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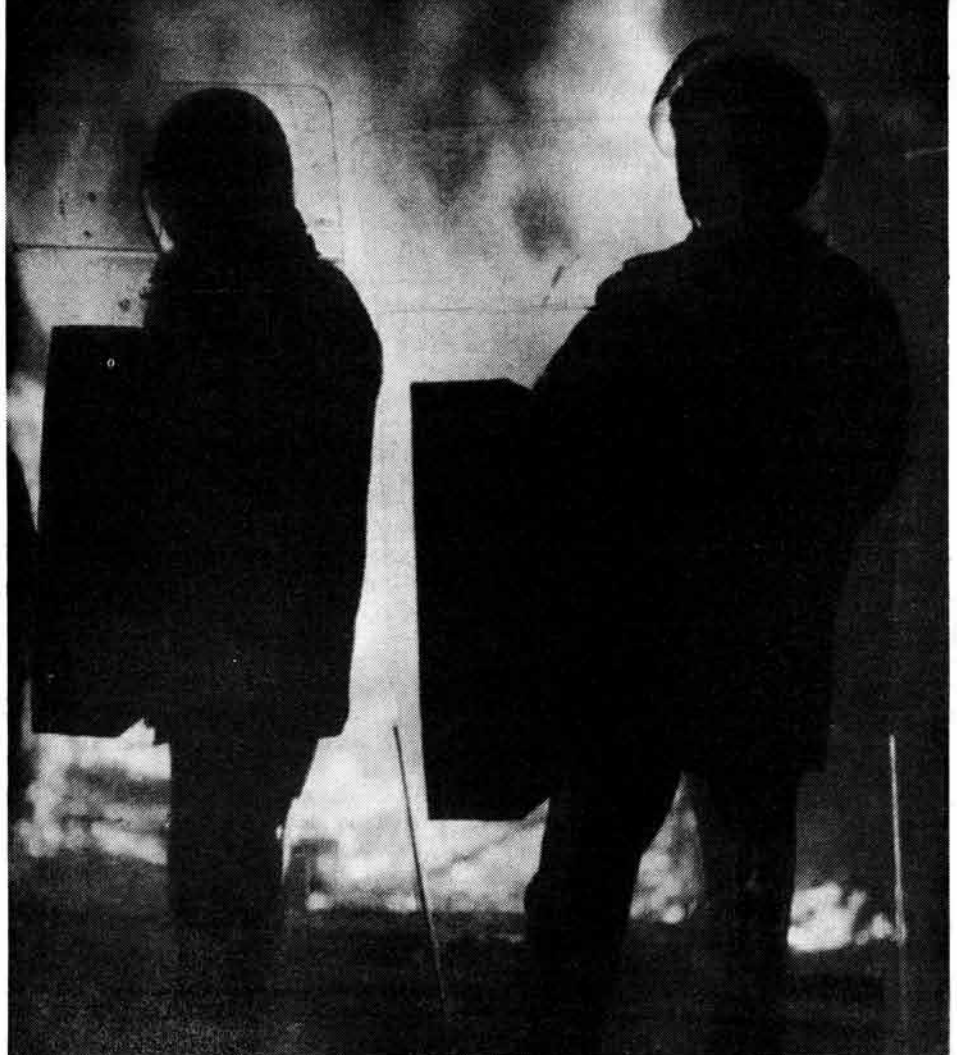
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**Powerful Blow to Thatcher Government**

## **British Youth Rebel Against Racism and Unemployment**



# Polish workers organize

By Ernest Harsch

SZCZECIN—"To ensure a better future join and build Solidarity." That is the message that is being conveyed to the people of this port city by Poland's independent union movement.

There can be no mistaking the vitality, strength, and influence of Solidarity among Szczecin's more than 400,000 people. The Solidarity logo is everywhere. It can be seen on the lapels of people walking on the streets or working in offices and shops. It is displayed in the windows of clothing stores, hotels, and restaurants. Solidarity posters abound throughout the center of Szczecin, especially one that portrays workers standing abreast, arms locked in unity.

On the street leading to the Warski shipyard, the largest in the city, one is first confronted with several large, multicolored billboards put up by the authorities to praise the accomplishments of the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), the Communist Party.

But the workers have the final say. Just outside the gate, with the huge shipyard cranes towering in the background, stands a series of black-and-white photo enlargements showing scenes from the August 1980 sitdown strike at Warski.

The organizational center of Solidarity in Szczecin is on Malopolska Street, in the downtown area. Housed in the building of the former official trade union, right next to the main police station, it is a hub of activity.

People are constantly coming and going. Lines form to buy *Jednosc* (Unity), Solidarity's local weekly newspaper. Workers walk in off the street, sometimes with their families, to seek help for specific problems.

Unlike in the days of the old government-controlled union, there is no barrier of receptionists to prevent workers from speaking directly to top union officials. They can now walk straight into the offices of members of the regional executive committee.

## History of working-class militancy

Just as in Gdansk, Poland's other major port city, Solidarity is rooted in a long history of militancy among the working people of Szczecin.

It was in the Warski shipyard in January 1971, following the police massacre of hundreds of striking workers in Gdansk and Szczecin the month before, that the first major sitdown strike in the history of the Polish People's Republic was organized. This served as a model for the strikes of last August.

During the August 1980 strike wave, Szczecin again moved to the fore, taking second place only to the powerful example set by the Gdansk workers.

After the workers of Warski occupied their shipyard on August 18, the rest of the city fol-

lowed. By the end of the month, the workers of hundreds of factories in the Szczecin area were represented on a democratically elected Inter-Factory Strike Committee (MKS).

Although the workers of Szczecin had little initial contact with the Gdansk strikers (the authorities had cut communications), they formulated a list of demands that was remarkably similar, including recognition of their right to form an independent union free of government and party control.

After the government agreed in late August to most of the strikers' demands, the MKS in Szczecin was transformed into a regional body of Solidarity, known as the Inter-Factory Workers Committee (MKR).

Against continual resistance and provocation from the government and party bureaucracy, Solidarity succeeded in building a powerful union structure in Szczecin. One of its most important instruments was *Jednosc*, Solidarity's first public weekly newspaper. (Even today, the only other one is the national *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*, printed in Warsaw.)

To counter the distortions and slanders in the official press, the unionists of Szczecin fought to make *Jednosc* into a mass newspaper. They succeeded. By the beginning of the year, the press run had reached 100,000.

## Union elections

As elsewhere in the country, Solidarity in Szczecin organized new elections to union leadership positions with the aim of strength-

ening the union's organizational capabilities.

The initial leadership had come out of the strike committee. While many were fully capable of leading the union in its day-to-day tasks, others proved to be better public speakers than organizers.

The June 5-7 elections in Szczecin, for which posters were put up all over the city, provided the union members with an opportunity to choose their representatives on the basis of greater familiarity with their abilities. While some of the top leaders of the union were re-elected, including Marian Jurczyk and Stanislaw Wadowolski, about half of the eleven-member presidium is new.

At the same time, the MKR transformed itself into a regional arm of national Solidarity.

Following the elections, the local Solidarity leadership began planning organized discussions of Solidarity's draft program. That program, around which there have already been informal discussions for many weeks, presents the union's basic proposals for economic, social, and political change in the country to help pull Poland out of its deep crisis. (For the full text of the draft program, see *Intercontinental Press*, June 22, p. 665.)

The effects of the crisis are very evident. Hours before the stores open in the morning, people form long lines outside in hope of buying meat, cigarettes, butter, and other scarce items. In many stores, shelf after shelf stands empty. The prices of cars, appliances, and many other imported or locally manufactured products are beyond the means of many ordinary workers.

Although Szczecin has more gasoline than many other parts of the country, the shortages are a problem even here. One construction worker told me that many truck drivers in his

# Bolivian trade unionists jailed

Bolivian security forces have launched a massive wave of arrests against opponents of the bloody military dictatorship that seized power in July 1980.

"In recent weeks," says a June 23 communiqué from the Political Commission of the Revolutionary Workers Party-*Combate* (POR-C), "nearly 100 revolutionaries and democrats from the antifascist resistance have been seized in trumped-up armed confrontations, in street searches, and in raids on homes throughout the country. Today they are suffering brutal physical and psychological torture in the jails of the SES (Special Security Service)."

The communiqué, issued in La Paz, indicates that in the capital "there are more than eighty trade unionists and members and supporters of leftist organizations being held prisoner. . . . Twenty-three prisoners began a hunger strike against torture and abuses at the SES prison on June 23."

Among the most recent attacks cited by the POR-C's communiqué is the shooting and detention of Genaro Flores, the top leader of the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB) in clandestinity.

Hit by machine-gun fire and then arrested, Flores is now being held at the Copacabana Clinic, a police installation.

Besides having his spinal column injured and being wounded in the stomach and legs, Flores is being tortured physically and psychologically.

Amadeo Vargas was detained in the city of Cochabamba on June 16. The whereabouts of the fifty-three-year-old ex-professor from San Andrés Superior University are unknown.

The POR-C is calling on all political, trade-union, and humanitarian organizations to help save the lives of Flores and Vargas and the hundreds of other victims of the regime's repression.

industry are unable to work because of gasoline shortages.

Such disruption of the construction industry can only contribute to the country's already severe housing shortage.

Although the coming agricultural year is expected to be better than the last, working farmers still face many difficulties. According to one member of Rural Solidarity, the private farmers' union, the prices he will get for his chickens will increase as of July 1. But so will his costs for feed and baby chicks.

### Political pressures

The problems facing working people in Szczecin are not just economic. They are also political.

The authorities, who claim to speak in the name of the workers, are still trying to prevent the workers from exercising their rights. *Jednosc* is engaged in a constant battle with censors. Efforts by workers to exercise greater control over their factories are meeting with considerable resistance.

According to Mieczyslaw Ustasiak, a member of the MKR executive committee, "the Party and the regional authorities are more rigid now than they were before" in their relations with Solidarity.

Ustasiak attributed this stance to the "international situation, especially as a result of our relations with the Eastern countries." He believed that the threatening letter sent in early June by the Soviet leadership to the Central Committee of the PUWP was "the reason for the stiffer position of the authorities."

Ustasiak explained: "On the whole, our union is on the defensive, not on the attack. This is a result of the letter and the greater pressure by the Soviet Union on our country. The danger of the Soviet army coming into our country is real. We know that. And that would be the end of everything. So we have the idea that it would be better to be on the defensive than to attack and lose everything. I hope that soon the situation will change and we will be able to again go on the offensive. But for now, that is impossible."

This does not mean, however, that Solidarity is remaining passive. It is taking on the censors and responding to the slanderous attacks of top party officials. It is prepared to counter any provocative actions the bureaucrats may try to take.

Above all, Solidarity is continuing to organize and strengthen its own ranks in order to be in the best position possible to defend its members and move ahead.

At the Warski shipyard, as in some other large workplaces around the country, workers have set up the Workers Self-Management Organizing Committee (KZSR). The task of the KZSR is to lay the groundwork for the establishment of democratically elected bodies of workers to manage the shipyard; make key economic, financial, and production decisions; and choose a director.

This is the kind of initiatives that the PUWP

and its administrative apparatus have been particularly firm in resisting. But Solidarity does have some allies within the party itself, especially among the rank and file, who are demanding internal party democracy and new proworker policies.

"All people in Poland know that Solidarity is the guarantee of renewal," Ustasiak said. "But we don't take up an official war with the

party. The party isn't a monolith. In the party there are groups that I think are on the same side as us. So we can't fight against the whole Communist Party, only against that group of people which also talks about renewal but which does nothing but strike out at renewal."

And there can be little doubt that the people of Szczecin stand solidly behind Solidarity in that fight. □

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# Revolt against unemployment and racism

*Part of fightback against austerity offensive*

By Janice Lynn

Youth rebellions have swept through more than thirty cities and towns in Britain.

Black, white, and Asian youth have joined together in driving back the police, who have long harassed them all.

Staggering levels of unemployment, widespread poverty, rotten housing, police brutality, and racial discrimination is what these young people face, day in and day out.

They are fed up.

The first rebellion flared in the Southall area of London on July 4. Pakistani, Indian, and other Asian youth poured out to protest an organized assault on their community the night before by several hundred fascist youth. Busloads of these white toughs had arrived for a rock performance. As police stood by, the fascists proceeded to assault people and attack Asian shops and shopkeepers.

The next day, the Toxteth section of Liverpool was the scene of hundreds of Black and white youth fighting shoulder-to-shoulder against police attacks. (See accompanying article for a firsthand report on these events by Mark Turnbull, a member of the Labour Party in the Toxteth section of Liverpool and a contributor to the British weekly *Socialist Challenge*).

The rebellion quickly spread to other areas of Britain. In the textile city of Manchester, where unemployment has reached record levels, more than 1,000 Black and white youth battled together against the police. Manchester's chief constable called it an outbreak of "guerrilla warfare."

In London, rebellions flared in more than a dozen neighborhoods. In the largely Black district of Brixton, where rebellions protesting police harassment had broken out last April, some 400 predominantly West Indian youth protested the arrest July 10 of a local resident who sought to prevent the police from acting with their customary brutality.

The largely middle-class district of Fulham was also affected. And youth were not the only participants. Middle-aged women carted off loads of goods made available by collective action. Pre-teen youth—both boys and girls—joined in the battles against police.

In the Walthamstow neighborhood of London, hundreds of Asians were confronted by some 1,000 police at a July 11 memorial service for a Pakistani woman and her three children, who had been murdered in an arson attack on their home the week before. It is widely believed that right-wing racist youth gangs were responsible for the four deaths, but instead of going after the rightists, the police

## Cops out, Tories out!

[The following front page editorial was scheduled to appear in the July 16 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, weekly newspaper sponsored by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Riot police, CS gas, rubber bullets, and the army—that's the Tories' solution to the events in Liverpool and Southall. But it is their policies and their crisis which provoked the youth rebellion.

Bankrupt British capitalism offers young people nothing but the dole queue, racist discrimination, and police harassment. More repression will not stop the youth riots from anger and despair.

The labour movement should oppose "law and order" solutions and defend the youth from the Tories' repression. It should offer a political alternative by fighting the symptoms of the capitalist crisis—unemployment, police harassment, and fascist violence—and by fighting to bring down the hated Tory government once and for all.

stepped up their harassment of Asians. The Asian youths began to vent their feelings about this racist murder.

In Leicester hundreds of Pakistani and West Indian youth joined together in protesting police harassment and rampant unemployment.

By July 12, youth rebellions had erupted in the major industrial cities of Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, Preston, Wolverhampton, Hull, and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, as well as in smaller towns such as Maidstone, Cirencester, and Knavesborough.

The Nottingham chief constable declared, "It was not racial violence. Both Black and white youths were making an attack on the police and authorities."

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had repeatedly insisted that unemployment—which has reached a post war record of 11 percent of the workforce—was not a cause of the rebellions. Some 3 million people are out of work. In many areas where rebellions broke out, the unemployment rate is 50 percent, and climbs even higher among Black youth.

An indication of the enormous pressure on Thatcher was the July 12 announcement that

her government would propose a special youth employment plan among other measures in response to the rebellions. Such a plan—even the kind of phony one that the Tories are sure to propose—goes against the whole course of Thatcher's economic policy.

But the Tory government's basic response has been repression. It has urged better protective gear for the police and "riot act" legislation that would make it a crime to be in the vicinity of a disturbance.

Thatcher condemned what she called "terrorism and criminal looting and thuggery," and her aides have called for the setting up of special courts to try the thousands of young people who have been arrested so far.

This measure is reminiscent of how the British government has dealt with the Irish independence struggle, setting up special courts to try Irish freedom fighters.

In addition, the British government has severely restricted democratic rights—banning demonstrations for one month while at the same time promising new measures to strengthen the police.

The July 7 *Daily Mirror* called for "tear gas, rubber bullets or water cannon to defeat the mobs. . . ." The *Daily Mail* the same day called for "special contingents of riot police." And the headline in the July 7 *Daily Telegraph* read "More police riot gear."

Home Secretary William Whitelaw said he would not rule out the use of troops and said he had no objections to the use of water cannon. Whitelaw also blamed parents for lack of control over their children. The parliament is due to approve legislation that would make parents financially responsible for their children's "crimes."

In contrast, Labour Party members have placed the blame for the rebellions on the Tory government and its savage economic policies.

Labour Party leader Michael Foot told a mine workers convention July 11 that behind the rebellions was "the return to mass unemployment and particularly unemployment for young people, on a scale that most of us believed had been banished from our country forever."

The Trades Union Congress (TUC), Britain's national labor federation, called for an immediate \$1 billion program to create new jobs, build and renovate homes, and widen educational opportunities.

In a stormy parliament session July 9, Labour member of Parliament Bob Brown from northeast Britain—which is hardest hit by unemployment and Thatcher's economic policies—accused the prime minister of "ripping away

the fabric of our society." He told Thatcher she was seen as the biggest vandal in the country whose government was "mugging the taxpayer."

Conservative government officials and big business newspapers tried to place responsibility for the rebellions everywhere but on Thatcher's economic policies. They blamed "outside agitators." They suggested that Trotskyists or even the Irish Republican Army were responsible. And they blamed the influx of immigrants from the West Indies, Africa, and Asian countries. Some of these racists spoke about "genetic inheritance" or "feelings of criminal hooliganism."

Former Labour cabinet member Shirley Williams, who led a right-wing split-off from the Labour Party in March, joined in the chorus. She charged that radical leftists who have "climbed into the Labour Party" could be linked to the urban rebellions.

The outbreak of these rebellions is part of the fightback against Thatcher's austerity offensive. These youth rebellions spotlight the bankruptcy of Thatcher's Tory government—its callous disregard for the economic problems facing working people and especially

youth, its cold-blooded insistence that they pay for the capitalist crisis, and its racism.

It has been the government's various racist measures—including laws to keep Blacks and Asians out of Britain—that have encouraged right-wing, fascist attacks.

Faced with this rising opposition among youth, along with the rising opposition among labor—reflected in the turnout of some 150,000 people May 31 to protest unemployment and welcome the month-long People's March for Jobs—the future of Thatcher's Tory government is not bright.

Added to this is the international isolation of the Thatcher government over its criminal policies regarding the hunger strikers in Northern Ireland and its military occupation there.

British youth—Black, Asian, and white—have joined the fighters for self-determination in Ireland in dealing a body blow to the Thatcher government.

As the editorial in the July 16 British weekly *Socialist Challenge* declares, the labor movement now has the opportunity "to bring down the hated Tory government once and for all." □

streets of Britain. Twenty-five cannisters were fired at the crowd over a thirty-minute period.

Slowly the police moved forward. When dawn came they were back in control of the streets.

As I walked around the area Monday morning, there was anger at the reports that what had occurred was a "race riot," or that it was caused by "outside agitators."

The chief constable branded the protesters as "exclusively a crowd of Black hooligans intent on making life unbearable and indulging in criminal activity."

All of this is a lie. They were neither hooligans nor criminals and they were by no means "exclusively" Black. At least half the crowd on Upper Parliament Street was white, as were those who entered the shops.

John Hamilton, a Labour Party city council spokesperson, replied that the chief constable's charge was "too easy an escape from facing the deep-sided nature of the social problem" in the Liverpool area.

That's for sure.

### Staggering unemployment

Liverpool was once an important industrial area. But many of the companies have gone bankrupt or moved. Unemployment figures are staggering.

In the Toxteth area, the unemployment rate for whites is estimated at 43 percent. For Blacks, 47 percent. Among Black youth throughout Liverpool, the jobless rate is estimated as high as 60 percent!

It is no wonder the Trades Union Congress decided to start the recent People's March for Jobs from Liverpool.

The extent of the racist victimization of Blacks is seen in the employment for the Liverpool City Council, which is today the city's biggest employer.

Figures compiled less than a year ago show that of the 22,000 workers employed by the city, only 169 were Black.

The Liverpool Labour Party has called for emergency meetings of both the city and county council to discuss the root causes of the rebellion and declared it will set up "a labour movement defense committee."

The Community Relations Council issued a statement recalling how it had repeatedly warned of "an explosion of anger by local Black youth against prejudice and deprivation . . . and unreasonable pressure from police on the street.

"The events were an eruption of anger from a significant section of local youth," the statement declared, "and it is not helpful to attempt to lay blame on outsiders or a small number of individuals."

More than seventy people were arrested over the weekend and face charges that include arson, assault, looting, and rioting.

Besides these planned victimizations, the sole response of the Thatcher Tory government to the rebellion has been to proclaim the need to provide the police with more and better equipment. □

## Jobless youth rebel in Liverpool

### Anger against police brutality explodes

#### By Mark Turnbull

LIVERPOOL, July 7—The fighting began on Friday night after police chased and arrested a Black youth who was riding home on his motorbike. They claimed he had stolen it. But it was his bike.

That arrest touched things off. The police have been harassing people in Liverpool for years, as they have in the Brixton area of London and in Bristol, where there have also been anti-police rebellions.

Over the weekend, people here told me the same thing. "We knew this was going to happen," said Linda, twenty-two. "It isn't just the unemployment or the housing, because we've always had that. It's the police. And they just don't accept that they're to blame."

As they tried to make the arrest of the motorcycle owner Friday night, the police issued an emergency code on their radio. Within minutes, the area was full of police cars and vans.

The weekend had begun.

Clashes broke out for about two hours that first night, then all was quiet.

The next day, police flooded the area in what was intended as a show of strength. But their display crumbled when night came on.

#### Police driven back

With their lines of riot shields, they were pushed back from the center of Upper Parliament Street and kept out most of the night. On Sunday hundreds of residents came out to watch the cleanup. Burned cars blocked the

road and the streets were littered with bricks and broken glass.

But that was only a lull before bigger clashes.

By 11 p.m. on Sunday night, half of Upper Parliament Street was filled with police vans. At the junction of Grove Street stood a line of police with their riot shields. Bricks and bottles were raining down on them and they were being driven back along the road.

Soon the police were forced a quarter of a mile back up the road. Their vans turned tail. Parliament Street belonged to the youths.

People began entering shops. Washing machines, fridges, and TVs were carried off. Shopping trollies loaded with groceries were moving in convoys from the Quicksave supermarket.

It was whites as well as Black people. Both proudly wore police helmets and carried riot shields, the prizes of victory in battle.

But that wasn't the end of this particular chapter.

After being driven from the immediate area, the police stood and waited for two hours. They later admitted they had been beaten and forced to retreat. They claimed that 200 of their ranks had been taken to the hospital.

Reinforcements were brought in.

#### Use tear gas

The turning point came about 2 a.m. when for the first time ever tear gas was used on the

# Union democracy in action

## *Solidarity holds Gdansk regional congress*

By Ernest Harsch

GDANSK—"We can have differences within Solidarity, but we must also be like the five fingers of a hand that can close into a fist."

The speaker, one of the 500 delegates at the Gdansk regional congress of Poland's independent union movement, drew an immediate round of applause from the rest of the participants. And for nearly four days, from July 2 through July 5, they helped prove his point. They showed that differences within the union leadership are no obstacle to unity in action. They showed that varying points of view—discussed in a democratic fashion—can help clarify the union's direction.

The congress, held in a large and modern hall in the port city of Gdynia just north of here, was only one of numerous regional congresses of Solidarity taking place around the country. But given Gdansk's special role in the recent history of the Polish workers movement, its congress took on a particular significance.

Although the Gdansk MKZ (interfactory organizing committee) represents about half a million of Solidarity's 10 million members, it boasts of a disproportionate number of leaders of national stature: Lech Walesa, Andrezej Gwiazda, and Bogdan Lis, to name just the most prominent. Their participation contributed greatly to the discussions.

### **Democratic functioning**

The main purpose of the congress was to select candidates for a new regional leadership and to choose delegates for Solidarity's first national congress, scheduled to begin on August 31, the first anniversary of the signing of the Gdansk strike agreements, which led to the formation of the union.

The way the congress was organized was a living example of the kind of rank-and-file democracy that has made Solidarity into such a powerful force in the country.

The delegates themselves were the democratically elected representatives of the union's factory and workplace organizations, the bedrock of all other union bodies. In the Gdansk region, these encompass not only the giant shipyards of Gdansk and Gdynia, and a number of large factories, but also many smaller workplaces, including some quite far from Gdansk itself.

During the regional congress, there was considerable discussion about how much representation to give the smaller towns of the area within the new regional leadership. After some heated debate, the delegates voted to reserve fifteen places in the sixty-member re-

gional board for representatives from the smaller towns, a number that was considered more than adequate.

As Bogdan Lis explained, "It is impossible for Solidarity to accept a situation where the big factories and organizations dominate."

The relations between the central leaders and the delegates from the workplace organizations showed a similar concern to avoid the kind of domineering atmosphere that reigned within the former government-controlled unions.

The only people seated on the stage were the three chairpersons and a secretary to take the minutes. Walesa, Lis, Gwiazda, and other top leaders sat in the audience with the rest of the delegates, and like them had to go to one of the four microphones placed in the aisles if they wanted to speak.

### **Leadership report approved**

Near the beginning of the congress, the outgoing leadership gave an accounting of its actions over the past ten months, and individual leaders like Walesa and Anna Pienkowska went up to the podium to answer questions and counter criticisms from the delegates.

One participant argued against approving the report on the grounds that it did not mention the extent to which the twenty-one points of the Gdansk strike agreement had been fulfilled.

Another proposed that all union funds be centralized within the regional body, so that they could be distributed equitably to all local union organizations: otherwise, he said, the larger and thus better off branches would have an unfair advantage. The report was finally approved by an overwhelming majority.

In general, the participants in the congress displayed no qualms about expressing their opinions. Voices were raised. Sharp criticisms were directed against Walesa, Gwiazda, Anna Walentynowicz, and others.

When a speaker made an unpopular proposal or said something controversial, those who disagreed raised their delegate cards and flapped them in the air in a display of disapproval.

One of the sharpest disputes arose over a proposal that no one be allowed to hold more than one leadership post, specifically that members of the National Coordinating Commission (KKP), based in Warsaw, resign their positions on the regional and local levels.

Speakers both for and against the proposal were greeted with applause. Some delegates pointed out that if the proposal were adopted, the KKP would no longer be representative of

the regions.

Walesa went to the microphone to argue that if he had to resign from his local and regional positions, he would be cut off from the membership, sitting in Warsaw "like a general without an army."

Finally, it was decided to postpone a decision on the proposal, most likely to the national congress, which will have greater authority to deal with such questions.

### **Case of Anna Walentynowicz**

One example of how Solidarity's democratic procedures take precedence over everything else—including personal considerations—came around the case of Anna Walentynowicz.

A long-time fighter for workers' rights at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, Walentynowicz was fired in August 1980. That sparked the strike at the shipyard, which in turn became the center of the massive nationwide strike movement. As a result Walentynowicz is widely respected throughout the union.

In April, however, the Lenin Shipyard workers voted to withdraw their mandate from Walentynowicz, at a time when she had raised sharp differences with the Walesa leadership over the tactical question of whether to go ahead with a general strike call.

Although she remained on the MKZ for the time being, according to the union statutes, no one can be elected or reelected without a mandate from their local union organization.

This caused considerable consternation among the delegates. Some proposed that out of respect for Walentynowicz, an exception be made in the regulations "just this once." Others sympathized, but were opposed to bending the rules for anyone.

Finally, Walentynowicz herself ended the matter, going to the microphone to announce that she would not run for the new regional leadership. A later motion to make her an honorary member was defeated.

Although the actual elections for the new regional leadership were not scheduled to be held for more than a week, the congress did complete the process of screening and selecting candidates.

One hundred eleven candidates for the sixty-member regional body were finally approved.

### **'A movement of working people'**

Walesa, Gwiazda, Lis, and other key figures were again obliged to explain their programs and answer questions from the floor.

"Many people, including the party, want to steer our movement," Walesa said on July 4.

"But I have always tried to prevent the party or the church from taking over Solidarity, because, as I have repeatedly said, this is a movement of working people in the factories."

Walesa then turned to the difficult social situation in the country and the strains that it is placing on Solidarity. "Who has thought about the simple facts of life, that someone has imposed a cigarette ration, a gasoline ration."

"Who has thought about the fact that in these long lines one can hear more and more often, 'I don't like Solidarity. Before I could smoke and use my car, and today I can't do these things.'

"So, if we don't think deeply about these problems right now, and if we don't change the direction in which we are going, if we don't turn our attention to the future and the conditions of life, remember that the same people who applauded us in August will throw stones at us in the near future."

It is the question of how to deal with this difficult situation—which has been exacerbated by the increased pressures from Moscow—that accounts for the differences within Solidarity.

How far and how fast can Solidarity push to realize its aims? What can it realistically ask

for, given Poland's severe economic situation? How can it preserve its gains, while at the same time avoiding a Soviet intervention?

#### Tactical differences

The differences are largely tactical ones, over how best to move forward. As Bogdan Lis explained, "There is no split in the MKZ, just differences of opinion."

As Solidarity has shown in numerous recent moves, it can mount a united response to government attacks whenever necessary, whether in reaction to the recent slanders and efforts to extend censorship to internal union publications or in response to the authorities' attempts to stall or renege on previous agreements.

One example of this came during the congress itself. In response to a new draft bill on workers self-management submitted by the government to the Sejm (parliament), the regional congress proposed a letter protesting the fact that Solidarity had not been consulted on the bill and noting that Solidarity had its own proposals for factory self-management. The delegates unanimously approved the protest letter. □

there had never even been a discussion of any strike.

Lajverdi did not mention the strike charges in his press conference. The portion of the press conference concerning the two socialists' arrest was reported in the Tehran daily *Kayhan*.

HKE members and supporters have launched a vigorous defense campaign, distributing leaflets daily to various workers' meetings.

Socialists report that the day the two women were arrested and on July 5, the following day, hundreds of other workers were also arrested in factories throughout Iran. Many were members of the Mujahedeen and Peykar. Others were workers charged with being *monafeqin* (hypocrites), accused of insulting a clergy member in some conversation.

Many of these workers have since been released, although some are not being allowed to go back to their jobs. In factories where the workers organizations were strong, arrests were minimal. In other factories, workers organizations came under strong pressure from management and government ministries to cooperate in the arrests of leftists.

While the arrests and executions have had an intimidating effect, and created a certain amount of confusion among layers of the population, there is still strong opposition to the government's repressive measures.

The HKE has also come under attack by right-wing gangs. In Isfahan and Tehran, HKE offices were ransacked and socialists injured. On July 8, Hamid Shahrabi, an HKE leader in Isfahan, was kidnapped and interrogated for eight hours by four of the gang members who had earlier attacked the HKE offices. Shahrabi was badly beaten and finally dropped off in the street.

Meanwhile, elections for forty-six vacant parliament seats and the presidency are scheduled for July 24. More than seventy persons have filed as candidates for president. The candidates must be screened by the Council of Guardians before all the names can be made public.

In a significant step, the HKE and the Workers Unity Party (HVK) are running a joint election campaign.

The HKE and HVK have announced that they are running HKE leader Babak Zahraie for president; HVK leader Mahmoud Sayrafiezadeh for parliament from Tehran; Rezvan Rooshenas, a woman textile worker, for another Tehran parliament seat; and Khosrow Movahed, a fired employee of the Isfahan Oil Refinery, for an Isfahan parliament seat.

The joint election campaign platform calls for anti-imperialist mobilizations to counter imperialist threats; unity of all workers in the fight against the Iraqi invasion and imperialism; and for an immediate halt to the executions.

It also raises proposals for reorganizing and reconstructing the economy in the interests of the Iranian workers and peasants. □

## Iran

# Executions and arrests

## *Regime tries to intimidate working class*

By Janice Lynn

Since the June 28 bombing of the Tehran headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), there have been more than 150 executions and 1,000 arrests in Iran.

Bombing of the IRP headquarters was an action that only served to strengthen the hand of U.S. imperialism against the Iranian revolution. But the capitalist government in Iran has seized on this attack to attempt to intimidate and weaken the Iranian working class and hold back its independent mobilization.

Those executed have primarily been young men and women belonging to leftist groups like the Mujahedeen, Fedayeen (minority), and Peykar.

Among those arrested are two anti-imperialist activists who are members of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE)—one of three groups in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.

The two women—Faranak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali—were arrested July 4 at their jobs at the Ray-O-Vac battery factory. They are currently in Evin Prison, where their lives are in danger. Many of the executions have been carried out in this prison.

Iranian socialists have informed *Intercontinental Press* that a dangerous frame-up campaign is under way to link Zahraie and Shir Ali

with the Maoist Peykar group. A false dossier has been produced in the Islamic Revolutionary Court that accuses them of being members of Peykar.

On July 5, a reporter for the HKE newspaper *Kargar* attended a press conference at Evin Prison held by Tehran's Revolutionary Prosecutor General Assadollah Lajverdi. The *Kargar* reporter asked Lajverdi why, in the context of imperialism's stepped-up campaign of terror against the Iranian revolution, have two staunch anti-imperialist fighters been arrested? The two women have played an important part in the military mobilizations in their factory against the Iraqi invasion, and in anti-imperialist struggles.

Lajverdi's response was that all Marxists are enemies of the Islamic revolution.

When asked what the charges were against the two women, Lajverdi replied that the charges would be revealed when they have been proven.

Initially, it had been learned that the two women were being charged with starting a strike in the Ray-O-Vac factory. But the HKE immediately issued a leaflet refuting these charges.

The HKE leaflet declared there had never been a strike at Ray-O-Vac; the two socialists had never proposed that there be a strike; and

# Fifth hunger striker dies

*British torpedo negotiations at last minute*

By Will Reissner

Early on the morning of July 8, Irish republican hunger striker Joe McDonnell died on the sixty-first day of his fast, a victim of the intransigence of the British government. McDonnell, thirty, was the fifth hunger striker to die in the protests, and the first since May 21.

Seven other prisoners remain on hunger strike in the H-Blocks of Maze Prison near Belfast. Following McDonnell's death it was announced that Patrick McGeown, twenty-five, would take McDonnell's place.

The prisoners have five demands: the right to wear civilian clothing, to refrain from prison work, to associate freely among themselves, to more visits and mail privileges, and to 50 percent remission of their sentences for good behavior.

McDonnell, who leaves a wife and two children, was serving a fourteen-year prison sentence for riding in a car in which a weapon was found. Bobby Sands, the first hunger striker to die, was arrested in that same car and received an identical sentence.

Prior to McDonnell's death there were a flurry of reports that a settlement of the protest was close at hand. Representatives of the Catholic Church's Irish Commission for Justice and Peace had been serving as intermediaries between the prisoners and the British authorities.

The prisoners had indicated their willingness to allow the British government some face-saving formula for ending the protest, as long as the essence of their five demands were met. For a time it appeared that the British might agree to grant the demands to all prisoners in Northern Ireland jails.

At one point, members of the Irish Commission stated that the British were prepared to accept changes in dress, work, and free-association rules and would send a delegation to meet directly with the prisoners to explain the new policies. But on the morning of July 7, British officials backed off from that commitment.

Now the British are again insisting that the hunger strikes must end *before* any change in prison rules are announced.

The prisoners have rejected this demand. They already had experience last December with a similar agreement, which the British authorities subsequently reneged upon after the hunger strike was ended. This led to the renewal of the fasts and the five deaths.

Goretti McDonnell, wife of Joe McDonnell, noted that the authorities "tricked us the last time, and now the Brits have tricked the commission."

Officials of the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace charged at a July 8 news conference that the British government had pulled back from an agreement that had been reached on

prison reforms.

The group's president, Bishop Dermot O'Mahony, stated that "we don't regard this as a serious attempt to seek a resolution."

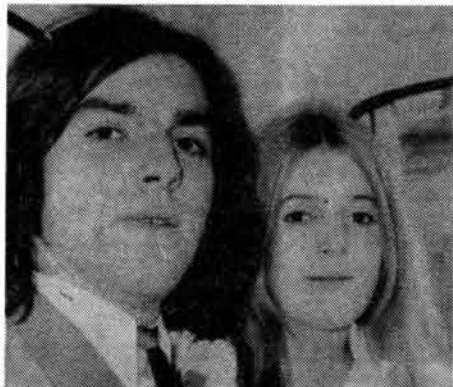
At a march of over 10,000 supporters of the prisoners in Belfast on June 28, a statement from more than 400 republican prisoners in the Maze Prison and Armagh women's jail was read to the crowd. The statement noted that "the five years of prison protests are littered with broken promises, mistruths, and instances of British double-talk and double-dealing." It called on supporters of the hunger strikers to remain vigilant against British attempts to "undermine or dupe them."

The message from the prisoners added that "all of us, whether inside or outside British prisons, have already paid too high a price to be sold short at this stage and, as speculation of 'a move' from the British side increases, we remind all concerned of the reasonableness of our demands and of our many efforts to bring all the prison protests to a principled end."

The Belfast demonstration, called by the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, was

addressed by relatives of the hunger strikers and by London Labour Party councilor Carol Turner. Turner noted that recent comments by Labour Party left-winger Tony Benn had brought the Irish question to the fore. "The Northern Ireland question," she said, "has again been introduced into the Labour Party and represents a crack in the bipartisan policies practiced by the parties in Britain."

Turner urged those present to continue building the H-Block campaign. "Mass peaceful action," she noted, "shows the world—not only Britain—the strength of feeling against British imperialism. It will counteract the lies of the national media and the propaganda of the Thatcher government." □



Joe and Goretti McDonnell on their wedding day in 1970.

## Northern Ireland Police attack H-Block protest

BELFAST—On June 27, thirty-three people were arrested during an attempt to hold a peaceful rally in support of the hunger strikers in front of the Belfast city hall. The Royal Ulster Constabulary and British troops have repeatedly prevented nationalist demonstrations from entering the city center, although loyalist demonstrations are held there regularly.

The rally was initiated by the newly formed Councilors Against the H-Blocks and Armagh and was sponsored by thirteen members of local councils in Northern Ireland, including members of the Irish Independence Party, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and People's Democracy, the Irish Trotskyist organization.

All the elected councilors from those three groups are refusing to participate in council business until the H-Block struggle is resolved.

Among those arrested were four Belfast city councilors, Fergus O'Hare and John McAnulty of People's Democracy, Gerry Kelly and Sean Flynn of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, North Antrim IIP councilor John Heffron, and London Labour

Party councilor Carol Turner.

On the same day that police broke up the H-Block protest, the RUC allowed loyalist forces to stage a march through the city center commemorating the 1690 defeat of Irish troops by English forces under William of Orange.

Paschal O'Hare, a representative of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the largest political party of the oppressed Catholic population, bitterly told the press later that "the center of Belfast is preserved for those of one tradition only and the police are there to ensure that it so remains." He added that "people have had enough of this blatant sectarian approach by the forces of law and order."

Those arrested were released on bail after nine hours in custody. In a statement issued after their release, PD councilors McAnulty and O'Hare said "the totally unprovoked and inexcusable attack by the RUC on Saturday's peaceful and legal demonstration illustrates graphically once again the brutal and sectarian nature of this discredited force."

—Jim Upton



# Where H-Block campaign stands today

Interview with Fergus O'Hare

[The following interview with Fergus O'Hare was conducted by *Intercontinental Press* in New York City on July 3. O'Hare, a member of the Irish Trotskyist group People's Democracy, was elected to the Belfast City Council May 20 on a program centered on support for republican political prisoners currently on hunger strike. He was in New York as part of a tour to build support for the prisoners.]

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*Question. Can you give us some idea of what stage the anti-imperialist movement in Ireland is at?*

*Answer.* We are now approaching another crisis point in the struggle in the H-Blocks of Maze Prison. Joe McDonnell is on his fifty-sixth day of hunger strike and is extremely weak, very close to death.

On the other hand, the British government remains, at least outwardly, intransigent. Last week the British produced a document on the H-Blocks that was a slap in the face to the prisoners, telling them that if they come off the hunger strike the British *might* consider some prison reforms.

So it is a very difficult situation. Obviously the prisoners are as determined, as resolute as ever. With each death they become even more determined to see the thing through.

On the streets, the mobilization of the past months and years continues, although obviously the combatants, the ordinary people, are becoming weary.

Because of the seeming impasse, there is a real possibility of people becoming demoralized. But while that danger must be recognized and dealt with, the movement on the streets remains extremely strong.

This was shown by a demonstration of more than 10,000 people in Belfast last Sunday [June 28], and by the results of the recent elections in the South, where two republican prisoners were elected to the twenty-six county parliament, and where the vote for the prisoners was impressive throughout the country.

Those elections were very significant because this was the first time since the current upsurge began in 1968 that people in the south of Ireland responded in an organized way. It was the first case, certainly in my experience, where passive sympathy has been turned into active support in defense of the prisoners.

This is extremely significant, not only for the current prison struggle, but also for the future of the overall struggle in Ireland.

*Q. What is happening in Britain around the hunger strikes?*

A. One of the most depressing aspects of this whole phase of the struggle has been the British ruling class's seeming ability to blind their own working class to the reality of what is happening in Ireland.

The solidarity movement remains small and isolated. The Troops Out Movement has been

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## The prisoners are as determined, as resolute as ever . . .

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working to build support for a number of years, and hunger-strike support committees have been set up.

They have managed to organize some demonstrations of several thousand people. But the campaign has been sporadic. The movement in the streets in Britain certainly does not compare to the movement in the U.S. during the Vietnam War.

*Q. What about the development of opposition to Irish policies in the Labour Party?*

A. That is significant. We see the beginnings of a solidarity movement within the Labour Party in support of the prisoners. A number of members of Parliament and other elected officials from the Labour Party have set up a committee to defend the prisoners. In Belfast we had a Labour Party councilor from London address the June 28 rally.

These developments are very important because they challenge the bipartisan policy that has existed at least since 1968 on the question of Ireland. Whether Labour or the Tories were in power in Britain, both followed the same policy of repression of the Irish.

There is also the movement around Tony Benn's campaign for deputy leadership of the Labour Party. While that obviously involves more than the question of Ireland, the fact that Ireland does figure in this very significant battle in the Labour Party is extremely encouraging.

*Q. Has the struggle around the demands of the H-Block prisoners changed relations between the various anti-imperialist groups?*

A. There is now much more cooperation between the various groups. But this process started before the hunger strikes. It is the outcome of a long battle going back to the early 1970s.

In 1971-72 we had a united campaign around the issue of internment, with a fair degree of cooperation among various groups. But

in the mid-1970s, perhaps to 1976, the overall struggle in Ireland went into decline. Throughout that period the movement was splintered, with almost no cooperation between the anti-imperialist groups.

Since the onset of the H-Blocks struggle, there have been attempts to rebuild the unity that existed in the early 1970s. It has been a long and very hard struggle, but through a number of initiatives all sides have come to see the need for greater cooperation.

Among the steps in this road were Bernadette Devlin McAliskey's campaign for the European Parliament, when she ran as a supporter of the demands of the H-Block prisoners. There was the fight for broad unity in the Relatives Action Committee, an organization made up of relatives of prisoners which started the H-Block struggle. And there were other united struggles.

People have begun to see that it is possible to work together over central issues that we agree on, despite very fundamental disagreements on a whole range of other questions.

The outcome of this process was the establishment of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee in 1978, which involves all the major anti-imperialist groups—the Provisional IRA, other groups involved in the H-Block activities, People's Democracy, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the Relatives Action Committee, and a number of independents.

All agree on the need to build a campaign around the five demands of the hunger strikers. This allows us to reach out to people who may not support the concept of a united Ireland, or armed struggle or whatever, but do want the British to grant the five demands.

With that united and open approach the National H-Block/Armagh Committee grew in two years from a fairly small organization, largely composed of relatives and already committed supporters of the struggle, into a mass campaign, the largest in the last thirteen years of the struggle.

*Q. How were you elected to the Belfast City Council?*

A. When it became clear that the H-Block committee would not run candidates in the northern local elections, People's Democracy decided to contest the election in two key areas of Belfast. We ran myself against Gerry Fitt, and John McAnulty against Paddy Devlin.

Fitt is a member of the British Parliament and was on the Belfast council. Because he was supposedly a spokesman for the anti-Unionist population, his strong condemnation of the prisoners was very damaging to the mass

movement.

Similarly, Paddy Devlin, a former member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, leading trade unionist, and member of the council, had also damaged the prisoners' cause by condemning their struggle.

We decided that both had to be challenged because of their prominence and the harm they had done to the H-Block campaign. We wanted to use the elections to show the world that their attitude toward the prisoners was not the attitude of the population they supposedly represented.

We began holding meetings in those two constituencies, and through these meetings we formed election committees of local people. From there we organized door-to-door leafletting, explaining the situation.

In my constituency we managed to build up a real united front on the prisoners issue. The anti-Unionist population came together and fought that battle with incredible zest.

For the first time people had a candidate whose platform on the central issues they actually supported. There is a tradition in Belfast that people will vote for a Gerry Fitt as a lesser evil to keep out the Unionists. But they cast those votes with very heavy heart.

This time they had someone who represented their views on the central issue of the prisoners, and the whole area came together and fought the election battle with great determination. The result was we won decisively. Although Gerry Fitt is an internationally known figure, he got only one-quarter the votes I did.

*Q. Is there any indication that the Provisional IRA is changing its traditional position of refusing to run any candidates who would be able to take their seats if elected? Having some people able to participate in the southern parliament, for example, and raise the prisoners question could make a real difference.*

A. The Provisionals have a traditional policy of abstention from any elected assemblies in

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## The whole area came together and fought the election battle with great determination . . .

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the North. But like all of us in this struggle, they are learning, as we all are.

The lessons of Bobby Sands's election, and the election of the two People's Democracy and two IRSP candidates to the Belfast City Council, and the way we have been able to use the elections to push forward the overall struggle, is causing a number of people in the republican movement to rethink the question of electoral tactics.

Before the elections in the South, where we got two prisoners elected to parliament, there was a debate in the H-Block committee on whether to put forward candidates who could take their seats. That debate was part of the ongoing process of rethinking the question.



Marc Lichtman/Militant

Fergus O'Hare (second from right), speaking at a New York news conference July 3. Other participants are (from left) former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Oliver Hughes, brother of late hunger striker Francis Hughes; former New York City Council President Paul O'Dwyer; and Alice McElwee, mother of hunger striker Thomas McElwee.

But the policy of the Provisionals remains abstentionism, although I know individuals who would prefer a less rigid attitude. If there are enough examples of how elections can be used more positively than a pure abstentionist position, hopefully their attitude will change.

*Q. What do you do on the council?*

A. We are not taking our seats. We complied with the legal requirement of membership, attendance at one of the first three meetings, by walking in during the meeting and walking right out again.

Even before the elections, we were part of a campaign to force the elected representatives to take positive action in support of the prisoners, to do more than mouth platitudes and tell us how much they were doing behind the scenes.

Concretely, we said that since the massive majority of the Irish people have indicated that they see the demands of the H-Block prisoners as the central, uppermost issue in their minds, all anti-Unionist councilors should withdraw from the councils until the British meet the demands of the prisoners.

Until the question of the five demands is solved, it is pointless to talk about the minor questions discussed in the councils. We felt that these elected representatives must show the British that unless they concede the prisoners' demands, the whole anti-Unionist population will withdraw from participation in the institutions of the state in Northern Ireland.

The second largest anti-Unionist group in the north, the Irish Independence Party, withdrew all its councilors. And we have not taken our seats, nor have the IRSP councilors. We

are still putting pressure on the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the largest anti-Unionist party, to withdraw as well.

*Q. Through the hunger strike it has become clear to the whole world that there is a political struggle going on in Ireland, and the attempt of the British government to portray the prisoners as criminals has failed. Do you think that Thatcher is simply going to try to bull her way through?*

A. Thatcher, like all politicians of her ilk, reacts in accordance with the number of times she is kicked in the head, and we will continue kicking.

It is ironic that the British government's refusal to budge comes at a time when its overall strategy has been totally defeated. No one still accepts the British argument that the struggle in Ireland is simply a criminal conspiracy.

The determined, resolute struggle of the prisoners has focused world attention on the fact that they are indeed political prisoners. Through the death of Bobby Sands and the other hunger strikers the whole world knows that a political struggle is going on.

So Britain's attempt to criminalize the struggle has failed. But Thatcher is trying to salvage what she can. The British realize that if they are defeated on the issue of prisoner status, that will be the first major victory for the anti-imperialist struggle in a number of years. It will mean that the downturn in the struggle, during which the British were able to take back earlier gains, is over, that the anti-imperialist movement is again forcing the British to make concessions.

That is why Thatcher is so intransigent on

the demands.

Britain will concede only when it sees that it loses more by not giving in than by yielding. We must show that all of Ireland is involved in the struggle, not just the North, that the whole of the Irish people are rising up and threatening British domination over all of Ireland.

That is why the activity in the South has been so important. And that is why international solidarity could have a massive effect on Britain.

*Q. Will the new government in the south make a difference in terms of pressure on Thatcher?*

A. Historically the Fine Gael party, which is the major party in the new coalition government, has been more proimperialist than the Fianna Fáil party, which was in power before the election. If that were the only considera-

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### **The determined struggle of the prisoners has focused world attention on the fact that they are indeed political prisoners . . .**

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tion, we would not be too hopeful of any great developments from the new government.

But the election of the prisoners to parliament and their strong showing throughout the South puts considerable pressure on the incoming prime minister, Garrett FitzGerald.

In addition, FitzGerald has a hung parliament, and will probably have to call a new general election within a year. Having seen the intensity of the support for the prisoners in the country, FitzGerald must realize that if he wants to be returned to power in the coming election, he had better be seen doing something about the H-Blocks.

*Q. What has been the impact of international solidarity activities?*

A. International solidarity puts political pressure on the British government. And boycotts and the like would also put big economic pressure on them to concede.

But there is another aspect that people doing solidarity work may not be aware of. The work boosts the struggle in Ireland itself.

The struggle in the North is extremely intense and totally dominates people's lives. The anti-Unionist population lives under constant British occupation and repression. The scope of the repression, the daily arrests and interrogation, the young people killed by rubber bullets, tends to grind people down.

So does the length of the struggle. The current phase has lasted thirteen years. And we've had a year of hunger strikes, a form of struggle that is extremely intense and emotionally draining.

In that situation, where people have to struggle so hard and so long, and have suffered the bitter loss of the four hunger strikers, solidarity

work in other countries gives a big boost to the population's morale.

That happened, for instance, when Prince Charles got such a hot reception in New York. People in Ireland were just delighted. They talked and laughed about it in the streets and went home to watch it on television. It was the talk of the pubs.

It is so very important for people under such pressure to see that in the midst of their terrible troubles others support their struggle and are dealing blows to the British.

The visits organized from New York for the Berrigan brothers and Ramsey Clark to Belfast also lifted people's morale. It was one of the first major press breakthroughs for the H-Block situation. Again it encouraged people to continue the struggle.

*Q. How has People's Democracy, as an organization, participated in the campaign around H-Block?*

A. People's Democracy has been involved since the very beginning. In fact, we were the first organization to raise the question of political status in 1976, when the then-Labour government in Britain introduced legislation removing political status from the prisoners.

At the time there was a lot of confusion about what the law involved. It was also a time of deep decline for the overall movement. In that situation we tried to make people aware of the real thrust of the law by circulating a petition in defense of political status. We knew the petition would not change British policy, but it gave us a tool to stop people in the streets and explain the situation.

When the new legislation was passed, the first prisoners processed under it started their blanket protests, refusing to wear prison uniforms. As more and more prisoners went on the blanket, relatives organized the Relatives Action Committee to support them.

We took part in the Relatives Action Committee. But the organizational forms made it hard for political groups to have an ongoing intervention, because people could participate only as individuals.

We argued within the committee that it had to develop forms for reaching out to layers who were not traditionally involved in the struggle. We also argued for uniting all the anti-imperialist groups around the question of the H-Blocks and for a campaign that would be inclusive rather than exclusive.

The key, we felt, was to bring in forces who might not necessarily support other aspects of the struggle, but would support the campaign to improve the conditions under which the prisoners were forced to live.

In 1978 Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, working through her local Relatives Action Committee, organized a conference in Coalisland to broaden the movement. It was the first united action in a long time, bringing together many people who had been around in the early days of the civil rights struggle but later drifted away from activity. We helped build that campaign.

When Bernadette McAliskey ran for a seat in the European Parliament, on the specific issue of the H-Blocks, People's Democracy was the only organization that totally supported that campaign. Bernadette's candidacy was opposed by the republican movement, which waged a strong boycott campaign.

But Bernadette received 34,000 votes, the clearest indication to that time of the extent of support for the prisoners. In that period, the British minister for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, was saying that the prisoners had no support, that they were criminals and gangsters backed only by a few lunatic extremists.

The 34,000 people who voted for Bernadette provided the first unarguable indication of the extent of the support that existed, despite the divisions around the campaign.

In 1979 we organized a three-day march in commemoration of the 1969 Burntollet civil rights march. We initiated a call for an organizing committee, inviting all groups to participate. And that march, again in spite of some difficulties in the committee (the Provisionals withdrew from the committee at the last minute and refused to support the march), was very successful, mobilizing several thousand people on the last day. It received tremendous publicity and generated a lot of support in an area where no activity had taken place up to that time.

Here too, we were able to show the benefit of a united approach and of an orientation of pushing the struggle into new areas and layers of the population.

Through our activity and our arguments for

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### **Solidarity work in other countries gives a big boost to morale . . .**

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unity and for a broad approach, we played a fairly significant role in developing people's consciousness to the point where the overall movement could set up the National H-Block/Armagh Committee, bringing together all the forces in the anti-imperialist movement in an outward-looking campaign.

We are active in that committee, with three comrades, including myself, on the national leadership body. Our comrades are also involved at the local level wherever we have the forces to do the work on the ground.

Perhaps most important has been our recent intervention around the local elections. We were able to clearly demonstrate the benefit of fighting elections and showed how elections can be used to boost the overall campaign.

That goes beyond just using the elections for propaganda and as a show of support for the prisoners. We showed you can also challenge the enemies of the prisoners and defeat them on the battleground from which they claim they get their mandate—the ballot box.

Overall, I think you can say we have made a significant, positive contribution to the H-Block campaign. □

# Workers unity assembly

*FSLN's pledge: 'deepen the revolution'*

By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA—Four hundred delegates gathered here July 4 and 5 for the Second Assembly of Workers Unity, called by the Nicaraguan Trade-Union Coordinating Committee (CSN).

The delegates met under a twenty-foot-high banner quoting Commander of the Revolution Luis Carrión: "The historic mission of the trade unions is not merely to win this or that improvement, but to educate tens of thousands of workers in the fundamentals of building the new society."

Even before the sessions began, the crowd was on its feet chanting and clapping. "After twenty years of struggle," they shouted over and over, "we pledge to defend our victory." (The Sandinista National Liberation Front was founded in July 1961.)

Unanimously approved, after two days of discussion and debate, were resolutions to undertake a vast political education campaign among Nicaraguan workers, using "the revolutionary theories of Marxism"; and to recognize the FSLN as the leadership of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The delegates also called for tougher measures against decapitalization in industry and agriculture.

They urged greater participation by the workers in the Sandinista People's Militias, and called for guaranteeing job security to workers who join the militias.

## Step toward labor unity

The CSN, founded in November 1980, represents about 95 percent of the country's organized workers. It brings together Nicaragua's three largest union federations, as well as the teachers association (ANDEN), the farmworkers union (ATC), and the union of health workers (FETSALUD). Also part of the CSN is the Workers Front (FO), one of the prorevolution political currents active in the trade unions.

Deep sentiment exists for ending needless duplication of effort in the labor movement and creating a single trade-union federation, the better to confront the serious challenges facing the workers and the revolution. The CSN represents a major step toward that goal.

In hundreds of factories and workplaces across the country, unions organized discussions and assemblies during the two months preceding the national conference. The key themes from these meetings were summarized in the proposals offered to the delegates and adopted.

Part of this preconference discussion included visits to factories by members of the FSLN National Directorate and other Sandinista

leaders. These visits gave the workers an opportunity to explain the problems they face.

At the opening session of the national assembly, Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega, coordinator of the three-member Junta of National Reconstruction, outlined the country's difficult economic situation. He noted in particular the possible shortfall of \$100 million in foreign-exchange income this year because of low world coffee prices. He explained that this makes it impossible to raise wages further as a solution to the workers' problems. (A 20 percent wage increase is already planned for 1981.)

Ortega explained that the government would concentrate on improving social services so as to upgrade the workers' real income.

Speaking on July 4, Ortega noted that the date marked the 205th anniversary of United States independence. He explained that the American people had fought with arms in hand for eight years to rid themselves of the tyranny of British colonialism.

"We respect and salute that heroic struggle," Ortega said, "especially those who shed their blood for American independence. They were not fighting for the United States to become to other countries what England had been to them."

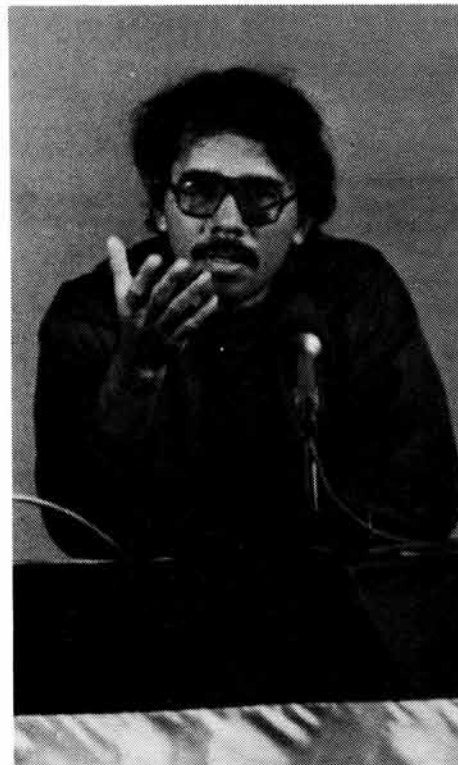
## 'That past is dead and buried'

Commander of the Revolution Víctor Tirado López, representing the FSLN National Directorate, sharply attacked the owners of private enterprises who are decapitalizing, and who claim the "economic climate" is bad for private investment.

"For them, people's power, Sandinista power, doesn't create the right climate or the proper guarantees. They would like for things to be like the past, when private enterprise had unchecked and unlimited power, like the old days with Somoza. But that past is dead and buried," Tirado declared.

The assembly was a sharp rebuff to the panic-mongering, anti-Sandinista centers of Nicaraguan society—such as the right-wing daily *La Prensa*—which have tried to convince Nicaraguan workers to blame their problems on the FSLN. The reactionaries claim such difficulties can only be solved by turning the government and the economy over to big business.

The CSN gathering was one of many marches, meetings, and rallies being held across the country during late June and early July. These demonstrations have had two common themes: A call for confiscating decapitalized properties while there is still something left to confiscate; and a call for exercising *mano dura* (an iron hand) against the counterrevolution.



Fred Murphy/IP

DANIEL ORTEGA

For example, thousands of women marched through the city of Chinandega July 5, raising these demands and calling on women to join the militias.

Three thousand Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS) activists from Managua neighborhoods rallied the same day under a huge banner bearing just two words: *Mano Dura*.

"*Al paredon, al paredon!*" rang out again and again. ("To the wall!")

The next day, thousands of peasants marched on the offices of the Ministry of Agricultural Development in Managua. Organized by the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), the peasants demanded arms to defend themselves against the counterrevolutionary terrorists operating in the countryside, and an end to bureaucratism in the national banking system.

## July 19 'a historic date'

In León, 800 persons marched June 30 to demand the removal of two Somozaists who had wormed their way into the judicial system.

A few days later, a national congress of students called for students to join the workers and peasants in defending the revolution.

Five thousand workers and peasants marched on the Casa del Gobierno (Government House) here in the capital July 8 to demand firm action against decapitalization.

"This July 19 will be a historic date for the Nicaraguan people," junta member Sergio Ramírez told the demonstrators. "It will not only be a commemoration, but an opportunity to deepen the revolutionary process still further."

Noting that Nicaragua faced a series of grave economic problems, Ramírez said, "We

think the only way forward is consolidating and deepening the revolution, with firmness and decisiveness."

Meanwhile, another 1,000 workers from the

San Antonio sugar mill, the country's largest private enterprise, were marching on the Council of State to protest decapitalization by the mill's owners. The workers charged,

among other things, that 7 percent of the 1980-81 sugar harvest at the mill had been lost because of the Pellas family's economic sabotage. □

# Unions discuss workers control

## *Demand crackdown against capitalist sabotage*

By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA—The San Martín slaughterhouse in Nandaimé laid off 188 workers and announced it was closing for at least two months. The owners had already sent checks for more than 100,000 U.S. dollars to Miami, and had withdrawn 7 million córdobas (10 córdobas = US\$1) from the company accounts to buy more dollars on the black market.

The IGOSA slaughterhouse in Rivas fired more than 300 workers after selling off 1,500 manzanas (one manzana = 1.73 acres), two jeeps, three microbuses, two cars, and spare parts. The owners claimed there was a shortage of cattle, despite the fact that there were more than 15,000 head in the province.

The 1,600-manzana property of Alfonso Ramos, near the Honduran border, had only 460 manzanas cultivated in coffee that was almost completely uncared for and badly diseased. Before the revolution, Ramos employed 200 workers. Now there are only 27.

The Hacienda Rio de Janeiro in Boaco, which in 1979 had 500 head of cattle, now has 72, of which only 13 are healthy. The nearby Hacienda San Pedro harvested 155,000 pounds of coffee in 1979-80, but only 38,000 in 1980-81. The San Pedro sugar mill used to process 5,000 bundles daily. Now it processes none.

All these enterprises were taken over by their workers during June, and the IGOSA slaughterhouse was turned over to administration by the National Financial System.

These are a few recent examples of a plague deeply affecting daily life in Nicaragua: decapitalization.

### **Like a strike by the bosses**

Decapitalization is like a strike by the bosses, who refuse to invest in their own enterprises. They fail to hire enough workers, refuse to purchase raw materials, ignore equipment maintenance, sell off assets, and carry out fraudulent financial dealings. The aim is to milk the enterprise for everything it is worth before abandoning it.

In another recent example, an orthodontist received US\$92,000 from the national banking system to import dental equipment. She spent only \$18,000 on imports and sold the rest of the dollars on the black market. She was arrested and sentenced in June.

Decapitalization is an especially serious challenge to the revolutionary government. Somoza left the economy in ruins, from which it is finally emerging. The central goal here has been to raise production.

But decapitalization means *cutting* production, thus directly confronting the ability of the Government of National Reconstruction and the FSLN to carry out the social programs the country so desperately needs. Decapitalization expresses the employing class's complete disinterest in the standard of living of Nicaragua's working masses.

### **Early moves against sabotage**

This problem has a considerable history in Nicaragua. It has been estimated that \$800 million was taken out of the country during the period of the mass struggle against the Somoza regime in 1977-79. (A similar process is now under way in El Salvador, where an estimated \$2 billion has been removed by the capitalists.)

Decapitalization of the enterprises owned by the Somoza family and its partners was stopped short when these were all confiscated the day after the victory of the insurrection. But some 75 percent of industrial production remained in private hands.

As the proworker, propeasant course of the revolution became clear to the remaining bourgeoisie, decapitalization was renewed in early 1980. This brought a sharp response by the workers and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

A series of workplaces were taken over in February 1980, and the trade unions demanded action by the government. On March 2, 1980, a law against decapitalization was decreed. It called for prosecution of all those "who by action or omission employ deceitful or fraudulent means to remove from the country the fixed or circulating assets of enterprises (that is, the capital of such enterprises)."

Those convicted under the law faced stiff fines and jail terms. The law also empowered the government to "intervene," or place under state administration, any enterprise found to have suffered decapitalization.

Before the law was passed, the FSLN weekly *Poder Sandinista* termed the workers' own initiatives "as or more important than the legal measures taken to control the illegal practices of various unpatriotic businessmen." The article went on:

In the event situations of this type [decapitalization] are detected it is necessary to denounce them immediately, defend the means of production, demand maintenance of production levels, and call for a review of the real accounts of the enterprise. . . .

The working class has to begin to be concerned with maintaining the economic balance, understand-

ing that this is not a problem for the private owners, but rather an axis of the workers' class interests—an eminently popular question and thus cause for concern and study on the part of the workers. [*Poder Sandinista*, February 14, 1980.]

Later, the FSLN called for the implementation of "workers control . . . so as to prevent a halt in production or the destruction of enterprises by their owners or other reactionary forces. . . ."

### **Popular outrage**

In recent months a fresh wave of decapitalization has brought up the need to deepen such measures. A series of new takeovers such as the ones described at the beginning of this article has exposed the capitalists' economic sabotage for all to see.

Along with the decapitalization moves has come an increase in counterrevolutionary terror. At least sixteen Nicaraguans were killed during two weeks in June.

Coming at the same time, the new wave of decapitalization and the rise in terrorist violence sparked a great national outcry, voiced through the mass organizations.

During June and into July, mass meetings, news conferences, articles in the FSLN daily *Barricada*, speeches, and editorials denounced the capitalists who were responsible for these crimes.

Popular outrage reached the point that representatives of the unions, Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs), the peasant organization, and others demanded confiscation of the properties of decapitalizers and tougher measures, including possible institution of the death penalty, against collaborators with the counterrevolution.

"Strike at the heart of the counterrevolution," cried a *Barricada* editorial:

That is the fundamental objective. We have plenty of evidence already that the counterrevolution is more than just the actions of the armed bands. It is also the accelerated decapitalization our economy is suffering. . . .

We need severe laws to defend the power conquered by the people, and the popular masses must put themselves at the front of actions to guarantee that these laws are applied and obeyed.

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Commander of the Revolution Bayardo Arce, speaking before an assembly of food workers, charged that decapitalization was part of an imperialist destabilization campaign.

#### 'Workers should take offensive'

It has been the workers organizations that have taken the lead in the discussion of how to stop the capitalists from bleeding the country's assets.

Lucío Jiménez, general secretary of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), Nicaragua's largest labor organization, explained the solution to decapitalization in a speech to the government workers union UNE:

We are all aware of the conscious participation of the workers, sometimes even including taking on tasks that are part of administration. We value the immense sacrifices of the working class and all the workers, but, working against these sacrifices and this effort, is the criminal hand of imperialism and its lackeys, the sellout capitalists that in a thousand and one ways are decapitalizing the national economy.

By looking at a huge number of private enterprises, we have learned about two fundamental forms of decapitalization. The first and most important is the refusal to invest, in spite of the profits they make. And as if that weren't enough, not only do they rob the people through phony bank loans, but they also allow themselves the privilege of decapitalizing their enterprises both by overbilling imports and by buying dollars and sending them to Miami, surely to arm the counterrevolutionary bands there and here on our northern frontier. . . .

We are of the opinion that the workers cannot remain on the defensive, because on our shoulders rests the future of the revolution. And we should immediately go over to the offensive, to an open struggle, not just against anybody, or against one or two capitalist administrators or against one or two bosses, but go over to an immediate struggle to strike a profound blow at the bourgeoisie as a class.

#### Workers control

The solution most frequently offered to the problem of decapitalization is workers control.

CST legal adviser Margarita Zapata explained in an interview that the workers play an important role in keeping an eye on the enterprises through their participation in administration. Without such participation, Zapata warned, decapitalization would continue.

And, she added, "the capitalist who is not decapitalizing is the exception."

It is generally agreed that current laws against decapitalization are not very effective.

Edgard Macías, vice-minister of labor, explained to *Barricada* that the law did not cover such abuses as distributing profits as dividends before the end of the year or excessive management salaries.

Another difficulty, added Rural Workers Association (ATC) head of labor relations Fernando Cedeño, is the difficulty of proving that assets have been taken out of the country.

A third problem is the length of time it takes to prove decapitalization. "Against decapitali-

zation, confiscation," declared Edgardo García, head of the ATC, at a news conference. "But timely—not just when there's nothing left but ruins, debts, and bankrupt enterprises."

Cedeño proposed that any law permit government intervention based simply on charges by the workers or any other responsible body.

The fight against decapitalization is the latest chapter in the discussion of workers control, what it is, and how to nurture it.

Explaining the FSLN's view of workers control, Nathán Sevilla wrote in the May 23 *Barricada*:

"In the nationalized sector, workers participation is continually becoming more effective and richer as the organized workers assume responsibility in planning and in control of the productive process. . . ."

In the private sector, Sevilla wrote, "the workers are pressuring more and more to penetrate the 'secrets' of production, find out where the profits go, and demand a reduction in capitalist profits through bigger contributions for social services. . . ."

In a series of seven national workers conferences organized by industry by the Nicaraguan Trade-Union Coordinating Committee (CSN),

delegates discussed the connection between increasing production and productivity and increasing workers' participation in planning and administration.

Looking back on the nearly two years since the revolution, a speaker at the metalworkers conference noted that the FSLN had consistently been trying to increase workers' participation in the running of enterprises.

He explained how production commissions had to involve workers from every plant department in discussions about the entire process.

"The administration should provide detailed information on sources of materials, costs, every stage of production," he said. "The workers often don't know what the problems are, and we have to know all these things in order to raise production."

He explained that the reactivation assemblies held after the revolution in many enterprises had had only a limited impact because many workers didn't understand the importance of participating on a day-to-day basis in decision-making after the assemblies were over.

Other delegates from private plants gave examples of how their unions had dealt with de-



Roger/Barricada

capitalization. One explained that his union had assigned someone to keep track of the flow of raw materials, whose job included notifying the rest of the workers when supplies ran short. Another described how the owners of his factory left needed equipment in customs warehouses for a year until the workers finally went to customs themselves and arranged for the equipment to be released.

#### Workers' participation on state farms

Agricultural workers organized in the ATC met in assemblies in May. At twenty-five meetings of year-round workers and seven of seasonal laborers, the farmworkers discussed how to increase their participation in management and how to deal with rampant decapitalization.

Interviewed in *Barricada*, Francisco López, ATC organizational secretary, described a fiasco on the Arlen Siú state farm, which he said was typical of many, that could have been avoided if workers had more decision-making power.

The workers, he said, had opposed a decision to plant sesame because it was the wrong time of year. Unable to convince the administrator, they went so far as to hide the equipment so that money wouldn't be wasted. Their efforts failed, however—as did the entire sesame crop.

The majority of Nicaraguan workers today participate at least to the extent of having access to information about production and management. In many cases, workers in the nationalized plants are consulted at some stage of planning or production. However, final decision-making power rests, in the nationalized sector, with the administrators; in the private sector, of course, it lies with the owners.

It is generally agreed that increasing workers' access to information is key to extending their control. "When the workers know how everything works in an enterprise, they will have the capacity to make decisions," said Omar González, an administrator at the nationalized textile firm, Texnicsa, in an interview.

Nicaraguan workers play a leading role in drawing up laws concerning their rights and their working conditions. For example, a number of imminent reforms in the Labor Code were announced at the International Workers Day rally in Managua on May 1.

Union leaders began discussing these reforms paragraph by paragraph. After nine hours of discussion, they announced that the proposed reforms were inadequate. In particular, they demanded stronger protections for workers the bosses tried to fire for revealing decapitalization.

#### 'Scapegoats'?

The capitalists remaining in Nicaragua, despite their claims of loyalty to the revolution and their professed concern about economic reactivation, have so far refused to admit that decapitalization is a problem, let alone denounce it.

Instead, they have blamed the country's economic ills on the FSLN, claiming they are being made into scapegoats.

In a June 24 interview with the right-wing daily *La Prensa*, for example, Enrique Dreyfus, head of the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), admitted that Nicaraguan capitalists were not reinvesting their profits.

But Dreyfus blamed this refusal—which can only be called decapitalization—on low government-controlled prices. In other words, the capitalists would only invest if their profit margins were allowed to rise to what they were before the revolution. And never mind the effect on poor and working people.

FSLN leader Onofre Guevara answered Dreyfus in the June 29 *Barricada*:

The origin of the economic crisis lies in the history of unlimited exploitation guaranteed by the capitalist structure, and in the latter's relation of dependency on imperialism. The resulting crisis that we are trying to deal with is the legacy of that capitalist past which refuses to die.

So it is not only hypocritical, but tremendously cruel (or even criminal), to prescribe the very capitalist 'medicine' that has already poisoned the nation's economy. And this prescription comes just at the moment when we have rejected it in a revolutionary way, so as to rescue the economy from the historic crisis into which it had been plunged by the bourgeoisie.

As an effort to insure its own survival, it is quite understandable that the bourgeoisie should deny responsibility and even claim to have an alternative solution. But it is intolerable that they should pose as 'scapegoats' and try to find someone else to blame for their own sins. . . .

The bourgeoisie cannot avoid carrying out decapitalization—nor should it be bothered by our calling it just that—because the very nature of the capitalist system and of those who benefit from it has always been to take from the worker what he has created and give it to others.

Despite the will of the revolution's leadership, and the general desire of the workers themselves to increase their participation in administration and planning, obstacles remain.

#### Overcoming obstacles

In a three-part *Barricada* series in May, Ives Chaix listed a few: lack of confidence and unwillingness on the part of workers to confront administrators, divisions within the working class, a fear of the ranks on the part of some union leaders, indiscipline at work, and unfamiliarity with the technical side of production.

Chaix proposed several methods of overcoming these historic weaknesses within the working class. First, he suggested, simple initial goals should be set and then made progressively more complex.

Second, Chaix urged workers to question the administration whenever there was something they didn't like or understand. Another suggestion was higher levels of organization and discipline in the working class, and more widespread use of democratic forms, such as councils, section meetings, and plant meetings.

It is not a simple task to take a working class, less than 8 percent of which even belonged to unions two years ago, and turn over to it the complex tasks of planning and managing a modern economy.

Yet this is the goal the Sandinista revolution has set itself, and it has already begun the job.

Decision-making "is a right conquered in the revolution," said Texnicsa's Omar González.

"We have to get rid of the idea or the fear that the workers aren't capable of exercising this right," said Fernando Cedeño of the ATC, "because experience has shown that the workers have been able to prevent mistakes and thereby avoid serious damage." □

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# Update on the 'Green revolution'

*It only works in Cuba and Nicaragua*

By Cliff Conner

Remember the "green revolution"? That was the buzzword in the 1960s among those who thought the problems of underdeveloped countries could be solved fundamentally by technological means.

Biological science, they believed, could raise productivity of small farmers enough to solve the world hunger problem.

With their agriculture on a solid basis, the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America could then supposedly proceed along the same path to industrial development that Western Europe and the United States had once travelled.

The "green revolution" was to eliminate the need for "red revolution" as a prerequisite to breaking the chains of poverty.

## Who benefited?

A recent article in the *New York Times* (May 4, 1981) recalls that in Latin America the green revolution didn't quite work out as anticipated. The "miracle" wheat and rice strains it produced were genuine technological breakthroughs, but social factors overwhelmed the scientific advances:

"... the wealthiest, large-scale farmers and their urban customers were the main beneficiaries, while the poorest peasants remained as destitute as before."

Although the *Times* article fails to point it out, the "urban customers" who benefited were not, for the most part, individual consumers, but rather large-scale food distributors.

Moreover, most of these "urban customers" were not Latin Americans at all. The big landowners enriched themselves primarily through exports to industrialized countries, especially the United States.

Finally, the "wealthiest, large-scale farmers" were, above all, U.S.-owned agribusinesses such as Del Monte, Anderson-Clayton, Standard Brands, and others.

The losers in the green revolution are the small farmers, who still constitute some 40 percent of the population in Latin America and produce most of the continent's food.

Recognizing the failure of the green revolution (but not the cause of the failure), a second effort was made in Latin America, and with similar results:

"Today, almost 10 years and more than \$100 million after that work began, it appears that the latest research, like the green revolution before it, has benefited large-scale producers and urban consumers, leaving the rural poor by the wayside once again."

In the capitalist countries, to be sure, the in-

roduction of agricultural technology has made the rich richer and the poor hungrier.

## No 'measurable impact'

The researchers at one center for research in tropical agriculture, CIAT near Cali, Colombia, are well aware of this problem: "... the center's top scientists acknowledge that, largely because of political and economic restraints, their work has not yet had a measurable impact on Latin America. . . .

"Most importantly, conversations with a number of the center's researchers make clear, many of the Latin American governments up to now have shown little interest in bettering the conditions of the rural poor."

The scientists complain that "if we enable the oligarchs to decrease the price of food, they'll just decrease wages as well."

On the other hand, a radically different picture emerges in what the article identifies as the "noncapitalist" countries of Latin America, Cuba and Nicaragua:

"The noncapitalist countries have reportedly done more than any others to utilize the center's work to feed large masses of people. Cuba is said to have gone all out to adopt the research center's techniques in cassava and bean production, and in Nicaragua, cotton plantations abandoned by fleeing landowners have been planted with new bean varieties, one of which has been named the 'revolution of 1979.'

## 'Most successful in Cuba'

"The most successful utilization of our work has been in Cuba," said James H. Cock, a 37-year-old Briton who is perhaps the world's leading authority on the cassava plant. "They have imported tens of thousands of seedlings and adopted our cultural practices, and as a result they are producing yields of up to four times the world average. They've already been able to take cassava off the ration list."

"Similarly, the Cubans have ambitious plans to have 40,000 hectares (98,840 acres) planted in the research center's bean varieties by 1983, and have already been able to ease the rationing of beans.

"In both Cuba and Nicaragua production is on large-scale state-owned plantations rather than small individual farms." As one agronomist here explained, "the noncapitalist countries can emphasize maximum food production, without having to worry about market prices or an optimum economic return for producers."

That is the most important point of all. When blind market forces are allowed to deter-

mine agricultural production levels, the big landowners grow the most profitable cash crops for export rather than staple crops to feed the home population.

Since the capitalist governments in Latin America represent the interests of the wealthy, propertied classes, they have no desire to challenge the systematic exploitation of the poor farmers.

That is why the hunger problem in Latin America can only be solved through a transformation of social structures, beginning with the governments.

And that is what makes Cuba and Nicaragua different from the rest of Latin America—revolutions there put governments in power that do not defend the interests of a wealthy few against the needs of the population as a whole.

## Science in a capitalist straight-jacket

The director general of the agricultural research center, John L. Nickel, is nervous about the fact that the center's technology only seems to serve its purpose in Cuba and Nicaragua. About one-fourth of his budget comes from the United States government.

"We're an apolitical technical organization—we stay away from telling people how to organize politically," says Mr. Nickel. "But technological improvement is no panacea."

How right he is! In spite of all the tremendous advances of modern physical and biological science, they are powerless, in the straight-jacket of the outmoded capitalist social structure, to benefit the human race.

The impasse of science will not be resolved in research on quarks, or DNA, or miracle wheat, but through practical activity in the science of society.

As long as private profits remain the primary driving force in organizing agriculture and industry, the fruits of scientific research will not only rot and go to waste; they will turn poisonous and pose a danger.

Technological advances are today more feared than welcomed by millions of working people—especially if such advances have "military applications." In capitalist hands, the destructive potential of science overshadows its positive creative powers.

Since the roadblock to progress is not technological but political, programs such as the green revolution, which "stay away from telling people how to organize politically," are insufficient.

If world hunger is to be eliminated, it will be through the "prisoners of starvation" arising in emulation of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions. □



# Auto workers strike for jobs

*Discontent rising amid economic disaster*

By Fred Murphy

Argentine workers are beginning to fight back against the economic disaster brought on by the military dictatorship in its five years of rule.

Massive layoffs have taken place in recent months as a wave of bankruptcies has swept Argentine industry. These have resulted from the high bank interest rates imposed by the government and from a series of sharp devaluations of the Argentine currency, the peso.

On June 17, thousands of auto workers carried out a thirteen-hour strike to demand a halt to layoffs. Similar strikes had taken place earlier at two Volkswagen plants, and on June 22 Mercedes-Benz workers struck again.

The June 17 strike was called by SMATA,\* the national union of auto workers. At plants in the Buenos Aires area, the workers gathered for assemblies in their workplaces and then marched out in demonstrations at 11 a.m. Such a tactic is called an "active strike" in Argentina; it was often used during the working-class upsurge of 1969-75.

### 1,000 workers arrested

Several thousand auto workers gathered at the SMATA headquarters in the center of the capital on June 17. As they were preparing to hold a march to the presidential palace, police armed with submachine guns moved in and arrested all those who were inside the SMATA offices. More than 1,000 workers were herded onto city buses commandeered by the cops and hauled off to police stations.

The regime was forced to release all the workers, however, after the SMATA leadership threatened to prolong the strike.

Auto workers also struck on June 17 in Mendoza, Córdoba, Tucumán, and Bahía Blanca. In the three latter cities, the workers defied the local SMATA bureaucrats, who refused to honor the national union's strike call.

The June 17 strike reflected the immense pressure that the SMATA bureaucracy has been under to wage a fight against layoffs and plant closures. According to the union's own estimates, some 36,000 of Argentina's 130,000 auto workers are now without jobs. Major employers such as General Motors and Citroën have closed down all their operations in Argentina. Other multinational corporations are threatening to do the same. Hundreds of smaller auto parts companies have been forced out of business.

Auto plants that are still operating have cut back on working hours. Some 25,000 SMATA

members are now working between ten and twenty hours less per week than normal.

Other industries especially hard hit by the current recession are steel, metals, and textiles. The Metalworkers Union (UOM) estimates that some 110,000 of its members have lost their jobs in the past five years. Twenty thousand textile workers are unemployed, and nearly 6,000 textile jobs have been eliminated in the Buenos Aires suburb of Quilmes alone.

Overall, the number of Argentines employed in industry has dropped by half a million since 1975. Nationwide unemployment is estimated at nearly 9 percent.

Bank failures have also caused joblessness. In May, bank workers in several cities went on strike to demand a halt to layoffs.

The country's biggest paper company, Celulosa Argentina, has shut down one of its five plants and may face bankruptcy. Workers at the Celulosa plants that are still operating have carried out strikes of twenty-four, forty-eight, and seventy-two hours to protest layoffs and

### Reagan OK's loans to dictators

The Reagan administration has ordered U.S. delegates to the Inter-American Development Bank and other international lending institutions to support loans to the Chilean, Argentine, Paraguayan, and Uruguayan dictatorships.

The July 8 order reversed a policy established under the Carter administration of opposing such loans because of human rights violations in the countries of the southern cone of South America.

Reagan's move is illegal under current U.S. law. A law passed by Congress in 1977 instructs U.S. representatives to oppose loans by international banks to countries that engage in "a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights."

The Reagan administration has also asked Congress to lift an embargo on military aid, sales, and training to Argentina. Several top U.S. military officers have visited Argentina recently.

The military dictatorship that has ruled Argentina since March 1976 is responsible for the kidnapping and "disappearance" of at least 15,000 persons, the exiling of tens of thousands more, and the acknowledged jailing of at least 1,000 persons, 900 of whom are being held under decrees that require neither formal charges nor a fixed term of imprisonment.



Argentine auto workers at demonstration before installation of military regime.

delays in wage payments.

Working-class resistance to the employers' attacks has been hindered by the continuing effects of the fierce repression carried out by the dictatorship in earlier years. Thousands of union militants were killed, "disappeared," or forced into exile. The strongest unions were "intervened" by the government, with army officers appointed to oversee them. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) was ordered dissolved.

The bureaucratic apparatuses of the trade unions were left more or less intact by the dictatorship, however. Until recently, the union leaderships have refused to put up a fight to save their members' jobs.

While the SMATA leadership was finally forced to call a strike, its proposals for dealing with the crisis in the auto industry involve making a bloc with the employers. The SMATA bureaucrats put forward demands for a ban on auto imports and for tax credits for the auto companies.

But despite a lack of leadership, discontent with the dictatorship is becoming more widespread and vocal. On May 28, some 2,000 persons marched in Buenos Aires in solidarity with the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo"—a group of relatives of "disappeared" persons who for four years have been demanding that the government clarify the fate of their loved ones.

### Capitalist press becomes bolder

Sectors of the bourgeois press are becoming bolder about criticizing the dictatorship. After the Buenos Aires daily *La Prensa* began publishing sharp attacks on military rule, its circulation leaped from 90,000 to 170,000. The newspaper has not backed down despite a physical attack on one of its leading columnists and the withdrawal of all government advertising.

Further workers' struggles can be expected as the economic crisis deepens. The sector of the trade-union bureaucracy tied to the bourgeois-nationalist Peronist movement has regrouped and taken the name of the dissolved union federation CGT. It held a national plenary in late June and called for a "national day of protest" to be held sometime during the first two weeks of July. □

\*Sindicato de Mecánicos y Afines del Transporte Automotor (Union of Automotive Machinists and Allied Trades).

# Auto workers demand their rights

## Protest harassment by management and arrests

[At the end of April twelve workers from the Iran National auto factory in Tehran were arrested and fired from their jobs. On April 29 an open letter protesting the arrests was circulated to Iran National workers by Bahram Ali Atai and Reza Arefpour, two former workers at the plant. Atai and Arefpour, members of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), had been fired from Iran National in mid-January.

[Nine of the twelve workers have since been released and two have returned to work, in an important victory for Iran National workers. The campaign continues for the release of the remaining three workers.

[Following are excerpts from the letter, addressed to members of the factory *shora* and Islamic *anjoman* (the workers' committees at the factory). It appeared in the May 4 issue of the HKE's weekly newspaper *Kargar*. The HKE is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International. The translation is by the HKE.]

\* \* \*

At the end of last week and the beginning of this week, twelve of our militant and Muslim co-workers of Iran National were arrested by authorities of the Revolutionary Prosecutor's office and the National Industrial Organization. Some of those arrested are now in Evin Prison.

With the recent arrests, it is now clear that there is a deliberate plan afoot to create divisions between the workers and toilers with the aim of weakening the revolution. The events over the last several months speak for themselves:

- With the start of Iraqi and imperialist military aggression against the revolution, we saw a wave of self-sacrifice and militancy against this military aggression sweep through the country.

Iran National workers, in coordination with the rest of the country, took steps to mobilize militarily. In support of the Imam's saying that in an Islamic country everybody is a soldier and strives to build the Army of 20 Million, the factory's Islamic *anjoman* began to organize the military mobilization in the factory. More than ten workers from Iran National were martyred at the front, joining thousands and thousands of martyrs of this war.

It was not long after this that the representatives of the Revolutionary Prosecutor's office and the National Industrial Organization, along with Iran National management, stepped up their illegal activities against the mobilization. From the beginning, they had tried to prevent the development of the factory's military

mobilization.

These authorities began a series of illegal expulsions that began with the firing of the socialist workers from the factory. They called us back from the front and within a week fired us, despite the fact that the constitution of the Islamic Republic outlaws expulsions for political views.

Despite the increasing protests against these counterrevolutionary expulsions, the authorities expanded them. They resorted to accusations, slanders, and lies. They tried to frighten all the honest workers of Iran National.

Altogether, seven socialist brothers active in the mobilization were fired—militants who were in the front lines of the war with Iraq. By slandering the socialists, these authorities also targeted the Islamic *anjoman* for attacks in order to stop the united struggles and actions of the workers.

The authorities tried to turn the factory's military mobilization, which was set up by the Islamic *anjoman* with the participation of socialists and workers with all different views, into something to feel guilty about. They also tried to divide the Islamic *anjoman*.

- At the beginning of the New Year (March 21), management distributed a circular announcing a program to increase the hours of work. The increase would not even include payment for the workers' lunch break, which is guaranteed by law.

But since the Iranian people made the revolution so that every worker and toiler could obtain their basic human rights, a wave of protest swept through the entire plant.

At the same time, Iran National workers demanded that the parliamentary bill on payment

of twenty days' wages for the New Year's bonus also be granted.

This protest began in the assembly section and soon the entire plant was discussing it. The assembly section workers acted as principled soldiers of the revolution. They turned to the Islamic *shora* and *anjoman*. They elected representatives to discuss the matter with management.

Management's program for increasing the work hours was not accepted by the majority of workers. The majority also requested hot lunches. All the workers knew that with the present level of production at Iran National, calling for working overtime was just a provocation by management.

The workers' anger deepened with the announcement by management's stooges that the contract with British imperialism required overtime work and that this was the wish of the British company.

But management was forced to retreat. The work was increased only one hour. And 200 rials was proposed as payment for lunch.

All those arrested had been the ones elected by the workers to speak to management and the authorities in the National Industrial Organization and Revolutionary Prosecutor's office.

- Following these incidents, more than one hundred workers were fired—all brothers known as the Five Percents. [A law had been passed that every plant should hire at least five percent from unemployed high school graduates.]

When these brothers approached the authorities to pursue justice, the response everywhere, from management to the prime minister's office, was the same—do not make a conspiracy, the left has influenced you, if you gather together once more we will do this and that to you, and so on.

During this time, Iran National management and authorities in the National Industrial Organization did not take one step towards making Iran National self-sufficient. And they have no such plans for the future because this will only be possible by mobilizing and uniting the workers. These authorities have attacked the military mobilization in the factory, trampled under foot the constitution (which has clearly declared freedom of ideas for workers), arrested representatives of the workers, and fired the Five Percents.

Confronting the military aggression of Iraq makes it necessary for the workers to mobilize, to hold a general assembly of the *shora*, and discuss the questions of the war and our economic needs.

At the time we were fired from the factory,

### Urge release of Iranian socialists

International support is urgently needed to secure the release from prison of Iranian socialists Farnak Zahraie and Monavar Shir Ali (see article on page 751).

Supporters of the Iranian revolution are requested to send telegrams to Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Rajai and Speaker of the Parliament Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; Majlis Building; Tehran, Iran.

Copies should be sent to *Jomhuri-e-Eslami*, Saadi Jonubi Street, Tehran, Iran and *Kargar*, Box #43/174, Post Area 14, Tehran, Iran.

we said that the firings, threats, slanders, and lies would not end with the socialists. Today we see how our Islamic brothers in the factory have also been arrested just like our brother Nemat Jazayeri from the Ray-O-Vac factory.

These actions all result from management's weak position.

The firing of the Five Percents takes place because the managers claim that if the high school graduates come in contact with the rest of the workers this might heighten the consciousness of the workers. If this is so, what will become of the literacy campaign?

When we were fired, the Muslim brothers of the Islamic anjoman, with whom we were in the same trenches at the front, condemned our being fired in private conversations. But they did not take an official position. By this act, the leadership of the Islamic anjoman has un-

consciously betrayed themselves and the Iran National workers.

If this militant, anti-imperialist solidarity between the workers is broken, only the devils benefit from it. Yes, the British company benefits from this. With the return to the plant of British specialists—who have no concern for industrialization or restoration of the country's economic situation but whose only aim is to make money—innocent workers are put in jail.

One of the arrested brothers, before his arrest, declared in a gathering of the assembly section, "Brothers, do not leave us alone. I believe we have to defend this revolution. This is the time for action."

Our message to the brothers of our factory shora and anjoman is exactly the same. We should fight against these methods in order to bring unity among the workers. □

## Factory committees take action

*Seek to control production and distribution*

By Nader Avini

[The following article appeared in the June 16 issue of *Hemmat*, newsweekly of the Workers Unity Party (HVK). The HVK is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International. The translation is by *In-tercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

The initiative taken by workers at the Superior Chintz factory in taking over the direct distribution of cloth is only one example of the kinds of revolutionary measures being carried out by Islamic factory *shoras* (committees).

According to a report in [the workers' publication] *Shora*, a number of Islamic shoras have been successful in controlling and taking over

production and in selling their products themselves.

Another example is the initiative taken by the Islamic shora in the Profile factory. "The Profile Islamic factory shora took over distribution some time ago. It cut out sale of the factory's product by the big middlemen, capitalists, and iron dealers, and eliminated bribery. Now, the shora only produces necessities and sells them to the [consumer] cooperatives.

"To prevent profiteering, the Profile factory announces its prices in the press and over radio and television. The share of the profiteering iron dealers has been cut. The factory also formed its own cooperative" (*Shora*, #44, May 31).

The Islamic shoras' efforts to control the

distribution of their factories' products was in response to the current needs, especially the war needs. Through experience, workers have learned how the fruits of their labor are controlled by the possessing classes—the capitalists and parasites.

They have seen how profiteering capitalists put their own interests above the needs of society. By cornering the market and controlling production and distribution, the capitalists create shortages and generate unemployment and inflation.

So "one of the Islamic shoras' goals is to prevent capitalist plunder, hoarding, and overpricing, aiming to eliminate the role of the middlemen. The shora must supervise and control the factory's production and sales."

But once again, experience shows that the capitalists and their collaborators will not sit idly by. They are constantly in a state of war with the workers shoras and use the state apparatus to this end.

*Shora* sums up this experience: "In general, legitimate and necessary intervention by shoras leads to opposition by foremen and management."

It is important to note that this revolutionary initiative by workers shoras in controlling production and distribution is still scattered. Appreciable results have not yet been achieved. The capitalists and their agents continue to put obstacles in the path of the workers and this minimizes the positive effects of these kinds of measures.

The Islamic shora at the Superior Chintz factory was faced with many problems when it tried to continue controlling direct distribution of cloth. And despite control over production by the Islamic workers shora of the Profile factory, "the market price of Profile products is high and is several times its real price."

Through these experiences, many workers shoras feel the need for a conscious and rounded plan for workers control of production and distribution throughout the country. The Federation of Islamic Shoras, which supports these revolutionary measures, must begin to organize a general meeting of all workers shoras to review the problems and suggestions of the workers shoras, and in the process form a national federation of Islamic shoras.

A united movement against counterrevolutionary hoarders and capitalists is needed. The government must meet the demands of the workers shoras. Instead of weakening and sabotaging the work of the shoras, the government must immediately recognize the workers shoras and support their revolutionary measures, such as those taken by the workers at the Superior Chintz and Profile factories.

These initiatives are supported by the rest of the toilers in our society. Reports in the mass media about the measures taken by the Superior Chintz factory workers reflect this.

More of these revolutionary measures and unity of all workers and toilers against the capitalists, hoarders, and profiteers are the order of the day. □



Tehran metalworkers.

# Trade unionists meet in Bombay

## *Protest regime's anti-working-class policies*

**By Vibhuti Patel and Jagdish Parikh**

BOMBAY—On June 4, about 5,000 delegates from throughout the country attended an All India United Trade Union Conference here. The convention was called to protest price increases and the government's anti-working-class policies and practices.

The gathering brought to mind an earlier All India Trade Union Convention held in Delhi on November 19, 1978. That convention had been called to protest the Industrial Relations Bill, a draconian measure that would have curbed the freedom of the workers movement to organize and struggle. In connection with the Delhi conference, 100,000 workers staged a militant rally against the proposed bill. This opposition forced the government to withdraw the measure from consideration.

But after the Delhi convention, there was no attempt to build grass-roots unity of the organized working class on an all-India scale. In the two and a half years since then, the organized sectors of the working class have been the target of a number of laws restricting their rights.

### **Repressive laws**

These include the Preventive Detention Act, which allows the government to detain a person without trial for up to twelve months; the Disturbed Areas Act, under which the government can declare an area "disturbed" and suspend normal legal forms and procedures; the National Security Act; the Essential Services Ordinance; and others.

A productivity-linked bonus formula was imposed on the railway workers, and then extended to other sections of the workforce as well. The government has also ignored collective bargaining agreements, and has acquired authoritarian powers to arbitrarily impose wages and working conditions on employees.

There have been attempts by organized sectors of the working class to counter this ruling-class offensive. Action committees were formed on various levels to fight the anti-working class laws. The workers movement could see the need to draw different sections of the working class into the fight against the employer's offensive.

Nonetheless, when the railworkers, the public-sector industrial workers in Hyderabad and Bangalore, and Life Insurance Corporation employees all saw their negotiated contracts and benefits taken away, the response of the trade-union leaders was very hesitant, despite the pressures from the ranks. The leaders limited themselves to holding meetings, small processions, and a partial strike of public-sector employees in March.

When workers at the Life Insurance Corpo-

ration got back some of the bonuses that had been denied them, the leaders tried to save face by hailing this as a great victory.

But this claim of a great victory was not convincing to the workers. Pressure from the ranks has now forced the leaderships to come together at least to talk about united actions.

### **Foot-dragging on conference**

For some time after the initial call for the Bombay convention, there was doubt whether it would even take place. There was considerable frustration among the Bombay-based convenors of the conference over the fact that some leaders in Delhi did not sign the call for the gathering because they were not sure they could participate, citing the upcoming state elections in West Bengal and various by-elections.

In addition, after that initial obstacle was removed, some of the state units of the trade unions were dismayed by the fact that there was no move either from their central leaders or from other state units to participate in the meeting.

Militants close to these unions saw their leaders getting caught up in petty fights over technicalities rather than engaging in serious discussions in the period preceding the convention.

The lackluster prospects for the convention and for the June 4 public meeting were thrown into relief by the poor attendance at more than ten meetings organized in different working-class areas of Bombay in the two weeks before the start of the conference.

This was the background in which the June 4 convention took place. The eight union federations attending the gathering were the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, controlled by the Communist Party of India-Marxist; the All India Trade Union Congress, controlled by the Communist Party of India; the United Trade Union Congress, controlled by the Revolutionary Socialist Party; the United Trade Union Congress (Lenin Sarani), controlled by the Socialist Unity Centre of India; the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (Indian Workers Organization), controlled by Socialists; the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (Indian Workers Association), run by the Jan Sangh Party; the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), controlled by the Congress Party-Indira; and the Trade Union Coordination Committee.

The convention was also attended by union federations from the Life Insurance Corporation, the railways, the pharmaceutical industry, teachers, electrical workers, and other public-sector industries.

Representatives of different trade unions and federations proposed courses of action.

But while all the speakers expressed the need for united action, their perspectives differed and were sharply contradictory.

In general, there were two tendencies in evidence. One tendency reflected the actions and programs proposed by the central trade unions—except for the United Trade Union Congress (Lenin Sarani).

Their speeches gave the impression that they favored limiting united working-class actions to pressure tactics for their own parliamentary political goals. Their aim appeared to be to embarrass Indira Gandhi's regime and to protect the left-front governments in the states of West Bengal and Kerala.

But the speakers from the central unions seemed to forget that the best way to protect these left-front governments was through militant mobilization of the working class, not through parliamentary pressure tactics.

On the other hand, the speakers from central federations that have in the recent past faced state repression called for concrete solidarity activities at the grass-roots level.

Nearly all the speakers demanded that trade-union recognition be granted through secret ballot voting and called for full guarantees of collective bargaining and trade-union rights without any discrimination. These statements are in contrast to the actual practice of a number of recognized unions, which have played into the hands of the ruling class by attacking the right of unrecognized unions to even minimal recognition.

In the recent past, in fact, a number of recognized unions have played the role of renegades, helping the government to crush militant working class struggles in order to maintain their own recognized status.

Their presence at the convention and their use of fine-sounding phrases and slogans was largely an exercise in hypocrisy since they have no plans to change their methods of functioning.

### **Workers not mobilized**

Among trade-union militants at the convention there was considerable frustration over the lack of seriousness concerning the gathering's objectives and the hypocrisy of many of the union officials. That frustration was deepened by the poor turn-out at the public meeting following the convention. Despite the fact that the meeting had the support of almost all the participating unions (except for the INTUC and a few others), it was attended by only 10-15,000 people, including the delegates who had come to the convention from outside Bombay.

By contrast, the independent unions in the Bombay area led by the charismatic figure Datta Samant have been regularly able to mobilize tens of thousands of people in marches and demonstrations.

This demonstration of the attitude of the workers of India's main industrial city toward the sloganeering of the central trade-union leaders has probably sealed the fate of the programs that were adopted at this convention. □

# Interview with Jaroslav Suk

## The fight against bureaucratic repression

[Jaroslav Suk was a philosophy student in Prague in 1968. He was one of the leaders of the strike committee of November 1968 which organized resistance to the Soviet occupation. He was also one of the founders of the Movement of Revolutionary Youth—a revolutionary socialist organization of around 100 members formed in the autumn of 1968.

[In January 1970 Suk was arrested with eighteen other members of the movement and, in March 1971, he was imprisoned for his political activities.

[A founding member of the human rights group Charter 77. Suk participated in writing some of its key documents. He also collaborated with Petr Uhl, a revolutionary socialist and Charter 77 activist who is currently serving a five-year prison term for his political activities, in writing a book, *Socialism Imprisoned*. Confronted with the choice between exile and prison, Suk left Czechoslovakia in March 1981.

[The following interview was obtained by Peter Green. It appeared in the May 25 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

*Question.* First of all tell us your story.

*Answer.* I was harassed for a long time by the police. This was very hard not only for me but for my family, so we decided to leave. I understand that my emigration was a political defeat, but I believe that here I can do more for the struggle in Czechoslovakia than I would be able to do in prison.

*Q.* Could you go back over your political experiences since 1968?

A. I was politically active in the student movement in Czechoslovakia in 1968. I was a member of a strike committee in the Philosophy Faculty during the fall of 1968. Then I became a member of the Movement of Revolutionary Youth. I also was a member of the steering committee of the Prague strike committee in November of that year.

In the Movement of Revolutionary Youth, I was the author of a number of leaflets and statements. I was arrested in 1970 and sentenced to two years in prison in March 1971. Petr Uhl got four years; his was the stiffest sentence.

Then I did illegal work and signed statements and resolutions with former prisoners like myself, for example on the question of Chile and Charter 77. I was an activist in Charter 77 from the beginning and later I was active

in the VONS<sup>1</sup> committee.

*Q.* Which prison were you sent to?

A. I did sixteen months in Ruzyně prison in Prague during the investigation. It was the worst time I had in prison. I was in a cell with two or three others. It was six square meters, so you could not really move. The ceiling was low and there was not enough light, air, food or protein. It was tough and physically demanding.

*Q.* Were there other people there from the Movement of Revolutionary Youth?

A. There were twenty people from our group. So it was very difficult to isolate us from one another, and we maintained contact.

*Q.* After the arrest of Uhl and his trial that followed, we heard that the conditions in Mirov prison were very bad. Are the conditions still bad? Have the conditions improved since he went in or are they worse?

A. First of all, remember that Petr Uhl already spent four years in prison. He suffers from asthma and to remain in Mirov for more than two years with bad health is extremely dangerous. (His new sentence is five years.) There is one group of secret police and prison guards who openly hope to do away with him. They told me this.

*Q.* When was this?

A. I heard this from them during one of my last interrogations. They said they would deal with him the same way they dealt with Trotsky.

Petr now shares a cell with other prisoners. This prison is an old restored castle. He also receives lots of disciplinary punishments, which means deprivation of food as well as hard labor.

*Q.* Can you give us specific examples of this kind of punishment?

A. The guards use every chance they can get. For example, if a guard finds someone where he is not supposed to be, or if a prisoner is surprised while helping somebody else in their work (which is quite usual in prison), they can say that he passed a message even if he didn't say anything. In this way they can extend his sentence. There are many examples of this with political prisoners—Cibulka,<sup>2</sup> for ex-

1. VONS (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted) was founded in 1978.

2. Petr Cibulka, a young worker sympathetic to

ample.

*Q.* Did Petr and other political prisoners get to hear about the international campaign of getting postcards sent to them? We know it is unlikely that they actually received them.

A. Petr probably has heard because the prison guards talk freely in front of him. In Petr's case this can help him both morally and practically—it can be a defense against all the attempts to destroy him. It also helps in the case of lesser known prisoners like Machacek and Lastuvka.

*Q.* There have been cases of suicides in prison. Did they happen under questionable circumstances?

A. Of course it is possible to murder somebody and say it was suicide. But even if it was suicide, the responsibility rests with the system, the prison.

Petr himself said to his wife, Anna Sabarova—it was the last thing he said to her on her last visit so he gave this some importance—"Whatever happens to me, never believe suicide!" So we are right, I think, to say we fear for his life.

Rudolf Battek is in an identical situation. He is awaiting trial and could be sentenced to three to ten years. He too is ill and in the eyes of the police he represents the same threat as Petr Uhl because he defends socialist democracy. Two weeks before he was to leave for Sweden a very active member of VONS, J. Litominsky, was also arrested and he faces from three to ten years for "subversion."

*Q.* Do you think that this is part of a systematic campaign to destroy Charter 77?

A. Step by step they are trying to put the most active Charter people behind bars. However, since big trials evoke a response in Western countries, they try to have smaller trials. For example Josef Gruntorad, who was very active in a samizdat [uncensored] publishing house and was working on a book on the Polish events, was taken to prison and could get one to five years.

Militants in Czechoslovakia are very interested in Polish events and some collaborators and supporters of Charter 77 published several letters and statements about the Polish events.

Recently there was even a meeting between members of Charter 77 and the KOR [Committee for Social Self-Defense]. They tried to organize a simultaneous hunger strike by militants in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Poles have come to Czechoslovakia and vice versa. The secret police tried to stop these meetings.

This was why J. Litominsky was arrested at

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Charter 77, was arrested in April 1978 and sentenced to two years in prison for having listened, with friends, to records by the banned Czechoslovak rock group Plastic People. At the end of his two-year sentence, he was sentenced to an additional six months in prison. VONS and Charter 77 have carried out a campaign in his defense.

the Poland/Czechoslovakia border. He was put in prison following a police provocation. Whoever shows the slightest interest in the Polish events runs the risk of being prosecuted. Despite this, the contacts with Poland remain, as well as links between Charter 77 and the independent union Solidarity.

*Q. What has the government done to try to turn Czechoslovak public opinion against the Polish people?*

*A. The Prague government tries to make the Czechoslovak people believe they will have to*

pay additional taxes for the Poles. This finds a response among the more backward sectors of the population. The official propaganda pours out lies that nobody believes, even when they tell the truth.

The majority of the population receives foreign radio and television, and illegal information about Poland circulates throughout the country. This is most pronounced in the border region. Tens of thousands of Polish workers work every day in Ostrava, in Czechoslovakian Silesia.

*Q. How does the Czechoslovak leadership*

*present all this to the party cadres?*

*A. It lies, and gives disinformation not just to the Czechoslovak people, but to the bureaucratic layers, too.*

They try and say that Solidarity is weak, that it has lost strength since August. They say that the KOR—like all right-wing groups—will have to be destroyed. The Czechoslovak leadership loudly asserts that this can be easily done, in order to discourage party members in Czechoslovakia from going off in the Polish direction. □

## DOCUMENTS

# How Cuba deals with bureaucratism

## Interview with Carlos Rafael Rodríguez

[The following are excerpts from a December 1980 interview between Chilean journalist Marta Harnecker and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba.

[Portions of the interview appeared in Vol. VII, No. 25 of *Areito*, a Spanish-language magazine published by Cubans who reside in the United States. These have been translated by *Intercontinental Press*. Other portions appeared in English in the Spring 1981 issue of *Cubatimes*. Both magazines are quarterlies published in New York.]

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*Question. Revolutionary leaderships, due to their multiple tasks in the state apparatus as well as in the party, can fall, and in fact in some countries have fallen, into a state of great detachment from the masses. As a result they have been ignorant of the state of mind of the masses. What mechanisms does the Cuban revolutionary leadership use to maintain its links with the masses?*

*Has the revolutionary leadership been surprised at any point by concerns of the population that weren't detected in time? Do you think that the new Central Committee of the party, which came out of the Second Party Congress that has just ended and has a significant number of working-class members, indicates an effort to overcome this problem?*

*Answer.* Marta, you ask me too many questions at one time. I think we are free from that danger which has brought so many difficulties in other countries.

In my view, the fundamental element preventing the Cuban revolution and its leaders from becoming detached from the masses lies in the personality and the working style of Fidel. I would not be honest if I didn't stress this element as decisive in our work. The great link between the revolutionary leadership and the

people is, in the first place, Fidel himself. His continuous contact with the masses, not at the abstract level but in a very concrete manner—on the scene, in the areas of production, education, and research—constitutes a guarantee.

But besides that, I think that the party and the government have taken care to establish permanent links with the totality of the population, so that their problems and judgments reach the high levels of the leadership as rapidly and as accurately as possible.

In this sense, the party is a precious instrument, but I would say that the party still has to improve its political linkages. The rank-and-file party bodies are often absorbed by their responsibilities in productive tasks and their internal functions, and there has been a constant effort by the leadership to insure that the party—which is the decisive instrument for the communication between the leadership and the masses—engages in much wider political activity, concerns itself with the problems of the working class and workers in general, perceives their concerns, and transmits them to the party leadership, the working class, and the people.

The union movement plays a very important role in the process of discussion of concrete labor problems that emerge in a society that's building socialism. We don't think, however, that the unions play the role that they should.

Our unions are much better at transmitting the party's orientations to the working class than they are at gathering from the working class the desires, the criticisms, the suggestions to which the leadership has to be alert. But here, also, we are undoubtedly making progress.

The Federation of Cuban Women, the women's mass organization, and the Union of Communist Youth, the auxiliary political organization to the party, are also precious links

of communication between the party and the society. But besides all this, the Cuban revolution has created, as we see it, a unique instrument in the process of socialist construction—the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

As you know, 6 million citizens are members of the CDRs: people involved in production and education, as well as housewives and retired persons. We still have a lot to do so that this valid instrument of creativity and opinion generates optimal results. But, without any doubt, the committees constitute now a permanent barometer of the feelings and judgments of our people.

I don't want to exaggerate here the positive aspects of our work in this area because I feel that criticism among us has not yet reached a maturation point. There is sometimes a certain inhibition, an excessive caution in the exercise of criticism, motivated by the desire to prevent irresponsibility or disruption, which would not be, in any way, an adequate way of projecting the feelings and judgments of society.

There is a lot to do in this area, and it is a process of continuous improvement. The decisive factors in terms of the participation of the working class and the people in the transformation of society reside in the raising of the cultural, political, and ideological levels of the masses. Lenin said that socialism is a system in which the simplest cook should know how to handle state problems.

We have organized the state in order to eliminate, as much as possible, all features of bureaucratization and to promote a maximum of participation. People's Power is oriented in that direction.

As you know, the report-back assemblies, the direct forms of nomination of candidates—in sum, all the mechanisms of People's Power—involve a desire and an effort to achieve more complete participation by our

people. But the present processes of guiding society are very complex. These are not the times of the Greek *agora*, where the decisions that had to be adopted were few and relatively simple.

The scientific-technical revolution imposes demands that tend to elevate the role of technocrats. Planning, for example, involves a number of technical decisions. If all segments of society were to participate in them, they would need a level of scientific understanding of the economy greater than what our workers have achieved with only a sixth-grade education.

When the revolutionary leadership sets an objective of the working class attaining at least a ninth-grade education, and a secondary education for the party members, it is also thinking about this. A society that achieves adequate cultural and technical levels will reach a more complete and mature form of self-government than a society of illiterate or semiliterate people.

I explain all this to you not because I am convinced that we have reached the desired results in this area. On the contrary. To the extent that criticism is insufficient and superficial—and it still is—and to the extent that transmission channels are not fully utilized, it is possible that certain problems do not strike the leaders' sensitivities with the necessary rapidity.

But I would say that this is not a grave problem, it does not tend to be in our country. There are very few cases in which negative phenomena, which have been rejected by the population nationally, do not reach the leadership, sooner rather than later.

It is obvious that the new composition of the Central Committee of the party, which has incorporated comrades who come directly from the workers', farmers', and women's organizations, is conducive to linking the revolution-

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### **In the final analysis the essence of bureaucratism is substituting for the role of the masses in the decision-making process . . .**

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ary leadership with the people. This has been a constant concern of our party and very personally of *compañero Fidel*.

I would not say that we are trying to "overcome" any situation, because, I repeat, the party leadership has always been very attentive to the opinions and feelings of our people. But we are making additional efforts to establish even more direct channels of communication. An example of this is the access that the comrades with important posts in the mass organizations have as alternate members of the Political Bureau.

*Q. What mechanism does the Cuban Communist Party have to detect and eliminate bad*

*members? Can the people exercise any kind of control over the party?*

A. Marta, you could say that the entire life of the party and its organization are aimed at seeing that those whom you call "bad members" are detected in the very course of their party activity and then eliminated from it. The base organizations, the cells, maintain constant collective attention over the political and social life of their members within the workplace.

Criticism of the errors and defects of every member is an organizational principle that the party must carry out. Of course the form in which this criticism is carried out depends on the level of political maturity of the people in the cell and is not the same all over. But the party exerts itself in this aspect of its internal life, and it could be said that the self-purging of the party is a continuous process.

There is a body of sanctions—from private warnings to expulsion from the ranks of the party—that allows the organization to correct the defects of its members and to rid itself of them when experience definitely shows that they do not have the qualities needed to remain in the ranks of the party.

You ask if the people can exercise any type of control over the party. In fact, not only can they exercise it, but they do. As you know, one of the basic ingredients of the education of the party comes through the participation of the workers, in their respective workplaces, in the process of selection.

This doesn't mean that the masses of the workers decide who does or does not enter the party. But it does mean that through consultation with the workmates of the person who hopes to join our ranks, the party is in a position to know the collectivity's social judgment and assessment of his or her personality and activity. And this is a decisive element.

In cases where the party organization feels that the mass of workers have made an incorrect assessment, it proceeds through the local leadership bodies to discuss with them the criticisms they made of the applicant. This analysis makes it possible to determine the truth from the totality of assessments, which may end up being contradictory.

In the same manner, the member's life is subjected to the population's scrutiny. Our people demand stricter comportment of a party member than for the rest of the workers. Not only in the workplace, where the masses can and do state their opinion on the behavior of party members, but also in the place where they reside. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, it must be said, are a valuable auxiliary for detecting any irregularity that might develop in a member's life. They are attentive to it.

The National Control Commission of the Central Committee, headed by *Compañero Juan Almeida*, and the local commissions not only receive the complaints, criticisms, and denunciations that come from party bodies and members, but they also have the responsibility

of investigating any evidence that comes from the general population. More than a few functionaries and members have lost their positions as a result of denunciations from the populace.

But I repeat, this does not mean that organizations outside, even if linked to the party, have the ability to decide the fate of party members. But with their vigilance and their collaboration they do contribute to continuously improving the composition of the ranks of the Cuban CP.

I am sure that here too there is much more to do. Sometimes the masses display a certain inhibition regarding criticism of the member and

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### **Lenin fought against 'bureaucratic degeneration' in the revolutionary state . . .**

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sometimes there are "defensive" reactions to the criticism. But I am sure that these negative traits are less and less of a factor, while in contrast, the process of constructive and reasonable criticism is increasing.

*Q. What measures are being taken in Cuba to attack the seeds of bureaucratic attitudes that can be seen at the state and party level?*

A. We are all in agreement that bureaucratism is one of the permanent risks of socialism. In places where all the problems of society are in the hands of those who represent that society, and as a result very little occurs outside the sphere of decisions made at the local or national level, the forms of leadership and decision-making become determinant.

Therefore the term "bureaucratism" has many meanings and is used to describe different phenomena. There is the bureaucratic attitude of the leader who is separated from the productive processes and believes that his office is the center of the universe he gets to administer. The lack of contact with reality, with the factory, with the agricultural unit, can therefore lead, and does generally lead, to mistaken bureaucratic decisions.

We also speak of bureaucracy when, in making decisions, the needs and the interests of the population are not taken into account; when the requirements of the citizenry disappear in the endless paper-shuffling, when they get no response to their needs or their questions.

But in the final analysis the essence of bureaucratism is substituting for the role of the masses in the decision-making process, on whatever level those decisions are made, implanting an administrative or political apparatus over the workers and not taking either the workers or their organizations into account. It must be said that the complexity of contemporary political and economic life conspires to transform democracy into bureaucratism. Moreover, the decisions—as I said—acquire an increasingly technical character and the

"technocracy" is a close cousin to the bureaucracy.

Lenin was concerned about this from the first moment of the socialist revolution. He fought against the "bureaucratic degeneration" in the revolutionary state. He always fought the "encrustation" of those who lead and was a partisan of airing all the problems before the masses.

You have listened to Fidel, and have listened to his constant criticism of bureaucracy, his concern that the leaders at all levels are linked to the productive process in each one of its stages. This is the policy of our party. These are its constant objectives. I think that the way that we have organized the relationship be-

tween the working class and the leaders, the role that we assign to the workers' unions and mass organizations, and our efforts to make sure that the party continually listens to the workers and knows how to assimilate their judgments with sensitivity—all this constitutes on-going prevention against the never completely overcome tendency toward bureaucratic positions.

If I were to tell you that we have attained these objectives, that would be ignoring the realities that are before our eyes. But this is a battle not only of the party and its leaders, but it must be understood as a great people's battle, in which the working class has to play a predominant role. □

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## Jamaica

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# Repression and austerity

*PNP youth leader interviewed in Nicaragua*

**By Matilde Zimmermann**

LEON—The National Union of Nicaraguan Students (UNEN) held its congress here from July 1 to 3. One of the international guests who attended was Sheldon MacDonald, general secretary of the Jamaican People's National Party Youth.

During a break in the conference proceedings July 1, I asked MacDonald a few questions about the situation in Jamaica since the elections in which Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP) was defeated by Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).

"The repression that was carried out during the election by armed paramilitary forces of the JLP has continued," MacDonald said. The JLP thugs "move against the strong communities of socialists, PNP Youth, the PNP communities. But this has not stopped the comrades from remaining in their places.

"This repression has now eased up somewhat. But one section of the repression that has not eased up is that by the police. There are joint police-army actions. For example, they have created what they call an eradication squad. It is headed up by a JLP policeman, Joe Williams.

"He tries to find young people who have been to Cuba to train in construction skills, to find the leadership of the progressive youth organizations, socialists, communists, progressives, democratic people in general. Just recently they carried out an attack in our community, which is strongly PNP. And they killed eight people, including children.

"This was about three or four weeks ago. Their pretext was that there were a lot of guns. But up to now the guns have not been for children, and children were killed in the attack as well.

"Seaga has promised the International Monetary Fund and U.S. imperialism that he

will deliver Jamaica. They now have a firm influence over the news media, the *Gleaner*, so that now neither the public nor the private media is reporting what is really going on. So Seaga can turn to the world and claim that things are quiet in Jamaica. Because the traditional news media will not report it.

"He has strengthened the armed forces and the police, which are getting assistance from the United States. They are also getting assistance from the United Kingdom."

I asked MacDonald if he could describe the economic situation.

"The economic situation, which is the pivot, has not improved. Seaga has signed this agreement with the International Monetary Fund, but the money from the IMF is not enough to refloat the economy. He needs, in line with the Puerto Rican model, a large dose of investments, which international capitalism apparently is not giving him.

"And Seaga is the author of this 'Mini-Marshall Plan' [Reagan's proposed plan for military and economic aid to pro-imperialist Caribbean regimes]. He talked about it before he took power, and now he is pegging all of his hope on it.

"In the meantime, the IMF agreement is in place. And unemployment is increasing. Contradictions are emerging within capitalism itself, in that the agreement specifies that the government has to dismantle all the legislation and the measures that protected Jamaican industry, in order that the transnationals can import things into Jamaica from South Korea, Taiwan, etc. Our local capitalists cannot compete.

"So there is an argument between the capitalist Seaga and the capitalists in the Jamaica Manufacturers Association.

"The IMF has demanded—and Seaga is carrying this out—that the state sector be dis-



Attacks against left-wing neighborhoods that took place during election campaign are continuing under Seaga regime. Police have formed a special "eradication squad" to carry out such assaults.

mantled, that the state companies established by the PNP be sold to private individuals, either Jamaican or foreign. So this is the handing over of the entirety of the Jamaican economy once more to capitalism.

"But Seaga has a problem, because capitalism worldwide is in crisis. And we have in Jamaica a trade union movement that is very strong. And it is not going to, as we say, lay down and play dead. And this is going to be where Seaga's main problem lies."

I asked MacDonald about anti-JLP activity among the youth.

"It would not be right to say that there is as yet the development of militant anti-government activity. The progressive organizations, the party, all the workers parties of Jamaica are analyzing the situation, setting the basis for future action.

"Ourselves, for example. We are planning our congress within the next two months, our first biannual congress. And the party congress will be in September. So we'll have a situation where the youth congress will come first, in August, and the party congress will be in September."

I asked him if he had any other comments he wanted to make.

"I just want to say to all the people who read this paper that there has been a temporary setback in Jamaica, but this certainly doesn't mean that Jamaica has been lost forever." □