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## HISTORIC MARCH BY U.S. LABOR



Lou Howort/Militant

# HALF MILLION WORKERS PROTEST REAGAN'S BUDGET

## General Haig and germ warfare

By Will Reissner

There is a very large and rapidly growing movement in Western Europe against the arms buildup now being carried out by the Pentagon and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

On September 13, as U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig was delivering a speech in West Berlin supporting the Pentagon's arms policies, 80,000 Berliners demonstrated against his visit.

Police in West Berlin described the march as the biggest protest in that city since the Vietnam War. The Reagan administration was particularly upset by the fact that the demonstration was sponsored by the youth organizations of the Social Democratic and Free Democratic parties, which govern West Germany in a coalition.

Opponents of the NATO buildup are focusing on two areas—NATO's decision to deploy 572 U.S. nuclear-armed missiles in Western Europe that will be targeted on the Soviet Union, and Washington's decision to begin producing the neutron bomb, an atomic weapon that kills people while doing minimal damage to property.

Both these weapons are part of the Pentagon's plan to develop the ability to fight and win "limited nuclear wars" in Europe. But European working people want no part of a "limited nuclear war" that would leave their continent in ashes.

### Massive opposition to NATO plans

On October 10 there will be a massive demonstration in West Germany against NATO's military plans. The march is expected to be the largest in that country since the Second World War. Two weeks later, on October 24, there will be a national demonstration in Britain organized by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

The Dutch government is expected to announce soon that it will not accept the forty-eight cruise missiles scheduled to be placed in the Netherlands. It is becoming increasingly doubtful that Belgium will take the missiles scheduled for placement there. Opposition to the missile plan is strong in the Scandinavian countries.

Richard Eder reports in the September 18 *New York Times* that throughout Western Europe NATO's nuclear strategy, "which to many Europeans speaks not of balance but superiority [over the Soviet Union]—is losing political support."

The Reagan administration, alarmed by the growth of the antimilitarization movement in Western Europe, has just launched a major propaganda offensive to turn the situation around. Haig's West Berlin speech was one of the opening shots.

As the September 14 *New York Times* pointed out, "Mr. Haig, according to his aides, wanted to use the speech to launch a vigorous campaign in coming weeks to inspire greater self-confidence in the alliance and to point out weaknesses in the Communist world more actively."

As part of this propaganda offensive, Haig charged in his speech that "the Soviet Union and its allies have been using lethal chemical weapons in Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan."

The following day, Haig's charge was front page news in the major dailies in the United States. The *New York Daily News* featured the banner headline "Haig Charges: Soviets Use Germ War."

Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* carried the screaming headline September 15 "Torture Rain Kills 30,000." The next day the *Post* followed up with a page-one headline "Germ Bombs Aimed at U.S." and a page two "Exclusive" entitled "Top Secret: Cuba Has Death Rain Chemical."

The Soviet government adamantly denied Haig's charges. When Haig was asked after his speech about his assertion that there was "physical evidence from Southeast Asia" to substantiate his charges, he refused to provide any details.

But the next day the State Department held a bizarre news conference in Washington to back up Haig's claim.

Present were a panel of "experts" to answer questions from reporters. But the *Washington Post* noted that "in an unusual display of secrecy, the government refused to tell reporters, even on a not-for-publication basis, the identity or agency affiliations of those who were answering the questions at the briefing."

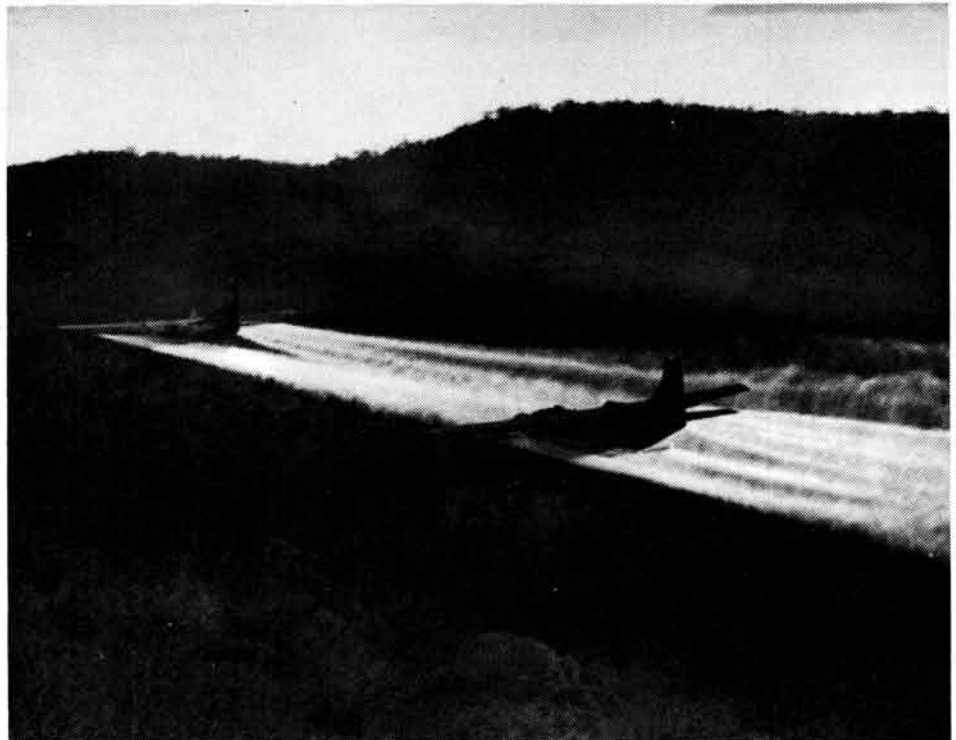
The sum total of the physical evidence for Haig's charges, it turned out, was a single "leaf and stem sample" supposedly found in Kampuchea last March and turned over to the U.S. government. The State Department did not reveal who had provided the sample. But Don Oberdorfer wrote in the September 15 *Washington Post* that it was collected "presumably by Pol Pot forces."

Up to 3 million Kampuchean were murdered by Pol Pot's government before it was overthrown in 1979. Despite this bloody record, Washington continues to claim that Pol Pot is the legitimate ruler of Kampuchea and provides him with military and diplomatic backing.

This single leaf and stem donated by Pol Pot was subjected to what this mystery panel of experts described as "a very unique analysis method," one so new it has not yet been patented!

Oberdorfer noted that "the high-profile form of the U.S. allegations, in a major speech abroad by the secretary of state and a press session for reporters and television cameras in the State Department auditorium, contrasted with the unusually guarded way in which the actual documentation was discussed."

He added that "it was not clear why the government chose to make public 'preliminary' results based on a single field sample rather than await more conclusive data."



U.S. planes spraying deadly Agent Orange over Vietnam in 1970.

Haig noted in his speech that use of chemical weapons is banned by the 1925 Geneva Protocol. But he conveniently ignored the fact that the Soviet Union signed that treaty in 1925, while the U.S. government only got around to ratifying it a half century later in 1975. And even then, President Gerald Ford stipulated that Washington, unlike the other signers, interpreted the treaty to mean that herbicides and so-called "riot-control agents," both widely used by U.S. forces in Vietnam, were not covered. (A 1969 United Nations General Assembly resolution declared that the protocol did indeed ban tear gas and herbicides.)

Haig himself is no stranger to chemical warfare. He helped implement the widespread use of Agent Orange and other defoliants, as well as tear and nausea gases, in Vietnam.

While Haig points an accusing finger at the Soviet Union, the Pentagon is rapidly building up its stocks of chemical and biological weapons. On May 21, Congress appropriated \$20 million to build a new nerve gas factory in Arkansas. The Pentagon plans to spend \$2.47 billion for chemical weapons over the next five years, and the May 24 *New York Times* reported that "a panel of the Defense Science Board recommends that this figure be increased by a factor of three or four."

Vietnam is not the only place where the U.S. government has used chemical and biological warfare. In 1952, during the Korean War, the Chinese and North Korean governments asked the International Scientific Commission to investigate accusations that U.S. troops were using biological weapons. The commission took testimony from local witnesses who reported that after U.S. warplanes flew over their regions there were outbreaks of unusual diseases. They further stated that following the flights exceptionally high concentrations of insects were found that were either foreign to the region or inappropriate for the season.

#### Germ warfare against Cuba

Washington has never acknowledged use of biological warfare during the Korean War. But it has admitted that on a number of occasions bacteriological weapons were used against Cuba. The Central Intelligence Agency introduced a virus to destroy Cuba's coffee crop in 1968. It seeded clouds with chemicals in 1969 and 1970 in an attempt to ruin the country's vital sugar harvest. In 1971, the CIA introduced a virus that caused an outbreak of African swine fever in Cuba.

In the past two years Cuba has been hit by four major epidemics affecting crops, animals, and humans: sugarcane smut, tobacco blue mold, another outbreak of African swine fever, and dengue fever. This string of epidemics has led the Cuban government to openly speculate that Washington is again using biological weapons against Cuba.

The outbreak of dengue fever, a virus spread by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, began in early June 1981. By the end of July more than a

quarter of a million Cubans were afflicted by the disease, and over one hundred died, most of them children.

#### Mosquito breeders

The U.S. military has had a long history of work with the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. U.S. military documents declassified on October 29, 1980 revealed that Washington had seriously considered using the very same mosquito—the *Aedes aegypti*—to infect the Soviet Union with yellow fever in 1956.

In July 1958 a U.S. Army bacteriological weapons center released some 600,000 uninfected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos in south Florida to study their dispersal pattern.

At Fort Detrick, Maryland, the army has conducted experiments with millions of yellow-fever-carrying mosquitos. It can breed half a million mosquitos monthly there. A new facility is now being built that will have the capacity to breed 130 million mosquitos per month.

Why does Washington need this facility if not for biological warfare? *Intercontinental Press* staffwriters can personally attest to the fact that the U.S. is certainly not undergoing any shortage of natural mosquitos.

The charge that the Soviet Union has engaged in germ warfare in Southeast Asia is made by the same government that brought us the now totally discredited "White Paper" on supposed Soviet and Cuban intervention in El Salvador. This is the same government that manufactured a Soviet arms spending spree by simply changing the way the CIA calculates Soviet spending. It is the same government that "proved" an increase in international terrorism by abruptly changing the way it defined and counted terrorist incidents.

As a September 15 editorial in the *Washington Post* acknowledged, "the track record of this and recent administrations makes it inevitable that these [germ warfare] allegations will be treated skeptically in many quarters." □

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# Labor's historic march on Washington

*AFL-CIO mobilizes half a million against Reagan's budget*

**By Fred Murphy**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Half a million trade unionists and their allies gathered here for a historic march and rally on September 19.

For the first time in its 100-year history, the AFL-CIO\* trade-union federation called on the ranks of American labor to march on Washington.

From all across the country—and even from Hawaii and the Virgin Islands—workers and their families mobilized to protest the deep cuts in social services and other antilabor policies being imposed by the Reagan administration.

From the early hours of the morning, the U.S. capital was inundated with trade unionists. Steelworkers from Chicago and Gary and Baltimore and Pittsburgh; garment workers, hospital workers, and government employees from New York City; striking air-traffic controllers from many cities; auto workers from Detroit and Toledo; electrical workers from Massachusetts and Kentucky; carpenters and painters from Ohio and iron workers from Tennessee; coal miners from West Virginia; machinists from North Carolina; farm laborers and motion-picture projectionists and marine engineers and insurance company clerks—all these and many more poured out of more than 5,000 buses and twelve trains and thousands of cars.

Throughout the entire afternoon they marched down Constitution Avenue to the Capitol chanting slogans like "AFL-CIO, Ronald Reagan's got to go!" and calling for "jobs, justice, compassion, solidarity" (as placards borne by a contingent of construction workers put the day's theme).

The marching unionists were joined by thousands from other social movements—more than 200 busloads from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other Black organizations; a large contingent from the National Organization for Women (NOW); and hundreds of activists from groups like the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), the National Coalition Against Registration and the Draft, and the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP).

Tens of thousands of Blacks participated in the march, making up a large percentage of such contingents as the United Automobile Workers (UAW), the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

\*American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Among the trade unions, AFSCME had the largest contingent with some 60,000 marchers wearing green and white hats, followed by the blue-jacketed International Association of Machinists (IAM), the UFCW, and the UAW.

Thousands of teachers marched under the banners of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

The demonstration was among the largest in the history of the United States. Its size topped that of such historic marches on Washington as the one for Black civil rights led by Martin Luther King, Jr., in August 1963 and the anti-Vietnam War protest in November 1969. The demonstration came close to equalling the huge antiwar demonstration of April 24, 1971, the largest march on Washington ever held.

The immense turnout far surpassed even the most optimistic forecasts by AFL-CIO officials. In anticipation of a big crowd, the union federation had rented the entire Washington subway system at a cost of \$65,000.

## **Air controllers**

Solidarity with the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), on strike since August 3 and facing an attempt by the Reagan administration to destroy the union, was a special theme of the day. As the marchers gathered on the grounds of the Washington Monument, groups of air controllers circulated through the crowd, holding impromptu rallies and selling buttons and T-shirts that bore slogans such as "PATCO—leading the nation with striking results."

The contingent of several thousand PATCO members and their families was the most militant and spirited in the march. The air controllers chanted slogans such as "Ronald Reagan take a hike—PATCO has the right to strike!" They were greeted with a standing ovation as they marched into the rally site. When the air controllers passed a contingent of Puerto Ricans, all joined in chanting "PATCO sí, Reagan no!"

Unionists went to remarkable lengths to get to the march while honoring the PATCO strike. Fifty unionists from Seattle on the West Coast flew through Canada to avoid crossing PATCO picket lines. According to an AFL-CIO news release, "Four carloads of unionists from Montana drove all night to Chicago, where they were welcomed by a group of striking air controllers who took them to their homes for breakfast and showers" and then put them on a train to Washington.

While the overriding theme of the day was the Reagan budget cuts, other issues received

considerable attention. Thousands of placards saying "ERA yes!"—that is, ratify the amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing equal rights for women—were carried by demonstrators throughout the march. At the rally, speakers from NOW and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) called for ERA ratification and defense of women's rights against Reagan's attacks. Several speakers were interrupted with loud applause and cheers when they blasted the so-called Moral Majority—a right-wing religious current that opposes abortion rights.

Many signs and banners called for extension of the Voting Rights Act, a 1965 law prohibiting discrimination against Black voters that is in danger of being allowed to expire by Congress this year.

## **Antiwar sentiment**

Marchers were also well aware that Reagan's cuts in social spending have been accompanied by vast hikes in the war budget. The UAW printed placards with the slogan "Make jobs, not war." The International Association of Machinists contingent was led by a big banner reading "Jobs not bombs," a slogan also raised by a steelworkers' banner from Baltimore and by hundreds of smaller placards throughout the march.

One local of the machinists union carried a big banner reading "U.S. hands off El Salvador." The IAM leadership encouraged participation in its contingent by activists from the movement in solidarity with Central America, the antidraft movement, antinuclear groups, and all other victims of Reagan's policies.

At the rally, speakers who made even oblique references to the mounting war budget received the strongest applause.

The day was a real consciousness-raising experience for many who marched. This was undoubtedly true for the tens of thousands of participants from the construction trades—electricians, painters, carpenters, iron workers, operating engineers. These overwhelmingly white and male unions are among the most conservative in the country. On September 19 they marched in one of the most massive antiwar, antiracist actions in U.S. history.

Eleven years ago, the bureaucracies of these same unions were organizing prowar rallies and physical attacks on peace demonstrations, and they have been in the forefront of opposition to affirmative action programs for Blacks. But under the pressure of the capitalist offensive, a change is taking place among the ranks.

Three targets of Reagan's budget blade were singled out by many marchers as especially infuriating. In the days leading up to the action, fresh cuts in Social Security (old-age pension) benefits had been announced. "Save Social Security" was a slogan on many placards and banners.

Likewise, the protesters were outraged by the recently announced cuts in the nutritional content of government-subsidized lunches for school children. (Regulations are being altered in such a way that ketchup will count as a "vegetable" and yogurt or nuts as "meat"!)

Cutbacks in funding for health and safety programs were the main theme taken up by the contingents of coal miners, chemical workers, and construction workers. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is being gutted, and the budget of the Mine Health and Safety Administration may be cut by more than half. Safety inspections of coal mines are to be reduced from four to one per year.

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) has been in the forefront of the fight against Reagan's cutbacks. In March a two-day coal strike and a protest by 7,000 miners in Washington hit planned cuts in benefits for miners disabled by "black lung" disease.

"The laws which protect coal miners' safety are just a decade old," UMWA President Sam Church told the massive crowd at the September 19 rally. "Our people remember too vividly the mine disasters of the past.

"I have witnessed the death and destruction of these disasters. The United Mine Workers of America will not and I will not tolerate a return to those Dark Ages. In fact, I demand that they do more to improve mine safety, not less."

For an example of how to fight for such demands, more and more American workers are looking to their brothers and sisters in Poland and their trade union Solidarity. Many marchers sported "Solidarnosc" T-shirts or buttons, and the distinctive logo could also be seen on placards and banners.

AFL-CIO chief Lane Kirkland was interrupted with an ovation when he told the rally that "Solidarity is more than just a day. As our brothers and sisters in Poland have shown the world, it is a quality of the human spirit that can never be defeated."

#### 'Social dynamite'

Kirkland sounded the theme that pulled together the many slogans and demands raised by the historic gathering: that the gains the U.S. labor movement and its allies have made in the past 100 years—and that women and Blacks have especially made in the past fifteen—are under serious attack today. "We have come too far, struggled too long, sacrificed too much, and have too much left to do, to allow all that we have achieved for the good of all to be swept away without a fight," Kirkland declared.

Benjamin Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, made this point more concretely in his speech, which followed Kirkland's:

"We shall not stand idly by while America's working poor, the children of the poor, the Black youth of our cities, the elderly, and those who labor in our nation's factories feel that [their needs] are sacrificed in the name of fighting inflation. We shall not allow social programs established to provide a minimum standard of living for those who are in need to be destroyed. We will not sit by while the bare necessities of life are taken from the needy and given to the greedy. . . .

"A society that endures billions of dollars in military cost overruns yet cannot afford to continue hot-lunch programs for our nation's schoolchildren is flirting with social dynamite. A society that will flirt with apartheid and discrimination in South Africa can only weaken our moral authority, and that is a clear and present danger. A nation that spends \$26,000 a year to keep a man in prison and yet cannot afford student loans for the working class is a clear and present danger. A nation that equivocates on protecting the rights of Blacks and minorities constitutes a clear and present danger. . . ."

One of the day's most enthusiastic ovations greeted Steve Wallaert, a local PATCO leader who was hauled off to jail in chains at the start of the air controllers strike.

"I have become embittered by an administration that refuses to make cuts in defense spending," Wallaert declared. "The strongest military in the world is worth nothing if its people are starving in the streets."

The PATCO leader blasted the Reagan administration for wanting "to hand over the environment to business, which sees no profit in clean water, in clean air." Reagan, Wallaert said, "professes to remove government from the backs of the people yet wants constitutional amendments that tell women what they can or cannot do." This reference to the right of women to abortion drew heavy applause.

Wallaert concluded by asking, "Where are the leaders that see ahead rather than looking into the past, who still believe we must make life better rather than concentrating on means that destroy life?"

Other speakers included NOW President Eleanor Smeal, UAW President Douglas Fraser, AFSCME President Jerry Wurf, Coalition of Labor Union Women President Joyce Miller, Tony Bonilla of the League of United Latin-American Citizens, and Vernon Jordan, president of the National Urban League, a Black civil-rights organization.

All condemned Reagan's policies, and they were cheered when they did so. It is noteworthy that while the AFL-CIO officialdom's political perspective is to tie labor still more tightly to the Democratic Party, not a single capitalist politician was allowed onto the speakers' list.

The trade-union bureaucracy's pro-Democratic Party approach was presented only obliquely in the speeches of Kirkland, Fraser,

and Wurf—they knew it would not be well received at a time when many Democrats in Congress had just voted for Reagan's proposals and when the Democrats have also been calling for austerity and a bigger war budget.

#### Labor party

In a special issue of the *Militant* that was sold to thousands at the march, the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance put forward a different proposal: "that the unions launch a new political party—a labor party."

"It's a concept with the potential of inspiring millions," the *Militant* said:

It's a whole new framework. It says, yes, we can do it. We don't have to sit back and rely on the bosses. . . .

We need our own party that unites us, a party of solidarity with everyone in our class.

A labor party would do that. It would unite us against the companies that are shutting down plants. It would unite us against discrimination in any form. It would unite us with our sisters and brothers around the world—in El Salvador, Cuba, Poland, Vietnam, Japan, Britain, and Ireland.

The labor party strategy involves more than a new party structure. It is a whole new way of looking at things. It means breaking out of the limitations of the capitalist framework in looking for answers.

The September 19 demonstration was an unprecedented display of the power that the trade unions have when they unite with their allies in action. It was a harbinger of the future of the American labor movement.

If the bureaucrats who organized it saw September 19 mainly as a way of "stiffening the spine of some of our friends" in the Democratic Party (as Douglas Fraser put it in his speech), the dynamic it expressed points in the opposite direction, toward working-class political independence and mass mobilization.

This is what the ruling class fears; this is why the *Wall Street Journal* warned last August 6 that "Lane Kirkland and other cool heads at the AFL-CIO should first give some thought to what the administration has at stake."

The day after the march, liberal columnist James Reston of the *New York Times* was more explicit. Reagan's budget, he said, "could easily be wrecked by reckless opposition before it had a chance." As a result, "we'll have not an Imperial Presidency, but an Impotent Presidency, precisely at the point when we need 'solidarity' not merely in the unions but in the nation."

For the first time, Reston warned, "the conflict is coming into the streets." And he concluded by posing a question: ". . . on Solidarity Day in Washington, with union masses screaming in the sunshine on the mall, one wonders what 'solidarity' means—is it for the unions or for the union of the nation?"

September 19 showed that the American workers are learning that solidarity means the union of the oppressed, and that practicing it means taking to the streets. And that is what the rulers and their politicians and publicists fear most of all. □



# Bureaucrats, capitalists fear Solidarity

*Sharp international reactions to union's first congress*

**By Ernest Harsch**

The first national congress of Solidarity, held in Gdansk September 5-10, showed everyone—both within Poland and abroad—how far the Polish workers have come in just one year.

The union has clearly established itself as a powerful force. It has provided an example of what can be accomplished when workers form their own independent, democratic, and fighting organization, one that does not restrict itself to shop-floor issues but also addresses the big social, economic, and political questions that affect society as a whole.

It is the powerful attraction that this example holds for workers in other countries that has rulers around the world extremely worried. The bankers and businessmen on Wall Street are no less fearful than the bureaucrats who rule in Moscow that this example could spread.

The Soviet response to Solidarity's congress was predictable: an escalation of slanders and threats.

As the congress was underway, 100,000 Soviet troops were carrying out military maneuvers near the Polish border and in the Baltic Sea, in what was reported to be the largest exercise of its kind in the region since World War II.

On September 10, the Soviet press agency, Tass, branded the Solidarity congress as "an antisocialist and anti-Soviet orgy." Repeating a favorite slander dating from the times of Stalin, Tass accused the Solidarity leaders of conspiring with "agents of imperialist secret services" to prepare for a "seizure of power." The union was charged with aiming to undermine "the basis of the Polish socialist state" and restore "the bourgeois system in Poland."

Of particular concern to Moscow was a statement adopted by Solidarity pledging sup-

port for worker activists in the rest of Eastern Europe who may also attempt to set up independent unions. Large factory meetings were organized in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities, at which workers were asked to approve prepared statements condemning Solidarity. This was the first time Moscow had taken such a step, and marked a new stage in its efforts to turn Soviet workers against their brothers and sisters in Poland.

On September 10, *Rude Pravo*, the Czechoslovak Communist Party daily, likewise branded Solidarity's statement of support for workers in Eastern Europe as an "attempt at exporting counterrevolution."

Although there have not yet been any large-scale attempts by workers in other Eastern European countries to emulate Solidarity's example, the bureaucrats nevertheless have reason for concern. In recent years, there have been efforts in Romania, Hungary, and the Soviet Union itself to set up independent unions. In fact, one such group in the Soviet Union sent greetings to the Solidarity congress (see box).

The Soviet factory meetings also have more ominous implications. By portraying them as "spontaneous" outpourings of working class indignation at Solidarity, Moscow is trying to prepare the political ground for a possible military intervention into Poland.

The Hungarian Communist Party paper, *Nepszabadsag*, was more direct about such threats, writing in its September 13 issue about the growing "possibility" of "firm" action against "the opponents of social peace" in Poland.

The big-business press in the West, which in the past has lavished praise on Solidarity as part of its general anticommunist propaganda campaign, has also been growing more and more critical of the Polish workers' movement. The commentary on Solidarity's congress reflected some of the capitalists' real attitudes toward the union.

In a report on the congress in the September 13 *New York Times*, correspondent John Darton stated, "The six-day session in Gdansk was heard round the world, with indignation and anger in the Soviet East and with admiration, but also anxiety, in the West."

A day earlier, an editorial in the *Times* counseled Solidarity to make "hard choices" and accept "reduced incomes and increased productivity"—words that could easily have come out of the mouth of a Polish government official.

The London *Guardian*, in a September 12 editorial, characterized Solidarity's statement of support for other Eastern European workers

## Soviet workers group hails Solidarity

[The following is the text of the greetings sent to the Solidarity congress from the Free Trade Union Organizing Committee in the Soviet Union. It was first published in the August 30 issue of AS, a Solidarity press agency bulletin, and was handed out at the congress. The translation from the Polish is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

We send these greetings to you from a country where the working class has hardly ever known independent trade unions that firmly and resolutely defend the interests of the masses of workers.

To us, the achievements of the Polish proletariat are like a dream. Our workers' movement has scarcely been born. But in the current turmoil of events and ideas, a small spark could be enough to engulf in flames all those who mercilessly exploit the enormous patience of the Russian people.

Your struggle for the common people of Poland is also our struggle. Everything that contributes to the demise of falsehoods and duplicity, everything that leads to the realizations of the workers' basic demands, also weakens our regime.

Poland will not be free as long as Russia is not free. Only democratic changes, on the side of God, will allow you to build a free and prosperous country, independently

of anyone.

How very much we would have liked to be among the guests at the congress, to represent the free Russian workers' movement. How very much we would have liked to deliver these greetings directly to you to show our unconditional support—not the kind of support given to you by our government.

For the moment, this is only a dream. But the day will come (and in this we must believe) when the Russian and Polish workers will sit shoulder to shoulder in a democratic and progressive gathering.

Solidarity is today an example for us. At the cost of persecution, blood, and suffering, the Polish workers have broken the shackles of the government-controlled trade union.

Our organization unites workers and intellectuals. Although today we are not many, we solemnly pledge before this congress to do everything possible in our country to support you, to get out the truth and expose the lies, and even, if necessary, to defend you by any means.

Long live the friendship of the Polish and Soviet peoples!

Long live the international solidarity of all working people!

May God help you in your historic efforts.

as "reckless." It then added, "Banging on about free elections, a free press, freedom for political prisoners and an end to oppression is equally unnecessary."

A report from Warsaw in the September 13 *Washington Post* raised an alarm about the course of the Polish workers' revolution as a whole, noting that "there are eerie parallels between the events of the past year in Poland and the Russian Revolution of 1917."

Perhaps the most explicit criticism of the Solidarity conference appeared in an editorial in the September 12 *Economist*, the British business weekly. Under the headline "Solidarity, whoa!" the *Economist* characterized the decisions of the congress as "bravery-cum-foolhardiness." It charged, "Simple-minded

bravado . . . appears to be in the ascendant."

At the same time, the *Economist* praised the policies of the Polish authorities: "The Polish government, under the sensible direction of General Jaruzelski, is trying to take a grip on the country. It has pushed through some huge and much-needed, though unpopular, price rises. It has refused to yield to some of Solidarity's absurder demands. . . ."

While advising Solidarity to show "more realism," the *Economist* reminded Jaruzelski, "In most countries, the best way to handle over-powerful trade unions is to ignore their demands and withstand their strikes."

That is the capitalists' prescription for their own countries. And increasingly, it is their answer to the Polish workers as well. □

ally brought in. He wrote out false receipts that amounted to 3 million córdobas (\$300,000) in the month of May alone. He pocketed money for thousands of cases of toothpaste never delivered, to customers that never existed. Everybody was getting squeezed—the consumers, the market women and small shopkeepers, and the central bank that was lending López money.

The get-rich-quick scheme had political implications as well. The right-wing newspaper *La Prensa* hammered away day after day at the lack of toothpaste as "proof" of the Sandinistas' inability to manage the economy.

But the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) has once again shown just the opposite. Eddy López's partners are cooling their heels behind bars, facing possible sentences of six months to a year in jail. The only reason the head crook isn't with them is because he is in Miami.

In his absence, the government is invoking a new revolutionary law passed last July 19 to begin confiscating the toothpaste magnate's property.

The Nicaraguans have also asked the United States to return López to face the trial he deserves. But they may wait a long time. Authorities in the United States are likely to regard Eddy López's dirty tricks against the Nicaraguan toothpaste-buying public as just normal business practice. □

## Nicaragua

# Solving the toothpaste shortage

## Speculators get it in the teeth

By Matilde Zimmermann

MANAGUA—Toothpaste isn't something you buy everyday, but when you run out it's nice to be able to get more. So it was mildly annoying that there wasn't any at the supermarket when I needed it a couple months ago. None of the stalls at the open-air market had toothpaste either, and even the hotel shops were out. I finally bought a very small tube for a very large price.

A couple weeks later I noticed that there was toothpaste in the market again, and after that I didn't pay much attention to the off-again, on-again supply. After all, Nicaragua has to import all its toothpaste, so it seemed reasonable that stocks could run out and prices be high.

Besides, years of living in the United States had made me somewhat cynical about shortages. One day there is a "shortage"—of gasoline, for example. The next day, after the price has gone up 25 percent, you are swimming in the stuff.

But Nicaragua is different. Just how different it is became apparent one day in early September when a millionaire businessman was charged with illegal speculation in toothpaste.

The Sandinista police had a news conference to explain what had happened. Several months ago the office that deals with "crimes against the economy" started to notice—just like the rest of us—that toothpaste was getting very expensive and hard to find.

Import records showed that enough toothpaste was being brought in to satisfy the country's needs. So the police started looking more closely at the books of one Eddy López Tijerino, the Nicaraguan manager for Colgate Palmolive. López had been using his virtual monopoly over toothpaste distribution in Nicara-

gua to make himself and a few close associates rich.

He used every trick in the book. He claimed to be importing more toothpaste than he actu-

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# General strike on the agenda

## 5,000 trade unionists hold national conference

By Marcelo Zugadi

SÃO PAULO—In a historic step forward for the Brazilian workers movement, 5,247 delegates representing 1,800 different trade unions convened August 21 in the town of Playa Grande, seventy kilometers from here on the Atlantic Coast.

The first National Conference of the Working Class (CONCLAT) discussed and decided on a plan of struggle against the military dictatorship's austerity policies, layoffs and unemployment, and other problems facing Brazilian workers. It called for a National Day of Protest to be held on October 1. Through rallies, demonstrations, land occupations, and other actions a set of demands will be made known to the government. If no action is forthcoming, a general strike is to be held on November 17.

The CONCLAT also decided to move toward the establishment of a Brazil-wide confederation of trade unions. It called for the founding congress of the United Workers Federation (CUT) to be held on August 1, 1982.

The huge turnout of delegates doubled the most optimistic predictions of the organizers. The combative mood at the assembly and the scope and character of the resolutions adopted were true reflections of the current social and political situation in Brazil.

### International delegations

The large number and variety of international guests at the CONCLAT underscored the assembly's significance and also reflected the broad range of political forces that had come together to hold it.

Social Democracy was represented by delegations from the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the West German Trade Union Federation (DGB), and others. The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP) and the World Federation of Trade Unions showed the presence of pro-Moscow Communist forces. And the Social Christians participated through a delegation from the Latin American Workers Federation (CLAT).

Especially moving greetings were presented by Galvão Branco, general secretary of the National Union of Angolan Workers (UNTA). After explaining the problems of Africa and reaffirming his country's unshakeable support for the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), Branco pointed to the need for unity in Brazil, called on the workers to take power, and upheld socialism as the only goal worth fighting for.

Branco's speech was met with numerous ovations. This showed the mood of the dele-



Em Tempo

In-plant march by steelworkers backs São Paulo metalworkers strike in October 1978.

gates and foreshadowed the militant spirit in which the conference would unfold.

Other international guests included delegations from the National Workers Congress (CNT) of Uruguay and the Argentine Workers and Trade Unionists in Exile (TYSAE).

### History of the CONCLAT

The idea of the CONCLAT arose in 1978. The originators were the pro-Moscow Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and a sector of the state-controlled trade-union bureaucracy. The reformists and the *pelegos* (bureaucrats) were trying to find a way to get out in front of the upsurge that had opened with the big metalworkers strikes in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo.

By 1980, however, the CONCLAT was already taking on broader scope. Some leaders of the newly-formed Workers Party (PT)—which had initially arisen out of the São Paulo strikes—saw the CONCLAT as the vehicle for organizing a united workers federation, or CUT.

The first gathering of the forces interested in a CONCLAT was held in March 1980. Some 200 trade-unionists met and issued the call for

a national conference. At that time the bloc between the PCB and the *pelegos* was still dominant; the National Executive Commission that was set up was headed by Hugo Pérez, the *pelego* president of the Metalworkers Federation of the city of São Paulo.\*

The reformists and the *pelegos* aimed to set up their own national trade-union structure. Thus they sought to keep the preparations for the first CONCLAT as narrow and apolitical as possible. At the same time, some sectors of the Workers Party leadership hesitated to challenge the bureaucratic apparatuses and were considering establishing another structure in opposition to the *pelego*-reformist bloc.

As a result, the process of delegate selection in the various unions and the preliminary state assemblies appeared to be leading to domina-

\*The metalworkers federation of the city of São Paulo should not be confused with either the state federation of São Paulo or the metalworkers union of the São Paulo suburb of São Bernardo. The first two are controlled by the *pelegos*, while the São Bernardo union is a key bastion of the class-struggle opposition. It was led by Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula") at the time of the big strikes in 1978.



tion of the CONCLAT by the reformists and the bureaucrats.

But in the last three days before the conference the number of those registered doubled. This fresh mass of independent-minded, militant trade unionists sufficed to overwhelm the careful plans for tightly controlling the conference that had been laid by the dominant sector of the National Executive Commission.

#### Themes of the discussion

The CONCLAT took up the whole range of problems that face the Brazilian working class today—above all, the economic crisis and the continued rule of a seventeen-year-old military dictatorship. Delegates discussed the need for agrarian reform to meet the needs of the 50 million Brazilians who live in the countryside. They took up questions ranging from union organization at the factory level to social-welfare programs and reform of the repressive labor laws.

But attention focused above all on two themes that synthesized the working-class response to the crisis: building a united workers federation and organizing for a general strike.

On May Day, the president of the Workers Party, metalworkers leader Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula"), had proposed that a general strike be held on October 1. The recent national pre-convention of the PT had reaffirmed that call. This became the cutting edge of the debate at the CONCLAT, since the PCB and the pelegos strongly opposed it. They viewed a general strike as dangerous to the "democratic opening" that has been under way for several years in Brazil.

#### Democratic debate

During the first two days of the CONCLAT, the delegates met in separate commissions that discussed and voted on proposals to be brought to the plenary sessions. Motions receiving at least one-third of the vote in a commission could be brought to the floor of the plenary.

The debate in the commissions clearly showed the overall will of the delegates. With a high degree of maturity and mutual respect, the delegates set a course independent of the political apparatuses, taking up the positions of first one tendency and then another, reproving the errors of some and the conciliationist policies of others.

On the one hand, the delegates corrected the PT's hesitations on the need for a united workers federation. On the other, they systematically defeated the reformists and the pelegos on the question of a general strike.

Once the commission meetings had concluded, it was clear that the plenary would set a firm course toward a united workers federation and call for the general strike. Thus the main debate took place over the composition of the National Executive Commission that would be elected to carry out these tasks.

#### Leadership election

Consultations had been taking place from the outset among the different tendencies pres-

ent in order to put together a unified slate. But the reformists and the pelegos sought to limit the participation of the PT and the other class-struggle forces. They placed before the PT the alternative of submitting to a minority role or else being excluded and denounced as "split-ters."

But the development of the conference itself had rendered ineffective the tactics of the reformists and pelegos. Confident of its apparatus, the PCB did not seem to grasp what had happened. But the PT leaders demonstrated once again their sensitivity to the rank and file and their audacity in challenging the pelegos.

When it came time to elect the National Executive Commission, the plenary was presented with two slates. But when Lula, certain of victory, called for a vote, the reformist-pelego bloc ordered its members and allies to withdraw from the slate put forward by the PT. One after another, they took the floor to announce that they would not accept inclusion of their names on the opposition's slate. Some of these were figures with great mass prestige, such as peasant leader José Francisco da Silva.

But this maneuver lost much of its impact when Lula took the floor to announce that the PT would not withdraw its militants from the slate proposed by the reformists and pelegos. (Lula and some other PT leaders had been given token spots on the slate.)

The vote took place in a tense atmosphere. The presiding committee—which had gained authority with the delegates through its handling of the debates—first called for a repeat of the vote and then declared itself incapable of deciding which slate had won. There was a virtual tie.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to resolve the impasse. The PCB would not accept being in a minority, while Lula was certain of the PT's majority. Efforts to provoke a confrontation and break up the conference were decisively beaten back by the levelheadedness of the delegates.

Finally, Lula took the floor again and announced that he and the peasant leader José Francisco da Silva had come to an agreement. He was speaking in both their names. The sight of the main leaders of the industrial workers and the rural workers standing together before the mass of expectant delegates symbolized the united and combative power of the oppressed of the entire country.

Under the proposal of Lula and J.F. da Silva, the size of the National Executive Commission would be expanded from forty-seven to forty-eight, and it would be made up of equal numbers from both slates. The proposal carried, over the opposition of the PCB.

The new National Executive Commission is made up of representatives from three blocs—the PCB, the pelegos, and their allies (including the ex-Maoist Communist Party of Brazil); the PT and its allies (class-struggle oppositions in the unions, the Catholic left, and political currents to the left of the PCB); and independents (mainly from the unions of rural workers). The PCB-pelego bloc has slightly

more than the PT, but it can no longer dominate the commission.

The results of the first CONCLAT come in the context of a series of important steps that the Brazilian proletariat has been taking for several years. These are now taking concrete organizational and political form.

The general strike called by the CONCLAT is not merely a spontaneous response to the economic crisis. The strike was proposed and fought for by the Workers Party, which in just two years of existence has gained more than 200,000 members and is fast becoming the mass party of the Brazilian proletariat.

The building of a united workers federation, spurred by the CONCLAT, has its basis in the struggles taking place every day throughout the country against the pelegos and their allies in the unions. The most advanced expression of this was seen in July, when the class-struggle opposition won the first round of the elections in the São Paulo state metalworkers federation and then lost by only a scant margin to the pelegos in the second round.

The next big test will be preparing and carrying out the October 1 National Day of Protest and the November 17 general strike. The outcome will be a big factor in determining the future course of Brazil, where the capitalist "miracle" of the past two decades has not only reached its limit but has also created its gravediggers on a massive scale.

August 25, 1981

## Trotskyist murdered in Peru

Teófilo Inga Quispe, a thirty-year-old municipal worker, was kidnapped on July 25 in the Lima suburb of San Luis. On August 1, Inga Quispe was found dead along a roadside. His body showed signs that he had been beaten to death, but the police claimed he perished in a traffic accident.

Inga Quispe was a leader of the municipal workers union of San Luis and a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT—Peruvian section of the Fourth International). His co-workers and comrades believe he was murdered by a gang of thugs known as *coyotes*, used as strikebreakers by San Luis Mayor Nicanor Gamarra.

Inga Quispe's wife said that he had been the target of death threats from the coyotes in the days preceding his disappearance.

César Rodríguez, organization secretary of the Municipal Workers Federation of Peru was among the speakers at Inga Quispe's funeral. "We will not allow further attacks like the one that took the life of our young and combative leader Inga," Rodríguez declared. "We demand the withdrawal of the coyotes from all the districts, and we call on the mayors of San Luis, Rimac, Chorrillos, and other towns to halt their sinister maneuvers against the workers."

The murder of Inga Quispe occurred several weeks before a nationwide strike of municipal workers was to take place.

# The world situation and the tasks of building the Fourth International

[This week we are beginning publication of majority and minority documents debated at the May 7-14 meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International. Translations of these documents from the French are by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

[The U.S. government directly intervened to prevent the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from participating in the May IEC meeting. Government lawyers in the April-June 1981 trial of the lawsuit brought by the SWP against secret police spying and harassment subpoenaed central SWP leaders who had planned to attend the IEC meeting and present counter reports there. Those subpoenaed were legally required to be available to appear in court on twenty-four-hours' notice when the government began its case and could not leave the United States. Material reflecting the views that SWP leaders would have presented at the IEC meeting will be published in forthcoming issues of *Intercontinental Press*.

[The following introduction to the IEC documents appeared in the July 6 issue of the French-language fortnightly *Inprecor*.]

\* \* \*

The International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International met in May 1981.

The political questions at the center of discussions were the following: the general features of the world situation; the rising tide of the political revolution in Poland; the revolutionary developments in Central America and in the Caribbean, as well as the situation in Cuba; the deepening crisis in the semicolonial countries and the

present stage of the Iranian revolution; the situation of the workers movement in capitalist Europe in light of François Mitterrand's election victory in France, the process of radicalization within the British Labour Party, as well as the attempted coup in Spain.

A discussion took place with the aim of reevaluating the position the United Secretariat of the Fourth International adopted in January 1980 regarding the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

In addition, an initial assessment was drawn of the more systematic effort to root the Fourth International's sections in the key sectors of the industrial proletariat and of the solidarity campaigns with the Central American revolution, as well as with the struggle of the Polish workers for the political revolution. A declaration in solidarity with the hunger strike of the republican political prisoners in Northern Ireland was adopted.

The IEC adopted a message of solidarity with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the United States, which must confront the Reagan administration's attacks. In fact, the American government, through judicial means, prevented members of the SWP leadership from participating as observers at this meeting of the IEC. Given this situation, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International will take the measures necessary to make known the points of view on the questions under discussion in the International.

Representatives from twenty-eight sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International took part in this first meeting of the IEC since the Eleventh World Congress in November 1979.

## [First of two parts]

Today on the one hand the world situation is characterized by a continuation of revolutionary upsurges and processes (Central America, Poland, Iran) and on the other hand by the accentuation of the imperialist counteroffensive. Since the victories of the masses against Somoza in Nicaragua and the shah of Iran imperialism has reorganized its forces and has launched a series of counterattacks. The difference between the relative paralysis of American imperialism in the case of Nicaragua and

its significant intervention in El Salvador illustrates this change. The imperialist counteroffensive and the success achieved by the ruling class in Turkey, in other semicolonial countries or the worsening of the situation in the Spanish state certainly has not qualitatively reversed the relationship of forces between the classes on the international level. But it has placed new obstacles in the path of possible victories of the toiling masses and has as a result accentuated still more the crisis of proletarian leadership.

## I. The general characteristics of the world situation

1. In the most recent period there has been an uneven development of the world revolution.

Today there are three struggles which constitute the most significant examples of the advance of the proletariat: the rise of the socialist revolution in Central America, the formidable dynamic of the struggle and self-organization of the Polish workers and the mass mobilizations which are continuing in Iran.

In this context we see the assertion of the increasingly central role of the working class and the growth of proletarian forms of struggle: general strikes and insurrectional strikes, the formation of independent mass organizations, the appearance of committees and militias, etc. The working class, in particular its best organized sectors in industry, is asserting its role at the head of the oppressed and the exploited.

At the present time the revolutionary process is being extended in

Central America. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) is in the process of consolidating its power. It is arming the masses in the perspective of a showdown with the national and international counterrevolution. The development of the revolution in El Salvador represents a major challenge for American imperialism. It has from the beginning increased its efforts to prevent the repetition in that country of a revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship as in Nicaragua. A major test of strength is therefore on the agenda in this region of the world.

The broad struggles of the Polish proletariat, the creation and growth of Solidarity, as well as the setting up of Rural Solidarity, are the hardest blows suffered by the international bureaucracy since it was consolidated. The Solidarity organizations are increasingly playing the role of a counterpower faced to the regime of the bureaucratic caste. The political



revolution has begun in Poland. It is already having effects on the other workers states.

The objectives around which the Polish workers are mobilizing and organizing are the best arguments in favor of socialism in the imperialist countries. It saps the efforts of the bourgeoisie to relaunch a cold-war climate, which remains necessary for it to fully achieve its policy of rearmament and remilitarization. The leading role of the working class, drawing in behind it the intellectuals, peasants and students, has been clearly shown.

The insurrectionary overthrow of the shah's dictatorship opened the way to the third Iranian revolution. It has considerably weakened one of the key bases of imperialism in this strategic region. After two years the rise of the struggles of the workers, peasants, and national minorities (above all the Kurds) in defense of their gains has not been broken. The Iranian revolution is continuing. It favors the mobilization of the workers and peasants of the whole region.

The gains accumulated by the workers in most of the imperialist countries during the years preceding the generalized recession of 1974-75 prevented the ruling class being able to qualitatively modify the relationship of forces in its favor by utilizing the economic crisis. Certainly its austerity offensive has thrown the workers movement onto the defensive. But the main sector of the dynamic forces of the latter has not been affected. Thus despite the decline in living standards, massive unemployment and occasionally even a step back in the level of trade-unionization, the possibility exists in a whole series of countries for large-scale defensive struggles to be transformed into a counteroffensive of the working class.

The twin scourge of significant unemployment and high inflation has revealed the unrealistic character of any purely partial or sectoral response to the crisis. The growing involvement of trade-union industrial forces in the left turn of the Labour Party in Britain, as well as the social and political polarization expressed by the election of Mitterrand to the presidency of the Fifth Republic in France, indicate the type of evolution that could come about in the workers movement of various advanced capitalist countries. The search for an answer to the crisis and to austerity can stimulate the emergence and the recomposition of left currents in the traditional organizations.

2. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution in 1975 marked a major defeat for imperialism.

After 1975 imperialism therefore found itself relatively paralyzed faced with the national liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies and the overthrow by the insurgent masses of two key positions of its international strategic system: the shah's dictatorship in the Middle East and Somoza in Central America.

Confronted with the possibility that such events could be repeated in these regions, imperialism has gone over to the counteroffensive. Its first steps along these lines was to prepare world opinion by trying to take advantage of the American "hostages" affair in Iran and in launching a campaign of mystification on the so-called "Soviet military superiority."

The accession of Reagan to the presidency of the U.S. symbolizes American imperialism's will to take a tougher line and go on to the counterattack. It has enormous economic and military resources to commit to this operation. It began to mobilize them from 1977-78, when the Carter administration launched a new escalation in the arms race.

It has systematically prepared for the possibility of new direct counterrevolutionary interventions on a large scale. It supported the repressive crackdown in South Korea. It has set up more rapid intervention forces ready to act in the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central America, and the Indian Ocean. The European and Japanese imperialists are organized to help along the same lines in Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East.

The Reagan administration is accentuating and broadening this course of action. The increased intervention in the Middle East, the reinforced aid to Chon in South Korea and to Pinochet in Chile, the budget decisions on arms spending, and above all the counterrevolutionary intervention in El Salvador and the threats against the Nicaraguan revolution and Cuba are already concrete examples of this. But this counteroffen-

sive will not proceed without provoking new contradictions inside the very heart of the American ruling circles.

The austerity offensive of the international bourgeoisie and its attacks against the organized workers movement, which has deepened since the new 1980-81 recession, forms another aspect of its attempt to modify the balance of forces in its favor. This offensive is extended to attacks against the democratic rights of working people. The attempted military coup d'etat in the Spanish state, which was able to base itself on the institutions left over from the Francoist dictatorship, is a sharp expression of the ruling classes' counteroffensive.

The counteroffensive means that imperialism is ready to take more risks. The stakes have increased. But these attacks have already provoked new fightbacks and resistance from the masses. Capitalism cannot resolve its socioeconomic crisis without winning decisive victories against key sectors of the international proletariat. The crisis will therefore be long-lasting. The imperialist counteroffensive can make some gains in certain countries, but it is incapable of stabilizing in any way the international situation or preventing new waves of struggles or explosions.

3. The international policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy makes an essential contribution to imperialism's attempts to reinforce its bases.

In the colonial and semicolonial countries it supports bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships whose function remains that of channelling and misleading the mass movement. It supports some corrupt, repressive regimes of the "national bourgeoisie," such as that of Indira Gandhi in India. It gives backing to some bloody military dictatorships such as in Argentina. It was one of the first to recognize the Bolivian military dictatorship.

In the imperialist countries, it defends the maintenance of bourgeois regimes which fit in with its diplomatic interests, whether it is a question of the Spanish monarchy or the support given right to the end of Giscard in France.

Its dictatorial regime severely affects the laboring masses in the USSR and the "People's Democracies." It discredits socialism in the eyes of decisive sectors of the world proletariat. Its counterrevolutionary attacks against the Polish workers feeds the anticommunist campaign of the bourgeoisie. This in addition brings ideological back-up to imperialism's remilitarization and austerity offensive.

Its international policy aims to safeguard the status quo and to avoid revolutionary crises susceptible, in the last instance, of undermining its domination inside the USSR itself and in the Eastern European countries.

In the Polish case, there is an evident convergence between the Kremlin's necessity to break in the long term the movements and organizations which are endangering the bureaucratic regime, and imperialism's desire to avoid a political revolution which would favor an upsurge of the proletariat in the industrialized capitalist countries.

This defense of the international status quo does not however signify that the Stalinist bureaucracy is completely immobile. Faced with the rise of class struggles and the initiatives of imperialism, it can intervene to extend its strategic positions and to defend its interests. This can lead to limited and conjunctural conflicts with imperialist and proimperialist forces, as long as that does not result in a serious confrontation.

The Afghanistan intervention illustrates the overall negative effects of this policy. Carried out in function of the specific interests of the bureaucracy and by its traditional methods, violating the right of peoples to self-determination, seriously compromising the idea of socialism, it facilitates the work of reactionary forces inside the vast movement of spontaneous resistance against the occupation and divides the anti-imperialist forces in the country, the region, and on an international scale. It provides the imperialists with a cover for their counterrevolutionary interventions throughout the world and furnishes a pretext for their increased military preparations.

As for the Chinese bureaucracy, in the name of the priority of the struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy, it gives its support today to imperialist policy and to its most extremist representative (e.g., Thatcher), just as it supports the most reactionary regimes and dictators. It backs up military intervention in El Salvador. It continues to threaten the Viet-





May 1, 1981, demonstration in Managua.

Arnold Weissberg/IP

namese revolution, adding its military pressure to the imperialist economic blockade.

But the beginning of the political revolution in Poland, the sharp socio-economic difficulties affecting a big part of the bureaucratized workers states, and the obstacles encountered by the Chinese bureaucracy in its attempts to stabilize its regime mark a new deepening of the crisis of the bureaucratic castes' systems of domination.

4. The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has a world character which is not reducible to the international anti-imperialist struggle. It also involves the struggle to overthrow bourgeois power in the imperialist centers and the battle between capital and labor in the semicolonial countries.

But the tasks are posed in different ways and the crisis of leadership bears a specific character in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

In the imperialist countries, the ruling class, solidly organized around its state apparatus and disposing of important reserves, makes full use of the control of the working class by the reformist apparatuses in order to develop its austerity plans. It bases itself on the open collaboration or divisive policies of these reformist leaderships. An effective workers response to the crisis in fact implies demands and solutions challenging the laws of the capitalist market and the existence of the bourgeois state. That is why the accumulated forces and combativity of the workers does not constitute sufficient conditions for an overall counteroffensive. The need for an anticapitalist strategy and a vanguard capable of putting this forward is of increasingly burning importance.

The struggle for the antibureaucratic political revolution is an integral part of the world revolution. In the last analysis such a revolution is the only means for preventing the bureaucratic caste undermining the fundamental bases of the workers states. The setting up of a socialist democracy will have, furthermore, a major role to play in bringing to maturity the consciousness of the working class of the industrialized capitalist countries. In this framework, the challenging of the bureaucratic management and domination, with all the despotic practices and wastage that goes with that, will end up very quickly posing the need for democratic planning based on the largest mass democracy. Similarly, it will

put on the agenda the most complex problems of the economy of a transitional society and the problem of the international consequences of a rise of the political revolution.

At the beginning, the political revolution can develop in a massive way within a national framework. It can take advantage of the relative weakness of the country's bureaucracy which, compared to the ruling class in the capitalist countries, does not have its own base in the relations of production. But this upsurge can only result in a lasting victory if there is a leadership conscious of the issues involved in setting up democratically structured workers power and its international implications—starting with the necessity of establishing a link between opposition proletarian forces in the "People's Democracies" and the USSR—even if these forces are as yet still embryonic.

In the more backward semicolonial countries, the ruling classes continue to have an extreme material and political weakness. Lacking a social base that is at all consistent they show signs of decomposition.

Thus in the specific conditions marked by the isolation of the Somoza dictatorship, the divisions of the bourgeoisie and the temporary paralysis of imperialism, the Nicaraguan revolution was able to overturn the dictatorial state. It took the road to the setting up of a workers state under the leadership of the FSLN, which had learned the lessons of the Cuban revolution and the other developments of the class struggle in Latin America.

This experience confirms the possibility that, despite the absence of a revolutionary Marxist party, the crisis of proletarian leadership can be overcome in exceptional cases in relation to the conquest of political power on the national level. Such leaderships have not, for all that, integrated the historic experiences of the international class struggles. This can lead them, on the one hand, to an abusive generalization of a specific experience in the definition of a revolutionary strategy in Latin America and, on the other hand, to wrong political positions on the proletarian struggles in the three sectors of the world revolution.

However, in a growing number of semicolonial countries, industrialization, concentration of the urban proletariat and its combativity is allied to a reinforcement of the repressive apparatus and new forms of political organization of the ruling classes (for example the specific role of

the armed forces). Democratic and anti-imperialist tasks are consequently more immediately tied to anticapitalist tasks, and demand a more important degree of organization and political preparation of the revolutionary vanguard.

5. The present stage of the rise of the world revolution is marked by a growing differentiation inside the mass organizations, by a periodic putting into question of the control of the reformist and national populist leaderships and by emergence of currents and organizations which break with these traditional leaderships.

The Cuban, Nicaraguan, Grenadian, and Salvadoran leaderships have firmly stood up to the accentuated imperialist offensive. Whatever might be its overall weakness, the orientation of this current reflects progress in the political development of the vanguard of these countries. The refusal of this current to capitulate to the violent offensive of American imperialism and its perspective of encouraging a socialist breakthrough in Central America create conditions for restarting discussions on revolutionary strategy in its ranks. Our capacity to be in solidarity with it on a united-front basis can contribute to facilitating the defense of our perspectives for ensuring the progress of the world revolution faced with this current.

In Poland the rise of the mass struggles has given birth to a layer of real workers' leaders. They are today leading national, regional, and workplace organizations of Solidarity. While stimulating the workers' self-organization, in the course of the conflicts with the bureaucracy this leadership is going through a process of differentiations which reflect many political and ideological orientations. This creates the best situation since the consolidation of Stalinism during the 1920s for the formation of a working-class vanguard in the Eastern European countries, for political clarification within this force, and for the winning of new currents to revolutionary positions.

## II. Situation and perspectives of the colonial revolution

7. Since the beginning of the period opened up in 1968, the socialist revolution has seen a victorious outcome in Vietnam in 1975. Today, the rise of the revolution in Central America is accelerating the passage to the establishment of a workers state in Nicaragua and in Grenada and results in El Salvador in generalized military and political confrontations between the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the military junta which is directly supported by imperialism. It is in Central America that the dynamic of the revolution in the semicolonial countries has reached its highpoint at the present time. It constitutes a major challenge to American imperialism, which has continually, since 1960, tried to prevent the emergence of a new Cuba.

The victory of the popular insurrection led by the FSLN in Nicaragua in July 1979 took place in a context marked by the deterioration of the relationship of forces to the disfavor of imperialism. On the other hand, the extension of the revolution in El Salvador, and even more so in Guatemala, must confront a vast political and military intervention set up by imperialism in agreement with the Central American dictatorships and governments like those in Venezuela and Colombia. A test of strength is becoming outlined in the area. The Cuban revolution is an integral part of this and its leadership is preparing for it through, among other things, relaunching the territorial militias in a massive way.

But a direct confrontation between the revolutionary forces and the international counterrevolution in Central America would provoke an enormous tide of anti-imperialist feeling and political radicalization among the masses of Latin America. It is that which certain Latin American bourgeoisies are above all afraid of when they demonstrate they are not too favorable to the "big stick" policy of the United States. One can add to this, as in the case of Mexico, their more specific economic interests in their relations with Central America. In the citadel of imperialism itself, reaction against direct intervention could take on a resonance analogous to that of the movement against the Vietnam war. The first reactions against the intervention in El Salvador are a demonstration of this.

The consolidation of one or two new workers states in Central Ameri-

In the advanced capitalist countries the workers are looking for political answers to the overall problems they are faced with. The way in which they are looking for such a response stimulates a recomposition of the left wing of the workers movement. Thus the preconditions are appearing for the building of class-struggle left-wing currents. Therefore new possibilities are emerging for revolutionary Marxists to link up with leading cadres of the working class.

However, in various sectors of the world revolution it is still a question of an uneven process which up to now has still not permitted the gap between the maturity of the objective conditions necessary for the revolution and the weakness of the subjective factor to be bridged.

6. The developments of the international class struggle are increasingly closely interlinked. The immediate perspective is that of chronic social instability in the colonial countries, with setbacks but also real revolutionary crises, and a sharp crisis of bureaucratic domination in some workers states. In the imperialist countries, resistance to austerity—with the hard, explosive struggles that the latter can produce—plays a key role in the world relationship of forces, even if it does not in the short term, result in decisive victories.

Revolutions have resulted in the overthrow of capitalism in one country or region and they have weakened imperialism and reinforced the proletariat. But none of them, since the victory of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the USSR has permitted the resolution of the leadership crisis of the international workers movement.

The solution of this crisis of leadership, on which the historical outcome of the struggle for workers power depends, requires the construction of a new mass communist International on the basis of a world program which synthesizes the most advanced experiences of class struggle in all countries. To work towards this end is the *raison d'être* of the Fourth International.

ca would begin to break the more than twenty years isolation undergone by Cuba. It would increase the attractive force of the socialist revolution for the working masses of Latin America and would contribute to a reshaping of the forces identifying with Castroism. On the other hand, a defeat inflicted on the Salvadoran revolution by imperialism and its "junior partners" will immediately reinforce the counterrevolutionary threats and actions against Nicaragua and the Cuban revolution itself.

The July 1980 coup d'état in Bolivia, which imposed a serious defeat on the workers and peasants, clearly expresses the fragility of the attempts of "democratic openings" and "institutionalization" in various Latin American countries.

The acute social contradictions, intensified by the deepness of the economic crisis and the revolutionary upsurge in Central America, stimulates in Latin America, although in an uneven way, a resurgence of the mass struggle. The bourgeoisie can only hope to contain it within the limited framework of the "democratic openings" to the extent that it does not go beyond a certain threshold. That is what underpins the alternating and hesitating between "institutionalization," coups d'état, or reinforcement of the repression. The defeats inflicted on the masses by imperialism and the ruling classes in a series of countries (Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia) continues to very much characterize the class struggle in the continent. But the events of the last few years in Peru and even more so the difficulties of the Brazilian regime indicate that major crises could break out in the next stage.

8. Following the imperialist defeat in Indochina and fall of the Salazar regime in Portugal; Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau/Cape Verde won political independence, after long years of armed struggle. The support accorded to the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), as well as the direct intervention of Pretoria forces in the civil war failed thanks to the support given by the Cuban armed forces to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). This contributed in a big way to reinforce the struggle in Southern Africa.



However, the imperialist operation to regain ground on the military and economic terrain in Angola is continuing.

Imperialism has tried hard to find an overall political solution preserving its global interests in Southern Africa, beginning with Zimbabwe. The neocolonial agreement of Lancaster House (December 1979) aimed to allow an integration of the Patriotic Front representatives while safeguarding the essential positions of imperialism and the richer white settlers.

The electoral victory of Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in February 1980, expressed the combativity of the masses who identified with the strongest and most intransigent organization of the liberation war. In this sense, the electoral success of ZANU represented a political failure for imperialism and an encouragement to the Southern African masses as a whole.

Nevertheless, the ZANU leadership agreed to respect the framework of the London agreement imposed by imperialism with the aim of maintaining its influence.

Mugabe has not hesitated to repress movements mobilizing around social and economic demands that have broken out in the wake of the February victory, at a time when the social crisis is only getting greater. The petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships pull back from putting forward a social/economic program effectively responding to the demands of the workers, poor peasants and ex-liberation fighters. To try and contain an explosion which would undermine the neocolonial accords, they are trying to channel this dynamic into bitter factional struggles between ZANU and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in the course of which radical nationalist declarations are used to camouflage their real orientation. If the hegemony of these leaderships is maintained on the mass movement the result will, in the last instance, be the consolidation of a neocolonial bourgeois state, whatever may be the problems of conflicts between factions and the instability that can result from that.

The course followed by the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) since the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980 is a striking example of the dynamic of evolution towards neocolonialism: an opening up to imperialist capital, revitalization of the private sector, support for the Lancaster House agreement within the framework of the economic links with South Africa, willingness to agree to the Lome accords, and demobilization and strict control of the mass movement. In the context created by the present economic crisis and the links set up by the Soviet bureaucracy with some of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships, such a slide towards a neocolonial project can be accompanied by relations with Comecon and even a certain alignment with the main options of the Kremlin's international policy. The Angolan regime, under the leadership of the MPLA, also has a tendency to commit itself to this road—referring to the "stagist" ideology of the national democratic revolution.

Strategically, imperialism is looking to impose neocolonial political solutions in Southern Africa, in order to cut off what represents for it a dangerous dynamic of guerrilla movements and armed confrontations which radicalize the masses.

However, such an option can only be concretized in ensuring that such conditions do not shake up the apartheid regime in South Africa. Furthermore, the partisans of apartheid, who have an autonomy in relation to London and Washington, are making more and more military attacks against Angola and even against Mozambique. They are blocking the conclusion of the agreements presently being proposed by the UN for the independence of Namibia—this is even more the case since they expect the support of the more aggressive fractions of imperialism.

These various initiatives of Pretoria do not mean that key sectors of capital in South Africa are not basically in favor of neocolonial political solutions. In the long run these solutions are the most susceptible of ensuring stable markets for South African exports which are continually increasing towards those African countries who expect massive aid from imperialism and have built up economic links with South Africa. However agreements analogous to those of Lancaster House, or even more unfavorable to the masses, are only acceptable to Pretoria in the framework of a relationship of political and military forces adequate to ensure their application. In order to consolidate its positions and to increase pressure on the "front line states" as well as on the liberation move-

ments, Pretoria will continue to launch military operations against countries used as "rear camps" for liberation fighters (e.g., South West Africa People's Organisation [SWAPO]).

Against this aggression revolutionaries must declare themselves resolutely for the military defense of the countries that are attacked (Angola, Mozambique) without for all that silencing their opposition to the neocolonial line of their governments.

The overthrow of the Ethiopian monarchy struck another blow against imperialism in one of its important regions. After having swept away the vestiges of slavery and feudalism and starting out on a profound land reform under the impact of a gigantic mobilization of the rural masses, the Ethiopian revolution has not yet exhausted its potential. Thanks to the aid of the USSR and Cuba, the Dergue regime has been able to combat the internal counterrevolution and the attempts at destabilization developed partially by Somalia. However, using this support of the USSR and Cuba the Dergue has tried to crush the Eritrean national liberation movement, has violently repressed the "civilian left," has regimented the mass organizations, and has declared the pre-eminence of the professional army in the carrying out of the process of social transformation. Thus it blocks the deepening of the latter at a time when, facing economic constraints and regional political tensions, it is looking towards openings to the imperialist powers (EEC) and to regimes like the Sudan.

In the medium term, a new advance of the revolution in Southern Africa, with repercussions in the whole of Africa, is very much tied to the power of the mass mobilizations of the Blacks in South Africa. The strikes in the important industrial sectors, in the public services and the struggles of the school students, as well as the general demand for the creation of independent trade unions, express the acceleration on every level of the rising struggle for democratic rights, for national liberation, for the overthrow of the apartheid regime, and show its social dynamic. In this imperialist bastion, it is precisely the power of the white bourgeoisie on the one side and the development of the Black working class, putting itself at the head of the struggles, on the other, that renders necessary the emergence of a proletarian leadership having a coherent revolutionary orientation capable of unifying the struggles for the overthrow of the apartheid regime. It must be able to combine the tasks of the national liberation struggle with those of the conquest of democratic rights for the masses and the independent organization of the proletariat. From the beginning it should also develop an international revolutionary political line, given the international significance of the South African revolution. This leadership will be forged in the ongoing struggles, it will draw its forces from among the leaders of strikes, the struggles of the shantytowns and among student youth.

The European and American imperialists, in the last period, have reinforced their engagements in Africa. They will spare no effort to break the revolutionary upsurge in Africa, even if the political price paid for this counteroffensive risks being very high given the profound discredit of the apartheid regime among the working masses of the imperialist countries.

9. The insurrectionary overthrow of the shah's dictatorship has considerably weakened one of the key bases of imperialism in a strategic region. For two years the struggles of the workers, peasants, and national minorities (above all the Kurds) in defense of their gains have not been broken.

The invasion launched by the Iraqi Ba'athist leadership has failed in its political objective. It aimed to overthrow the Khomeini regime in order to roll back a revolution which threatened to find an increasing echo within significant layers of the Iraqi population and, more generally, in the whole Gulf region.

The outbreak of hostilities between Iran and Iraq produced an exacerbation of class conflicts, confrontation between various factions of the leading circles and a more general crisis of the Khomeini leadership. The incompetence of the government in the military and economic domains pushed the workers and sections of the masses to want to take matters directly into their own hands, by using the instruments remaining from the preceding revolutionary upsurges (*shoras*, neighborhood committees, the experience of the people's militias, the extension of the



agrarian reform).

The workers shoras have been extended. On the basis of various existing coordinations initiatives have been made to give military training to the workers in the factories. After the outbreak of the war, millions of peasants began to mobilize with a view of combining the defense of the revolution against Iraqi aggression with the struggle for land and for a decent life, and to eradicate the reign of the big landowners. Since the beginning of the war peasants have organized themselves into shoras in thousands of villages.

The polarization of the classes can more or less parallel, conjuncturally, the lines of cleavage between the different factions of the leading circles of the Islamic Republic. It is a question of grasping the real social content and meaning of these mobilizations, beyond immediate references to the Khomeini leadership or to "radical" wings of the clergy.

The fundamentalists and the partisans of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) are increasing their pressure for the control of all the commanding posts of the state apparatus and to affirm their hegemony. They are reinforcing military aggression against the Kurds. They interfere with democratic rights and often directly attack workers and peasants as well as progressive and workers organizations.

Under the cover of the strict defense of democratic rights, some factions of the ruling power bloc (Bani-Sadr) are in fact leading a battle for the control of the state institutions. They want to stabilize the situation and consolidate the instruments of capitalist domination in order to create the conditions for the relaunching of the capitalist economy.

The essential stimulus of the masses' activity remains their deep anti-imperialist sentiments, which are confirmed by their willingness to resist the Iraqi aggression, as well as the desire to satisfy their own demands, which pushes them to oppose private property and the bourgeois state. The war has furthermore combined these two preoccupations. The hoarding of goods of basic necessity by the capitalists, production stoppages, inflation, redundancies, the powerlessness of the regime to come to the aid of a million refugees—all that appears to the masses both as acts which trample their elementary interests and as an objective sabotage of the war effort. All this explains the growth of differentiation between the religious hierarchy, the leading circles of the Islamic Republic on the one hand and growing fractions of the working masses on the other. But there is no automatic passing over from mistrusting the leading factions—who are making many appeals to "national unity"—to a position of political class independence of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie or its indirect petty-bourgeois representatives.

From that flows the crucial importance of leading a battle within the advanced proletarian layers to reinforce all elements of political and ideological autonomy from the various tendencies of the present leadership. This starts from the defense of all the gains of the revolution, the democratic rights and demands put forward by the masses as well as the organizational instruments they have built up (independent shoras).

If this autonomy is not learned by large sectors of the workers and militants who were at the head of the struggle against the shah and are in the leadership of the combat against capitalist sabotage and the popular struggle against Iraqi attack, the gains of the revolution risk being put into question.

Indeed, after two years of revolution, the elementary needs of the masses have not been really resolved. The counterrevolutionary forces can take advantage of this impasse, economic chaos and disorganization in order to regroup its forces—in the army and in the state apparatus—and start the counteroffensive. The external counterrevolution is waiting for the best moment to try and strike. American imperialism, which has consolidated its bases in the region, will play different options in order to slowly regain its positions in Iran.

**10.** In certain other sectors of the colonial revolution defeats or past setbacks continue to weigh on the mass movement.

In the Arab countries which do not possess high oil revenues, the living conditions of the toiling masses continues to deteriorate. This is particularly the case for Egypt, where the economic turn made by Sadat and the agreements concluded with American imperialism have not produced the results hoped for by its promoters. The masses, who were confused at the beginning by the Camp David agreements which were

presented as a return to peace, have on several occasions launched very militant movements around social and economic demands. However these were not generalized and have therefore not succeeded in rolling back the attacks against their already dramatically low living standards or in winning real democratic gains.

The Palestinian movement has still not overcome the consequences of the defeats suffered in the 1970s. But it has experienced a growth in the most recent period in the territories occupied by Israel, where currents influenced by the Palestine Liberation Organization have won an increasing influence—thus accentuating the contradictions of the Zionist state. The latter is racked by growing economic and social difficulties and is increasing its military activities in Lebanon. It is supporting the right-wing forces there and fighting against the progressive and Palestinian forces. Furthermore Israel is trying to strike new blows against Syria and Iraq.

In the Arab countries of North Africa there has been a rise of workers struggles which repression has not been able to crush. The case of Tunisia is a particularly eloquent example of this. The attempt of the regime to break the movement in 1978 by the repression on January 26 of that year has only given ephemeral results. The working class is not demoralized. The economic and social movements have continued. The trade unions have reorganized. Finally, it is the regime that has made concessions in liberating the imprisoned trade-union leaders and in giving up the attempt to impose a trade-union leadership of "puppets."

If the situation created by the rise of the masses and important struggles has not resulted in revolutionary crises or even in the overthrow of the existing regimes, that is due mainly to the orientations and methods of the traditional bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships and that of the communist parties under the influence of Moscow, or in any case, dominated by Stalinist conceptions. These leaderships have shown themselves incapable, not only of achieving the bourgeois democratic tasks of the Arab revolution but also of even ensuring the gains of the masses. Consequently they have to an increasing extent lost their influence and are torn apart by internal crises. It is as a consequence of this failure that Muslim fundamentalist currents have been able to develop—whose components are, in an overwhelming majority, extremely reactionary. The latter have been able to implant themselves in plebian sectors of the masses and the petty-bourgeois layers hit by the social and economic crisis. Nevertheless they are incapable of bringing concrete responses to the needs of the masses and their influence remains therefore precarious. To struggle against both the traditional leaderships as well as the fundamentalist currents, revolutionary Marxists put forward slogans and proposals that respond to the needs of the impoverished masses and to the necessity of organizing the proletariat in an independent way in the trade unions and politically. They defend the secular component of their program and democratic demands. They give trade-union activity a major importance in their work.

**11.** Given the explosive economic and social contradictions and the relative weakness of the ruling classes, the resurgence of the mass movements and sociopolitical instability will remain constant in the semicolonial countries. These contradictions have been even more reinforced as a result of the prolonged crisis of the international capitalist economy which savagely affects most of the semicolonial countries and imposes on the masses a new and insupportable cut in their already miserable living standards.

The May 1980 explosion in South Korea (with the taking of several towns, creation of militias, etc.), the clear signs of crisis in the Philippines and Pakistan, the numerous confrontations between the rich and poor in the Indian countryside and the waves of workers struggles in various Arab countries, illustrate this phenomenon.

Nevertheless the combination between the socioeconomic crisis and the relative strength of the ruling classes is very different between Brazil, Mexico, India, and South Korea on the one hand and the more backward countries of Central America, Africa, or Asia on the other.

This combination determined the possibilities of revolutionary victories in certain, particularly backward countries, despite the absence of a revolutionary Marxist mass party. On the other hand in the "stronger" countries of the semicolonial world successive cycles of upsurge and

confrontation have resulted in defeats, given the lack of such parties.

The objective and subjective causes of these defeats can be outlined in the following way:

A. The bourgeoisie of a series of semicolonial countries have set into motion during the last decades a process of semi-industrialization. It has been based on: the relative consolidation of capitalism in the imperialist centers during the long post-war "boom," the structural transformations of imperialist industry and the sociopolitical "fall out" from the upsurge of the liberation movements.

This bourgeoisie, above all the industrial bourgeoisie, has participated as a "junior partner" in the conversion from direct to indirect imperialist domination of the semicolonial countries. It has contributed to the continued maintenance of bourgeois order. In exchange it has demanded and partially obtained increased participation in the international share-out of surplus value and in the exploitation of its own working class. It can certainly put pressure on the imperialist powers, but it also uses the anti-imperialist demagoguery that goes with it to hold back and slow up the process of the winning of proletarian class independence. The domination and exploitation of the masses by the bourgeoisies is tied to the perpetuation of the indirect reign and the exploitation of imperialism. The formation of OPEC is the most emphatic example of the process of limited redistribution of surplus value on a world scale.

Thus many dependant bourgeoisies dispose of political and repressive reserves and resources—linked to imperialism—which are stronger than the old oligarchies and able to confront and deal the masses very hard blows.

The grouping of "nonaligned" governments expresses both the attempt of some neocolonial bourgeoisies and petty-bourgeoisies to cash in on the anti-imperialist radicalization of the masses of their countries in face of imperialism and their design to channel the latter along lines that do not threaten their power. The participation of the governments of workers states in these "nonaligned" conferences does not flow from the same motivation. Its tactical usefulness must be judged in function of the line that they defend there and of a refusal to give any sort of seal of approval to neocolonial regimes and even less to bloody dictators who are only the agents of imperialism in their countries. This participation of the governments of workers states alongside bourgeois governments cannot be a substitute for a true anti-imperialist united front.

B. Linked with the progression of industrialization and the penetration of capitalism in the countryside, the urban and rural proletariat has emerged in most of these countries as the main social force in the population.

From that moment on, the unification and organization of this force are the preconditions for victory of the socialist revolution. Until the proletariat has won political independence, and on the basis of that has a possibility of hegemonizing its allies (plebian masses, pauperized urban petty-bourgeoisie, students, peasants, etc.), the capacity of the national bourgeoisies and imperialism to inflict severe setbacks on the masses will not be put into question. A situation of political subordination of the proletariat to the "national bourgeoisie" and its indirect petty-bourgeois representatives creates an insurmountable obstacle in the way of revolutionary victory. It condemns the revolutionary upsurge to a halt and then to a defeat. That was verified in Uruguay, Bolivia, and Indonesia for example and in Chile under the particular form of the reformist leadership's subordination of the development of the self-organization and self-defense of the masses to respect for the institutions of the bourgeois state. The battle for political independence of the proletariat must therefore be articulated with anti-imperialist, antidictatorial, and national-democratic tasks which retain all their relevance in these countries and which has even greater importance today given the present aggressiveness of imperialism.

The reinforcing of the bourgeoisie and the central place acquired by the proletariat in all the most advanced semicolonial countries therefore entails the necessity of a more elaborated strategy, different from the one that had been applied in the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban, or Nicaraguan revolutions and from the start a leadership basing itself on a revolutionary Marxist program.

12. The overthrow of capitalism in a series of backward countries,

in the absence of a mass revolutionary party, is explained by a particular combination of factors linked to the extreme decomposition of the ruling classes and their state. The absence of a basis for the development of the petty-bourgeoisie pushes its best elements, in particular the intelligentsia, to look for an alliance with the proletariat or to unite with it more often than not in the framework of an organization. In this context, the absence or the limits of the organization and self-organization of the proletariat does not constitute in itself an obstacle as absolute as in the advanced countries.

Nevertheless it is decisive that there are political forces that push forward mass mobilizations, lead them and respond positively to their pressure. These forces act on the basis of the experiences accumulated by their cadre in the course of struggles and as a function of their education within a perspective of taking power. At a given moment this is translated into the decision to go to the finish in the destruction of the bourgeois state. Finally the pre-existence of other workers states permits the survival of these new states after the revolution when they are faced with military threats and blockades from imperialism.

The Nicaraguan revolution confirms once again this established fact. The advanced decomposition of the Somoza dictatorship and the fracturing of the bourgeoisie, the momentary paralysis of American imperialism, and the secondary role of the process of mobilization and organization of a very small industrial proletariat in the revolutionary upsurge, gives the objective framework. To complete this, we must take into account: the concrete references to the Cuban experience (the "Cuban model") and the close links between the FSLN and the Castroist leadership; the unification of the FSLN with the enrichment and realignments that resulted in terms of a perspective which aimed to affirm a clear hegemony in the system of alliances with the "opposition bourgeoisie," while limiting their effective implementation; and the extraordinary insurrectionary mobilization of the masses which resulted in the complete smashing of Somoza's army.

The course of the revolution in Nicaragua confirms in turn, the first thesis of the theory of permanent revolution: the full realization of the anti-imperialist and national-democratic tasks of the revolution in the semicolonial countries necessitates the destruction of the bosses' state and the setting up of a dictatorship of the proletariat based on the plebian masses of the towns and countryside and the poor peasants.

All the developments of the revolution in Nicaragua, particularly in the context of the present big conflicts in Central America, indicate the following:

- That the elements of a very weak bourgeoisie who were constrained to accept a temporary collaboration with the FSLN, finish up by passing, one after another, over to the counterrevolutionary camp; they hold on, to the end, to their private property and try and integrate the Nicaragua economy into the world market;
- That the accomplishment of anti-imperialist and radical democratic tasks can only suffer from any brake put on the activity of the masses trying to improve their situation; the masses through their initiatives and force gained in the revolution put into question capitalist property and authority in the private sector;
- That the conclusion of these tasks, among others the radical agrarian reforms, necessitates the definitive destruction of the bourgeois state, a break with the world market and the profound transformation of social relations—that is the passing over into a socialist revolution;
- That the political-military confrontation with imperialism means that the remainder of the bourgeoisie plays the objective role of "fifth column" which is violently combated by the masses who are animated with deep anti-imperialist feelings.

It is in relation to this type of problem that it is necessary to judge the question of alliances or temporary convergences with sectors of the "opposition bourgeoisie," and therefore the real and effective content of class political independence remains the necessary condition for making the revolution.

In a backward country with a dictatorial regime like Nicaragua, if the passing over of the revolution into the socialist revolution is the condition of definitive victory, it does not flow from that that the starting of the revolution implies the rejection of any tactical agreement between bourgeois sectors and proletarian forces around concrete democratic de-



mands and real actions. Afterwards, to the extent that between bourgeois forces and proletarian forces there is a radical opposition of interests, expressed by diametrically opposed strategies, the decisive question is to know:

- if, in the name of agreements or temporary convergences with a bourgeois sector, a brake is put on the mass mobilizations and on their organizations (in this case the Civil Defense Committee [CDC], the militia, then the Rural Workers Association [ATC], the Sandinista Workers Federation [CST]-Nicaraguan Trade-Union Coordinating Committee [CSN], the Sandinista Defense Committees [CDS], and the Sandinista People's Militias [MPS] . . . );

- if the consistent defense of the overall interests of the workers and peasants is abandoned in the name of the prior realization of anti-imperialist objectives;

- if the mistrust of the masses towards the capitalists is, or is not, developed on every concrete occasion and if therefore the showdown with the bourgeoisie is prepared.

Despite vacillations and formulations that were often confused, the FSLN has responded generally positively to these questions posed by the conquest of the class political independence of the masses and the necessary leap forward of the revolution. It has known how to recognize the demands and the pressure of the masses, it has developed their mobilizations.

Revolutionary Marxists must energetically and unreservedly support all the concrete progress of the revolution. They must recognize the real content of the political line and evolution of a revolutionary leadership

like that of the FSLN as well as the revolutionary organizations grouped in the FMLN. But in the same way, it is of decisive importance that they defend all of their programmatic positions, without concessions to confused theories or formulations like those of the "intermediary state between a workers state and a bourgeois state" or of a nonsocialist, non-capitalist "mixed economy" and this is also for a practical reason.

The more a semicolonial country has become industrialized the more there will be a direct and sharp antagonism between the whole of the so-called national bourgeoisie and the exploited. Less conceivable also are temporary, tactical agreements between a faction of the bourgeoisie or its representatives which do not involve a self-limitation of specifically proletarian demands and mobilizations and which do not place an obstacle in the path of the conquest of political independence for the proletariat. Any bourgeoisie which has much larger reserves and a larger base and historical experience and whose capacity for political maneuver is broader than that of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, would not have linked its fate so long with a dictatorship like that of the Somoza family, or at least, would have imposed political changes before the irreversible degradation of the situation and consequently would not have been constrained to accept the compromises such as those accepted by the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie since July 1979.

Any confusion that is maintained on these questions, any abusive generalization of a specific tactic whose validity is tied up with a very specific combination of objective elements, risks to have disastrous consequences for the conduct of revolutionary struggle in all the main semicolonial countries.

### III. The working class upsurge in Poland and the crisis in the bureaucratized workers states

13. In the European bureaucratized workers states, the contradiction is becoming explosive between the massive industrialization, the concentration and growing qualification of the labor force on the one hand, and bureaucratic management on the other. This bureaucratic management is increasingly revealed as an obstacle to economic growth, disorganizes production and planning and is only maintained thanks to a police-state regime of repression and oppression.

Furthermore, the acceleration of the arms race submits the Soviet bureaucracy to a rude test. It has only succeeded in reducing the gap which separates it from the imperialist armed forces, in terms of weapons, at the price of military expenditure being a disproportionate part of spending in relation to Soviet economic resources as a whole. Given the continued slowing up of economic growth, a new acceleration of the arms race would mean a very heavy burden for the Soviet economy and would oblige the Kremlin and its acolytes to put even more of a brake on its policy of gradual improvement of the masses' living standards, which constitutes the best shock absorber for holding back the resurgence of independent activity and politicization of the proletariat.

The discontent that is appearing, due among other things to the difficulties of food supplies, not only in Eastern Europe but in the USSR itself, can result in serious political crises, especially after the massive eruption of the Polish workers.

14. This mobilization of the Polish workers and their organization into a trade union independent of the bureaucratic state apparatus constitutes the major milestone and the most advanced experience of the struggle for the political revolution. The social reinforcement of the proletariat, the accumulation of experiences of confrontation, the strong sentiments of national resistance against the Kremlin's oppressive policies as well as the depth of the economic crisis with its consequences inside the bureaucracy, have fundamentally spurred on this action.

Apart from the Soviet Union, Poland is the bureaucratized workers state which has gone through the most important, generalized process of industrialization following an overthrow of capitalism. This process was even more accelerated in the course of the last ten years, after Gierek opted for economic expansion at all costs and the development of prod-

uction of industrial consumer goods, in order to try and calm the popular discontent expressed in the 1970 strikes. The result of this was a rapid growth of a young, concentrated, and rebellious working class.

This working class has retained the memory and the heritage of the struggles in 1970, 1976, and partially of 1956, out of which came nuclei of militants battle-hardened by the test of bureaucratic repression. These were sometimes the initiators of strike committees, interfactory committees and a skeleton network of organization for the strike during the summer of 1980. Starting from the Baltic ports, the movement of self-organization of the Polish proletariat then spread in a dynamic which combined an extraordinary spontaneous impetus with the appearance of workplace leaders linked in part to the conscious action of semilegal opposition bodies which had been set up after the 1976 strikes (Committee for Social Self-Defense [KOR], *Robotnik*).

It was finally the depth of the economic, social, cultural, and moral crisis which nourished the power of the mass movement to the extent of representing a direct political threat to the bureaucratic dictatorship. The political authority of the bureaucracy and all its factions found itself annihilated by the bankruptcy of the economic policy of the Gierek regime, by the crisis of the food supplies, by the crisis in the social services and housing, and by the enormity of corruption and injustice. Contrary to what happened in Poland even in 1956 and 1970 or in Hungary in 1956 or during the Prague Spring, today no "providential" figure issued from the ranks of the bureaucracy incarnates the hopes of the Polish masses. They count today above all on their own initiatives and forces, which have already permitted it to seize important victories.

15. From the beginning the mobilization of the Polish proletariat combined economic and political demands. From the start of the strikes in July and August, the demands defined by the strikers included eminently political democratic demands: a trade union independent of the state, the right to strike, a trade-union press free of censorship, free expression for all, freedom of religion, access to the mass media for the trade unions, liberation of political prisoners and an inquest into the bloody repression of 1970 . . . All this was extracted by the Gdansk accords (and also of Szczecin, Katowice) and defended vigilantly since,



by new actions against a bureaucracy which jibs at honoring its commitments.

Since these agreements, other political demands have been put forward by the workers, in particular, the recognition of Rural Solidarity, the recognition of independent student unions, a radical reduction of the repressive forces' powers and means of action and the arraignment and purge of the most corrupt and incompetent leaders from the PUWP and the state at a local and regional level.

The Catholic hierarchy makes use of its prestige in the eyes of the masses, won by the fact that it was the only form of organization considered by the masses as independent of the Stalinist bureaucracy from 1956 on—which permitted it to look after the victims of the repression of 1970 and 1976 with an aim of moderating and stemming the tide of workers struggles. Despite this objective linking up of all the conservative forces of the country, there is an incompatibility between the bureaucracy's power and the development of truly independent organizations of the proletariat.

Due to the reality of existing social relations in the bureaucratized workers states, the nationalization of the means of production and the centralized planned economy, the defense of the immediate interests of the working masses inevitably ends up in a challenge to the choices, the priorities of socioeconomic management and therefore of the bureaucracy's power. The local and regional coordination of the trade unions independent of the bureaucratic state already contains within itself the embryo of a counter power of the workers in face of the bureaucracy—that is why Solidarity was indeed, from the start, more than just a simple trade union. Today, it objectively functions more and more, at least on a local and regional level, as an organ of dual power, which implies that the political antibureaucratic revolution has in fact already begun in Poland.

The overall relationship of forces remains favorable to the workers and unfavorable to the bureaucracy, as long as the alliance between the workers and the small peasants is consolidated. The PUWP is more and more shaky, cut across by the proletarian upsurge and marked by the appearance of militant and radical opposition groupings. Its apparatus remains divided faced with the choices it has to take. The bureaucracy is obliged to consequently maneuver in order to win time and to blunt workers militancy. Nevertheless it is going onto the offensive. It tries to divide the movement; it is concentrating its attacks and the beginning of its repression on the most radical sectors of Solidarity. It simultaneously tries to neutralize a part of the Solidarity apparatus. Already it is banking for all it is worth on the economic disorganization, the increasing difficulties of supplies, indeed, the fear of famine and unemployment and the fear (not ungrounded) of a military intervention from the Kremlin. But it does not have the force, on its own, to dam up the formidable dynamic of combativity and radicalization of the Polish masses, who, in many towns and regions are going further than leaders who hold to a strategy of reforming the bureaucratic regime. The confrontation is not between the Polish bureaucracy alone and the Polish proletariat. Strategically it is between the Polish proletariat and its allies on the one side and the Soviet bureaucracy and its agents on the other. It is this fundamental conflict which makes the test of strength inevitable.

**16.** This is even more the case given the example of the Polish proletariat's experience which pose the Soviet bureaucracy and those of the other "People's Democracies" with the real danger that it will become contagious. The objective causes at the origin of the Polish crisis exist fundamentally in all the European workers states. However the maturing of a workers vanguard and its fusion with a political opposition capable of intervening on a mass scale is still lacking.

Although filtered and deformed, the information on the Polish events which ends up circulating could nevertheless, in the long term, stimulate the emergence of a political opposition linked to the working class and inspire movements in favor of independent trade-union organization. The Kremlin is thus confronted with a terrible dilemma.

If it leaves the Polish bureaucracy time to maneuver, it runs the risk of seeing the movement of workers extend and consolidate itself. If it decides to intervene militarily, it runs the risk of finding itself faced with a mass, *proletarian and nationalist* resistance which would have deep

roots in the workplaces and the countryside. A confrontation of this unprecedented breadth would have inevitable repercussions in all the "People's Democracies" and in the USSR itself.

The risk is equal to the stake involved. If the Soviet bureaucracy is convinced that the crisis of the Polish party is too deep, that the division in the apparatus is too strong and that consequently the possibility of using internal repressive forces is made difficult and the chances of the PUWP channelling and regaining control of the mass movement are severely reduced, then military intervention from the Kremlin will be its last resort.

After East Berlin, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, the Polish experience confirms the extreme social fragility of the bureaucracy, but also its capacity of maneuver. It illustrates the revolutionary proletarian content of democratic and national demands in the bureaucratized workers states. It proves that under the staggering blows of the mass mobilization, oppositions spring up from the base inside the party, and the party is susceptible to division and splits. But its power remains in the last instance guaranteed by the national repressive bodies (and if necessary by those of the Warsaw Pact), which cannot be democratized or reformed. They must be overthrown.

This experience also puts the spotlight on the complexity of the tasks of the political revolution and the high level of consciousness necessary to carry them out well. The struggle for the political revolution inevitably means simultaneously coming up against the central problems of: the transitional economy and democratic planning; workers control and self-management; political institutions and socialist democracy and finally the necessity for the international extension of the revolution. The dynamic of the political revolution is indeed directly opposed to all theories of the building of socialism in one country. It is necessarily inscribed within an international strategy.

**17.** After the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao, the Chinese bureaucracy has not succeeded in unifying itself around a new leadership, nor in smothering all autonomous activity of the mass movement. The economic and political concessions given to the masses by the Deng Xiaoping leadership team has only given it a brief respite. The dissatisfaction will increase as long as the new economic policy aggravates social inequality, the high cost of living, unemployment and develops bureaucratic privileges while the needs of the people are far from being satisfied.

Since the beginning of the 1970s the Chinese bureaucracy under the pressure of Zhou Enlai modified the policy of "work investment," "count on our own resources," and threw itself into the operation of reinserting the Chinese economy into the world market to be able to rapidly finish a policy of industrialization based on the "four modernizations."

After some initial successes, this policy came up against growing contradictions: rapid growth of debts to foreign creditors, the difficulty of using modern technology effectively, growing disequilibrium between industry and agriculture and between different industrial branches, a budget deficit feeding an increasingly serious inflation, etc. The result of all that is a shattering revision of all the grandiose plans, a policy of restrictions and austerity, which took on a big dimension towards the end of 1980 and fuels the discontent of the masses.

The bureaucracy is increasingly divided in front of these economic difficulties, the loss of prestige of the party and of all of its factions in the eyes of the masses and the rise of dispute and contestation. A current of middle cadres from the army and the party has continued to resist de-Maoization. Deng and his group had tried to blame the transitional team of Hua Kuofeng for all the troubles. New regroupments at the head of the party are probable. They are favored by the oscillating attitude of the Deng team, faced with the pressure of the masses: recognition then suppression of the "four liberties;" toleration then suppression of the democracy movement; recognition of the rights of the workers at the workplace level and then a vigorous taking in hand by the party.

The democratic opening has therefore only lasted a springtime. But the working class and the masses are not so atomized and depoliticized as they are in the USSR. Having gone through quite recent experiences of mobilization (peasants, students, young unemployed, etc.) they re-



Ernest Harsch/IP

June 28, 1981 demonstration in Poznan, Poland.

main active, capable of taking the initiative of a much greater challenge of bureaucratic power.

For the moment, and in spite of the repression, the fermentation of the "democracy movement" is continuing and becoming extended, including within the working class under the form of local circles and networks and even strike movements. A national association of twenty-one "nonofficial" journals was set up during the second half of 1980. The activity of this opposition is marked by a deep mistrust of all factions of the bureaucracy and by the challenge of the "leading role" of the party—identified with the role of the bureaucracy. The latter has furthermore stepped up again the repression against the opposition.

A prolonged period of stability, interbureaucratic conflicts and mass activity offers the possibility of a maturing of the antibureaucratic opposition.

**18.** The tensions between the bureaucratized workers states, with the Sino-Vietnamese crisis, have reached an unprecedented violence. Yugoslavia, after the Stalin-Tito split had to stand up to very severe measures of boycott from the Soviet bureaucracy. The Sino-Soviet rupture was accompanied by very strong military pressure by Moscow against China and a certain number of limited confrontations. But the Chinese-Indochinese conflict this time ended up with quite extensive military conflicts and a latent state of war whose consequences are disastrous for the countries concerned, the revolutionary movement in Southeast Asia and the world workers movement.

The Chinese bureaucracy turned against Vietnam for similar reasons to those which led the Soviet bureaucracy to oppose Peking in the 1950s and 1960s: it wanted to isolate a new workers state because it wasn't able to control its leadership, in order to block the dynamic of the extension of revolutionary struggles in the region, to ensure a political monolithism that is indispensable for the bureaucracy to be free to carry out its own diplomacy in the framework of "peaceful coexistence" agreements with imperialism and to avoid a reinforcement of Soviet influence in Southeast Asia. To do this, the Chinese bureaucracy has used the same

methods against Vietnam as those that the Kremlin used against China: economic sabotage, diplomatic isolation, military pressures, political excommunication, intervention in relation to national minorities. . . .

What is more, the Chinese bureaucracy played on the specific tensions of the Indochinese revolution, in particular consolidating the Khmer Rouge regime, despite its criminal policies, and armed it against Vietnam. This counterrevolutionary policy is combined with the maintenance of the economic and diplomatic blockade set up by American imperialism and the pressures exercised through ASEAN and particularly by Thailand.

Five years after the victory, keeping the country on a war footing has largely contributed to the failure of the economic development plan in Vietnam, the worsening of bureaucratization and the alienation of a part of the Southern population from the regime, which was also determined by the bureaucratic methods and choices of the leadership.

In Cambodia in 1980 the economic and social situation of the masses has improved. There has not been the constitution of a national opposition to the presence of the Vietnamese armed forces. With the aid of China and the U.S. the Khmer Rouge, the Khmers Serei and Serilza, and the Sihanouk elements are trying to set up a common military front which is at present isolated from the broad masses.

The Heng Samrin regime is made up of various currents and forces who participated in the liberation struggles against French colonialism and American imperialism. But due to the fact of its greatest weakness, the conditions of its formation, and the state of the country it remains essentially dependent on Vietnam and the massive presence of the Vietnamese armed forces. This situation could tomorrow make the national question an explosive problem. That is why we are in favor of the organization and the arming of the Cambodian masses, the retreat of the Vietnamese forces and the constitution of a really independent regime, without which the effective right to self-determination cannot be guaranteed and the national question resolved. It is only in this way that the unity of the three Indochinese revolutions—which is indispensable faced with the counterrevolutionary pressures and the tasks of reconstruction—can



be preserved in a lasting way, within the respect of the national rights of each people—including the Cambodian people.

In Laos, by far the most vulnerable workers state economically, the periodically organized blockade set up at the Thai border and the organization by Peking and Bangkok of new guerrillas, put the possibilities of development there too in jeopardy.

Indochina remains the theater of national and social conflicts, of international interbureaucratic conflicts between the Chinese and Soviet regimes and of a confrontation between revolution and imperialist-inspired counterrevolution which uses the neocolonial regimes of the region. Washington maintains its diplomatic, economic, and military pressure through Thailand. Peking for its part looks after the training of guerrillas, encourages the coordination of military activities in the three Indochinese countries and continues its own pressure on the frontiers. The immediate interest of the masses requires the putting into practice of a resolutely internationalist political line which would help in particular the reinforcing of the anti-imperialist struggles in the whole region. It also requires international solidarity in face of the counterrevolutionary operations of imperialism, the neocolonial regimes of the area and the Chinese bureaucracy.

19. The crisis of Stalinism in the semicolonial countries is fueled by the repercussions inside the CPs of the rise of the revolution in Central

#### IV. The crisis in the imperialist countries

20. The nature of the period opened in 1968 was expressed most sharply with the setting off of prerevolutionary crises in various countries of capitalist Europe: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

In the majority of European countries, which experienced relatively full employment up to the recession of 1974-75, an exceptional convergence of factors was produced: a qualitative rise of workers struggles which had a tendency to become generalized; the reinforcement of workers organization on a general level and in the workplaces; the emergence of a layer of advanced workers which reinforced itself and became transformed in the course of the struggles and contested in practice the orientation of the reformist leaderships; mobilizations with an anti-capitalist tendency of social layers activated by the organized working class (school/university youth, new salaried layers, women's liberation movement). A crisis of all social relations was affecting bourgeois society.

But even the strongest mobilizations of the proletariat were not able to go beyond a certain threshold because of the policy and influence of the bureaucratic apparatus, the absence of a revolutionary leadership having authority in significant sectors of the masses, and the capacity of maneuvers of the bourgeoisies who drew on their accumulated reserves. The strongest workers upsurges were thus not able to result in real situations of dual power capable of rapidly bringing to maturity the class consciousness of the proletariat, of qualitatively reinforcing the revolutionary party and preparing a decisive confrontation with the bourgeois state.

The experience of the Portuguese revolution illustrates this. This state apparatus was severely shaken. The movement towards the self-organization of the masses had made considerable progress in 1975, although it still wasn't centralized. But the democratic counterrevolution could base itself on social democracy's vigorous defense of bourgeois parliamentary institutions and on the attraction of these institutions for the masses, after a long period of dictatorship, given the absence of a sufficiently broad experience of prolonged and centralized self-organization and a perspective of class independence on a governmental level. The policy of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) who supported the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), packed the state apparatus and divided the mass movement, favored the bourgeois and social-democratic counteroffensive.

That is the type of resources of the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries, even "poor" ones, can count on to defend its power. Such obstacles cannot be swept away without having previously forged a revolutionary Marxist leadership over a long period.

America and in Poland, by the dead end of gradualist solutions, an extremely sharp economic crisis as well as by the worsening of the Sino-Soviet conflict and its consequences in East and Southeast Asia.

While the revolutionary developments and the role played by the FSLN and the Castroist leadership spark off strategic debates in the CPs of Latin America, the violence of the Chinese-Vietnamese conflict and the change in the attitude of Peking in relation to the reactionary governments of ASEAN encourages formerly Maoist CPs of the region to take their distances from the present line of the Chinese CP, if not from Maoism itself.

This concerns notably the communist movements of Thailand and the Philippines which situate themselves within the Maoist tradition and have a long tradition of armed revolutionary struggle. On the national level they maintain up to a certain point an anti-imperialist line independent of the Chinese bureaucracy. It is in this context that a debate on perspectives has begun in their ranks. This can be combined with the debate developing around the present day problems of the class struggle on the national and regional levels. Such a process of discussion could contribute to the political reorientation and programmatic readjustment of these movements, especially if it is stimulated by reinforced solidarity from the international workers movement and above all from its vanguard.

21. From 1976-77 the conjunctural situation of the class struggle began to be modified in capitalist Europe and in Japan. The situation in the U.S. is different to the extent that the preceding phase was not characterized by an upsurge of the workers struggles or of the workers movement.

The bourgeoisie has taken advantage of the dead-end situation created by the class collaboration orientation of the reformists. It has made a series of gains on the *political level*. It uses them to strike blows against the economic strength of the working class.

Its political successes can be summarized as follows: the stopping of the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal in November 1975 and then the later electoral victories of the Democratic Alliance; the maintenance of Christian Democracy in power in Italy despite the working-class struggles and the sharp crisis of the regime; the installation in Spain of a parliamentary monarchy able to count on the continuity of the coercive apparatus inherited from Francoism whose practical significance was illustrated in particular by the attempted coup d'état in February 1981; by the survival up to 1981 of the Giscard regime assured by the demobilization and then the division fomented by the CP and also the SP in 1977; and by the coming to power of the Conservatives in Britain in 1979.

In this context, the rise in unemployment, following on from the generalized recession of 1974-75, has facilitated the launching of austerity policies. These policies, on more than one occasion, are carried out directly by the reformist leaderships (Britain, West Germany, Portugal, Scandinavia, and Belgium), or accepted through explicit agreement with the bourgeoisie (Spain, Italy, and Japan) or de facto as a consequence of the demobilizing effects of the reformists' policies (France and Portugal). The offensive élan of the previous phase has been interrupted. The working class is in a corner fighting defensive struggles.

The source of this reversal is found not in a structural weakening of the working class and of the workers movement or in a brutal fall of combativity. It is essentially provoked by the policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the SP, the CP, and the trade unions. Their hold on the general political level remains such that it makes any short-term political outcome to the crisis of the capitalist regime difficult.

The acceptance by the reformist leaderships for three decades of the bourgeois myth of a capitalism capable of assuring full employment and a continual increase in living standards also contributed to the disorientation of workers confronted with the explosion of a prolonged crisis. The change in the economic conjuncture limits the effectiveness of the type of mobilizations which previously had permitted a fightback



Dorothy Bruck/Direct Action

Funeral of hunger striker Raymond McCreesh in Camlough, Northern Ireland, on May 23, 1981.

against inflation or against changes in the capitalist organization of labor.

22. The degree of organization of the working class in the majority of countries, its combativity and experience of struggle acquired in the past have however stimulated a strong resistance of the key sectors of the proletariat against the first wave of austerity. Generally, the spending power of the main sectors of the working masses has only been slightly affected. The attack has been made above all on employment, striking mainly against youth, women workers, and immigrants. Industrial sectors that are in structural crisis (textiles, steel) are experiencing a strong fall in the volume of employment. Nevertheless, this first phase of austerity policy has not brought, from the capitalist point of view, the hoped-for results.

A second wave of attacks started with the new recession of 1980. The restructuring and the bitter medicine meted out on employment are being extended towards most of the essential bastions of the industrial proletariat: cars, chemical and petrochemicals, heavy and electrical engineering. Not only do investments centered on the rationalization and growth of productivity eliminate jobs, but the bosses are trying to modify the training and organization of the labor force (subcontracting, temporary work, part-time work, modification of the legal status of workers, etc.). These attacks particularly affect women workers: limitation of the women's right to unemployment benefit, the putting into question of positive discrimination in hiring, limitation of social security aid for abortions and the restrictive interpretation of abortion laws.

The overall policy of capital and governments ends up by creating massive, long-term unemployment. The bosses are trying to use this to begin to dismantle the workers' instruments of defense in the factory, to weaken trade-union organization and to attack workers gains.

The handicaps of the first stage of the austerity policy still weigh on the working class: demobilization and divisive policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses; weakness of the political forces that have a real political alternative and are capable of unleashing the potential of the anticapitalist and antibureaucratic challenge of a significant fraction of advanced workers.

However the forces accumulated by the working class in the 1968-76 period, as well as the experiences on the trade-union and political level means that the capacity for overall resistance remains significant, although uneven according to country. These experiences, the debates which reflect them, combined with the processes of struggle of the workers movement favor the politicization and raising of class consciousness. The actions carried out under the impulsion of the more militant wings of the trade-union movement contribute to checking the pressures of capital.

The consciousness within an important layer of workers that the possibility of resisting and fighting back exists and that the crucial problem remains the organization and orientation of this fightback expresses, in its way, the nature of the relationship of forces that exists between capital and labor, which is at the origin of the perpetuation of the crisis of the bourgeoisie's political leadership. It is shown, according to the country, in the precariousness of the electoral and parliamentary positions of the bourgeoisie, in the conflicts within or between bourgeois parties and in the discredit attached to the political personnel of the state.

In Ireland, in the Six Counties of the North, despite the British military occupation an important resurgence of the mass movement and a politicization of it have taken place in the course of the last months.

In Spain where the trade-union movement was not able to sufficiently implant itself before the outbreak of the economic crisis, its forces have been seriously diminished. The offensive launched by the Spanish bourgeoisie after the February 1981 putsch, with the complicity of the PSOE (Socialist Party) and the PCE (Communist Party) leaderships, opens up a period where grave threats hang over the workers movement in the Spanish state.

It has only been in Turkey that the bourgeoisie, with the support of imperialist forces, has been able to inflict a serious defeat on the working class (massive repression, dismantling of the workers organizations)—whose force and degree of organization were, however, very much less than those in the main capitalist countries.

The election of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. expresses above all the advantage that a conservative wing of the bourgeoisie can take from the



discontent provoked by the rise of unemployment and inflation among very large sectors of the population under the Carter Democratic administration. The social force of the workers and the maintenance of the main trade-union organizations—despite their erosion over many years—remains a key element of the situation. In the medium term, a new series of attacks against employment and the wage workers' living standards could well result in a more profound crisis of the traditional system of two bourgeois parties. The immediate benefit to Reagan of the absence of a nonbourgeois political alternative could be precarious. The trade-union bureaucracy and the social-democratic current (which is being reinforced) as a priority, work inside the Democratic party. This choice could be undermined by the maintenance of a clearly proausterity orientation of the Democratic leadership. So the understanding inside the American workers movement of the need for class independence on the political level, for the formation of a labor party, could take a step forward.

The proletariat's capacity of resistance and the crisis of bourgeois leadership are the essential reasons why the period opened up in 1968 is not closed. Nowhere has the offensive of capital resulted in a stabilization in its favor on the social, political and economic levels. For several years many hard workers struggles will take place in the course of which an explosive potential has accumulated in the ranks of the proletariat. Different economic, social and political events could cause sharp turns in the conjuncture. A wave of defensive struggles could result in a working class counteroffensive. The need for, and project of an overall movement, a general strike against the bosses and the bourgeois state can rapidly come to the surface again.

**23.** The election of Mitterrand to the presidency of the Fifth Republic profoundly modifies the political situation in France and could have repercussions in a good part of capitalist Europe. Certainly the electoral progression of the workers organizations was not preceded or accompanied by a powerful wave of mass struggles.

But this electoral event has permitted the working class to successfully oppose the divisive maneuvers of the traditional apparatuses. The powerful dynamic for unity which results from this increases the confidence of workers in their own strength and facilitates more determined and effective opposition to redundancies, factory closures and unemployment. It places an urgent struggle for the thirty-five-hour working week, indeed a generalized counteroffensive against the austerity policy, on the agenda. The bourgeoisie, after being in momentary disarray, is looking to regroup its forces and to sabotage the Mitterrand experience because even relatively modest reforms are incompatible with its imperative need to restore the rate of profit in a period of deep economic crisis and intensified interimperialist competition.

The changed political situation will accelerate the process of recomposition of the workers movement, greatly stimulate a wave of trade unionization and enlarge the layer of new worker cadres, even if during the first period it will favor the SP. The ultrareformist class collaborationist line that the SP-led government will follow can only progressively alienate workers, including the layers newly organized as a result of the Mitterrand experience.

**24.** A crisis of strategy is affecting the reformist parties to different degrees. They are caught up in the following contradiction: the urgency and brutality of the austerity measures called for and imposed by the bourgeoisie on the one hand and the resistance of the working class and the existence of a layer of advanced workers conscious of the necessity and possibility of a fightback on the other.

The bourgeois austerity offensive highlights in the eyes of many workers the reformists' inconsistency and lack of concrete perspectives. The most important gains of the workers are being challenged (jobs, indexing of salaries, social security); some of the key sectors (auto, petrochemicals, electrical engineering) are being hit with massive redundancies; there are fewer and fewer possibilities for the reformist apparatuses to reinforce their positions inside the bourgeois institutions or in the state owned sector of the economy (denationalizations, budget limitations with effects on municipal and regional structures, etc.). The compliance by the majority of the trade-union leaderships with the capitalist

imperative to increase productivity, linked to giving up the fight for a drastic reduction in working hours, leads not only to an increase in unemployment, but to a deterioration of working conditions.

"Accepting sacrifices" results in taking a step down the road of restoring capitalist profitability and politically strengthens the bourgeoisie. Several years of "social contracts" or "pacts" with the latter has shown more clearly the impossibility of intermediary solutions through a negotiation of austerity. The workers organizations pay a price for such a political line also on the electoral level.

In such a conjuncture, the link which is established between immediate demands and overall political problems is much closer. Thus, austerity policy and "remilitarization" go hand in hand. That means an overall response is necessary, combining slogans against arms spending and imperialist unemployment. From the start, the questions and critical reflections of advanced workers and of party and trade-union militants carry over to questions of general political orientation. The channel for the expression of these criticisms can be the trade union or the party, or both at the same time. Two characteristics mark this process of differentiation. The first is that opposition takes shape not only on the periphery of the workers organizations but in the very heart of the industrial proletariat and even affects the apparatuses of the parties and trade unions. Secondly the critiques and questions do not bear only on the formulation of immediate demands—which can be a starting point—but on the conduct of struggles and the definition of an overall political orientation.

These differentiations are still at the *initial stage*. The breadth and rhythm of their development depends on a series of elements: the accumulation, over a long period, of a diffuse discontent which is reflected in the activity of a large fraction of worker cadres; the weight and political maturity of a workers vanguard which not only leads struggles, but leads opposition battles in the trade unions; conflicts between factions of the trade-union apparatus and the central leaderships of the trade unions and parties; and the revolutionaries' capacity of initiative on the political and trade-union level.

The maturing of such critiques, whatever might be the form under which they are formulated leads some workers to pose themselves a central question: What alternative political instrument is needed to carry out a different political perspective? Now the weakness of the revolutionary organizations and their lack of credibility inspires much hesitation among these militants and often pushes them to look for alternative solutions inside the reformist parties themselves. The crisis of these parties is therefore only beginning. The process will be long and complex. Its articulation with struggles will be an important element in the maturing of political consciousness among a layer of workers.

The development of the tendency led by Benn in the Labour Party (accompanied by a split operation of the ultraright of Jenkins, Williams, etc.) expresses the most advanced point in the process of mass differentiation inside social democracy in capitalist Europe. Two phenomena stand out in this. In rallying to Benn and his program workers are looking for an alternative to respond to Thatcher's offensive and also to express their mistrust towards the Callaghan leadership which had made itself the guarantor of austerity. Furthermore Benn has broad support in the trade unions and no longer only in the "constituencies" (local LP branches).

Inside the CPs the general factors of the crisis of reformism are interlinked with the more specific ones of the crisis of Stalinism.

The CPs that have a mass base see their hegemony over the working class being contested. This challenge is seen on the trade-union level and can take various forms: opposition currents to the CP line in the trade unions they lead or competition from trade unions linked to the SPs—(French Democratic Confederation of Labor [CFDT] in competition with the General Confederation of Labor [CGT], the General Workers Union [UGT] of Spain in competition with the Workers Commission [CO], etc.). It appears, though in a more limited way, in elections. The stagnation of the CPs on this level stimulates in turn a crisis of overall political perspectives. This is articulated with difficulties inherent either in an austerity policy that is negotiated and which does not deliver the goods, given the drastic imperatives of capital or to a political line of division and fraudulent activism which refuses any outcome on the political level (French Communist Party [PCF]).

A few years after its proclamation, Eurocommunism has already found itself in an impasse. Indeed austerity and the blows struck against the workers movement have rapidly eaten away at the credibility of the Eurocommunist project which is only a rehash of classic social democratic gradualist and parliamentary themes. Centrifugal forces begin to take shape in these parties—particularly where the workers base exerts a strong pressure.

In Italy the leadership of the PCI is making many tactical turns and zig-zags, squeezed as it is between, on the one hand, a workers resistance which is stimulated by a vanguard situated to a large extent inside the party or under its influence and, on the other hand, the meager results of an "historic compromise" strategy which appears to have gone quite adrift.

In other cases (a faction of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia [PSUC], leadership of the PCF) the emphasis is once again placed on the reference to the USSR and its politics. This expresses the need to plug up the fractures enlarged by the competition of the SPs. Eurocommunist themes do not suffice to respond to the malaise at the base, nor respond to the SP. Therefore to ensure the coherence and identity of the party they have put two themes in the forefront again: the CP is the leading and unique party of the working class and it places itself in the "socialist camp."

This effort is however doomed to failure. On the one hand, because the shake up of the bureaucratic system of domination in the workers states makes any firmer realignment centered on the Soviet bureaucracy both precarious and explosive. On the other hand, because the persistence of the antibureaucratic dynamic in the ranks of the working class and the debates of the previous years on "existing socialism" had led many militants to challenge, at one and same time, the orientation of their leaderships, which remains substantially class collaborationist, and the internationalist line and internal politics of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Certainly, a part of the working class, independently of the specific interest of the leading factions of these three parties, can find in traditional references to the "socialist camp," a response to the malaise provoked by the tame, class collaborationist politics of these leaderships. The very conciliatory positions taken by the PCI and PCE leaderships towards imperialism also nourishes these type of reactions. Militants lacking a credible revolutionary alternative also express in this deformed way a criticism of the orientation followed by the leaderships confronted with austerity. In the last analysis it is this critique which explains the rejection by the working class base of the PSUC of the Carrillo line.

Inversely some sectors of these parties, often rooted in bourgeois state institutions and with little ties to the working class, propose to accentuate the process of social democratization in order to resolve the present difficulties.

The leaderships of the CPs continually chop and change their line. That worsens the centrifugal forces which exist within them and also shows the depth of a crisis which reaches the very heart of the CP's trade-union base and whose effects are only beginning.

The Polish workers are not only shaking up the Warsaw bureaucracy or those of the East European countries, they also put the CPs of capitalist Europe into difficulty.

The very nature of the workers upsurge in Poland and the worries that it is provoking in the imperialist camp is already unbalancing the attempts of the bureaucracies of some CPs to restore to a more central place the politics of the Kremlin and the "socialist camp" within the framework of their strategic references.

The triggering off of the process of political revolution in Poland begins to bring about a convergence in the minds of many militants between the criticisms of the class collaborationist orientation of the CP leaderships and doubts on the possibilities of the self-reform of the bureaucracy of the workers states—possibilities vaunted and defended with so much heat by the PCI and PCF. Thus the elements of a maturing of political consciousness from the standpoint of a revolutionary anti-capitalist and antibureaucratic strategy are accumulating.

25. After 1968 the appearance of "left tendencies" inside the mass organizations revealed the semispontaneous rise of the masses and the

attempt to try and channel this movement. The conjunctural modification in the class struggle has drawn out the intrinsic weaknesses of these tendencies inside the reformist apparatuses (Jones and Scanlon in Britain, the "trade-union left" in Italy, the CFDT sectors in France), or even the centrist organizations.

The prolonged economic crisis has quickly exposed the following: the limits of strictly economic mobilizations as well as the precariousness of such demands, even if radical, when centered only on the reorganization of labor relations inside the workplace; the obstacles that arise against the semispontaneous generalization of struggles and the need for an overall perspective in order to centralize them; and the necessity to link up unifying demands, class unity as workers organizations with the proposition of a governmental formula. "Left tendencies" as well as centrist organizations more or less all came unstuck on these particular questions.

Faced with capital's offensive practically all the centrist organizations showed themselves incapable of elaborating a coherent strategic alternative response to the policy of the bureaucratic leaderships, either proposing unity in order to collaborate, or stimulating the division of the movement to collaborate all the same. Their incapacity to put forward a tactic of united front and a strategy of class independence allowed the apparatuses to pay a limited price for their capitulation. On the other hand these centrist organizations disintegrated or dissolved themselves (Lotta Continua in Italy, PT in Spain, KPD in Germany, MES and PRP-BR in Portugal, etc.).

The adaptations of "left tendencies" to the politics of the reformist leaderships as well as the brutal weakening of the centrist organizations has repercussions on the differentiations inside the mass parties. In effect, in the formation of the different oppositions, today we see coming together workers looking for a more militant response to the austerity offensive as well as a significant layer of militants who are bringing to a head the willingness for a more radical change in the strategy and functioning of the reformist organizations. Their acceptance of united action on a political and especially trade-union level with centrist or revolutionary Marxist forces concretizes the degree of their political evolution. It indicates the possibility of future centrist tendencies, moving towards the left, inside the mass parties.

Thus, within the unfolding process of differentiation, we must be careful not to confuse the maturing of political class consciousness which is taking place inside the ranks of the militants and intermediary cadres of the reformist organizations with the project and political program of factions of the apparatuses which can take the leadership of these currents (relationship between the base and the leadership in the Benn current, in the PSUC, in the left trade-union opposition in Italy, in Belgium, etc.).

[To be continued in next issue]

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Chan Bu Han (right) and Abe Weisburd unfurl banner at socialist convention.

Charles Ostrofsky/Militant

## Socialist convention stresses solidarity with Indochina

By Steve Clark and Fred Feldman

Schools turned into torture chambers. Rows of houses demolished. Mass graves piled with skeletons.

These were some of the chilling scenes observed by hundreds of participants at the recent Socialist Workers Party convention during special showings of slides and films about Kampuchea under the regime of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge army.

The slides and films also told another story—the inspiring recovery of Kampuchea since the country was liberated by Vietnamese troops and Kampuchean insurgents. Cities returned to life; famine was overcome and agriculture restored; schools and hospitals were rebuilt; art and music were revived. The morale of the people and their confidence in the future has continued to recover.

All these are profound tributes to both the resiliency of the Kampuchean people and the revolutions of Indochina.

The slides and films were presented at the socialist convention by Chan Bun Han and Abe Weisburd.

Chan Bun Han, a thirty-three-year-old native Kampuchean, came to the United States in the early 1970s to complete his studies. He is a supporter of the New York-based Committee in Solidarity with Viet Nam, Kampuchea, and Laos. He recently returned from a two-month visit to his homeland, where he found that more than sixty of his relatives—including his parents and all his brothers and sisters—had vanished during Pol Pot's reign.

Abe Weisburd, a leader of the movement against the Vietnam War, founded the solidar-

ity committee in 1979.

In addition to showing the films and slide show, Chan gave greetings to the convention and to a rally in support of the Socialist Workers Party suit against government spying. He and Weisburd held many informal discussions with convention participants.

### Greetings to convention

Chan's greetings sparked one of the convention's high points of enthusiasm. Met by a standing ovation, he pointed out that Kampuchea's struggle for survival, independence, and development was not over.

"There's still a group of hostile people trying to impose their will on the Kampuchean people," Chan told the convention in his greetings. "They want to reverse the just revolutionary struggle and the victory of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos.

"Since he was thrown out of power more than two years ago, Pol Pot and his gang of murderers have been kept alive by the U.S. and Chinese governments. In February 1979 China openly attacked Vietnam on its northern border with over half a million troops, but they were defeated and thrown back into China.

"We clearly understand the difference between the U.S. government and the U.S. people," Chan continued. "Our just struggle was supported by many antiwar activists in the 1960s and 1970s and our victories are your victories."

### Denounces cutbacks

"We understand that to carry out its aggression all over the world, the U.S. has put an enormous amount into the production of arms

and ammunition. And the U.S. people are also hurt by this. There are a lot of cutbacks all over your country."

Chan told convention delegates, "It is an experience to see your work in building a democratic revolutionary party in this country and your solidarity with just struggles around the world."

He appealed to the convention to continue this solidarity "so that we can defend our revolutionary victory from the aggressors and move forward to build our country.

"We hope that many friends and comrades will help carry out this work here so that the American people can understand the just struggle of our people to build socialism."

Following Chan's statement, Weisburd was introduced to the convention. To a lengthy standing ovation, he and Chan unfurled a banner in the Khmer language calling for support to the People's Republic of Kampuchea—the regime established by the victory over Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge army.

The convention voted unanimously to issue a statement directed against the U.S. government's continuing war campaign against Indochina. The statement said in part:

"The more than 1,300 delegates and observers at the national convention of the SWP demand that the U.S. government drop its continuing war against the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea.

"We demand that the U.S. government fulfill its obligations under the Paris Peace Accords of 1973 to establish diplomatic and economic relations with Vietnam and fulfill its provisions for aid to reconstruct Vietnam."

### Lift embargo!

"We demand that the economic embargo against Vietnam and Kampuchea be lifted. Massive grain shipments must be sent to relieve food shortages.

"We demand an end to all support—overt and covert, economic, diplomatic and military—to the reactionary Khmer Rouge army of Pol Pot, as well as to other right-wing forces along the Kampuchean border.

"We demand that Washington end its arms shipments to the military dictatorship in Thailand, remove the Seventh Fleet from Southeast Asian waters, and dismantle its military base in the Philippines.

"We demand that the U.S. government apologize to the Laotian government and people for the recent invasions of Laotian territory, which Washington admits were organized by the CIA. The attacks on Laos show that Washington is seeking ways to escalate its military intervention in Indochina.

"We demand an end to all U.S. collusion with Peking against the peoples of Indochina.

"We demand U.S. recognition of the governments of Vietnam and the Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea.

"And we demand that the U.S. government, which brought so much death and destruction to Indochina, provide massive assistance to reconstruct these countries." □