerrillas range freely across the nation's northern provinces and are entrenched on volcanoes and in rugged hills in the heart of the nation. The insurgents' hit-and-run tactics have crippled the economy and can tie up far-larger numbers of regular troops.

"If we go after them, we get ambushed," says an army commander in Chalatenango, a guerrilla stronghold near the Honduran border.

In March and April, a group of foreign journalists spent five weeks with the FMLN forces in Morazán Province. Their report was summarized as follows in a dispatch from San Salvador printed in the April 24 edition of the Mexico City daily *El Día*:

According to what the correspondents could determine from the statements and conduct of the guerrillas, the war in El Salvador is characterized by the following concrete facts:

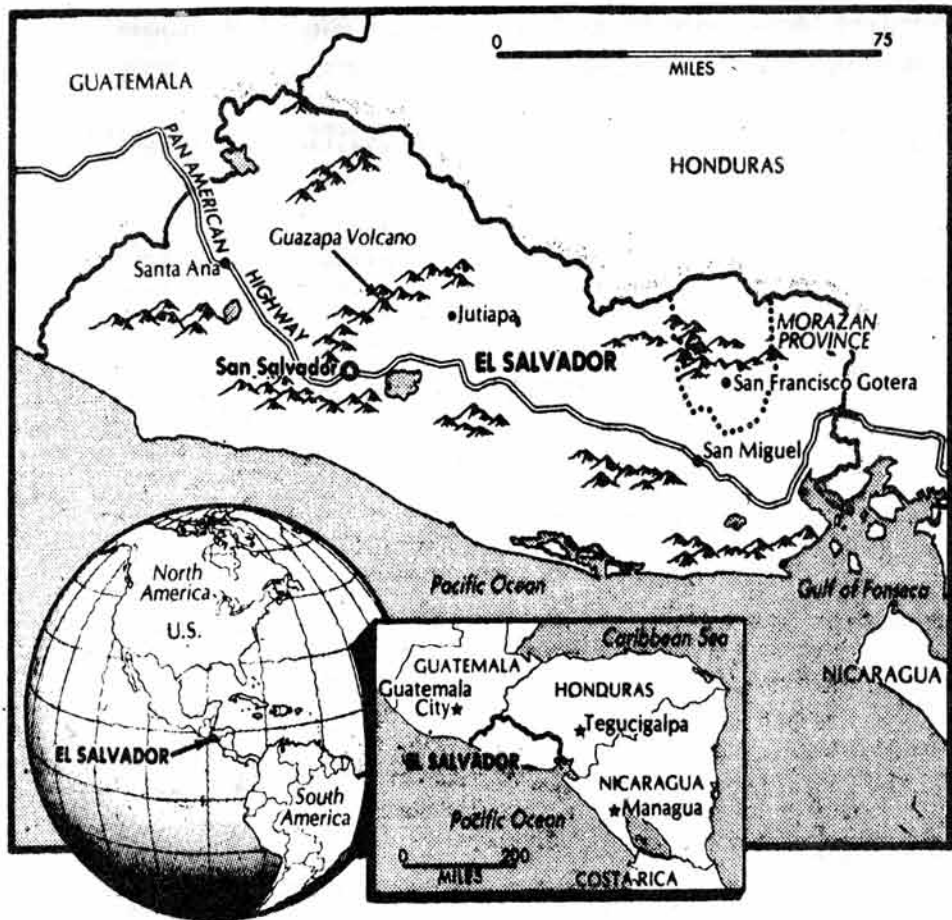
- Demoralization inside the army.
- Difficulties for the military in taking positions and dislodging the guerrillas.
- High morale among the guerrilla ranks.
- Growing incorporation of the people into the guerrillas and an increase in their military capabilities.

This and other recent reports from behind FMLN lines indicate that the rebels have been able to maintain and extend the liberated zones established last year and are proceeding with literacy and health campaigns, establishment of elected people's power committees, agricultural production, and fabrication of weapons and explosives.

The *El Día* report concluded:

The correspondents affirm that "while the involvement of the U.S. government is certainly a determining factor, and while direct military intervention cannot be ruled out, the guerrillas are certain they will be able to defeat the national army. . . .

"Moreover," they conclude, "the guerrillas are confident that the people of the United States



will prevent a massive, direct military intervention."

U.S. Out of El Salvador!

Opposition to Washington's role in El Salvador is indeed deep and widespread among U.S. working people. Reagan's attempt to whip up support for an anticommunist crusade in Central America has backfired. Fears of a new Vietnam brought tens of thousands of young people into the streets in March and April, and on May 3 nearly 100,000 persons demonstrated at the Pentagon. The latter was the biggest antiwar protest in the United States since Vietnam.

Since then, the administration has continued to lose ground. The massive antiwar sentiment has begun to create tactical divisions in Washington. The foreign affairs committees of both the House of Representatives and the Senate have voted overwhelmingly to place conditions on further military aid to El Salvador. In both committees, a majority of Republicans broke with Reagan's policy.

The amendments voted by the House committee would require Reagan to certify that the regime in El Salvador is "not engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights," is achieving "substantial control" over its own security forces, and is willing to accept "an equita-

ble political solution" and hold free elections "at an early date."

The Senate committee voted 11 to 1 for similar conditions on May 10, despite a letter from Secretary of State Alexander Haig charging that such an action "would encourage left-wing insurgents and other extremists. . . ."

Defenders of the Salvadoran people's right to self-determination must redouble their efforts to halt U.S. intervention in Central America. In the United States, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) has called for further protest actions on July 19; these will also demand a halt to Washington's threats and pressures against Nicaragua. On June 24-25, CISPES plans activities aimed at broadening trade-union involvement in the anti-interventionist struggle. □

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Dutch Women Protest Reactionary Abortion Law

By Rienke Schutte

On March 30, some 60,000 Dutch women from throughout the country participated in a "women's strike" against a restrictive abortion bill. For more than three years the right-wing Christian-Liberal government had wanted to introduce such a bill. The First Chamber (senate) finally adopted it, despite massive protests.

For twelve years, the struggle for abortion rights has been one of the most important issues in the women's movement. During the last six years, this struggle has been led by the committee called "We Women Demand."

Various women's groups, trade unions, the women's organizations of the Communist and Socialist parties, and the International Communist League (IKB)—Dutch section of the Fourth International, participate in this committee.

As a result of the activities of We Women Demand, abortion has been made possible in practice. Although a reactionary law from 1911 is still legally on the books, it is no longer applied in practice. Also, abortion clinics exist throughout the entire country, meaning abortions are possible for virtually every woman at only a small cost.

This relatively good abortion service partially accounts for the fact that the

death rate from abortion in Holland is the lowest in the world. Each year, tens of thousands of women from Belgium, France, Germany, and Spain come to Holland for abortions.

Until a few years ago, no majority existed in parliament for enactment of a new abortion law. But three years ago, when the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)—the liberal government party—changed its position, a new bill reversing the current abortion practices was introduced.

According to this bill, the existing clinics would have to meet a number of conditions in order to be licensed, conditions which could be arbitrarily imposed by the government. Also, abortions would only be possible with a doctor's agreement. And, what is very important, before the operation, a woman would have to wait five days to "think."

This last measure is clearly designed to make it impossible for women from other countries to come to Holland for an abortion. More and more women from nearby European countries had been coming to Holland as the governments in their countries began adopting more restrictive abortion legislation. This bill was designed to bring the abortion situation in Holland

more in line with the situation in other European countries.

From the very beginning, this bill met heavy resistance. We Women Demand organized a number of demonstrations and rallies, including the September 27, 1980 march and rally of 15,000 in Amsterdam. In spite of these protests, the bill was adopted in the Second Chamber by a slim majority on December 18, 1980.

The Labor Party (PvdA), the largest workers party, voted against the bill, but refused at every point to build mobilizations to defeat the bill. PvdA leader Joop Den Uyl even declared just before the September 27 rally, "We Women Demand is nothing compared to what it has been."

Since then, resistance to the bill has continued to grow. On March 8, International Women's Day, a group of radical feminists initiated a call for a women's general strike on March 30. This was the day before the definitive vote was to take place in the First Chamber of parliament.

This initiative won wide support. Unfortunately, it was not possible to organize a strike in three weeks, but the date did become a very successful day of action. Not only was it impossible to have a strike because of the short time period, but the leadership of the largest trade union feder-



March 30 protest in Amsterdam drew 40,000.

ation—the Confederation of the Netherlands Trade Union Movement (FNV)—did not support this type of strike.

We Women Demand has been trying to involve the union movement in the abortion struggle for some time now. Several trade-union women's groups, the teachers union, and the artists union affiliated with the FNV support the demands of We Women Demand. These include demands for the decriminalization of abortion, for abortion to be part of the national health service, and for the right of women to decide. Several other unions do not yet support these demands.

One of the reasons for this is that the collaboration of the social-democratic and Catholic unions in the FNV union federation is still shaky. The Catholic unions would not be prepared to recognize the right of women to decide for themselves—at least according to the argument given by the trade-union leadership. But among union members in the factories, there is no difference of opinion between Catholic and non-Catholic workers. Various polls show that the majority of Dutch people think that it is up to a woman to decide if she wants an abortion or not.

Despite the fact that the unions did not support the "women's strike," March 30 was a successful day of action. The largest demonstration took place in Amsterdam, where 40,000 people turned out. In many other cities thousands of women and men took to the streets—6,000 in Nijmegen, 4,000 in The Hague, 3,000 in Rotterdam, and many hundreds in various other cities and towns.

Not only was the mass character of this day of action important, but for the first time action was taken at many different industries and at factory gates. Leaflets and newspapers were distributed and discussions took place during lunch breaks. The International Communist League especially tried to stimulate these discussions.

It is now possible for the pro-abortion movement to make further contacts in the factories and industrial unions. In the context of the Dutch situation, this means an important strengthening of the abortion movement, since very few women workers are now involved in the women's liberation struggle.

Despite the massive actions on March 30, the restrictive abortion law was adopted by the First Chamber on April 28. Women demonstrating in front of parliament were attacked by the police and about sixty women were arrested.

The liberal abortion situation that had existed is now being threatened. But with the active participation of the entire workers movement, we can prevent this and get rid of the new law. Active participation by the workers movement, particularly by the unions, will only come about if both male and female workers themselves take this issue up in their unions. □

An Impetus to Women's Struggles Worldwide

Abortion Rights Victory in Italy

By Janice Lynn

A tremendous victory for abortion rights was won in Italy on May 18. By a two to one margin, Italian voters defeated attempts to repeal Italy's three-year-old abortion law.

This victory gives impetus to women's rights supporters throughout the world who are fighting back against other ruling class attacks on women's rights.

There were two abortion referenda on the ballot. One, sponsored by the misnamed "Movement for Life," was supported by the Catholic Church hierarchy, the governing Christian Democratic Party, and the neofascist Italian Social Movement.

If passed, this referendum would have only permitted abortions if the woman's life was shown to be in danger.

Under the present law, abortions are allowed in the first ninety days of pregnancy if there is a threat to the health of the woman, for socioeconomic reasons, in rape cases, and if there is a danger that the child may be deformed.

The second abortion referendum was sponsored by the Radical Party, under the guise of liberalizing the abortion law and abolishing all restrictions on the right to abortion. In reality, this referendum would have worsened the abortion situation for women.

It would have made it more difficult for women under eighteen to have abortions and would have given doctors a pretext for refusing to perform abortions in public facilities, thus forcing women to pay exorbitant prices at private hospitals.

The present law permits abortions which are paid for by the government at state-run clinics.

The outpouring of sentiment as news of the abortion victory was received was described by *New York Times* reporter Henry Tanner: "Demonstrators poured into the streets of Rome as soon as the early returns were recognized as irreversible," Tanner wrote. "Mostly young people, both men and women, they crisscrossed the city center singing and carrying

Women Fight Back Against Rulers' Attacks

Women's rights supporters in a number of countries are fighting back against attempts to restrict women's rights, especially against the ruling class offensive around abortion.

In Spain, where abortion is illegal, there have been a growing number of prosecutions of women who have had abortions and of people who perform abortions. After a raid on an abortion clinic in Seville and the threatened prosecution of 432 women whose medical files were confiscated, some 20,000 women sent statements to the court declaring they too had had an abortion. An international petition calling for amnesty for all those on trial and for legal abortion is being circulated.

In Sweden, anti-abortion forces have begun efforts to repeal Sweden's liberal abortion law. Women's rights supporters there are organizing to fight this attack.

In France, there has been an increase in the prosecutions of doctors suspected of performing abortions after the restrictive ten-week time limit. The few hospitals that performed abortions are more and more refusing to perform them unless they are very early (seven weeks).

More than 1,000 people attended an April 29 meeting in Paris to launch a campaign against these repressive moves and in support of abortion rights. The meeting was sponsored by a range of feminist, political, and trade-union organizations.

In New York City, the first major abortion rights action since President Ronald Reagan's election took place May 16. The more than 2,000 women and men aimed their fire at the federal Human Life Amendment and Human Life Bill, which would outlaw abortion.

The May 16 protest was called as part of an International Day of Action for Reproductive Rights. Actions took place in several other U.S. cities and in more than ten countries.

Women in Switzerland are gearing up for a June 14 vote on adding a clause to the Swiss constitution declaring equal rights for men and women.

In Britain, 2,500 women and men participated in a May 9 Festival for Women's Rights Against Tory Attacks. The meeting called for the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party to organize a demonstration for a woman's right to work.

banners proclaiming victory."

The stunning victory of nearly 70 percent against repeal is even more pronounced given that the voting began only four days after the wounding of the pope. There had been much speculation that the shooting might serve to mobilize the vote for repeal of the abortion law.

But even in southern Italy, where the antiabortion vote had been expected to be the largest, large majorities voted against repeal.

In preceding weeks, the pope had spoken out on several occasions against abortion, stating that any legislation favorable to

abortion was "a very grave offense against man's basic rights" and violation of the biblical commandment not to kill.

Thousands of churches throughout Italy had waged a campaign for repeal of the law. They displayed stark posters of a fetus with the caption: "It is a child. It is 90 days old. From its 18th day its heart is beating. Now you know. Vote yes in the referendum for life."

Priests called for repeal of the abortion law from their pulpits the Sunday before the voting. And there were reports that in southern Italy priests led parishioners in

marches urging a vote for repeal. But these appeals were rejected.

This victory now puts Italian women in a better position to work for improvements in the present abortion law. For example, working to extend the full right to abortion to women under eighteen and for the hiring of health-care workers who will not refuse to perform abortions on the basis of moral objections.

This victory will also help the ongoing struggles for women's rights in other countries, and the general fightback against the worldwide ruling class offensive. □

'Workers Feel that Anything Is Possible'

For a Government of the Workers Parties in France

By Alain Krivine

[The following two articles by Alain Krivine, a leader of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, appeared in the May 15-21 issue of the LCR weekly *Rouge*. The translations are by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

An immense hope has been born. The French workers have just won a considerable victory. They went through the 1968 general strike, and then years of struggles and battles, often carried out under difficult conditions, before they succeeded in defeating the bourgeoisie's parties and opening a new period.

The victory of François Mitterrand, who in the second round of the election had the support of all the workers parties and nearly all the unions, shows not simply that the majority rejected the policies that Giscard and the bosses have been carrying out for seven years. It also expresses a desire for radical change, a desire to do away with a society that exploits and oppresses the workers.

The LCR threw all its forces into this battle. From the beginning of the campaign we explained that Giscard could be beaten. At that time there was still deep skepticism on this point as a result of the wildly sectarian policies of the Communist and Socialist parties and the union federations.

LCR members everywhere intervened in such a way as to rebuild the workers' confidence, to organize the struggle against the disunity of the workers movement, and to help build a powerful unity current. For example, LCR members participated in the movement for unity in struggles and later helped build a powerful force for unity in the trade unions.

We knew that, because of the policies of

the CP and SP, the defeat of the right in the elections would not resolve all the problems. But we were convinced that it would give the workers new confidence, that it would create a new, and much more favorable, situation for the growth of workers mobilizations and the achievement of workers unity in struggles.

Our analysis was confirmed by the explosion of joy that greeted the election results on the evening of May 10, and by the fact that CP leaders felt they had to attend these demonstrations. It was further confirmed by the new tone that the CP leadership is using.

Following this initial victory, the desire for unity is more powerful than ever. After having been demonstrated in the voting booths, we began to see it in the streets.

Millions of workers feel that now anything has become possible. But they still need the means to make sure that this first victory sets the stage for further ones, to make sure that our hopes are not betrayed again. Because of the failure of the May 1968 general strike and the 1978 legislative elections, there is a real feeling of distrust of the CP and SP leaders. Millions of people are wondering what guarantees there are that this time things will turn out better.

The only guarantee is the organized strength of the workers, their unity, their own initiatives. In a month new legislative elections will take place. Already the right, which was thrown out the door in the presidential elections, hopes to use the legislative elections to get back in through the window. It is important now that everything possible be done to make sure that the workers parties win a majority in parliament so they won't have any excuses for not carrying out the demands of the workers and the people. With this majority in parliament, the CP and SP must form a

government composed of their two parties alone.

The regime elected May 10 must immediately commit itself to protecting the workers against the blows of the bosses by supporting urgent demands like increasing the monthly minimum wage to 3,400 francs and freezing all prices on basic necessities.

To insure that the bourgeoisie has no respite in which to maneuver and export its capital, the workers should also demand the immediate departure of Giscard and the formation, in the briefest possible time, of a government whose task would be to satisfy the most immediate demands and to prepare the ground for a workers victory in the legislative elections, especially by democratizing television news coverage.

Alongside all these forces, the LCR will fight against any inclination toward class collaboration by the government. It will also demand the immediate formation of a government made up exclusively of the CP and SP, without any bourgeois ministers. The workers must demand that this government begin to attack the real power of the bosses by carrying out the radical measures that the current situation demands—especially the thirty-five hour workweek without any cut in pay.

Unity—the unity of the workers—will develop in these struggles against the bosses and the rightists, against all their attempts at sabotage. For example, the bank workers and their unions must be vigilant in confronting the present flight of capital. They will have to keep a close watch on all suspicious transactions, and publicize any discoveries of capital flight.

To carry out all these measures effectively, the workers can only rely on their own strength. They will have to discuss their concrete demands in united general

assemblies. Mitterrand proposed drawing up a balance sheet of the seven years, but who is better able to draw up a balance sheet of the situation in the factories and the most pressing needs of the working class than the workers themselves?

The workers know what they want. They will not give anyone a blank check. We must develop the means to discuss, debate, and act in a united way. And the conditions have already matured for this united strength to be organized into united committees of vigilance and action.

The LCR addresses itself to the thousands of workers who have participated with us in the battle for workers unity and the battle to get rid of Giscard. Together we have just won an initial victory. We know very well that this victory is still fragile, that the bourgeoisie is still in place, with its hands on the levers of

political and economic control. CP-leader Georges Marchais and newly-elected President François Mitterrand are not ready to really confront the bourgeoisie, as is shown clearly by the CP and SP maneuvering over the up-coming legislative elections.

You have been able to judge the LCR's role in recent battles. Today the LCR faces immense responsibilities because the decisive battles still lie ahead. For these battles to be successful there has to be a powerful revolutionary communist organization, rooted in the workplaces.

The time has come for you, in turn, to assume your responsibilities by joining our ranks. The May 10 victory can lead to others. It can lead to the victory of socialism.

New Political Situation in France

Now Is the Time to Join the LCR!

By Alain Krivine

François Mitterrand's victory opens up a new political situation in France. In this new situation the Revolutionary Communist League [LCR] has responsibilities unlike those in the past. While the defeat of the right settled nothing for millions of workers, it makes everything possible.

For the first time in decades, a different camp has hope. There is a feeling that this time we must not let the opportunity slip away.

The 1936 People's Front, the period following liberation from Nazi occupation, the May 1968 general strike—all these mobilizations and all these hopes were betrayed. These struggles, although defeated, allowed revolutionists to understand things and learn.

While we have no illusions about the policies that the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties will put forward, on the other hand we have immense confidence in the willingness to struggle and desire for change of millions of workers and young people who voted for Mitterrand.

We already saw this during the great general strike of May and June 1968. But at that time we also saw how all these energies could be dissipated in the absence of a revolutionary party rooted in the factories. In themselves, good ideas are not enough if they are not backed up by a credible force, by activists capable of proving themselves and practicing what they preach in day-to-day struggles.

In recent months the LCR has thrown all its forces into the battle for workers

unity, to get rid of Giscard. The organization did not content itself with waging a battle of ideas. It took active part in activities that had an impact in the workers movement—such as the movement for unity in struggles, the development of a unity current in all the trade unions, and the preparations for May Day activities. Millions of workers identified with the struggle we were waging, discovered that the LCR had a role to play, and saw the work its members were carrying out.

Today the LCR is beginning to take on the configuration of a real workers organization, a tool for struggle. On the eve of what could be decisive events, increasing the size of the LCR becomes a decisive task.

In the wake of Giscard's defeat, many immense and complex tasks face us. How do we intervene to insure that this initial victory is not sold out by the reformists? How do we build the mobilization of the workers without isolating ourselves? How do we organize to warn against the plans of the CP and SP leaders, to foster mobilization against the bosses and their sabotage attempts, and to lay the groundwork for a real working-class alternative—without at the same time playing into the hands of the right and far right?

Many workers are asking what guarantee they have that they won't be sold out again. Well in fact the only guarantee is their own degree of mobilization. But their guarantee also lies in the existence of a strong revolutionary organization, which has a solid base in the workplaces, knows

how to deal with all aspects of the political situation, and is able to avoid both opportunist and ultraleft temptations.

Being totally realistic, we maintain that although in 1968 we did not have sufficient forces to play a decisive role in the outcome of the movement, today the situation could be different. But if that is to be the case, in the shortest time possible the thousands of workers who have been actively involved with us for months or years must take a step beyond being in the League's periphery. They must join and accept their responsibilities as well. There's not going to be a more favorable situation, a more opportune time, a time when it is more indispensable that they join.

The LCR still has many shortcomings. But we will correct them together. We know that the League's relative weakness is often an obstacle to workers who are sympathizers but want to wait until we are a more credible force before they join. This vicious circle must be broken now. The LCR will be what the workers, youth, women make of it.

A new period of struggle and politization has just opened up in France, which will certainly have profound repercussions in the international workers movement. This time we are not talking about making an assessment of the activities of the Portuguese, Chilean, or Italian far left. Now it is our turn to assume our full responsibilities.

Comrades and friends—all of you who know that the bourgeoisie will not allow us any respite, and that in any case we must not let it regain lost ground, all of you who know quite well that the CP and SP leaders will not use Mitterrand's victory as a springboard to mount a real attack on the power of the capitalists and build a socialist France—now is the time to come forward and help us build a powerful revolutionary force.

Enough of betrayed hopes, enough of defeats! Forward to socialism with the Fourth International and its French section, the LCR! □

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The Fourth International and World War II

[George Breitman joined the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1935 and has been a member of its National Committee since 1939. On April 30 and May 1 he testified in the lawsuit against U.S. government spying and harassment brought by the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance.

[In the first part of Breitman's testimony he went through the government's so-called Mandigo affidavit point by point to show the lies and inaccuracies in it. The Mandigo affidavit, named after the FBI agent who wrote it, was the government's attempt to document the supposed crimes of SWP and YSA leaders. What it catalogues are their public political activities and their advocacy of Marxist ideas.

[In the second part of his testimony Breitman dealt with the SWP's involvement in the Fourth International during World War II. The following are excerpts from that testimony.

[The questioning is being conducted by Margaret Winter, attorney for the socialists.]

* * *

Question. Mr. Breitman, were you present at the founding convention of the SWP in early 1938?

Answer. Yes.

Q. And you were a delegate to that convention?

A. I was a delegate. I was a member of the credentials committee and on some other commission.

Q. Have you written anything on the founding convention?

A. I prepared a book called *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party*, which is going to be published this year. It contains documents, minutes, and reports of the Socialist Workers Party's first and second conventions, and meetings of the national committee in between.

Judge Griesa. When was the opening convention?

Breitman. It began the last day of 1937 and ended on January 3, 1938.

Q. Was the Fourth International in existence at the time of the founding convention of the SWP?

A. No, this convention was in January, 1938, and the Fourth International was not founded until September of that year. But there was a forerunner organization called the Movement for the Fourth International.

Q. Did the new SWP support the Move-

ment for the Fourth International?

A. At this founding convention of the SWP, a report was adopted to affiliate with the Movement for the Fourth International, and to help work toward the creation of the Fourth International.

Q. What else was decided at the founding convention of the SWP—besides support for the Fourth International that was about to come into being?

A. Well, there were several resolutions on current questions of that period—one on the Soviet Union, another one on Spain. There were resolutions on trade union work and unemployed work.

There was the adoption of a constitution. There was a debate over the name of the new organization, and there was adoption of a declaration of principles.

Declaration of Principles

Q. I am handing you Plaintiffs' Exhibit 253 for identification. Will you state what that document is?

A. This is the pamphlet which was issued a few weeks after the convention, containing the declaration of principles adopted at the founding convention and the constitution of the organization that was adopted at the founding convention.

Q. Did the founding convention take any position on the relative merits of a multiparty political system as opposed to a one-party political system under socialism?

A. Yes, in the declaration of principles, it was very plainly stated that the party stands for freedom of speech, press, assembly, and the right of opposition parties within American society, after the establishment of a workers state—

Griesa. Where are these statements?

Breitman. On page 8 there is a section called "The Workers State." The last paragraph in it says, "While the workers state will necessarily reserve to itself the indispensable right to take all requisite measures to deal with violence and armed attacks against the revolutionary regime, it will, at the same time, assure adequate civil rights to opposition individuals, groups and political parties and will guarantee the opportunity for the expression of opposition through the allotment of press, radio and assembly facilities in accordance with the real strength among the people of the opposition groups or parties."

Q. What role, if any, did Leon Trotsky personally play in the founding convention of the SWP?

A. Well, he was not in the United States, of course, and he was not permitted to visit the United States, even for health consultations. But he participated in the form of articles that he wrote, which were printed in the discussion bulletin preceding the convention, and in letters that he wrote to the leaders of the new party.

Fourth International

Q. You testified a little earlier that the founding congress of the Fourth International was in September, 1938, I believe?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the SWP participate in that founding congress?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the SWP send delegates to that congress?

A. It did.

Q. How many?

A. Well, there were three Americans who were delegates. Two were leaders of the Socialist Workers Party—James P. Cannon and Max Schachtman—who had both been founders of the so-called Trotskyist Tendency in the United States.

The third person was a man named Nathan Gould, who was the leader of the youth organization that was affiliated with the Socialist Workers Party. These three went to the founding congress as delegates.

Q. Was the fact of their participation at this founding congress publicized at the time by the SWP?

A. No.

Q. And why not?

Leaders Assassinated

A. Well, this was more or less an illegal congress because Stalin and the Soviet secret police had decided to kill as many leaders of this Fourth Internationalist movement as possible. In the year preceding the congress, in September, they did succeed in killing several people who were unquestionably international leaders of this movement. These included Trotsky's son, who was assassinated in a Paris hospital in February, 1938, and Rudolph Klement, the administrative secretary of the Fourth International, who was kidnapped and whose headless body was found in the Seine River a few days before the congress opened.

So there was considerable concern about the safety of people who were known to be going to the congress, and it was not publicized.

We knew about it inside the party because of the great difficulty we had in raising money to send these delegates to the congress. They were elected in April, and in June they were supposed to leave. But there wasn't enough money for two of them to go, so only one went in June—Cannon. We had to carry on a big fund drive for about six weeks before money was raised to send Schachtman. And in the end we had to take a bank loan in order to be able to put him on a ship.

Q. At what time, if ever, did the SWP make public the fact that these three Americans had participated in the founding congress?

A. Well, in 1973 we published a book called *Documents of the Fourth International, the Formative Years, 1933-1940*.

This book reported who the delegates were and included minutes, as well as all of the resolutions that had been adopted by the congress.

We got those minutes only in 1972, and we published them in the first book thereafter. Reading those minutes it is clear who the three Americans were. They are identified by their own names.

Election of IEC

Q. Were any SWP members elected to leadership bodies at the Fourth International at the founding world congress?

A. Yes.

Q. Who were they?

A. There were three Americans elected to the International Executive Committee: Cannon, Schachtman, and the congress asked the SWP to select a third member. I should add that the International Executive Committee consisted of fifteen members, one of whom was Trotsky and three of whom were Americans.

Griese. What did the Fourth International request?

Breitman. It requested that the SWP select the third person rather than have him or her elected directly by the congress.

Griese. All right. Who was the third person?

Breitman. The third person was Carl Skoglund. He was not identified this way in the minutes where he was elected in November, 1938. It took me four years to find out his identity, but I think it is now quite well-established—that he was the third member.

Griese. So the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International consisted of fifteen people, one of whom was Leon Trotsky?

Breitman. Right.

Griese. Did he travel outside of Mexico at all?

Breitman. No. Once he reached Mexico he stayed there until his death.

Founding Congress

Q. What was decided at the founding congress of the Fourth International?

A. Well, the main decisions revolved around the adoption of program and the decision to actually found the Fourth International at that point.

The program, which has become known popularly as the Transitional Program, was written in its first draft by Trotsky in Mexico. After being discussed for several months before the congress, it was discussed at the congress and adopted there.

In addition, as I have said, they decided to set up the International at that point, and they elected a leadership to guide the organization until the next congress.

This was the International Executive Committee of fifteen that I have referred to.

And, in addition to that, they decided that in the event of war, the center of the Fourth International should be transferred to the western hemisphere.

What Is the Socialist Lawsuit?

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) are putting the U.S. government on trial for illegal acts that have been committed against them.

The lawsuit, begun in July 1973, demands \$40 million in damages for years of government spying and harassment, and an injunction to halt any further illegal government activity against the SWP and YSA.

An important part of the lawsuit is the socialists' challenge to the U.S. government's antidemocratic thought-control laws and presidential executive orders, which try to make just the advocacy of socialist ideas illegal.

On trial are the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and other U.S. government agencies that have interfered with the political rights of the socialists.

These agencies claim they have the legal right to spy on, harass, and deport anyone whose political views they disapprove of.

The lawsuit has forced the release of thousands of U.S. government documents describing burglaries, electronic surveillance, informers, interception of mail, blacklisting, bomb threats, physical violence, and so on.

The trial opened on April 2 in New York City and is expected to last into July.

Q. How do you know what decisions were made at this founding convention?

A. Well, we have the documents. There are some 150 pages of documents about this congress in this book that I referred to, *Documents of the Fourth International*.

We also have had an opportunity to study the archives of Leon Trotsky at Harvard. Trotsky was in the habit of retaining, saving, documents that were sent to him—political documents sent to him—from throughout the world. He received minutes of different national groups, of international groups, and so on, and he put them away.

Before he died, his archives were sold to Harvard University, and they were delivered shortly after his death.

Until last year we had access to, I forget how many, six or seven thousand different documents. But last year, in accordance with a stipulation they made and that Harvard accepted, they opened up another portion—the final portion—of his archives to the public. There we found a great many additional documents about the internal life, development, and disputes of the Fourth International and its predecessor groups.

International Center

Q. When war did break out in Europe, did the center of the Fourth International shift?

A. Yes. At the time that the war broke out, there was an American in Europe working with the International Executive Committee. That was Albert Goldman. When the war began, he left and returned to the United States. But before the war or before he returned, before he arrived in New York, there was a meeting in New York of six people, five of whom were members of the International Executive Committee. They decided that they should take action—did I say when this was, what date?

Q. You didn't give the precise date.

A. This was eleven days after the declaration of war, on September 12, 1939. This small body met and decided that with the approval of three other International Executive Committee members in the western hemisphere they would assume the functions of the International Executive Committee here.

A week or nine days later, Goldman arrived and confirmed what had happened in Europe was that all of the members of the Fourth International had either been arrested, or conscripted, or driven underground—declared illegal as an organization. The IEC that had existed there had ceased to function.

During this nine-day period, the three other members of the committee on this continent had been consulted and they approved of this decision.

So at this meeting, on the 21st of September, the decision was made final that this body would assume the functions of the International Executive Committee until further notice.

Q. Now, I think you said there were five IEC members who held the first meeting:

A. Yes.

Role of Americans

Q. How many of these were Americans?

A. Three of these were Americans: Cannon, Schachtman and Gould. Gould representing the International Youth Organization affiliated to the Fourth International. He was, I guess, what you would call a fraternal member or a sixteenth member.

Anyhow, he attended it. Those were the three North Americans who attended.

There were two other members of the IEC, one who hailed from the Caribbean and one who came from Brazil.

And the other significant action of this meeting was that they elected as administrative secretary of the IEC an SWP member named Sam Gordon.

Q. Were you present at that IEC meeting?

A. No.

Q. Do you base your knowledge of this meeting on the same—

A. Last year we obtained the minutes of these two meetings from Harvard.

Q. That you described previously?

A. Yes. The names in it are all pseudonyms, and I think we have tracked down the real names of most of the people involved but there are one or two that still elude us.

Q. Was there an office for the Fourth International in New York?

A. No.

Q. What was the role of Trotsky in these IEC meetings, if any?

A. Well, he was one of the three who was not in New York, and he sent his approval of the course that was proposed by the people in New York.

Q. That is, there were the five IEC members who met originally, and at the second meeting on September 21st you had the approval of three others, and he was one of the three?

A. Yes.

Griese. So it was expanded to eight?

Breitman. It was expanded to eight, but it was understood that the other three would not be present at its meetings in New York.

Q. And those eight represented a majority of the fifteen-member IEC?

A. Yes.

Q. How long did this IEC function as a body?

A. Not very long. There was a factional dispute going on in the Socialist Workers Party at that time over the role of the Soviet Union in the war, and whether or not the

SWP and the Fourth International should defend the Soviet Union in this war.

The IEC became paralyzed and ceased to function after November because they were unable to get a clear-cut majority for either point of view. So this executive committee existed nominally until May, 1940, when an emergency conference of the Fourth International was held—in order to resolve the political dispute that was going on and to elect a new IEC which could function.

* * *

Emergency Conference

Q. Mr. Breitman, before the break you were talking about this center of the Fourth International when it shifted to New York.

The last thing you had talked about with respect to the center in New York was an emergency conference in 1940. Could you briefly describe what this conference did?

A. It adopted a manifesto about the war which had been written by Trotsky in its first draft. It elected a new International Executive Committee.

Judge Griese. Who was it that did these things?

Breitman. An emergency conference of the Fourth International.

Griese. That was held in 1940?

Breitman. Yes. It was attended by delegates from North America, South America, Australia, and some mandated delegates from Europe—delegates who were mandated from Europe, rather.

Griese. Where was it?

Breitman. This was in New York.

Q. Who were the Americans present at this conference, Mr. Breitman?

A. James P. Cannon, Sam Gordon, Albert Goldman, Felix Morrow were the delegates and there was a fifth person. Goldman was the attorney of the party and Morrow was then editor of the *Militant*.

The fifth person in attendance was Joseph Hansen, who was invited to attend with voice but no vote.

Q. Were Americans elected to the new IEC?

A. Yes. There were three Americans elected to the new IEC—Cannon, Goldman, I think, and Dobbs.

Q. How do you know these facts?

A. Excuse me, there were four—Cannon, Gordon, Goldman, and Dobbs.

Q. How do you know these facts?

A. Because last year when the final part of the Trotsky archives at Harvard were opened, I wrote for and obtained a copy of the minutes of this conference.

Q. After this 1940 emergency conference what did the International center in New

York do, if anything—the International center of the Fourth International?

A. Well, it tried to maintain or regain contact with the different sections or parties of the International throughout the world.

It published occasional documents, declarations and manifestos on the major issues occurring in the war.

Q. For what period of time did the International operate in New York?

A. This International center that emerged from the emergency conference operated from 1940 to 1945.

Q. Who participated in the work of the center?

A. Well, some leaders of the SWP, and some refugees from Europe, some delegates from Latin America.

Q. What kind of communication was there between the center and New York and Europe during the war?

A. It was very scanty and very limited, especially in the early years of the war.

As Hitler was driven back beginning in 1944, contact began to be made with all of France, and not just the part that was unoccupied—and with other countries that they had been unable to reach until then.

But up until around 1944 there was small contact, infrequent and irregular.

Disaffiliation

Q. Mr. Breitman: I believe you testified that you were present at the December, 1940, convention of the SWP.

A. I don't believe I did, but I was present.

Q. Were you a delegate?

A. Yes, I was a delegate.

Griese. The date again?

Breitman. December, 1940. That was the Fourth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party. It was called a special convention.

Q. Was that convention the one at which the SWP voted to disaffiliate from the Fourth International because of the Voorhis Act?

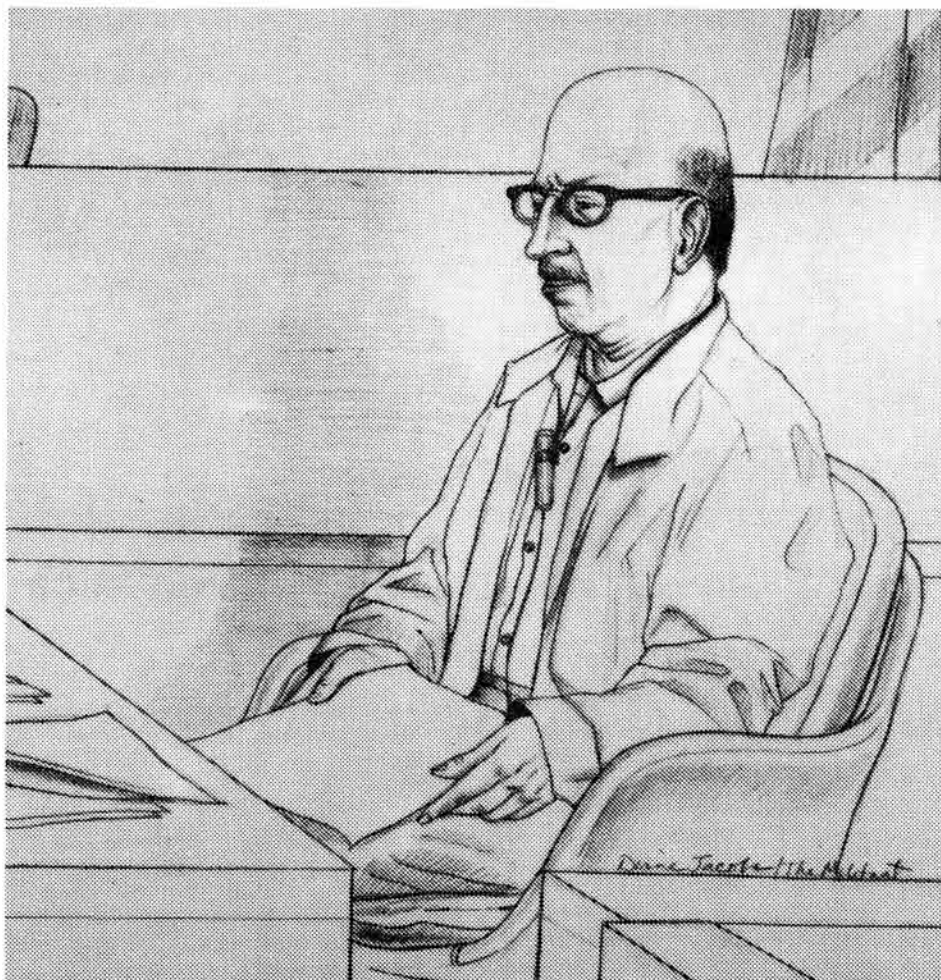
A. Yes.

Q. Were there any other major decisions at this convention besides the decision to disaffiliate?

A. The other decision was to suspend the declaration of, or to revoke—I forget the exact word—the declaration of principles that had been adopted at the founding convention in January, 1938.

Q. Why was that decision made?

A. Because the position that the declaration of principles had taken on a number of questions was no longer up to date. The party, in the meantime in this three-year period, had changed its position on the labor



George Breitman on the witness stand.

party question, and had decided to support a referendum on war, where previously it had been opposed to it. A number of other parts of the declaration of principles had been outmoded.

So it was decided to withdraw the declaration of principles and instruct the national committee to prepare a new draft.

Q. And did the SWP make public the major decisions of this convention?

A. Yes.

Q. I am handing you a copy of 'Socialist Appeal,' dated December 28, 1940. Are those decisions published in this issue of 'Socialist Appeal'?

A. Yes, on the bottom of the page—that is, on page 2 of this compilation—there is an article called "Special National Convention of SWP, Acts on International Relations."

And I think it contains the full resolution on both these questions that I have referred to in full.

Q. Is 'Socialist Appeal' the same newspaper as the 'Militant'?

A. Yes. At that time the *Militant* was called *Socialist Appeal*. The name was

changed again in 1941.

Q. Changed to what?

A. To the *Militant*, and has remained that.

Q. Did the December, 1940, disaffiliation have any effect on SWP members' participation in the International center of the Fourth International in New York?

A. No, I don't think so, not in a political sense. We continued to be in solidarity with the Fourth International, and to cooperate with them wherever possible.

In an organizational sense we no longer were part of the Fourth International and, therefore, that changed our relationship somewhat. But essentially and politically there was no change.

European Secretariat

Q. Did you ever attend any meetings of the Fourth International?

A. Yes.

Q. When?

A. From 1944 to 1946.

Q. Where were these meetings?

A. These meetings were in France.

Q. What kind of meetings were they?

A. They were meetings of a group called the European Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Q. What was the European Secretariat?

A. The European Secretariat was an executive committee set up after the national parties in Europe had either been driven underground or had disappeared—with an attempt to, or attempting to, reconstruct parties where they had been destroyed and to coordinate their work on a Europe-wide scale.

Q. Was this after the center shifted to New York?

A. Yes, this secretariat, I believe, was created in 1943, but it might have been the end of 1942.

Q. How did you happen to be in France in 1944?

A. Well, I can thank the government for that too. I was in France because I had been drafted into the Army and shipped there. I was drafted in 1943 and arrived in France in June, 1944.

Q. How did you happen to attend meetings of the European Secretariat?

A. Well, the Socialist Workers Party was very anxious to get in touch with co-thinkers throughout the world. When I went overseas, they wanted me to try to regain contact with whoever was possible, and I did that. They invited me to attend meetings of the European Secretariat.

Q. Were these meetings held openly?

A. No, they were not held openly. Paris had just been liberated from the Nazis. Some of the members of the Secretariat had been either in concentration camps, from which they had escaped, or they had been tortured. There was, as a result of the conditions that existed there, an atmosphere of secrecy and avoidance of public notice.

Q. What was discussed at these meetings of the European Secretariat that you attended?

A. Much of it had to do with what was going on in France. But most of it dealt with political problems of that period when the war was drawing to an end—what the new circumstances were going to be after the war. Attempts were also made to establish contact with more and more sections throughout Europe as the Nazi armies fell back.

Pre-World Conference

Q. Did you attend any other Fourth International meetings besides those of the European Secretariat between the 1944 and 1946 period?

A. Yes. In 1946 I attended a pre-World

Conference of the Fourth International in Paris—March, 1946.

Q. Were you a delegate?

A. Yes, I was a delegate representing the Socialist Workers Party.

Q. Were there any other American delegates?

A. There were two other Americans there. I think only one of them was a delegate from the SWP.

Q. Who were they?

A. One was Sam Gordon and the other was a newspaperman named Sherry Mangan, who worked for *Time* or *Fortune*, one of those Luce publications. He had been there before the war, and had been seized by the Nazis when they occupied Paris. But then he had returned to the United States, where I first met him.

In fact, it was through him that I first made contact with the European Secretariat. He collaborated very closely with the Secretariat.

Q. In March, 1946, at the time of this pre-World Conference, had the center of the Fourth International shifted back to Europe yet?

A. Not yet.

Q. How did the shift occur?

A. Well, it occurred at this very conference. Prior to that there had been correspondence between the European Secretariat and the people in New York. An agreement had been reached that as soon as the war ended, and as soon thereafter as possible, the center should be returned to Europe. That was the major accomplishment of this conference which, in addition, had the task of preparing for another world congress which was eventually held in 1948.

Q. Could you briefly describe what was discussed at this pre-World Conference?

A. Yes. By this time the war had ended and the cold war was starting. There were resolutions adopted on a great many questions that the European sections in particular were concerned about.

Griener. When was the World Congress? Are you talking about the World Congress or the pre-World Congress?

Breitman. The pre-World.

Q. Were delegates elected to the IEC at this pre-World Conference?

A. Members of the IEC were elected at this conference because now the center was being shifted back. A new leadership body had to do the work of preparing for the full World Congress later on.

Q. Were any Americans elected to the IEC?

A. Yes, Cannon was elected and Gordon

was elected—Sam Gordon. I am not absolutely sure whether there was another, but I also was elected.

Q. Were you present at the session when you were elected to the IEC?

A. No. On the third day of the conference the police invaded the hall and arrested everybody. The Americans were taken to the American Embassy. The others were put in jail, and the last session of the conference was held in jail that night. I was not present.

If I had been, I think I would have de-

clined the honor of being a member of the IEC—which was about what it would amount to, as an honor, if I was not able to attend their meetings. And I would have told them that my plans were to return to the United States as quickly as possible, and never to leave it again.

Q. Have you ever attended any other Fourth International conferences since the one you just described?

A. No.

Q. I have no further questions. □

U.S.-Backed Regime Steps Up Repression

Plot Uncovered For Invasion of Dominica

By Janice Lynn

Ten mercenaries—six of them active in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK)—were arrested by Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 27. The ten were about to launch an invasion of the Caribbean island of Dominica.

Among those arrested were a Grand Wizard of the Knights of the KKK from Birmingham, Alabama; a former Green Beret member; a notorious KKK member from Canada; and a former member of the American Nazi Party.

According to a federal indictment, these racist mercenaries were planning to overthrow the U.S.-backed government in Dominica, which is headed by Prime Minister Mary Eugenia Charles. Charles, along with Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga and Barbados Prime Minister Tom Adams, maintains friendly ties with the imperialists in Washington.

Meanwhile, mercenary forces intent on overthrowing the revolutionary governments in Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua are operating with impunity in Florida and other states. Neither the FBI nor the CIA—who are well aware of the existence of these counterrevolutionary forces—have done anything to interfere with their operations.

In fact, the CIA has been complicit in the training of these counterrevolutionary forces. After the defeat of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the CIA built up a huge station in Miami, with hundreds of CIA officers working closely with the Cuban rightists who have since been joined by supporters of former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza.

But the U.S. authorities obviously take a different attitude in the case of attacks on the Dominican government.

The island of Dominica, situated between the French-ruled islands of Marti-

nique and Guadeloupe, has a population of 80,000—overwhelmingly Black. Dominica was granted formal independence from Britain in November 1978.

Dominica is an underdeveloped country—as are the other Caribbean islands—a legacy of colonialist exploitation. Its economy is based on the production of bananas and citrus fruits. It has an official unemployment rate of 40 percent and an illiteracy rate of between 35 and 40 percent.

A state of emergency has been in effect on Dominica for the past three months. All fundamental rights have been curtailed. There is no freedom of speech, public meetings are banned, newspaper publishing is restricted, a curfew is in effect, and there has been a general crackdown against all opposition to Prime Minister Charles and the ruling Dominica Freedom Party.

Charles was elected Prime Minister in July 1980, a year after the former prime minister—Patrick John—had been forced out of the government along with almost his entire cabinet. The ten mercenaries arrested in New Orleans were said to be connected with John.

In 1979 John had tried to pass two bills in parliament that would have outlawed strikes and limited freedom of the press. This provoked a massive demonstration of some 15,000 people in front of the parliament on May 29, 1979. The police and army fired on the demonstrators, killing a six-month-old baby and a nineteen-year-old dock worker.

The widespread outrage resulted in a twenty-four day general strike that demanded John's resignation. The hatred for the John government was compounded by revelations of the prime minister's links to the apartheid South African regime.

While in office, John had become involved with a Barbados gunrunner in an

economic scheme for Dominica that was to be financed by the South African regime. The plan was tied in with a plot to invade Barbados and install John as president of a commonwealth of Dominica and Barbados.

In addition, it was discovered that an oil refinery planned for construction in the north of the island was to be used for the processing of crude oil for transshipment to South Africa.

John was finally forced out of office on June 21, 1979, after all his ministers had resigned. A coalition of organizations, composed of both business organizations and employers, as well as workers organizations, churches, and others came together to select an interim government until new elections could take place.

After repeated protests, elections were finally held in July 1980. Three pro-capitalist parties fielded candidates, as did the Dominica Liberation Movement (DLM), a leftist party that grew out of the Black power movement that swept the Caribbean in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The DLM received 10.8 percent of the vote.

The party of Mary Eugenia Charles, the Dominica Freedom Party, won 51 percent of the vote and seventeen of the twenty-one seats in parliament. Patrick John's party won no seats.

Charles Consolidates Rule

Charles began to consolidate her power. She disbanded the army, confiscated the soldiers' weapons, and turned them over to the police, which she viewed as a more loyal force.

She then moved to divide the working people and farmers by going after the Rastafarians—a Black-nationalist cultural and religious current.

On February 12, 1981, the police shot to death two Rastas who they accused of being responsible for several shop break-ins. This followed an anti-Rastafarian campaign that the government had been whipping up.

In response, the Rastas kidnapped a big landowner, whose car the police had used in the shooting. He is being held hostage in return for the setting up of an independent commission of inquiry into the police killings, the release of two Rasta prisoners, and an end to police harassment and brutality.

To this day, the Charles government has refused to accede to a single one of these demands. Instead, on February 13, a state of emergency was declared. Then, an anti-terrorism law was introduced. This law permits the police to shoot anyone suspected of a terrorist act, thus giving them the right to murder anyone they please.

This antiterrorist law replaces a 1974 law known as the "Dreads Act," passed during the regime of Patrick John. The "Dreads Act" had outlawed the wearing of dreadlocks (the hairstyle of the Rastafar-



ians) and permitted police to shoot anyone not complying with the law.

In March 1981, Charles announced she had uncovered a plot to overthrow her government and extended the state of emergency. She ordered the arrests of Patrick John and a number of other figures from John's regime.

But the Charles government has used the plots against her rule as the pretext for silencing all opposition to her policies. She has come under increasing criticism for her inability to alleviate unemployment, her unwillingness to diversify and develop the economy, and her close ties with imperialism.

In addition, two severe hurricanes had earlier ruined much of the banana crop and caused considerable destruction on the island. All the hotels were destroyed; none

have yet been rebuilt, thus effectively curtailing tourism.

Each month, Charles has extended the state of emergency and all the restrictions on democratic rights that go with it.

The Dominica Liberation Movement calls for the immediate lifting of the state of emergency. The DLM has also called on the Charles government to consider the demands raised by the Rastas, especially the setting up of an independent inquiry to investigate the police shooting.

Threats From Imperialism

The DLM also points to the greatest threat to the people of Dominica. In December 1980, during a strike of bankworkers, a U.S. warship came to Dominica. At the end of March 1981, a French ship came to the island, flying helicopters over Dominican land. At the same time, two additional U.S. warships visited the island.

"These ships are coming here to frighten us, to show us how strong the imperialists are," the DLM wrote in its April 4 newsletter, published in defiance of the government ban. "We must stand up firm for our rights."

Prime Minister Charles has been openly seeking U.S. military assistance. Charles recently returned from a visit to Washington where she held discussions with U.S. State Department officials about "the general security of the state." She raised the possibility of Washington setting up a U.S. Coast Guard service in the region. Charles has also requested that British and French troops be permanently stationed in Dominica.

The DLM, pointing to the gains won by the workers and peasants on the nearby island of Grenada, warns that the imperialists will try to use Dominica "as a base for attacking Free Grenada and turning back the tide of progress that is sweeping through the eastern Caribbean." □

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The Economic Disaster in Britain

By Brian Grogan

The British economy went into its current recession before any of the other advanced capitalist countries. It will also be the last to come out.

The recession began at the start of 1980. The slide in industrial output accelerated in January 1981 and there is no clear sign of the recession bottoming out. Indeed the recent Tory budget which took a further £3.5 billion out of the economy threatens to send it into a tailspin.

Britain has gone deeper into recession than the Tories planned or the bosses anticipated. But the recent budget made it clear that if Thatcher has her way, the punishment will continue until the working class is broken, or until the resistance to her policies from the working class turns her out of office. From the sound of the recent bleatings of the bosses in face of the budget, it seems that they are afraid that the latter will be the likely outcome of the continuation of Thatcher's policies.

The British Slump

In 1980, the output for the whole economy (gross national product) fell by 3%. But even this figure gives too flattering a picture. The situation has been a deteriorating one. The major decline was in the latter part of the year. Thus in the last quarter of 1980, total output was down 5.5% from a year earlier.

Compared with the peak of the last business cycle, this represented a 6.8% contraction. So the present recession is likely to be much worse than the 1974-75 recession when the drop was 4.8% between peak and trough—third quarter 1973, to third quarter 1975. (The figures are from *Report of the Central Statistical Office*, [CSO] February 1981.) Things are getting worse, with the burden falling on manufacturing industry.

In January, industrial output fell by 1.3%. This was the seventh monthly drop in a row. Industrial output for the three months November to January showed a staggering 11.5% drop over the same period last year. This is the largest decline since the crash of 1930. The drop is worse, (13.5%) if oil and gas production is left out.

The figures for manufacturing industry show a 14.4% drop in output since January last year, and the figures then were depressed by the steel strike. (In the three months from November to January the drop reached 3.6% on the previous three months.) The core sectors fared even worse. Metal manufacturing was down by 20%, engineering by 17% and chemicals and petroleum by 16%. (Figures issued by

the Central Statistical Office, February 1981.)

To try to get a measure of the decline, we could note that the car industry turned out only 924,000 units in 1980 against 1.64 million in 1970. Steel output was down from 28 million metric tons in 1970 to 11.2 million last year. As for the construction industry, the usual indicator of economic activity, the budget submission by the National Federation of Building Trades Employers, predicted that by the end of this year output will be 25% below its 1970 level.

The response of the bosses to this situation has of course been to go in for an orgy of destocking. As a consequence investment in manufacturing declined last year by 6%. The Department of Industry predicts that this year the volume of capital spending will decline by a further 15% to 20%.

A challenge to this bleak picture has been the way that exports have apparently held up despite the strength of the pound sterling. Last year saw a balance of payments surplus of £2.5 billion. The first two months of 1981 gave a £1.65 billion surplus—half the projected yearly target. But for several months now, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), has been pointing out that the strong pound is undermining exports. In just these same two months of 1981 the volume of manufactured goods exported fell by nearly 9%.

In any event, oil trade and "invisible" exports such as banking and other services (including the Common Market repayment on Britain's budget contribution) amount to more than 80% of the current account surplus.

The reality is that Britain has suffered a catastrophic loss of competitiveness—estimated by the Bank of England last December to be an astonishing 40% below 1975 levels—that will in time show through the current account.

This will be all the earlier as the previous export performance could take advantage of a situation where most of the advanced capitalist countries had still to go into recession. This no longer pertains.

The other bright spot for the government has been the way that inflation has been brought down over the past year. In February 1981, the Retail Price Index fell to 13% from the 20% level one year ago. But even this is threatened.

The main indicator that the government has chosen to monitor its success in bringing down inflation has been the money supply. This grew at *twice* the 7% to 11%

rate that the government had projected. By the April target date, it will have grown by well over 20%.

The big companies bear a large part of the responsibility for increasing the money supply. In October bank lending to industry totaled £3.6 billion. This has been increasing at an average monthly rate of between £400 million and £500 million a month since then (*Financial Times*, December 19, 1980).

High interest rates, which according to the monetarist religion should have kept the money supply in check, have had precisely the opposite effect. Companies have had to borrow more to pay interest on previous loans.

The severity of the recession is such that despite the unprecedented large number of bankruptcies—2,068 companies went bankrupt in the last quarter of 1980 alone, a 38% increase on a year earlier—banks are "bending the loan rules" to prevent more. According to the November 23, 1980, *Sunday Times*, "Helping to keep British industry afloat will cost the major High St. banks up to £400 [million]" in 1980 as provision against doubtful debts.

This situation has been exacerbated by the sharp fall in the rates of profit of industrial and commercial companies. This (excluding North Sea oil) had been cut at the end of last year to 4.5%—a full percentage point lower than during the 1974-75 recession. This has affected blue chip, high productivity and export oriented industries like ICI, Metal Box Co., and Courtaulds. ICI showed no trading profits for the first nine months of 1980, Metal Box was in the red last year on its British operation for the first time in living memory, and Courtaulds' profits collapsed from £30 million to £3 million.

Looking at a company more dependent on the hard-hit car industry, Lucas Industries, the motor accessories and aircraft equipment group, plunged £27 million into the red for the six months preceding January—down from profits of £12 million. GKN, Britain's top engineering company with extensive steel interests, saw profits of £126 million turn into a £1.2 million loss. International Computers Limited (ICL), Britain's only main-frame computer manufacturer, had to be rescued from bankruptcy by a £200 million government loan guarantee following a loss of £20 million in the last three months of 1980.

In face of this, the bosses have been screaming at the government to decrease its debt by massive expenditure cuts in order to allow a sharp fall in the punitive interest rates dictated by its monetarist policies. The public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) to April this year will be nearly £14 billion—a gargantuan overshoot of the government's target of £8.5 billion. This amounts to 6% of gross domestic product virtually the same as in the 1974-75 recession. The plan was to cut that in half to avoid the massive acceleration in



Scottish steelworkers march in London to protest job cuts.

inflation which followed the last recession.

But, this isn't because Thatcher's gang is wavering over its plan to all but dismantle the welfare state. Last November, a vindictive package of cuts was announced of some £1 billion off public expenditure (which stood at £105 billion) for the year. Within this, defense expenditure was increased by almost 3%, while local authority spending—the major spending on welfare services—was to be cut by 3% in volume terms.

What this latter cut was to mean in real terms was clarified by Tory Environment Minister Heseltine in December when he announced a complete ban on further local authorities' housebuilding and announced a system of vindictive punishments against "overspending" local councils.

These cuts were not meant to be general aggregate cuts. They were meant to be different than Labour's which had resulted primarily in cut backs in capital spending projects. Tory cuts were aimed at wage cutting and destroying services through cutting jobs.

Some success has been achieved on this front. Local government shed more jobs last year than ever before. But the 2.2% or 45,000 jobs cut (excluding increases in the forces of law and order), are really nothing comparable to what has been going on in the private sector.

Worse, from the bosses point of view, the wage bill at £30 billion for 1980-81 was a whopping 25% increase. Wages in the public sector have been rising twice as fast as in the private sector. (*Economist*, March 14.)

So the government plans have come up against the obstacle of the working class. This has been manifested in the way that local Labour controlled councils have been pressured to put up resistance to the Heseltine measures. It has also been registered in workers' resistance to the government

imposed 6% limit on public sector wage rises—a measure in itself originally thought anathema to monetarists. Thus, at the time of writing, all the workers in the civil service are involved in industrial action to force an improvement in a 7% wage rise offer.

Nonetheless, cuts in services have proceeded if not in exactly the form the government wanted. Further cuts are in the pipeline for July. Manual workers in the public sector have settled for 7.5% increase—even if they are so far mounting a determined resistance to job losses. So why the massive overshoot in the PSBR?

The *Economist* of March 21 summed up the reasons in its typically sardonic fashion: "Through grants to Britain's steel, coal, rail, motor and defence industries, the government has spent counter cyclically with greater munificence than any since the war, including Labour ones."

"Counter cyclical" spending had nothing to do with the upwards of £3 billion spent in this fashion. The reason was the strength of the working class. This was graphically the case in coal, when the government was forced to do a dramatic about-face cancelling all proposed pit closures and threatened redundancies [job losses] in face of a developing miners strike in late February. This action threatened to unify the whole class in a movement to bring the government down. Similar concern was at the root of the decisions to fund the British Steel Corporation (BSC) and British Leyland (BL), although the situation was less clear-cut, and the successes against the workers involved were greater.

Added to the reasons for the overshoot was the greater amount spent on ameliorating the effects of unemployment (£815 million) and the costs of unemployment pay and loss of tax revenue from the unemployed (approximately £1 billion

more).

Of course, there was never a chance that a full-blooded monetarism could have been implemented in Britain given the social relation of forces. Britain is not Chile. What Thatcher's version gave a cover for was the deliberate creation of mass unemployment as *the* decisive weapon to batter the working class into submission.

But the result has been that the Tories have thrown everything that they had at the working class without making any decisive breakthrough. To the contrary, as it continues to pile on the pressure, a backlash is threatened which could engulf it.

The Reserve Army of Labor

Figures announced for March show unemployment standing at 2,484,712, that is, 10.3% of the working population. The rate shows no signs of slowing down. As the March 25 London *Guardian* commented: "Next month, short of an economic miracle, the 2.5 m[illion] total will be exceeded with worse to follow in the summer when the jobs market is flooded with school-leavers."

In January, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported after close consultation with the Treasury that 1981 is likely to see a further million unemployed. By mid 1982, 3 million or 12% of the workforce will be officially out of work. This projection was confirmed by a recent leak from the Treasury which anticipates a 3.7 million figure by the end of 1983. (*Sunday Times*, March 22, 1981.)

These official figures underestimate the situation. It has been suggested (*New Statesman*, March 27, 1981) that nearly another million must be added in order to take into account the number, primarily women, who do not register. This would make the number of women unemployed equal to that of men.

Youth have been hit exceedingly hard. In the year up to January 1981 there has been a 73% increase in the number of unemployed people under the age of twenty-five.

Employment Secretary James Prior has attempted to utilize this horrendous situation facing youth to suggest the establishment of a voluntary training scheme for up to six months in the army!

Long-term unemployment (that is those unemployed for more than a year), increased by 100,000 in 1980. Standing now at 455,000, long-term unemployment accounts for 20% of those without work. (All figures are from the Department of Employment Gazette, February 1981.)

Overall, in 1980 one in ten lost their jobs in manufacturing. In metal manufacturing this was one in five. In textiles one in seven.

In addition, there were 501,000 workers on short-time in manufacturing by the end of 1980. But overtime working still

amounts to 8.2 million hours a week (down from 15 million hours per week a year earlier).

In this situation, of course, workers have been thrown onto the defensive. Wage rises have steadily declined. In the three months November 1980 to January 1981, the average increase in basic rates was 9% compared with over 20% for the corresponding three months a year earlier. Nonetheless, for those still in work living standards have continued to rise to date.

The number of work stoppages in 1980 (1,262) was the lowest since 1941. However, the Tory press was crowing a bit too soon. The number of days lost (11,920,000), although considerably down from the previous year's astronomic figure of 29,474,000, was higher than in 1970 and 1973 under the previous Tory administration, and higher than in the first three years of the last Labour government.

The average number of days lost per year for the past ten years was 12,870,000. But this included three exceptional years of strike struggle: 1972, with the first miners' strike and an incipient general strike to free five dockers imprisoned under infamous Tory antiunion laws; 1974, with the second miners' strike which culminated in the fall of the Heath government; and 1979 with its "winter of discontent" against the wage-cutting policies of the last Labour government—again, a movement that led to the downfall of the government.

Moreover, to get a real measure of the tempo of the class struggle we would have to add the days lost through political strikes which are not included in the official figures. These would include the stoppages by aerospace workers (March 3 and 24) protesting against the denationalization of their industry; strike action in solidarity with the steel strike in South Wales; and the stoppages connected with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) "Day of Action" on May 14. Just adding the 2 million or so engaged in the latter action would put the figure above the average of the past ten years.

Of course, it would be foolish not to take account of the much greater hesitancy that exists among workers about taking strike action reflected in the sharp decline in the actual number of strikes and the decline in the overall number of workers involved (excluding the TUC Day of Action). In fact, six major disputes accounted for 9.5 million of the days lost. Of those the thirteen-week steel strike accounted for 8.8 million days lost, or 74% of the total.

The underlying relationship of forces was clarified in the miners' strike. The government was left with absolutely no doubt that British industry would be brought quickly to a halt if the miners struck. Solidarity was promised from dockers, rail workers, and steelworkers. It was absolutely clear that virtually no one would cross the miners' pickets. In fla-

grant defiance of the new Tory antipicketing laws they made clear their determination to send flying pickets to prevent the movement of coal from stockyards to power stations and other major users.

The government's fear had already been revealed when it granted a 13% rise to the miners without a struggle. A similar attitude to other strong groups of workers had been struck by the government when the dockers forced a complete climb-down by the bosses from their threat of large-scale redundancies, the tab being picked up by the government.

The role of the trades union bureaucrats has therefore been thrown into sharp relief. There is nothing immovable about this government nor are workers lacking in willingness to take it on. In reality, in a whole series of key confrontations, it was only the open and blatant sabotage of the bureaucracy that allowed the bosses to impose their will. We had already seen this in relation to the steel strike early last year, where, although the final settlement of 16% was a far cry from the original 2% "final offer," the thirteen weeks of bitter struggle had put the satisfaction of the full demands in sight. Moreover, it was the bureaucracy that compartmentalized the fight for higher wages from the fight to defend jobs. After thirteen weeks, and feeling sold out, the steelworkers did not have the ability to prevent the bureaucracy from selling 50,000 jobs.

The situation in British Leyland was even more obvious. On three separate occasions, in relation to three separate attacks by the bosses, workers voted for strike action (or actually went on unofficial strikes). But each time it was the bureaucrats that sabotaged the fight. The last one was typical. The workers voted to reject an 8.2% wage offer but the bureaucrats simply refused to act on it, continually reposing the matter in front of the workers until they got a majority for acceptance.

A virtually identical situation pertained in Fords and elsewhere.

So the pattern became clear. Use the bureaucracy for all it is worth. But if that fails, compromise in order to avoid a real confrontation. Thus the miners, waterworkers, gas and power workers will all have achieved a 13% raise.

But the problem for the Tories was that they had rejected a policy of directly relying on the union bureaucrats to do their dirty work. Unemployment and a decisive weakening of the class especially at the level of the plants was going to do the trick. But even in the face of 2.5 million unemployed, the level of organization in the factories remains largely intact. To be sure, some individual unions have lost some members, but the last Trades Union Congress (TUC) recorded yet another overall increase in union membership. (See table. Note that in the last period when there was a sharp increase in unemploy-

ment in 1971-72, this was immediately reflected in the loss in overall union membership. This is not yet the case, today, although unemployment is very much greater.)

Of course there have been changes in the plants. A notable defeat was recorded with the victimization of the leading rank-and-file leader Derek Robinson and another group of stewards in British Leyland. But this has not been able to be translated across-the-board.

This situation is marked by an accelerated turnover of the rank-and-file leadership in the shop stewards committees. This has often thrown up a new layer of militant but untested leaders. Even in the cases where there has been little change of personnel, stewards committees have shown a real instability in political complexion, being capable of moving rapidly to the left.

But the most important index of the character of the situation in the class is the leftward moves inside the Labour Party. Eighty thousand people joined the Labour Party in 1980. Local union affiliation to the party has developed on a broadening front—pioneered by the Yorkshire miners, led by left-winger Arthur Scargill. The developing pressure on the trade-union bureaucracy was seen at the last Labour Party conference at Wembley when the vacillation of the union bureaucracy allowed the left to score a remarkable victory which gave a decisive say to the unions in the election of the party leader (that is, any future Labour prime minister).

The developments in the LP represent an attempt by a new layer of working-class leaders to solve the burning questions facing the class which can no longer be resolved at a local or sectoral level.

The advance of the militant left, and the adoption by the Labour Party of a left-wing alternative to the Tories is a factor weighing heavily on the response which the Tories make to workers' challenges to them. This was a clear factor in the capitulation to the miners. It is also an important element marking the response of the bourgeoisie to the crisis of Thatcher's policies.

In relation to productivity the situation is unclear. At the end of 1980, the Bank of England reported that "It does not appear that productivity performance over the past year or so has been significantly different than in the mid-seventies." (Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin, December 1980.)

Given the extent of short-time working (500,000 in manufacturing) it would be illegitimate to draw premature conclusions from this picture. Productivity gains have undoubtedly been recorded. Some of these have been very large indeed. This is especially true in BSC, BL, and Fords, and other large-scale manufacturers. There is evident satisfaction by the bosses on this

Changes in British Trade Union Membership, 1969-1979

Year	Number of unions at year end	Membership in thousands				% Change in membership
		Male	Female	Unclassified	Total	
1969	565	7,972	2,507	—	10,479	+2.7
1970	543	8,444	2,743	—	11,187	+6.8
1971	525	8,382	2,753	—	11,135	-0.5
1972	507	8,452	2,907	—	11,359	+2.0
1973	519	8,450	3,006	—	11,456	+0.9
1974	507	8,586	3,178	—	11,764	+2.7
1975	501	8,729	3,464	—	12,193	+3.6
1975*	470	8,600	3,427	—	12,026	—
1976	473	8,825	3,561	—	12,386	+3.0
1977	481	9,071	3,775	—	12,846	+3.7
1978†	462	8,791	3,692	628	13,112	+2.1
1979	454	8,963	3,888	645	13,498	+2.9

*These notional figures exclude 31 organisations previously regarded as trade unions (see article on page 1203 of the November 1977 issue of *Employment Gazette*).

†Prior to 1978 figures for trade union members not clearly identified as male/female were included proportionately in the appropriate totals.

front, although the permanence of their gains will only be really tested when the economic upturn comes. BL cannot be encouraging in that regard.

The real problem for the bosses, especially the dynamic export-oriented sectors, is the present framework of the government's economic strategy. Everyone was aware that problems would ensue from the high value of the pound sterling which now has the status of a petro-currency. But its value has been buoyed up further by high interest rates and the consequent movement of large amounts of speculative funds to London has meant that there has been an adverse movement of 40% in relative labour costs.

The Independent Treasury Economic Model (ITEM) group of economists pose the problem this way: "The loss of competitiveness [in 1980] was on such a scale that it went far beyond industry's capacity to offset by productivity gains and by lower wages" (*Guardian*, January 5, 1981).

In other words, the short and medium term interests of the big bosses are coming into conflict with the unexpected economic consequences of Thatcher's longer term objective. Thatcher's project to reverse the sixty year decline of British capitalism by inflicting a decisive defeat on the working class had been a shared perspective, but 2.5 million official unemployment has failed to deliver the goods.

In a number of tests, Thatcher has shown herself to be dangerously weak. A series of piecemeal concessions which she has been forced to make have had the consequence of producing unexpected results which have hurt major manufacturing concerns.

Given their shared objectives the bosses very much welcome the recession and the mass unemployment. They were quite pre-

pared for short-term sacrifices. Now, as Thatcher seems to be failing, they are beginning to lose their nerve. If 2.5 million unemployed has not done the trick, who knows what might be needed? Who knows what reaction will be stirred up? Who knows what the consequences might be for Britain's industrial base?

This was the context in which Chancellor Geoffrey Howe prepared his March budget. For some months, criticisms had been mounted by the bosses and their representatives. Terrence Beckett, chairperson of the Confederation of British Industry had already stated the need for "a bare knuckle fight" to force Thatcher to change course. An all-party committee of MPs, with a Tory majority, had produced two reports which had challenged the validity of the government medium-term economic strategy.

Industry wanted the budget to mark a change of course. The CBI demanded a reflationary package, biased towards helping private industry come out of the recession—a package which would slash interest rates significantly and lower the value of the pound. They wanted cuts in taxes on industry which would have put £1.9 billion in companies' pockets. All commentators were calling for "a new industrial strategy." The CBI produced its own "master plan" aimed at reviving the British economy. Finally they wanted a change in public sector spending towards financing capital projects (which have declined by 40% since 1970).

The actual budget came like a bombshell. It took £4.5 billion out of the economy (including the £1 billion delayed from last November) through a mixture of direct and indirect taxation aimed primarily at the working class. This will push inflation up by 2%. The TUC estimated that between

£4 and £5 will have to be added to union wage claims as a result. At the same time its constraints were such as to be unable to meet the demands put forward by the bosses. Only minor concessions were given worth £860 million in a full year. Sir Raymond Pennock, president of the CBI, called the budget "a kick in the teeth."

The budget on the other hand was welcomed by the City [London's financial district]. Share prices went up rapidly in the weeks following the budget. It would, however, be quite mistaken to see some basic division opening up between sections of the bourgeoisie, or Thatcher favouring the City as against industry.

The problem was that a "turn" along the line demanded by the CBI, although meaning a continuation of the attacks on the working class because of the reflationary consequences, would have been interpreted as a weakening of Thatcher signaling a change of priority from "fighting inflation" to dealing with unemployment and thus giving concessions to the working class. Just prior to the budget Thatcher had made a humiliating climb-down in face of the miners' challenge. The main concern was to avoid any idea that the budget was a continuation or endorsement of this capitulation. But this intransigence was play-acting. The capitulation to the miners was a real defeat.

The unpopularity of the budget within the working class threatens political disaster for the Tories. The growing disillusion of the ruling class has put Thatcher in an isolated position. Most major figures in her Cabinet, outside a small inner circle, have let it be known that they neither agreed with nor were consulted about the budget.

The overwhelming pressure is for Thatcher to change course—or if she refuses to remove her. The March 15, *Sunday Times* summed up the consensus: "If [Thatcher] continues [her policies], the electorate will have its revenge and it will be right." Or, more forthrightly, the March 15, *Observer*: "Mrs Thatcher must be persuaded to change course or she must be removed."

Pete Walker, a prominent cabinet "wet" and old Heath supporter has started a public campaign for "a new industrial strategy to save industry from extinction." He further argued for a policy to reduce unemployment. But this is already to throw in the towel.

The dilemma facing the bourgeoisie will not be easily resolved. To continue with Thatcher's policies or to do a "U-turn"—both are equally dangerous options. 1981 has opened with a rash of industrial disputes including a number of factory occupations against redundancies, with some victories being chalked up. Combined with events in the Labour Party they promise to prevent the bourgeoisie from gaining the defeat of the workers movement they wanted from the recession.

March 27, 1981

Vietnam Since the Revolutionary Victory—II

By Nguyen Khac Vien

[The following is the second half of an interview-article, dated February 1980, that was printed as a pamphlet by *Vietnam Courier*, an English-language magazine published in Hanoi. The first part of the article, which covered problems of domestic policy, was published in the May 25 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Question. World public opinion at the moment is focussed on the question of Kampuchea and particularly on Vietnam-Kampuchea relations. How can one assess the situation in that country?

Answer. The government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is in complete control of the situation there. One year after liberation it can be affirmed that the rebirth of this country which was literally disintegrated by four years of Pol Pot rule is an undeniable fact. Six hundred and fifty thousand hectares of land have been brought back under cultivation and the first harvest has already been gathered. Together with international aid, which is becoming larger and better distributed, this has averted the threat of famine. Though there are still serious problems in the food supply, this does not alter the fact that the alarmist reports which appear so frequently in the Western press have more to do with psychological warfare than with news.

In Kampuchea as a whole, 700,000 children are already attending school, 40,000 in the capital Phnom Penh alone; about 15,000 teachers are teaching again; the school of medicine and pharmacy has reopened with 728 students. Forty major enterprises are back in operation. Throughout the country, new provincial and village administrations are being set up: the regular army and the people's militia of the new government are ensuring the inhabitants' security. The National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (NUFSK) and the government are broadening out gradually, taking in members of the former Sihanouk government or of the royal family, intellectuals who have survived the massacre. A currency will be issued very soon. The situation has become irreversible, in the sense that no force in the world is any longer capable of putting agents of Beijing or any other power back in the saddle in Phnom Penh.

Q. Where does the Heng Samrin government's strength come from? In the West it is often claimed that this regime is only held up by the support of the Vietnamese forces.

A. The Pol Pot regime, barbaric as it was, was unable to prevent the creation of a resistance, which began as early as 1975. Though forcibly repressed, this resistance nevertheless managed in about mid-1978 to form itself into a solid organization, notably among officers and political cadres of the army. President Heng Samrin is himself one of these officers of the Pol Pot army who realised that Pol Pot's political line was leading the country straight into total extermination. Then the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (NUFSK) was set up and the present government was formed from this organization. The base of the Heng Samrin government is this vast opposition to Pol Pot's reign of terror. It is the grim determination of the whole population never again to let the agents of Beijing and the imperialist powers return to power. For that would mean a new massacre followed by another war against Vietnam.

The consolidation of the present government means peace and the possibility of rapid regrowth for the country. The Khmer Rouge, the Khmer Serei, and politicians like Sihanouk or Son Sann who want to return to power with Chinese and American help are all going contrary to this profound aspiration of the Kampuchean people. A few years of peace and Kampuchea will soon regain its vitality. It is a rich country which, with its 2.5 million hectares of fertile arable land, its favourable climate and the excellent fishing in its rivers and lakes, easily manages to feed its population under normal conditions. We think that if peace and security are maintained, Kampuchea will become self-sufficient in food sooner than Vietnam.

Q. Why are Vietnamese troops still stationed in Kampuchea? And how long will they stay?

A. The Vietnamese forces came firstly to pursue the Pol Pot troops who had attacked Vietnam, and then at the request of the NUFSK to help to save the Kampuchean people from genocide. Now the routed Pol Pot troops have regrouped in Thailand, where they are fed and equipped by Beijing. Pro-American forces, the Khmer Serei are also based in Thailand. The Khmer Rouge and Khmer Serei are recruiting among the refugees, and combine to form a real counter-revolutionary army, which Beijing and Washington are trying to get back into the country in order to unleash civil war and overthrow the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. This government, which is in the process of consolidating it-

self, asked for help from Vietnam and an agreement was signed in February 1979 between the two governments. Under the terms of this agreement, Vietnamese troops will stay in the country until the day when the Kampuchean government asks them to withdraw.

The day when the Kampuchean government will be capable by itself of resisting the threat of the pro-Chinese and pro-American forces, it will ask the Vietnamese forces to leave. All the Vietnamese hope fervently that this day will come as soon as possible; Vietnamese troops will not stay a day longer. But as long as the Kampuchean government has not made this request, no force in the world can oblige them to withdraw. Certain governments have pressurized Vietnam by cutting off economic aid, China is threatening to make war on us. Vietnam will accept any hardship and sacrifice to keep its commitments to the Kampuchean people.

Q. Why such stubbornness? Hasn't Vietnam had enough of war? And isn't aid to Kampuchea a very heavy burden?

A. Vietnam has to send to Kampuchea troops, workers, technicians, doctors, and specialists in a variety of fields, to help our Kampuchean friends defend and rebuild their country. The Pol Pot men destroyed even families' crockery, even school stationery. We have had to send foodstuffs, medicines, cooking utensils, exercise books, pens and pencils, although our people also suffer serious shortages of food and goods. Our government has no difficulty convincing the Vietnamese people to make these sacrifices, because for every Vietnamese person, to defend Kampuchea and help it to rebuild is to defend and help Vietnam itself. Imagine if Germany was threatening Holland and Belgium, wouldn't it be natural for the French to come to the rescue of these two countries? Geography and history have woven close links between the three Indochinese countries: Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, and they have been obliged to form a common front against foreign aggression.

Q. It is said that, on the contrary, the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples are motivated rather by age-old feelings of mutual hostility.

A. It is true that in past centuries the Vietnamese and Kampuchean monarchs were often at war. In the 13th century, an Angkor king tried on two occasions to invade Vietnam, then from the 17th century

onwards, Vietnamese kings invaded Kampuchea repeatedly and annexed the lower part of the Mekong delta. But if one goes back through the centuries, it was the Thais (formerly called the Siamese) who destroyed the Angkor Empire, and not the Vietnamese; and the last annexation of Kampuchean territory by the Thais was not in the 17th century, but in 1940 when with Japanese support they took from Kampuchea vast areas of Battambang, Stung Treng and Kompong Thom provinces. Neither the mass media of Beijing, nor those of the West mention this age-old hatred between Kampuchians and Thais. When this ancient hostility between Vietnamese and Kampuchians is evoked and when attempts are made to keep it going and worsen it, this is for precise political objectives. Another historical trend which has developed since the colonial conquest is forgotten, or deliberately ignored: the militant solidarity between the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples in opposition to colonialism for the reconquest of their independence.

Q. Would you please give us an idea of this militant solidarity?

A. In 1862 the French occupied the three eastern provinces of the lower Mekong delta, which were part of Vietnam. From this base, they moved up the Mekong and a year later in 1863 occupied Phnom Penh. So a foreign power which occupies Saigon will sooner or later take Phnom Penh, and vice versa. With the era of Western colonial expansion, the fate of the peoples of the three Indochinese countries became linked. In 1884, a few months after having completed their conquest of Vietnam, the French imposed a treaty of complete protectorate on Vietnam and Kampuchea. In 1893 Laos was in turn subjected and the French then created so-called French Indochina, with a unified administration, the government of all Indochina.

From 1864 there were Kampuchean patriots, such as Achar Soa or Pokambo, who coordinated their activities with Vietnamese patriots. In 1930, in order to struggle against the government of all Indochina, communists of the three countries founded the Indochinese Communist Party, calling on the three peoples to unite and fight French colonialism. Colonialism did its best to divide the three peoples; French administrators and historians did their best to exacerbate the hatred between Vietnamese and Kampuchians. Among these two peoples there were two tendencies:

- true patriots and progressives who made a call for solidarity and unity in the anti-colonial struggle and for co-operation to build a better society.

- reactionaries who tried to revive past hatred.

During the war of liberation against the French forces, from 1945 to 1954, Kampuchean patriots created a National Liberation Front and called for the aid of Vietnamese troops. So Vietnamese and Kampu-

chean patriots fought side by side for many years, yet the Vietnamese forces withdrew as soon as the French colonialists retreated from Kampuchea. From 1954 to 1970, the Sihanouk government succeeded in maintaining its independence and neutrality. But in 1970 Sihanouk was overthrown by the pro-American government of Lon Nol, and in order to resist the American and pro-American forces, Sihanouk called for Vietnamese troops. Once again, the Vietnamese came to fight side by side with the Khmer resisters, only to withdraw straight away in 1975 after the liberation of Phnom Penh. So it is not the first time that Kampuchean patriots have called for Vietnamese help.

Q. What is Sihanouk's attitude to this question?

A. Sihanouk is a complex and changeable person. On the one hand he is a feudalist and a paternal despot wielding a completely personal power, on the other he is on occasion a patriot. According to the circumstances one side or the other may dominate. Until 1953 he found little difficulty in accepting the French protectorate and then Japanese domination, and then French tutelage again. The armed resistance against the French from 1945 to 1954 worried Sihanouk as much as it did the French. In 1953, to check the resistance, the French signed an agreement which restored independence to Kampuchea, giving power to Sihanouk, who was there and then proclaimed as a great patriot who had seized independence from the hands of the French. From 1954 to 1975, Sihanouk did recognise that the great enemy of Kampuchea was American imperialism, which had already taken hold of South Vietnam and part of Laos, and that he could count on Vietnam to resist the American domination. He had enough lucidity to see that the Americans could not win in Indochina, but he lacked the courage to refuse in 1969 the renewal of mainly American military aid.

He also refused to democratise political life in the country, concentrating all power in his own hands. Though his political cleverness allowed the country to keep its neutrality until 1970, his mistakes opened up the way for the manoeuvres of pro-American groups and led to the coup d'état of March 1970. From 1970 to 1975 he lived in Beijing; from 1975 to 1979 he was the prisoner of Pol Pot, then exiled himself to Beijing again. Since 1970 he has had practically no contact with the Kampuchean people, for whom the most important thing today is to oppose the return of the pro-Chinese forces, whether they are led by Pol Pot or Khieu Samphan or Sihanouk. I think that the collusion between Beijing and Washington has deeply impressed him and led him to think that the revolutionary movement of the Indochinese peoples would never be able to defeat such a massive force.

In any case, all those in Kampuchea who seek foreign help to try and oppose the pres-

ent government are doomed to failure. In face of the Chinese threat today, the Indochinese peoples are more united and stronger than ever. This alliance of the patriotic and revolutionary forces of the three countries, which began with the struggle against French colonialism, and was consolidated during the common struggle against the Americans, has emerged victorious and strengthened after the victory against the pro-Chinese Pol Pot regime. The patriotic and revolutionary movement in Kampuchea has suffered considerable losses, the great majority of its militants having been massacred, but from among the people and above all from the young people who suffered tremendously under Pol Pot, new forces, new activists are emerging, who are determined to rebuild their country. The results achieved during the first year of the regime prove that one can have confidence in them.

Q. How can one explain what happened in Kampuchea under Pol Pot?

A. Pol Pot's politics have two principal aspects: genocide at home, and war to the death against Vietnam in foreign policy. Two factors came together to cause this: firstly the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan group's own political line, and secondly Beijing's projects. Briefly, it could be said that the Pol Pot group is made up of adventurists with a mixture of ideas, leftist and nationalist, often lunatic; the political support and material aid of Beijing unfortunately gave them the means to put their disastrous programme into action. This group dreamed of:

- reforming the great Angkor Empire, taking back from Vietnam the entire lower Mekong delta, including Ho Chi Minh City.

- carrying out a radical revolution, suppressing in the most brutal way everything which they believed to be the curses of the old society (money, commerce, the arts, religion, science, etc.) which led to the massacre of intellectuals, Buddhist monks, artists and even sportsmen.

To realise these visions they had to raise a large army and force the entire population to work day and night on huge projects, mostly irrigation; anyone who opposed this crazy policy was mercilessly done to death. For Beijing, the Pol Pot clique was an instrument for attacking Vietnam from the south and thus facilitating a Chinese attack on the northern border. A firm hold over the Pol Pot regime plus the crushing of Vietnam would allow Beijing to establish its domination over the whole of Indochina, and thence to advance towards all Southeast Asia where 20 million Chinese already hold important economic positions.

In 1975 Pol Pot possessed 6 divisions of 5-6,000 men each, with no artillery, armour nor aircraft. Beijing furnished arms and advisers to bring this army up to 23 divisions, providing it with heavy armaments and aeroplanes. One can see why from May 1975 Pol Pot began to launch the first attacks on

Vietnam and why for four years he consistently refused all offers of negotiation made by the Vietnamese. Certain of Chinese support, he believed he could defeat Vietnam. The events of January 1979 are easy to explain: in December 1978 after the great floods which had ravaged our country, Beijing thought that Vietnam was completely worn out and set the Pol Pot troops at the attack, while Chinese troops were being concentrated at Vietnam's northern border. The Pol Pot attack would oblige the Vietnamese forces to look to the south and give Beijing a pretext to attack Vietnam on the northern border. Deng Xiaoping received Washington's sanction for this. Both Beijing and Washington underestimated the strength of internal opposition to Pol Pot and the vitality of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement.

Q. Now it is this vitality of the Vietnamese that worries many people in Southeast Asia, according to some Western newspapers anyway. It could lead one to imagine the Vietnamese army invading in turn Thailand, Malaysia . . .

A. Southeast Asia is a vast region of 300 million inhabitants which today produces 100 million tons of crude oil, considerable quantities of tin, rubber, tropical woods, vegetable oil, etc. The oil reserves are very large. Where do these raw materials go? To Japan, to the USA, to Western Europe. Japanese, American, and European multinational companies have installed many enterprises in Southeast Asia; many Southeast Asian cities are places of cheap entertainment for millions of Europeans, Japanese and Americans. From the cultural point of view, the region is submerged by films and other products of the West and Japan. In the middle of this highly-integrated neo-colonial system, there are Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea who refuse to be drawn in, they're the spanner in the works which risks snarling up the whole machine.

Geographically, Indochina is necessarily on the route of any expansionist attempt by Beijing in the direction of Southeast Asia. One can see why the Washington-Beijing axis is concentrating its attacks on the Indochinese countries, especially Vietnam. The virulence of the Chinese and Western

mass media towards us does not surprise us. In fact the real burden on the economic and cultural life of this region is neo-colonial domination. What threatens these countries is the expansionist politics of Beijing. An independent Indochina which can check the manoeuvres and aggression of the Washington-Beijing axis can only be a source of support for the other Southeast Asian peoples to throw off the neo-colonial yoke, and avert the threat of Chinese domination.

Q. How can one precisely define Vietnam's policy towards the ASEAN countries?

A. Vietnam and the ASEAN countries have vital interests in common: to defend national independence and safeguard peace. Vietnam has no interest in provoking conflicts with the ASEAN countries or in interfering in their internal affairs; it has enough enemies without creating new ones. Vietnam is therefore ready to enter into friendly economic and cultural relations with these countries, on the basis of mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of each side. Vietnam is ready to enter into bilateral

'Vietnam Won, El Salvador Will Win'

NEW YORK—"Our rally, held nearly one week after the huge May 3 demonstration in Washington to prevent an armed intervention in El Salvador, is the continued strong impetus of the American conscience to defend the nation's right to self-determination."

With these words, Ambassador Nguyen Ngoc Dung of the Permanent Mission of Vietnam to the United Nations opened her remarks to a May 9 meeting here in solidarity with Vietnam and El Salvador.

The rally, which drew 150 people, was initiated by the Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos (CSVNKL) and cosponsored by a number of other organizations.

Hailing the sixth anniversary of Vietnam's 1975 victory, it linked defense of the Vietnamese and Indochinese revolutions to today's movement against U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

Ambassador Dung, who was greeted with a standing ovation, told "of deep feelings still dearly kept in the memory of every Vietnamese. We consider American mothers, housewives, students, teachers, clergymen, lawyers, and workers who in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the ending of the painful Vietnam war as the builders of the genuine friendship between the two peoples of Vietnam and the United States."

She pointed out that "the dream of so many Vietnamese generations—namely, national independence, liquida-

tion of the century-old colonial yoke—has come true." But, she added, "a great number of problems have not yet been solved. The Vietnamese people have not enjoyed . . . peace." She cited the U.S.-supported invasion of Vietnam by China as an example, along with continuing threats from the Chinese government.

"Last, but not least, the U.S. government has carried out an embargo policy vis-à-vis Vietnam, economic blockade . . . a policy that has been pursued against Cuba, Angola and newly-independent countries where revolution has just been successfully carried out."

Ambassador Dung expressed the solidarity of the Vietnamese people with the "struggle for peace, stability, and self-determination waged by their brothers and sisters in Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada, Cuba . . . in the Southern part of Africa," and with "their Palestinian brothers and sisters."

There were an impressive array of international speakers and guests. These included representatives of the Association of Vietnamese Patriots, a group of Vietnamese living in the United States; supporters of the African National Congress, South African Blacks who are fighting apartheid; a member of the Angolan mission to the United States; a representative of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; and Joseph Canute Burke, Grenada's consul-general for North America.

Chan Bu Han, a Kampuchean national, described visiting his native land after an absence of ten years. He found that scores of his relatives had perished under the Pol Pot regime, which was toppled with the help of Vietnamese troops. He declared that the people of Kampuchea would "continue our revolutionary struggle for socialism."

A statement prepared for the rally by the United Nations mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed firm support to the cause of the Salvadoran people.

"At the present time, the valiant people of Salvador under the direction of the Democratic Revolutionary Front wages an unyielding struggle against the oppression of the fascist junta that holds power and serves the interest of imperialism. . . . The Lao people voice its support to this struggle and will stand firmly on the side of the people of El Salvador until the total defeat of this fascist clique.

"The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its militant solidarity with the brotherly peoples of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada."

The meeting gave impetus to demands that the U.S. government recognize the Vietnamese and Kampuchean governments, stop aiding counterrevolutionary forces in the region, and lift the economic embargo against Vietnam.

—Nelson González

talks with each ASEAN country and to participate in regional discussions. We will do everything in our power to improve our relations with these countries; but we think that actions like the attempts to revive the SEA-TO military pact or to bring back the American forces of intervention to Thailand are highly dangerous for peace in the whole sector.

Thailand has no interest in unconditionally supporting the politics of the Washington-Beijing axis or in letting its territory be used as a base for the Kampuchean and Lao counter-revolutionary forces maintained by Beijing and Washington. Certain circles of businessmen or military and political circles closely linked to Washington are trying to poison these countries' relations with Vietnam, but we think that the great majority of the peoples of this region would support a policy of peaceful co-operative relations with our country. For us the most real danger is Beijing's expansionism, combined with a permanent threat, the neo-colonialism of the great capitalist powers, especially the USA. Against these enemies, the Southeast Asian peoples are our natural allies, so to speak.

Q. Some would reproach you for your alliance with the Soviet Union, your membership of Comecon. Perhaps China would not have attacked you . . .

A. Imperial China attacked us frequently over the centuries. France attacked us in the 19th century although the Soviet Union did not yet exist. The USA attacked us although we had not yet signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with the USSR and were not yet in Comecon. Our alliance with the USSR and our membership of Comecon are the logical and necessary consequences of the general line which our people and our Party have followed for the last 50 years. In the long and arduous struggle that we have been leading against the imperialist and reactionary forces, the revolutionary and progressive forces of the entire world have been our most precious allies. The Soviet Union has since its birth constituted the strongest support for the liberation movements of colonised peoples.

Today, not only for Vietnam, but also for Cuba, for Angola, for Afghanistan, and for all the other peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the existence of the Soviet Union and other industrially developed socialist countries allows under-developed countries like Vietnam to skip the stage of capitalist development and go directly to socialism. Material and technical aid and economic and scientific co-operation with the developed socialist countries are decisive factors for the modernisation of our economy. We entertain economic relations with many capitalist countries, but these economic relations are subject to the fluctuations of the market and to the more or less hostile policy of the governments. It is only in promoting organic co-operation with the

developed socialist countries that we can build up our economy. The treaty of friendship and co-operation with the USSR and our membership of Comecon have therefore reinforced our national independence, politically as well as economically. These links don't prevent us from having the most friendly relations with other countries like India, Algeria, Mexico, etc.

Q. Is this an abandonment of the former policy of maintaining a balance which Vietnam followed for many years, remaining linked to both the USSR and China?

A. Between the two partners, China and Vietnam, which is it that has changed "in its heart and in its guts" as we say in Vietnamese? As long as the Beijing government was following a policy of anti-imperialism in foreign affairs and a policy of real aid to our country, we had fraternal relations with China, just as we did with the Soviet Union. We hoped for a long time that the disagreements between the two big socialist countries would eventually be settled. Unfortunately, the Chinese leaders gradually moved on to a policy of collusion with imperialism on the one hand, and on the other hand hostility followed by aggression towards us and towards the socialist countries and the progressive forces of the whole world. So we can't stay half-way between the Chinese and Soviet positions. Quite independently, we took up a position which accords with our national interests and with those of the world revolutionary movement, a position which is in contradiction with that of Beijing, not because the latter is Chinese, but because it is reactionary.

Let's look at the facts. In 1971, the Beijing leaders, with Mao Zedong, opposed the liberation of Bangladesh, taking sides with the reactionaries of Pakistan who were massacring the Bengladeshi patriots. The same year, they let the Vietnamese leaders know that China would like to see the Vietnamese give up the struggle to liberate the South of our country. In 1972, at the time of Nixon's visit to Beijing, the bargaining became apparent. Beijing was to pressurize the Vietnamese to abandon the liberation of the South of their country, while Washington committed itself to aiding China in other fields. 1973 saw Beijing's support for Pinochet against the Chilean patriots and democrats; Beijing's hostility towards the Paris Agreement which stipulated the retreat of the American troops from Indochina. 1974 saw the Chinese attack on the South Vietnamese Paracel islands, with the assent of the American Command. In 1975 as we have seen, Beijing launched Pol Pot against Vietnam in order to prepare its own attack on our country. During all this time, from Angola to Iran, everywhere Beijing and Washington were working hand in hand.

Now in early 1980 the Washington-Beijing axis is making great efforts to try and take its revenge after all the defeats it has suffered in Kampuchea, in Iran, in Nicaragua

and in Afghanistan. The visit of the American Defense Secretary to China has sanctioned this implicit military alliance which has already been in force between the two countries. And in his message on the state of the Union at the beginning of this year, Jimmy Carter underlined the importance of this China-US alliance for Washington's policy in Asia and in the world. The projects to install new missiles in Western Europe, to deploy the American fleet in the Indian Ocean, the establishment of new American interventionist forces, Carter's violently anti-Soviet line, all show to what extent this alliance between Washington and Beijing has affected the policies of both these countries in a reactionary and warlike direction.

With Chinese complicity, Washington believes itself able to realise the dream it has long cherished to encircle the Soviet Union from both the east and the west (with NATO). With American aid, the Beijing leaders believe they can modernise rapidly and as a priority their armed forces, the instrument of expansion. Great threats loom for world peace. We are back to the period of the Cold War.

Q. Some think that the Beijing leaders are still however revolutionaries and that their alliance with Washington is only a tactical one.

A. A revolutionary power can follow a policy of temporary compromise with imperialism in order to avoid adventurism, but not a policy of systematic alliance in every domain, as the leaders in Beijing are doing today. Communists in some country or other can formulate reserves or criticisms of certain aspects of the policies of other countries, but not affirm that these countries are the bitterest enemies of humanity, the first to be struggled against, who must be punished. This sort of foreign policy is a truly reactionary one; there is nothing communist about it and it is indicative of home policy too. Many changes have taken place, deeply transforming the character of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and government, that is a reality to which one cannot shut one's eyes. For all those who have for many years placed their hopes in the Chinese revolution it is a bitter realization; for us Vietnamese it has been heart-breaking to see former comrades and brothers change into enemies, and what enemies!

We could not believe our eyes when we took back the towns and villages occupied by Chinese troops during their attack of February-March 1979. When they retreated, they had specialist teams destroy all the economic installations, schools, hospitals, crèches, etc., building by building, including even historical monuments. The result is that four towns and 320 villages have been destroyed, along with 735 schools (out of 904) razed to the ground, 428 hospitals and health stations, a whole mining complex, 41 big farms and lumber sites. This month-long

occupation brought back sad memories of the 1945 occupation by the troops of Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). There have definitely been deep changes in China.

Q. How do you explain these changes? How can communists become reactionaries, as you claim they have? The leaders at any rate.

A. It is not enough for a person or a group to claim to be communist for it to really be so. A party is formed which declares itself communist, people join; this party and its members nevertheless remain tied to a whole social context, they operate in given historical circumstances, come under various influences, and may become truly communist or deviate along other paths. The Chinese Communist Party, which was founded in 1921 by fifty or so intellectuals, was operating in a country where the industrial working class counted for less than one per cent of the population. It had begun to build up a working class base and recruit among urban intellectuals, but from 1927 onwards it was forced by Jiang Jieshi to flee to the countryside, so for the 22 years until its return to Beijing it had been operating solely in the countryside, entirely cut off from urban society and virtually without international relations. That's why, in spite of its Marxist declarations of faith, its leaders and activists found it hard to avoid the imprint of their peasant surroundings and traditional ideas.

Its history from 1927 to 1945 and even in later years resembles the history of peasant insurrectionary movements of past centuries much more than it does the history of a modern revolutionary movement. The peasants' anti-imperialist and anti-feudal fighting spirit became diverted to counter-revolutionary aims. In spite of prolonged internal struggle, the truly communist elements in the Party were submerged and little by little eliminated. Marxist doctrine gave way to a special ideology dominated by two powerful ideas which had always motivated Chinese peasant movements in the past: a peasant utopianism which wanted to build an egalitarian society immediately, and the re-creation of the great old imperial China. In the second stage, once the foreign imperialists had been excluded from China, the peasant utopianism lost its foothold and the establishment of a militarist bureaucracy led to the predominance of the idea of an empire. What was communist disappeared and what emerged was only nationalism.

To be a nationalist in China always means to think of restoring the grandeur of the Middle Kingdom which dominated Asia for 20 centuries. Mao Zedong, at the beginning principally a peasant utopian, ended up with the character of the Emperor on top. As for Deng Xiaoping, he is the representative of the militarist bureaucracy which is resolved to build a powerful China, ready to make alliances with anyone, without worrying about any revolutionary principle.



Chinese troops moving toward Vietnam prior to 1979 invasion. "Both Beijing and Washington underestimated the vitality of the Vietnamese revolution."

(What does it matter if the cat's white or black so long as it catches mice). For Mao and Deng alike, to modernise the country means first to acquire intercontinental missiles, atom bombs and other ultra-modern armaments so that China can set itself up as a great power, and as soon as possible as the greatest world power.

Q. In the face of the Washington-Beijing axis, isn't Vietnam's position particularly difficult?

A. We don't hide the difficulties. But as we say in Vietnam, Beijing and Washington may sleep in the same bed, but each has its own dreams. Washington is looking for a market, raw materials and Chinese mercenaries to fight the USSR and the Asian revolutionary movements. Beijing is looking for American aid to increase its own power, while at the same time pushing the USA to war against the USSR, which would be China's opportunity to rise from the ruins of the two greats as the world's most powerful nation. From 1972 to 1975 we fought the military might of America with Beijing's political support; today we face the threat of an eventual armed aggression by China, which enjoys the support of Washington. But the Washington-Beijing alliance is rent by contradictions. We won in 1975 and again in 1979.

Q. Why do those who would like to turn China into a great power not prefer an alliance with the USSR?

A. China as a great power, that can imply two absolutely opposite orientations. It could mean a socialist China where the principal objective is the satisfaction of the people's material and cultural needs; or a domineering, imperial China. An alliance with the Soviet Union would be conducive to development within China and the Chinese Communist Party, the rise of forces opposed to the power-crazed militarist bureaucracy

and to the imperial despotism of Mao Zedong. That's the reason for the furious anti-Sovietism of these chauvinist and traditionalist forces, as an alliance with the Soviet Union would jeopardise their power inside the country. In other words, it is inside China that the game was eventually played out.

For the moment, the authentic revolutionary forces have lost out, yet a return to imperial China is impossible. This dream of a new Middle Kingdom right in the twentieth century is completely contrary to the real aspirations of the Chinese people and those of the peoples of the whole world; it is a deliberate sacrifice of the welfare of the Chinese people and endangers world peace. This wholly anachronistic policy cannot last. Without minimising at all the great difficulties we have to confront, we are entering into struggle against this imperial policy certain of being able to resist it victoriously.

Q. How would you assess the present situation between China and Vietnam?

A. Large numbers of Chinese troops are being concentrated at our northern border. Every day commandos make incursions into our territory, carrying out sabotage, kidnapping or assassinating local people and officials. Politically, as either side of the border is inhabited by the same *montagnard* ethnic groups, Nung, Hmong, Zao . . . , the Chinese authorities are trying to regroup these peoples in order to set them against our government. On the sea, from the border down to Da Nang, Chinese naval units provoke incidents from time to time.

At the negotiating table, we have made concrete proposals: the withdrawal of troops to a fair distance either side of the frontier, establishment of a demilitarised zone with a joint control commission, negotiation on the recommencement of normal relations between the two countries. The Beijing side has laid down the precondition that the Vietnamese government change its policy towards Kampuchea and the Soviet Union

and recognise Chinese sovereignty over the Hoang Sa islands (Paracels). It's not a negotiating point, it's a diktat, and it's not for China to dictate our foreign policy. The Chinese leaders have spoken openly on several occasions of inflicting a second punishment upon Vietnam. We are obliged to hold ourselves ready for any eventuality.

Let us not forget either that Beijing is putting very strong military pressure at the Laos-China border, and that all the former partisans and mercenaries of the various old pro-American parties have regrouped in China. Attempts at subversion of the present Lao government are being made in parallel with this military pressure at the borders; the possibility of an attack against Laos should not be ignored. As at the time of the fight against French and American imperialism, Vietnam and Laos have to co-ordinate their efforts. Laos has only 3 million inhabitants in an extensive territory with very long frontiers; the Lao government called on Vietnamese forces to help it defend itself. For Vietnamese fighters and technicians, to defend Laos, and aid it in the economic and technical fields, is to defend and aid Vietnam itself. In the present conditions our policy is to:

- seek to negotiate, letting escape no opportunity to find a peaceful solution, accepting any compromise so long as it does not sacrifice our independence and sovereignty. We did this in 1946 and 1954 with France and in 1973 with the USA.

- if combat is forced upon us, we shall take up the challenge and fight to the end for our independence and freedom. Either they will notice in Beijing that it is impossible to crush Vietnam and will change their policy, as happened in Paris and in Washington; or in the long term the Chinese people themselves will force a change of policy towards Vietnam.

Q. You seem to cherish some hopes in regard to the Chinese people. But didn't you mention that the revolutionary forces in China had lost out?

A. Since the Opium War in 1840, the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples, both assaulted by Western imperialism, have entertained fraternal relations on the basis of militant solidarity against imperialism. Similar problems confronted the two peoples in regard to building the new society, and the perspective of socialism linked us even more closely. After the triumph of the revolution in China in 1949, China became a solid base of support for us, while Vietnam was a bulwark for China, protecting its southern flank. So, truly fraternal relations existed for several years.

We still have immense gratitude towards the Chinese people, towards its technicians and workers who came to help us during the 50s and 60s. When the Chinese leadership changed its line to one of hostility and then aggression in our regard, Chinese technicians working in our country expressed

their disapproval; when our students were expelled from China, their teachers and fellow students showed sympathy towards them. For some years, the Chinese leaders have been undertaking a massive campaign, carried on also by the Western mass media, to excite hatred of Vietnam among the Chinese people, in order to prepare public opinion for the armed aggression. It is certain that among backward strata of the population this campaign can achieve its goal, but it is also certain that the Chinese people, after over a century of struggle against imperialism, are no longer the people of the old imperial China, although the setback of the revolutionary forces is a serious one, for several million militants have been massacred.

Q. Several million?

A. Exactly. When I say millions I am taking a conservative estimate, some speak of tens of millions. What has been called the Cultural Revolution was a veritable civil war. From the rectification campaigns in the 40s, through the period of the Great Leap Forward, to the Cultural Revolution especially, the Chinese Communist Party has been literally decimated, above all the leadership and higher levels. The opponents of the chauvinist great-power policy were eliminated, then there have been the struggles between the various factions, between the partisans and adversaries of Mao. This struggle continues on two fronts: the faction fighting at the top, and the struggle between the leadership and the people who aspire to their own well-being and to peace and not to the restoration of imperial grandeur and war.

Even in past centuries this popular opposition to the policy of imperial greatness and to wars of expansion was very much alive: a re-reading of the great poets of old China will give you an idea of it. Anti-imperialist feeling is still very strong, and it is difficult for the leaders to justify their close collusion with Washington. A large working class has been born in China and so has a modern intelligentsia, a sizeable proportion of the peasantry has become aware of its rights. Sooner or later, the Chinese people will start to express more and more strongly its opposition to the politics of Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng. For these politics will lead to the recolonisation of China by the West and Japan, to war and poverty.

Q. So you're quite optimistic?

A. We will have some very hard years ahead. In home affairs, our country is confronting quite new problems, very hard ones. In foreign affairs we have to confront powerful enemies, all the more hostile now they feel threatened by the world revolutionary movement which never ceases to move forward. False moves and temporary setbacks are inevitable, but we believe that we will eventually achieve our aims: to keep our national independence, build socialism,

and have friendly, peaceful co-operation with other peoples, for we have many factors in our favor:

- support and help of the socialist countries and progressive forces throughout the world: we are most insistent on the fact that the world revolutionary and progressive movement is making gains, and that the Vietnamese revolution develops in the framework of this world movement and not in isolation.

- our people and Party have great experience of struggle and they can recognize and rectify any errors made.

- we are fighting today with our national territory completely liberated and not as before when the country was entirely occupied by the enemy or divided in two. Today we have a certain material and technical basis, and a body of qualified staff and technicians which we lacked only a few years ago.

We will solve the problems patiently one by one. Your help is particularly precious to us, both materially and morally. Thank you very much.

Q. How can Dutch people, and Westerners in general, help Vietnam?

A. Our Dutch and other Western friends can help us in two main fields. Firstly and fundamentally, politically, to help us preserve our independence and defend peace, as both are seriously threatened at this moment by the aggressive politics of the Washington-Beijing axis. A vigorous campaign of explanation of our problems to Western public opinion, which is being really hammered right now by the mass media, would be a great help to us.

I wrote in 1961 that "the best help that men of goodwill in the advanced countries can bring to the under-developed countries is still the struggle for peace. For a Vietnamese patriot, the memory of the 'gestures' of Henri Martin or Raymonde Dien will remain always infinitely more precious than all the dollars in the world."

Then in science and technology. In this domain there is the aid of governments, which is all-encompassing, but which is tied to changing political situation; and then there is the people's aid which comes directly from people of goodwill. If you total up the money value of this aid it doesn't seem very important; in fact if it is selective, i.e. directed towards specific areas, its effectiveness can be very great. It often happens that we lack one link in a production process which blocks everything; in that case one man or a team of technicians or scientists can get the whole process moving again. The same thing is found with regard to certain equipment, spare parts, documents, reagents, seeds. . . . Meetings and seminars between our technicians and researchers and their Western colleagues are extremely useful. We think that, even if some capitalist governments are hostile towards us, people of goodwill can maintain the most friendly relations with our people. □

U.S. Votes Against Preventing Infant Deaths

By Janice Lynn

By a 118 to 1 margin, the World Health Organization voted May 21 to adopt guidelines that are aimed at protecting children the world over from disease and malnutrition.

It was the U.S. government, in callous disregard for human lives, that cast the sole dissenting vote in the United Nations agency. The U.S. voted against a code to regulate the advertising and promotion of baby formula.

In order to keep their profit margins high, infant formula companies have been marketing their products heavily in underdeveloped countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. But conditions in these countries make it extremely difficult for these synthetic formulas to be used properly.

Large numbers of women do not have access to sterile water with which to mix the formula, no suitable pots for sterilizing bottles and nipples, no refrigeration. Not to mention the money to purchase the formula in the first place. Infant formula can cost from 47 to 62 percent of the daily wage of many of these countries.

Because of this expense, many women are forced to water the formula down to make it last longer—often with polluted water. The result is a staggering increase in infant malnutrition, diarrhea, and eventually death.

The Reagan administration ordered a vote against the regulations, despite a U.S. government study showing that each year some 10 million infants and young children suffer from sometimes fatal malnutrition and other diseases associated with inadequate breast-feeding and the use of milk substitutes. As many as one million babies actually die each year from infant formula and similar baby foods prepared under unsanitary conditions.

The Reagan administration's vote is a stark reminder of what the priorities of the U.S. government really are: to protect the profits of big corporations with no consideration of the health and lives of human beings—not even children.

The U.S. companies that produce baby formula—Abbott Laboratories, Bristol-Myers, and American Home Products—and the Geneva-based Nestlé Company have a \$1.4 billion worldwide market.

The Nestlé Company, the world's largest food conglomerate, is the largest distributor of baby formula in underdeveloped countries.

To increase their profits, these corporations have carried out misleading promotional campaigns that try to convince

women that artificial formula feeding is more beneficial than breast-feeding.

These companies have gone so far as to employ sales personnel who dress in nurse's uniforms when promoting the baby formula.

It was to protect women and their children from such deception that the World Health Organization voted for the voluntary code.

The very same day that the U.S. government voted against protecting the lives of millions of children, Reagan administration lawyers were defending an antiabortion bill to "protect unborn children."

Also the same day, in the name of protecting life, the U.S. Senate voted to strike down federal funding for abortion in cases of rape or incest.

"I don't see how an administration that talks so much about 'right to life' can show so little concern about the right to life of these 1 million babies," declared a California pediatrician at a May 20 news conference denouncing the Reagan administration's position against the baby formula code.

The Reagan administration claims it voted against the code because it infringed on free speech for corporations and restrained trade. But it made no mention of the real issue—the health and lives of children in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Two top officials of the Agency for International Development in Washing-

ton, D.C., including its highest ranking health professional, turned in their resignations. This was too much even for them.

But the exploitation of poor women and their children by Nestlé and other companies is part of the normal functioning of the capitalist system that puts profits ahead of lives.

Consumer organizations, religious groups, women's rights supporters, and others conducted a four-year boycott against Nestlé.

In retaliation, Nestlé launched a counter-boycott campaign. It circulated a red-baiting article from *Fortune* magazine, the big-business monthly, accusing proboycott religious groups of being "Marxists marching under the banner of Christ."

The *Fortune* article was widely reprinted and mailed at substantial expense to religious and community leaders by a right-wing think tank, the Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC). The EPPC was headed by Ernest Lefever, the right-wing opponent of human rights who is Reagan's nominee for assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs.

It turns out that Nestlé and other infant formula manufacturers donated at least \$25,000 to Lefever's group. Shortly afterwards, the EPPC began a study of the infant formula issue, reprinted the *Fortune* article, and discussed the possibility of making a film that would be favorable to Nestlé's interests.

Leaked Nestlé documents reveal that Nestlé has no intention of complying with the code, despite the millions of lives at stake.

As for the Reagan administration, its vote against the code has aroused anger and revulsion throughout the world, and exposed more clearly than ever the antihuman values that it defends. □

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