
INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

combined
with **inprecor**

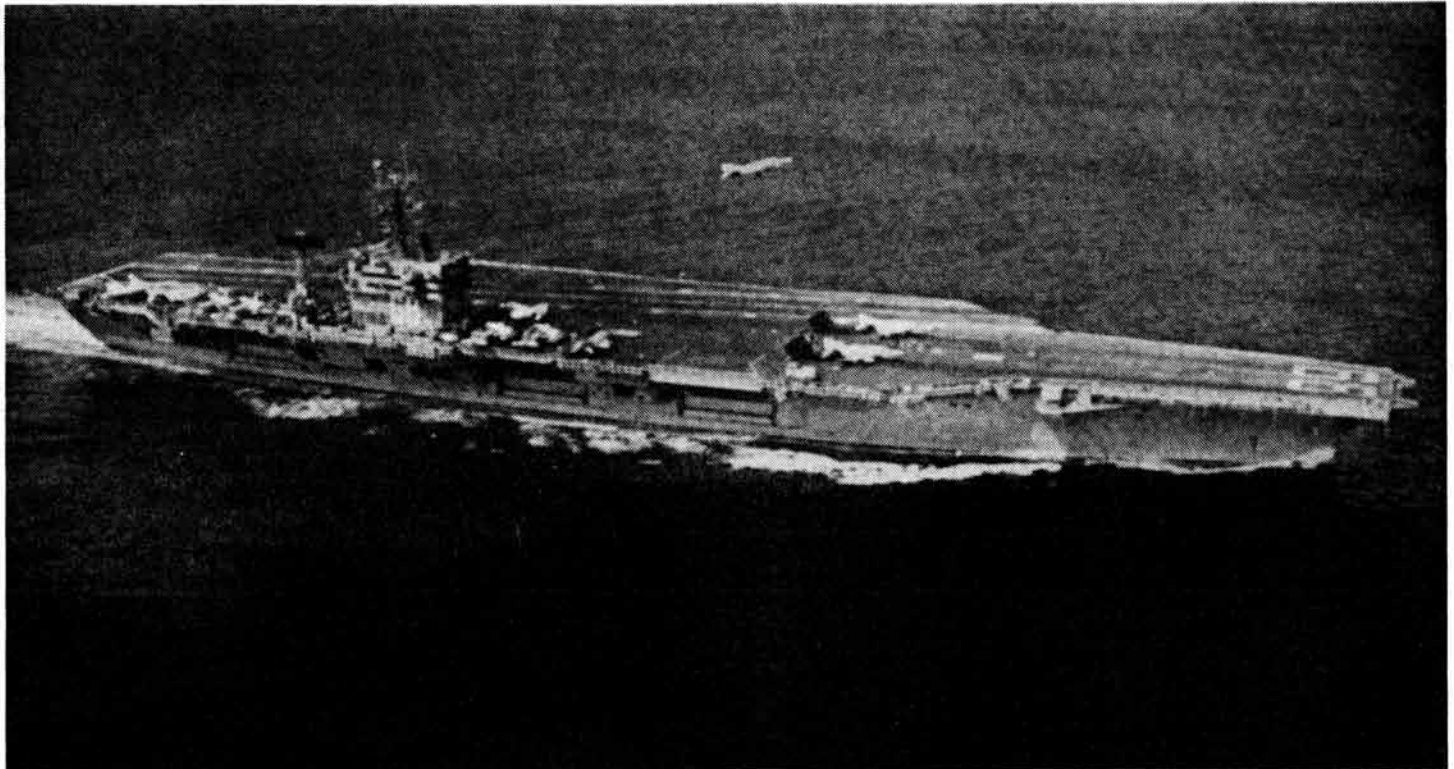
Vol. 19, No. 38

October 19, 1981

USA \$1.25 UK 50p

Washington Threatens Intervention in Libya

U.S. Military Mobilizes in Mideast in Wake of Sadat's Assassination



White House has ordered aircraft carrier *Nimitz* (above) and other warships to Egyptian coast.

Deepening Class Polarization in United States

What 'Solidarity Day' Showed

Hunger strike in Ireland ends

By Will Reissner

The seven-month long hunger strike by freedom fighters in British jails in Northern Ireland ended on October 3. Ten Irish republican prisoners—seven from the Irish Republican Army and three from the Irish National Liberation Army—starved to death during the protest. The oldest of them was only 30.

The five demands of the fasting prisoners were: the right to wear their own clothing, to associate freely in prison, to be exempt from prison work, to receive more mail and visits, and to get time off their sentences for good behavior.

The prisoners decided to terminate the fasts when it became clear that the families of all the remaining hunger strikers were determined to authorize British authorities to revive their relatives when they reached the critical point in their fasts.

The families of the hunger strikers had been subjected to intense pressure from the British authorities, who hinted that concessions would be made once the protest ended, from the Catholic Church, and from the Irish government.

Since the death of hunger striker Michael Devine on August 20, five prisoners had gone through the agony of hunger strikes only to be brought off the protest by their relatives.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was hailed by the British capitalist press for her intransigence regarding the five demands. Newspapers like the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times* of London warned the government against being too hasty on instituting any prison reforms.

But Thatcher has won a hollow victory. Although the hunger strikers did not win their five demands, their heroic action has inspired a whole new generation of fighters and raised the Irish freedom struggle to its highest point since the early 1920s.

The support shown for the prisoners by the people of Ireland, both North and South, has decisively refuted the British claim that the prisoners are simply "terrorists" without support in the population.

While on his fast, Bobby Sands was elected to the British parliament from the Northern Ireland district of Fermanagh/South Tyrone, in the process receiving ten thousand more votes than Margaret Thatcher had polled in her constituency.

Following Sands' death on May 5, the British parliament changed the eligibility rules to prevent the embarrassment of another victory for a hunger striker. But Provisional Sinn Féin member Owen Carron ran for the seat as a surrogate for the prisoners and he too was elected.

In the South of Ireland, two H-Block prisoners—Kieran Doherty and Patrick Agnew—won election to the Irish parliament. Doherty, who was on hunger strike when elected,

died August 2.

In elections to local councils in Northern Ireland, supporters of the prisoners won a number of seats, in the process defeating Gerry Fitt, one of the best known political figures in the north.

The hunger strikes focused world attention on the freedom struggle in Northern Ireland. Hundreds of thousands of people around the world demonstrated their support for the struggle of the prisoners in marches and rallies.

Within Ireland itself, a massive movement has been built on both sides of the British-imposed border dividing the island. The National H-Block/Armagh Committee now includes more than 400 local groups.

The hunger strike also began to break down the common approach previously taken by the British Labour Party and Thatcher's Conservative Party in regard to Ireland. The Labour Party conference held at the end of September came out for eventual unification of Ireland for the first time since the partition of the country, and it called for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, one of the key pieces of repressive legislation used by the government in Northern Ireland.

Although the British government rejected the five demands of the prisoners on the grounds that they are common criminals who do not merit "special status," it uses special methods to jail and convict them.

In 1971 the British began interning nationalists in Northern Ireland. More than 2,000 republicans were seized by the police and army and locked in concentration camps without being charged with any crime and without any

trial.

In 1972, the British implemented special Diplock Courts—named after Lord Diplock—to deal with nationalist prisoners. These Diplock Courts operate without juries, without the presumption of innocence, and with all factual questions decided by judges hostile to the oppressed Catholic population.

Using special rules regarding the admissibility of evidence, the Diplock Courts have achieved a conviction rate of 93 percent, most based solely on confessions beaten out of republican prisoners.

In fact, British interrogation methods in Northern Ireland were condemned by the European Commission on Human Rights and Amnesty International.

The hundreds of republicans convicted before 1976 were in fact granted special status that included the five demands of the hunger strike. And those still in jail have special status to this day.

But in that year the British authorities ended special status for new prisoners and insisted they wear prison uniforms and conform to regular prison regulations.

The first of the prisoners sentenced after the end of special status, Ciaran Nugent, refused to wear a prison uniform, wrapping his naked body instead in a blanket. Since then, more than 400 nationalist prisoners have gone on the blanket protest. Some have now been "on the blanket" for five years.

While on the blanket, the prisoners are denied visits, regular use of toilets, and are subjected to humiliation and physical abuse by the jailers.

It was the hardships and indignities of the blanket protest that led the prisoners to embark on a hunger strike to the death to win the five demands.

On October 27, 1980, male prisoners from the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison and female

Statement by hunger strikers

[The following statement was released October 3 by the H-Block prisoners announcing the end of the hunger strike.]

* * *

We reaffirm our opposition to the British Government's policy of criminalisation and recognise that their intransigence and the courageous sacrifices made by Bobby Sands, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreesh, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Tom McElwee, Micky Devine, have overturned the objective of that policy which was meant to force us into conformity and discredit our cause—Irish Freedom—through denigrating us as "criminals."

Far from discrediting our cause, British intransigence, which created the hunger strike, has given us international political recognition and has made the cause of Irish

freedom an international issue, has increased support at home and abroad for Irish resistance and has shown that the oppressed nationalist people and the political prisoners are one.

We extend our solidarity to the families of the dead hunger strikers and to all our families and friends. We especially thank the National H-Block/Armagh Committee and all support groups and urge them to continue their trojan work in support of our five demands.

Lastly, we reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of the five demands by whatever means we believe necessary and expedient. We rule nothing out. Under no circumstances are we going to devalue the memory of our dead comrades by submitting ourselves to a dehumanizing and degrading regime.

prisoners from Armagh jail launched a hunger strike. On December 18, 1980, British authorities delivered a thirty-four page document of concessions to the prisoners.

As a result, this first hunger strike ended without any deaths. But the British failed to implement the measures agreed to.

When it became obvious that the British had no intention of honoring their commitment, the hunger strike resumed on March 1, 1981, when Bobby Sands began his fast.

The hunger strike was, therefore, one aspect of the ongoing struggle for the five demands. That struggle continues despite the end of the hunger strike. Many of those coming off the hunger strike are facing decades of life on the blanket unless their demands are won.

Since the fasts ended the British government has announced some concessions to the prisoners. On October 6, the new British secretary for Northern Ireland, James Prior, stated that prisoners will be allowed to wear their own clothes. In addition, the number of prisoners allowed to assemble together at any one time will be doubled. Republican prisoners will also be able to get more mail and visits, and to get some time off for good behavior.

Gerry Adams, a leader of the Provisional Sinn Féin, which represents the political views of the Irish Republican Army, noted that whether or not the prisoners accept the package and end the blanket protests, "once again, changes in the British prison policy have been won by the efforts of Republican prisoners."

The prisoners themselves smuggled a statement out of prison saying that the new clothing regulations were "a positive move in the right direction." But they added that the proposal to count only half the prison time they have spent on the blanket toward their early release was vengeful.

Whether the prisoners accept this proposal and end their protest or not, the struggle for a free and united Ireland will continue. As Fidel Castro said September 15, the Irish patriots "have earned the respect and admiration of the world, and likewise they deserve its support." □

300,000 in Bonn protest missiles

By David Russell

West German working people have dealt a powerful blow to Washington's plans to station 572 new nuclear missiles in Europe. Some 300,000 people turned out on October 10 to march against the missiles in the largest demonstration in West Germany since World War II.

Held in Bonn, the demonstration had been denounced in advance by West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt as a "declaration of war" on his government. Nevertheless, more than a quarter of the parliamentary deputies in Schmidt's Social Democratic Party (SPD) en-

dorsed the protest, as did more than one-third of the deputies in the Free Democratic Party, Schmidt's partner in the government.

"If the chancellor thinks we want to press him, he's right," declared former cabinet member Erhard Eppler, a member of the SPD's executive committee and a featured speaker at the rally.

Eppler stressed the need "to break the chain of armament and rearmament that is pulling us all toward an abyss."

Among other speakers at the rally was Coretta Scott King, widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., who brought greetings from "the movement for peace and economic justice" in the United States.

Nevertheless, *New York Times* correspondent John Vinocur called the demonstration "anti-American." He seemed particularly upset by the fact that President Reagan "was depicted on one banner as having long, green fangs." Vinocur would have been even more

shocked if he had seen some of the signs carried by the 500,000 American workers who marched against Reagan's policies in Washington on September 19.

The October 10 demonstration was part of a massive movement that has been gathering force throughout Western Europe. It is not only against the 572 new NATO missiles, but increasingly against the NATO alliance itself.

Mass demonstrations against the missiles are scheduled in London and Rome on October 24. A building demonstration in Italy drew 50,000 on September 27.

Demonstrations are also scheduled in Paris and Brussels on October 25, and in Amsterdam on November 21. Protests are scheduled in Spain as well, where 50,000 turned out July 5 on an anti-NATO action. The success of the October 10 demonstration in Bonn will help to build all these actions, and to stay the hands of the imperialist warmakers who threaten humanity with extinction. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Closing News Date: October 12, 1981

MIDDLE EAST	1012	Sadat dies, U.S. military buildup lives —by David Frankel
USA	1014	What "Solidarity Day" showed —by David Frankel
CANADA	1016	Trudeau drives ahead on constitution —by Arthur Young
EL SALVADOR	1017	Freedom fighters urge negotiations —by Fred Murphy
NICARAGUA	1018	People reply to U.S. threats —by Matilde Zimmermann
	1019	FSLN guarantees rights of Indians —by Arnold Weissberg
IRAN	1020	How HKS views the situation
DENMARK	1021	Socialists set election campaign
FRANCE	1032	First three months of the new diplomacy —by Christian Picquet
DOCUMENTS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	1022	The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist current, and the Fourth International

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

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

Editor: Steve Clark.
Contributing Editors: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.
Managing Editor: David Frankel.
Editorial Staff: Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.
Business Manager: Sandi Sherman.
Copy Editor: David Martin.

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

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-

flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands on the program of the Fourth International.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sadat dies—U.S. military build-up lives

Washington alerts 70,000 troops, threatens Libya

By David Frankel

More than anything else, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat on October 6 revealed the underlying weakness and instability of the pro-imperialist Arab regimes that Washington is propping up in the Middle East—a weakness that is driving the U.S. rulers to ready their own armed forces in case of revolutionary upheavals in the region.

Radio reports on October 12 described an "unprecedented" U.S. naval build-up near Egypt.

Earlier, even as President Reagan was praising Sadat as "a man of peace," some 72,000 U.S. troops were put on alert, along with twenty-six warships from the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. Also alerted were several Air Force fighter squadrons.

"Officials said the White House-approved move signalled U.S. willingness to become involved militarily if its interests were threatened," reported Laurence McQuillan in the *New York Daily News* October 8.

Reagan pushes AWACS deal

In keeping with this perspective, Reagan is taking advantage of Sadat's assassination to push for congressional approval of the \$8.5 billion AWACS plane sale to Saudi Arabia. Failure to act on this, Secretary of State Alexander Haig declared October 7, "would make a mockery of all President Sadat stood for."

At the same time, Sadat's death is being used as the occasion for a massive propaganda campaign against the anti-imperialist struggles of the workers and peasants in the Middle East, and in particular against the Iranian revolution and the Libyan government. Opposition to U.S. domination of the region is being smeared as opposition to "peace," and as the work of "Islamic fanatics."

Speaking at an October 7 news conference in the State Department, Haig warned against "any effort by external powers to manipulate the tragic events of the last 24 hours." Although he was forced to admit, "We have yet uncovered no evidence of their involvement," Haig singled out the Libyan government, complaining in particular about "the level of their rhetoric . . . and the character of that rhetoric."

Who is threatening whom?

What was worrying U.S. policy makers was not any possibility of the outgunned Libyan army dashing across 500 miles of desert to take Cairo. Nor did the White House mobilize the Sixth Fleet and the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions to answer Libyan radio broadcasts.

The show of U.S. military power was aimed first of all at the Egyptian people. Any attempt by the Egyptian workers and peasants to take advantage of the assassination of the dictator Sadat to establish a government more to their liking would have faced the threat of U.S. intervention. Also under the gun were Sadat's successors.

Haig took care to note that "we were greatly assured yesterday by reiteration of the Vice President that Egypt's domestic and foreign policy will be one of a continuation of the Sadat legacy."

Referring to "our relationship with Egypt," Haig declared that the Soviet government "know[s] we consider that relationship absolutely vital to our interests in the region and that we would treat it accordingly."

Plans to intervene in Libya and Sudan

But the Egyptian workers and peasants were not the only ones threatened by the U.S. military display. Washington has made Libya—along with Iran—a special target because of the anti-imperialist stance of its government.

Proof of who has been threatening whom appeared in an article by Leslie Gelb in the October 8 *New York Times*. Gelb was told by U.S. officials that in 1980

President Jimmy Carter made plans with Mr. Sadat, the Saudi leaders, and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, then President of France, for covert action against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the Libyan leader. When Mr. Giscard d'Estaing lost his bid for re-election last spring, the plan, which would have used Egyptian and Sudanese paramilitary forces, was shelved, according to officials.

Of course, the whole point of making the plot public now was to revive the threat against the Libyan government. And in case that was not enough, the Pentagon announced October 9 that an AWACS radar plane—used to coordinate air attacks—was stationed on the Egyptian-Libyan border, and that the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* had been moved closer to the area.

Another U.S. plan which has not been shelved is for intervention in the Sudan to back the dictatorship of Gen. Gaafar el-Nimeiry. U.S. policy makers fear that unrest in Egypt could easily upset Nimeiry's shaky regime, which recently rounded up 17,600 people accused of participating in an antigovernment conspiracy supposedly directed from Libya.

According to an October 8 dispatch from Cairo by *Washington Post* reporter David Ottaway, "Western diplomatic sources here said in interviews before Sadat was assassinated that Egypt and the United States have already discussed contingency plans for a possible Amer-

ican airlift of Egyptian troops to the Sudan in an emergency."

Only a few days before his death, Sadat sent Egyptian Vice-president Hosni Mubarak to Washington to urge a speedup in arms shipments to Nimeiry.

'Inner poetry'

In general, the reaction to Sadat's assassination by imperialist governments and media has been strikingly different from that of the masses in the exploited countries of the Arab world. In the United States, Reagan eulogized the "champion of peace."

"A great man, a historic figure," said the *Washington Post*. "One of the few great statesmen of our age," declared the *Wall Street Journal*.

Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen talked about Sadat's "melancholy eyes, his inner poetry, his sweetness," while in New York City the Empire State Building was lit in red, white, and black, the colors of the Egyptian flag.

Despite his professions of grief, Reagan decided not to attend Sadat's funeral. Instead, he sent a delegation that included former presidents Carter, Ford, and Richard ("I am not a crook") Nixon. The use of the occasion to rehabilitate Nixon was virtually ignored in the U.S. media—apparently it was not considered good form to interject any sour notes into such a solemn affair.

In Israel, as in the United States, radio and newspapers were filled with praise for Sadat. Prime Minister Menachem Begin called him "one of the great fighters for peace," and attended the funeral.

But the scene in Arab capitals was somewhat different. Moslem areas of Beirut erupted with jubilation when news of Sadat's death was announced. "This is the first genuine happiness I've seen on this side in a long time," one resident told *New York Times* reporter John Kifner.

Posters of Sadat's predecessor, Gamal Abdel Nasser, were hung on cars and walls, and fireworks and guns were shot off in celebration. According to Kifner, "Longtime residents of Beirut found the scene strikingly the reverse of the night in 1970 when Mr. Nasser died. Then, several recalled, Moslems wailed in grief and banged their heads against walls."

Free candy

On the Israeli-occupied West Bank, *Washington Post* correspondent William Claiborne reported, "Some Palestinian nationalist leaders held parties to celebrate the assassination, and



Mourners at Nasser's funeral. No such scenes for Sadat.

shopkeepers in Bethlehem and Nablus distributed free candy to passers-by to mark the event."

"Traitor Falls, Egypt Remains" was the headline in the Syrian government newspaper *Tichran*, while in Iran, Tehran radio denounced Sadat as "the mercenary dictator of Egypt" and said that he had now "joined his old friend Mohammed Riza Shah."

Within Cairo itself, William Farrell reported in the October 8 *New York Times*, "those who were grieving over the fallen Egyptian leader seemed to be doing it at home."

Ottaway reported in the *Washington Post* that same day:

Western diplomats and analysts continued to puzzle today over the absence so far of any major public demonstration of grief over Sadat's assassination, in contrast to the dramatic displays that greeted the death of his predecessor, Gamal Abdul Nasser, in September 1970. . . .

In fact, only in the National Assembly, where deputies gave emotional eulogies to the slain president, was there any real sign of emotion over Sadat's death. Many deputies had tears in their eyes.

Perhaps some were afraid that they might now have to go out and work for a living.

What was Nasserism?

There is no mystery about why Nasser was mourned by the Egyptian people and by much of the Arab world, and why Sadat's death has met with celebration—at least not for those who are willing to examine the real role of the two figures. It is simply that Nasser was seen as an anti-imperialist fighter, while Sadat was seen as a collaborator with an oppressive and hated system of domination.

When Nasser and his Free Officers movement came to power in Egypt in 1952 the country was still a British semicolony. British troops were stationed on Egyptian soil, Britain owned and operated the Suez Canal, and British influence propped up the monarchy of King Farouk.

Under Nasser and the Free Officers the monarchy was abolished, British bases were removed from Egypt, a radical land reform was carried out, and the Suez Canal was nationalized. The joint British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in October 1956, following the nationalization of the Suez Canal, sparked massive protests throughout the Arab world. Nasser became a symbol of resistance to imperialism.

Although Nasser was opposed to the independent organization and mobilization of the workers and peasants, and to the workers and peasants establishing their own government, he was forced to lean on the masses for support against imperialism. He set up subsidies on basic foods and necessities, he brought schools and health centers to Egypt's peasant villages for the first time, and he nationalized some 90 percent of Egyptian industry.

These gains were an inspiration to people throughout the Arab world. A whole generation of militant fighters looked to Egypt and Nasser for guidance in their struggles.

But Nasser was never able to win genuine national independence from imperialism for Egypt. Nasserism—like the similar petty bourgeois nationalist movements led by Nkrumah in Ghana, Sukarno in Indonesia, and Nehru in India—sought to find a middle way between subordination to imperialism and socialist rev-

olution. In this it failed.

Even before Nasser's death in 1970, the pressure of world imperialism on the Egyptian economy had produced a deep crisis there. This pressure was redoubled as inflation skyrocketed in the early 1970s and with the world capitalist economic crisis that began in 1974.

Sadat returns to the fold

Sadat's response to the military and economic pressure from imperialism was to retreat. Imperialist corporations were invited to invest once again in Egypt, controls on native capital were relaxed, military ties with Moscow were broken, and Sadat finally went to Jerusalem and concluded a separate deal with the Zionist regime.

Having regained its grip in the most populous Arab country, Washington tried to use the Camp David deal as a framework for expanding its diplomatic and military network in the Middle East. But the opposition among the Arab masses, particularly in the wake of the Iranian revolution, proved too powerful to overcome. Sadat remained isolated.

With Sadat's death, U.S. policymakers are afraid that their gains in Egypt may be lost. Almost immediately there was a rebellion in Asyut, a city of 250,000, which left well over 100 people dead and forced the army to occupy the area. Egyptian authorities were so nervous that Cairo was turned into an armed camp and ordinary citizens were prevented from coming within a mile of Sadat's funeral on October 10.

Even before word of the Asyut rebellion, the editors of the *New York Times* asked: "How long will it take to consolidate power inside Egypt against the forces that challenged even Mr. Sadat . . . ? Optimists would say a year, or even two."

It should come as no surprise therefore that Washington's main response to Sadat's assassination has been to speed up its military buildup in the region. Thus, *New York Times* correspondent Drew Middleton reported October 9:

Israeli leaders hope that the assassination of President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt will impel the United States to speed agreement on the broad military cooperation Israel has proposed. . . .

Senior Israeli officials estimate that, with ground and air resources positioned in Israel, Rapid Deployment Force units from the United States could be in Iran in 48 hours.

And the October 19 issue of *Business Week* reported that "until Secretary of State Haig declared that there is no evidence of Libya's involvement in the assassination, some U.S. defense officials thought the time to move [against Libya] was right now."

Although it cautioned against itchy trigger fingers, *Business Week* added that "the U.S. should recognize that so long as it is involved in the Middle East, it could at any time be compelled to back its policies with force."

Behind all the hypocritical rhetoric about peace, and all the racist propaganda against "Muslim fanatics," that is precisely what Washington is preparing to do. □

What 'Solidarity Day' showed

Big changes in the trade union movement

By David Frankel

"Solidarity Day"—the massive social protest that drew some 500,000 working people to Washington, D.C., September 19—will go down in history as a turning point in U.S. politics.

A few weeks have hardly been enough time for participants in the September 19 demonstration to absorb its implications, but it is already clear that after Solidarity Day, the U.S. labor movement will never be the same.

This was the first time in its hundred-year history that the American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) had called a national political protest.

The sheer size of the turnout, which was far larger than the most optimistic AFL-CIO forecasts, made it the second-biggest demonstration in U.S. history. Its size was exceeded only by the April 24, 1971, protest against the war in Vietnam.

Two days before the march, a column by Alan Crawford in the *New York Times* claimed, "It is doubtful that labor can turn out anywhere near the 100,000 it projects, if the rally is to be made up of real working-class stiff."

Crawford insisted that in calling the protest against President Reagan's reactionary policies, the AFL-CIO leadership was out of step with the union ranks—with "Joe Sixpack, who is conservative on defense and is increasingly so on economics."

But as *Times* reporter William Serrin had to admit after the event, it was "a stunningly large crowd," and one that was indeed representative of the ranks of labor, "young and old,

black, white, Hispanic, construction union and industrial workers."

'We are one'

The September 19 march was an authentic outpouring of the U.S. labor movement, and it was a dramatic confirmation of the kind of changes that have been taking place in the composition and consciousness of the American working class.

Although the size of the demonstration made it impossible to make really accurate estimates, it appeared as if well over a third of the participants were women, and between a quarter and a third were Black.

At a time when the U.S. rulers are trying to intensify the rivalries and divisions between different sectors of the working class, Solidarity Day affirmed that "We Are One," as the signs carried at the front of the march put it.

The action was a clear example of the working class beginning to think socially on a massive scale. It showed the deep impact of the Black and women's liberation movements, and of the movement against the war in Vietnam, on organized labor. This was the biggest women's rights demonstration, the biggest Black rights demonstration, and one of the biggest antiwar demonstrations in U.S. history.

It was not just that leaders of the Black movement and of the women's movement spoke from the rally platform and received a warm response, as did attacks on war spending. All of these concerns were reflected in the placards, banners, and chants on the march as well.

As *Christian Science Monitor* correspond-



Lou Howort/Militant

ent Richard L. Strout noted September 21, "Nearly everybody had a placard, printed or homemade. One of the latter proclaimed simply, 'No Mandate [for Reagan] From Me.' Another said enigmatically, 'Mass Transit Not Missiles.' There were lots of ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) signs. There was a marked antiwar undercurrent."

Blacks in the labor movement

As pointed out earlier, Solidarity Day was a racially integrated action. That in itself represented something that is almost unique in American history, at least on a national scale.

Although there was massive sentiment against the war in Vietnam among Blacks in the United States, the massive antiwar demonstrations that took place during the late 1960s and early 1970s were overwhelmingly white.

Many whites participated in and were deeply affected by the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, but the really massive actions—and most of the local demonstrations—were overwhelmingly Black. Participants in the June 23, 1963 civil rights demonstration in Detroit, which turned out some 200,000 people, estimated that perhaps 1 percent of the marchers were white. The August 1963 march on Washington initiated by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was 90 percent Black.

Speakers at the Solidarity Day rally, including AFL-CIO leaders, referred several times to the 1963 march on Washington, which drew a quarter of a million protesters to the capital to demand passage of a civil rights bill by Congress. Solidarity Day was presented as a continuation of that civil rights protest. But the fact is that two weeks before that historic demonstration, the AFL-CIO met and *refused to endorse* the march on Washington. That the AFL-CIO leaders now claim the 1963 march as their own is an indication of how greatly the labor movement has changed.

In one sense, of course, the participants in Solidarity Day represented a vanguard of the



Nelson Blackstock/Militant

working class. The marchers on September 19 were the most militant, the most socially aware, the most affected by the economic crisis and Reagan's economic policies.

But they spoke for millions of workers who saw the demonstration on television, who discussed it in the following days in mines and plants across the nation, and who have been deeply affected by events.

Rather than the working class moving to the right, as the capitalist media claims, it has never had a greater degree of social consciousness. And there is greater opposition to the arms race and massive military spending among workers than at any time since before World War II.

No attempt to exclude communists

On the Solidarity Day demonstration itself, members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) sold more than 2,000 subscriptions to the *Militant* newspaper, thousands of single copies of the *Militant*, and more than \$1,000 worth of literature. Another 400 subscriptions were sold at Solidarity Day actions elsewhere in the country.

Perhaps even more significant than the opportunity to spread revolutionary ideas, however, was the fact that there was no attempt at all to exclude communists from the demonstration.

This was a violation of a norm that has been upheld by the trade union bureaucracy in the United States since the days of the McCarthyite witch-hunt in the 1950s. In a red-baiting column that appeared in newspapers around the country September 25, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak sharply criticized AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland's "hesitation in flatly reading the communists out of Solidarity Day."

Arguing that Kirkland is vulnerable "to attacks from the left," Evans and Novak said: "That vulnerability was demonstrated on a TV show Sept. 6 when Kirkland was asked about communist participation in the Sept. 19 demonstration. 'We're turning no one away,' Kirkland replied. The labor movement's anti-communists were stunned by this reversal of life-long form."

What was involved was not a change of heart by Kirkland, but an assessment by the



Osborne Hart/Militant

AFL-CIO leadership of what they had to do to pull off a successful demonstration.

Pressures on labor bureaucracy

Why did Kirkland feel under such pressure, why did he feel compelled to break with the AFL-CIO's previous tradition and call the Solidarity Day action?

Kirkland himself explained it at the AFL-CIO General Board meeting that approved the call for the September 19 protest.

"That we speak for the interests of our members has been assumed as part of the implicit social contract which governs the conduct of political relations in this country and which places prudent restraints on the passions of class warfare," Kirkland declared.

"Now, in our Centennial Year, that mandate is challenged. The challenge comes not from the political fringes but from the White House. . . .

"I do not believe that we can quietly turn our backs and walk away from this challenge. . . .

"Unlike the wily politician, we are not free to shift from constituency to constituency, to trade off one set of interests for another. . . .

"We have a constituency with self-defined interests. We have an agenda that flows from the aspiration of our members. . . .

"We are not free to favor Social Security one day and acquiesce in its dismemberment the next.

"We are not free to favor voting rights one day and find it unnecessary the next. . . .

"When the Administration launches a radical counter-revolution to undo the progress of half a century, we cannot pretend that we are in the midst of business-as-usual."

Workers demand action

Trade union officials in the United States do indeed feel as if the "social contract" is coming apart at the seams. They are faced with a re-

lentless drive by the ruling class to transform the relations between capital and labor, a drive that, as Kirkland notes, is beginning to arouse "the passions of class warfare."

What is involved is not just government attacks on clean air and safety standards, on old-age pensions and health care, on equal rights programs and school lunches. The employers on the whole are on the offensive. Hardly a week goes by without new reports in the newspapers of unions being forced to give up contract gains won in earlier struggles. For the first time since the depression of the 1930s, American workers are seeing actual wage cuts—cuts over and above those imposed by inflation.

Reagan's decision to fire 12,000 striking air traffic controllers was an indication of the stakes in what United Auto Workers President Douglas Fraser has called this "one-sided class war."

But more and more, the union ranks are demanding that the one-sided war become two-sided. The workers want to fight back. It was this pressure that forced Kirkland and the AFL-CIO bureaucracy to call Solidarity Day.

AFL-CIO leaders refuse to lead

The half million workers who came to the Solidarity Day demonstration were prepared to fight. There was no mistaking the militancy and determination of the people on that protest.

Heroes of the day were the thousands of fired air controllers who attended the action and marched in their own contingent. But despite the tremendous sympathy with the air controllers, the labor bureaucrats refused to map out any ongoing actions to support that strike, let alone to win it.

The AFL-CIO Executive Board has explicitly rejected organizing even a boycott of airline travel. It decided against calling on AFL-CIO unions to support the air controllers strike by



Lou Howort/Militant

honoring their picket lines. The kind of energy and resources that went into organizing Solidarity Day should now be mobilized behind the air controllers, but the labor bureaucrats are opposed to any such confrontation with the government.

September 19 was not seen by the union officialdom as a first step in mobilizing the power of labor and its allies to fight back against the capitalist offensive. Rather, it was seen as a means of putting pressure on the Democratic Party.

Democrats in Congress have joined with Reagan in pushing through cuts in all areas of social welfare, while jacking up the arms budget to astronomical levels. Not a single Democratic Party leader stood up and supported the air controllers against Reagan's assault.

The debate between the Democratic and Republican parties is not over whether to drive down the living standards of working people, but over how to do it most effectively.

Still, the labor bureaucracy continues to support the Democratic Party in hopes that the old days will somehow return and that they will somehow be able once again to come to the union membership with concessions from the Democrats. This has been reflected in donations to the Democratic National Committee of nearly \$500,000 in trade union funds this year alone, a figure that is expected to double before the end of 1981.

A step forward for class struggle

Despite the obstruction of the trade union officialdom, Solidarity Day represented a giant

step forward for the class struggle in the United States. It showed the labor movement in a new light to millions of working people—as a social movement championing the demands of Blacks, Hispanics, and women, of the handicapped, of the old, of the ill, of those too young to defend themselves—in short, of all the oppressed and exploited.

Solidarity Day has advanced the process of thinking, discussion, and radicalization going on in the labor movement. It has helped working people to envision a "Solidarity Party"—a labor party speaking in the interests of the working class and its allies—as an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans.

Above all, Solidarity Day revealed for all to see the real process of class polarization that is taking place in the United States today. □

Canada

Trudeau drives ahead on constitution

Quebec vows to resist moves

By Arthur Young

[The following article appeared in the October 5 issue of *Socialist Voice*, the fortnightly newspaper reflecting the views of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

MONTREAL, September 29—Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau seems determined to plunge the country into one of the deepest crises in its history.

The September 28 Supreme Court ruling that his constitution plan is "unconstitutional" and in violation of the "federal principle" and established precedent, is a major blow to Trudeau. Yet the same day he declared that he would press on regardless.

At the heart of the dispute on the constitution are its provisions undermining Quebec's control over language, education, and important levers of economic policy. These powers are needed to protect Québécois against the effects of national oppression. French-speaking Québécois live under the constant pressure of the richer, dominant English-speaking society.

The Quebec government reacted strongly to Ottawa's arrogant course. "We will never allow Ottawa to harm the historic and fundamental rights of Quebec, in defiance of the constitutional rules followed for more than a century," declared Premier René Lévesque. "We are convinced that Québécois will not allow the powers of the National Assembly—the only political powers that belong to the Quebec collectivity—to be flouted."

Among French-speaking Québécois, opposition to the Trudeau plan is almost universal. Last winter a petition opposing unilateral patriation* was signed by more than 700,000 persons, a record figure for any petition in

Quebec.

Women's groups across the country have effectively exposed the pretense that Trudeau's charter protects their rights. Spokespersons for the Indian and Métis movements have shown how the charter endangers the few rights they now possess.

Seven provinces have joined Quebec in its opposition to the constitution plan, as has the federal Conservative Party.

Faced with opposition of this scope, ruling class circles are divided over whether it is wise to proceed with unilateral patriation.

The Supreme Court noted that there is no law forbidding the federal government from unilaterally altering the terms of the Canadian federation. Thus in the strictest sense of the term the project is legal.

But the court also sided with the provinces on key issues. All nine judges agreed that the plan reduces the powers of the provinces. Six of the nine held that it violated established precedent and emphasized that precedent was a key part of Canadian law. In short, according to the court, the plan is both "legal" and "unconstitutional."

Angry response in Quebec

The court ruling has reinforced the Quebec people's determination to resist Trudeau's attack on their national rights.

The three main Quebec labor federations all pointed out that the federal reaction to the Su-

*Although Canada achieved full independence from Britain in 1931, its constitution remains based on the British North America Act of 1867, and amendments to the constitution are passed by the British Parliament at Canadian request. Trudeau proposes to "patriate" the constitution by bringing it fully under Canadian control.—IP

preme Court ruling "tolls the death knell" of federalism. They emphasized the need to mobilize the population against the project.

At an emergency session beginning September 30, the Quebec National Assembly will debate a resolution opposing unilateral patriation. Quebec Liberal leader Claude Ryan has indicated that his party may support the motion.

Popular anger against the plan is at a high pitch. One option being discussed widely is a provincial referendum on the issue.

In some plants and nationalist circles, an additional idea is being raised. If Ottawa enacts its unilateral plan despite popular opposition, many say, then Quebec will have to declare its independence in order to safeguard its language, culture, and ability to shape its own future.

These developments have provoked renewed debate in the NDP [New Democratic Party, the labor party]. As of this date, NDP Leader Ed Broadbent has not taken a position.

Broadbent's support for Trudeau's constitutional scheme has badly divided the party. Saskatchewan Premier Alan Blakeney, four members of the federal caucus, and more than one-third of the delegates who attended the July convention of the party are opposed to the leadership's stand.

With the court's ruling, the issues are posed more clearly than ever before. On one side, there is Ottawa's arrogant insistence on driving through its plan whatever the cost; and on the other, Quebec's determination to resist this attack on its existence as a nation with, in Lévesque's words, "all the legitimate means" it possesses.

Could there be any better time for the NDP to join the opposition to Trudeau's arbitrary measure? □

Freedom fighters urge talks

Nicaraguan leader presents FDR-FMLN proposals to UN

By Fred Murphy

UNITED NATIONS—In the final part of his address to the General Assembly here October 7, Commander Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction read the text of a proposal by the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador. The statement called on the U.S.-backed junta to open talks and seek a political solution to the Salvadoran conflict.

The FDR and FMLN had sent the proposal to Commander Ortega and authorized Nicaragua to present it to the UN General Assembly.

Before reading the statement, Ortega introduced FDR President Guillermo Ungo, who was seated with the Nicaraguan delegation. Applause erupted before Ortega could even finish the introduction. The Salvadoran was welcomed with a sustained ovation by a large part of the assembly, as well as by about 100 supporters of the Salvadoran struggle and the Nicaraguan revolution who were present in the visitors' gallery.

"If today our people are waging an armed struggle," the FDR-FMLN statement said, "this is because oppressive and repressive regimes have closed all peaceful avenues for change, thus leaving us with the armed struggle alone as the legitimate means to attain our liberation."

Nonetheless, the FDR and FMLN declared, "our desire is peace." To this end, the two organizations stated their readiness to "start a dialogue with civilian and military representatives that the junta may appoint. . . ."

The FDR and FMLN set down five "general principles" for such a dialogue:

1. The talks should be carried out between delegates appointed by the FMLN-FDR and representatives of the government junta of El Salvador.
2. They should be carried out in the presence of other governments, which as witnesses will contribute to the solution of the conflict.
3. The nature of talks must be general and must take up the fundamental aspects of the conflict. . . .
4. The Salvadoran people should be informed of the entire process.
5. [The talks] should be initiated without prior conditions on either party.

The FDR and FMLN also outlined two points in particular that would have to be discussed in order to "guarantee a political solution":

A. Definition of a new political, economic, and judicial order that will allow for and stimulate full democratic participation by all the various political, social, and economic sectors and forces, particularly those that have been marginalized. . . .

B. Restructuring of the armed forces, based on officers and troops from the current army who are

not responsible for crimes and genocide against the people and on the integration of the hierarchy and troops of the FMLN.

This fresh diplomatic initiative by the Salvadoran opposition served to answer the propaganda campaign being carried on by Washington and by junta president Napoleón Duarte around the theme of elections scheduled for El Salvador next March.

In a September 29 address to the General Assembly, Duarte had claimed that any opposition group "that puts down its arms" will be allowed to participate in the elections. But he also declared that "my government completely excludes any negotiations or dialogue with organized armed sectors."

Elections, the FDR and FMLN said in the statement read by Ortega, can be "a valid and necessary instrument for expressing the will of the people, so long as the conditions exist to allow the people to express their will freely."

But they emphasized that such conditions do not exist in El Salvador today, "inasmuch as the regime's repressive apparatus, which murders political and labor leaders and activists, remains intact. [This apparatus] persists in persecuting the progressive sectors of the church, and is also responsible for the daily physical elimination of dozens of citizens. Likewise, the regime currently has in effect a state of siege, martial law, and press censorship, and it is escalating the war against the people with arms and advisors sent by the U.S. government."

In concluding their statement, the FDR and FMLN declared that they were "directly addressing the government of the United States of America and demanding an end to its mil-

itary intervention in El Salvador, which is against the interests of both the Salvadoran and American peoples and endangers the peace and security of Central America."

The positions of the FDR and FMLN were presented to the United Nations at a time when international opposition is growing to U.S. military intervention in Central America. A number of governments and organizations have added their endorsement to the August 28 declaration by the French and Mexican foreign ministers recognizing the FDR and FMLN as "a representative political force."

Legislators from more than 100 countries meeting in Havana in mid-September for the world conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted a resolution that paralleled the French-Mexican position. On September 30, Panamanian President Aristides Royo addressed the UN General Assembly and endorsed the French-Mexican statement. Panama's territory and diplomatic services would be available for any efforts "to begin contacts and negotiations aimed at ending the conflict in El Salvador."

Fabio Castillo of the FDR's Political-Diplomatic Commission termed Royo's offer "perfectly acceptable" on October 1. But the junta rejected it October 7, stating, "It is clear that there is no chance of dialogue or negotiations with armed sectors, and therefore any possibility of mediation is excluded."

No response by the junta to the new FDR-FMLN proposals had been reported as of October 9. But in an October 8 speech to the General Assembly, U.S. Deputy Representative Kenneth Adelman rejected them and reiterated Washington's support for Duarte's phony elections.

The conditions under which that voting will be held were further indicated October 3, when the junta extended its martial-law decree (first imposed in March 1980) for another thirty days. Among other things, the decree bans all outdoor political gatherings and prohibits any transmission of national news by the country's radio stations. □



Commander Daniel Ortega and FDR President Guillermo Ungo at UN news conference. Fred Murphy/IP

People reply to U.S. threats

National mobilization protests military maneuvers

By Matilde Zimmermann

MANAGUA—A month-long mobilization began here October 4 in response to the U.S.-Honduran naval maneuvers known as Falcon's Eye which are taking place in the Caribbean waters adjacent to Nicaraguan territory.

"Falcon's Eye is a warning to our revolution," Commander of the Revolution Tomás Borge told a crowd of thousands in the working-class barrio of Ciudad Sandino October 6. "But we have a warning of our own to deliver. We are a peaceful country. But nobody should forget that this peaceful people also knows how to fight, that this peaceful people has a heroic history."

In announcing the month of protests October 2, Defense Minister Humberto Ortega predicted that the mobilizations would peak October 8 and 9, when the maneuvers would be at full steam. But by the time October 8 arrived, there had already been protest demonstrations in

every part of the country.

Led by the July 19 Sandinista Youth (JS-19), thousands marched October 4 from the Indian barrio and long-time revolutionary stronghold of Monimbó to the fortress of Coyotepe on a nearby hilltop.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of October 7, more than 4,000 residents of the town of Estelí assembled at the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) headquarters there.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) daily *Barricada* reported October 7 that it had been flooded with reports on demonstrations and statements of protest from unions, organizations of women, youth, farm workers, and students, and community groups "from every corner of the country." *Barricada* said there was so much activity it was unable to report on all of it. Judging from the various demonstrations one sees and hears in Managua alone, this could well be true.

The theme of the October mobilization is that the entire population of Nicaragua must be prepared to face the military threat that U.S. warships off its coast represent. Members of the army, the Sandinista People's Militias, and the Militia Reserve Battalions have played a prominent role in all the demonstrations. On October 7 a dozen delegates to the Council of State wore their militia uniforms to the regular weekly session of this legislative body.

Both U.S. and Honduran troops are involved in the Falcon's Eye maneuvers, and there have been reports in Honduras that members of Somoza's old National Guard are taking part as well. Nicaraguans consider this show of force a serious threat against themselves and against the revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The last such joint maneuvers in Central America took place in Somoza's Nicaragua in 1976, and involved troops from Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as the United States and Nicaragua. The main warship involved in Falcon's Eye, the USS *Fort Snelling* played a central role in the U.S. invasion of Santo Domingo in 1965, and was also involved in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Falcon's Eye is so unpopular here that even the right-wing proimperialist parties have had

'Profound injustice' at root of Central America's crisis

UNITED NATIONS—"Humanity is living through crucial moments, the result of severe tensions that today more than ever before threaten world peace," Commander Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction told the UN General Assembly here on October 7.

Ortega listed a series of threats to world peace, placing responsibility for them on U.S. imperialism and the Reagan administration in Washington. He noted the massive U.S. buildup of nuclear arms; South Africa's invasion of Angola and efforts to destabilize Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique; the U.S. downing of two Libyan air force planes in August; Israeli terror bombing of Lebanon and Iraq; and Washington's threats to Cuba and Grenada.

Turning to his own region, Ortega spoke of the "dramatic social, economic, and political crisis [that] is today shaking Central America." This, he said, is "the consequence of unjust relations of international exchange and of the profound injustices generated by exploitation."

The Nicaraguan leader presented data to back up his assertion:

"In 1979 one out of every two Central Americans over fifteen years of age was illiterate. One out of every eight children died before reaching the age of one. Three out of every ten Central Americans who sought employment could not find any.

Twelve million persons lived in inadequate dwellings. For every dollar obtained by a poor Central American, a rich one obtained forty-eight. . . . Eight and a half million Central Americans lived in conditions of extreme poverty."

That is where the causes of crisis in the region must be sought, Ortega declared—"not in the Nicaraguan revolution, which in fact is the first great historic effort in Central America to eliminate the roots of the crisis."

The "background of brutal economic exploitation," in Central America, Ortega continued, "has been upheld by the aggressive policies of the United States throughout our history." He proceeded to detail a lengthy list of U.S. violations of the sovereignty of all Central American states, beginning in the 1840s: "More than 784 actions hostile to the right of our countries to their sovereignty have taken place on the continent since then, and more than 100 of these have occurred since 1960."

Ortega cited dates and details of a long string of "interferences, threats, imposition of treaties that undermined our sovereignty, incitement of wars between neighboring states, blackmail through the presence of U.S. war fleets in our territorial waters, military interventions, landings by the marines, imposition of corrupt governments, and imposition of abusive economic treaties."

The Nicaraguan leader made it clear that such abuses by Washington are not just to be found in the history books:

"At this very moment—today, October 7, 1981—the United States is initiating a grandiose military maneuver termed 'Falcon's Eye' in the vicinity of the sovereign territory of Nicaragua. . . .

"In 1981 the United States has sent military advisors, helicopters and war matériel to El Salvador and Honduras. It has cut off loans for development and for food procurement for our country to a total of \$81.1 million. It has allowed the training of ex-Somozaist guardsmen in military camps in the state of Florida."

Nicaragua "cannot remain silent, nor can we stay inactive" in the face of such threats, Ortega said. "We have a historic right to believe that we may be attacked once again. The sovereignty that we won once and for all by force of arms on July 19, 1979, is in grave danger. . . .

"We want peace, but not at the cost of our freedom. We don't want war. But if war is thrust upon us, we will resist with a war of the entire people."

As Ortega closed his speech, many UN delegates rose from their chairs and offered a prolonged ovation. The U.S., Honduran, and Salvadoran delegations remained seated.

—Fred Murphy

to adopt a critical stance toward it, although they all downplay the threat the maneuvers represent and refuse to take part in the protest mobilizations.

The Pentagon always claims that maneuvers like Falcon's Eye are just "routine exercises." But the fact that the Falcon's Eye is aimed at Nicaragua was confirmed October 5 by retired U.S. colonel Samuel P. Dickens, a special envoy of Reagan and one of the directors of the Inter-American Security Council. Dickens told

reporters in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, that Falcon's Eye "is a way to show the countries of Central America that the U.S. will stand behind them in the event they are attacked by Cuba or Nicaragua." He also said that "many of us already consider ourselves to be fighting World War III, because communism is on the rise all over the Western Hemisphere."

When the coordinator of the Nicaraguan government, Commander Daniel Ortega, ad-

ressed the UN General Assembly on October 7, he warned of the danger that war games like Falcon's Eye represent. He asked if the Reagan administration was going "to continue driving ahead with its policy of military intervention, against the will of the people of the United States itself?"

"We want peace," Ortega said, "but not at the cost of our freedom. We don't want a war. But if war is thrust upon us, we will resist with a war of the entire people." □

FSLN guarantees rights of Indians

'We want to set an example for all Latin America'

By Arnold Weissberg

MANAGUA—The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction have issued a "Declaration of Principles on Indian Communities." It guarantees the peoples of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region the right to their own cultures, the right to organize their communities as they see fit, and the right to participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of the country.

After this declaration was made public in mid-August, the International Indian Treaty Council's representative to the United Nations hailed Nicaragua as "the only country in the Americas that respects the human rights of Indians."

According to Commander of the Revolution Luis Carrión, the declaration represents "a commitment to the world by the Sandinista government that a just solution will be found to the problems of the indigenous minorities."

Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region, made up of the provinces of Zelaya and Río San Juan, comprises more than half the national territory but has only 8 percent of the population. The Atlantic Coast population is made up overwhelmingly of three Indian groups—Sumo, Rama, and Miskitu—as well as of Black, English-speaking descendants of escaped slaves.

Legacy of mistrust

Isolated and even more underdeveloped than the rest of Nicaragua, the Atlantic Coast peoples have often seen themselves as a country apart. Residents of the area often refer to other Nicaraguans, for example, as "the Spanish." The central government in Managua has always been viewed with suspicion, if not hostility.

This historic mistrust did not change overnight after the Somoza dictatorship was overthrown, despite the FSLN's efforts to win the confidence of the Blacks and Indians.

Projects such as the 1980-81 literacy campaign, which taught some 12,000 people to read and write in Miskitu, English, or Sumo, were carried out. (Plans to give literacy classes in Rama as well were dropped when the government found that the Rama population

numbers only about 800, all of whom speak either Sumo or Miskitu.)

The government has also begun the construction of Nicaragua's first cross-country highway through the Atlantic Coast. New housing and hospitals are under construction.

Divisions among population

But the FSLN also made some errors, as Commander William Ramírez, head of the Nicaraguan Institute for the Atlantic Coast (INNICA), has described:

"Our first error was to treat the indigenous peoples as if they were all alike. Through experience, we have learned that the interests of the Miskitus, Sumos, and Ramas are different. Historically the Sumos and Miskitus have even been enemies.

"A similar antagonism exists between the Miskitus and the Blacks. . . . And it was the Miskitus who enslaved the Sumos or at least sold them into slavery."

Thus, Ramírez says, the FSLN's attempt to unite all the groups into one organization, MISURASATA, failed. (Another reason for this, Ramírez adds, is that many of the organization's leaders turned out to be counterrevolutionaries and subsequently left the country for Honduras.)

MISURASATA had been viewed by the Sandinistas as a sort of intermediary between the FSLN and the Indians, Ramírez explains. But now the organization is defunct, so from now on the government and the FSLN will deal directly with the Indian communities.

Ramírez has already traveled to thirty-two



Russell Johnson/IP

Revolution brought literacy to Indian communities of Atlantic Coast.

Sumo communities. He says that the August 12 declaration was greeted there "with enthusiasm."

Ramírez notes that MISURASATA's demise in no way detracts from the right of the indigenous peoples to organize themselves. "This is a right no one is going to take away from them," he says, noting that there already is an organization of Sumos that the FSLN looks forward to working with—the Association of Sumo Communities.

Plans for economic development

The Atlantic Coast has been a special target of the counterrevolution because of its continued isolation. With thousands of Somozaists just across the border in Honduras, many Miskitus have been induced to flee out of fear and misunderstanding. As many as 1,500 remain in Honduras, although the Nicaraguan government has repeatedly made clear that they may return at any time without prejudice.

The August 12 declaration emphasized the intentions of the FSLN and the government to improve living standards on the Atlantic Coast. "This must be the result of the economic development of the entire region," Luis Carrión explained. He noted that only the central government could rationally develop the Atlantic Coast's rich natural resources.

The Sandinistas, according to William Ramírez, want their relationship with the indigenous peoples "to set an example for all of Latin America, and even for the United States, in how to respect the rights of these brothers and sisters." □

How HKS views the situation

Interview from 'Socialist Challenge'

[The following is an interview with a member of the Socialist Workers Party (HKS), one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International. It appeared with the following introduction in the October 1 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the newspaper of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The downfall of the Shah in Iran inspired millions of workers around the world. But the murderous repression against political opposition by the Khomeini regime has led many to ask what has gone wrong in Iran. *Socialist Challenge* was able to speak to a member of the Socialist Workers Party, a section of the Fourth International in Iran. We do not necessarily share all the views expressed in the interview, but discussion on the issues it raises is long overdue.

Question. The most common sentiment of people in this country, which is reinforced by the media coverage, is that Iran is no better off now than under the Shah. What does the HKS say to that?

Answer. Khomeini's regime at one level is worse than the Shah. That does not mean that the Shah's regime was good! It was terrible, but the current repression is worse. The important difference is this: the overthrow of the Shah's regime through the mass upsurge of the people allowed three years of open activity for the workers' and left wing organisations, for the first time in 20-30 years. It gave the national minorities the space to fight against the central authorities, especially the Kurds.

This development of self-organisation threatened the Khomeini regime. When the strike committee under the Shah turned into genuine working class councils the regime tried to disband them and replace them with Islamic councils.

When these too began to side with the workers rather than the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) even they were shut down. They have been replaced by Islamic Societies in the factories which operate just like the old SAV-AK secret police under the Shah.

We should not forget that there have been tremendous gains from the revolution like the eight hour day, equal pay for women, nurseries, rights of workers to organise and so on. Not all these gains have been lost. The Khomeini regime has not completely crushed the working class and the gains of the revolution.

Q. How does the HKS characterise the regime and what attitude do you have to it? Are

you for its overthrow or not?

A. We consider that it is a capitalist regime. There were two important wings of the IRP authorities. One wing around Ayatollah Beheshti was for a centralised economy with more state control. He was killed in the IRP headquarters bombing.

The other wing round Rafsanjani opposes land reform and stands for defence of private property. This wing now runs the country. Everything is now imported, mainly from the West. The mullahs claim to be against capitalism and communism but they say their religion doesn't allow them to be isolated, so they have economic relations with East and West.

We are for the overthrow of the regime and for socialist revolution. It is possible that the civil war will provide an opportunity for overthrowing Khomeini.

We have no illusions in the Mujahedin. Their leader Rajavi says that they support [ex-President Abolhassan] Bani-Sadr in order to ensure they win the support of the bourgeoisie. They explicitly support capitalism.

But we say that if they come to power by overthrowing Khomeini this would open up big opportunities for open activity by the workers and left wing organisations, the na-

tionalties and so on. It would also boost the chances to develop a mass working class or revolutionary organisation in Iran.

In that sense we would fight alongside them to prevent any right wing inspired military coup that the royalists outside the country might support.

Q. What has happened to the mass support that Khomeini had? Is there a growth of anti-clerical feeling among the workers?

A. Khomeini and the IRP got huge popular support from the hostages issue. We considered this matter as a factional dispute within the ruling class in Iran, not as an anti-imperialist campaign. When Bani-Sadr stood for President the IRP was dogged by faction fighting. Their candidate for the election had to be withdrawn two days before voting when it was discovered that he was ineligible to stand as a half-Afghani. Their last minute replacement was a nonentity.

On the other hand the Mujahedin leader Rajavi stood on a radical democratic programme, calling for support for the rights of the Kurds, workers and women and so on. When he was excluded from the polls by the mullahs, Bani-Sadr adopted and campaigned on many points of his programme, and was elected.

So the IRP used the hostages issue to regain mass support which it was losing. But it didn't last long. The mullahs couldn't solve the burning economic needs of the masses.

The situation in that regard was worse than under the Shah—production and wages were going down, prices were going up, housing



"Khomeini and the Islamic Republican Party got huge popular support from the hostages issue."

problems were terrible and so on. Then the war with Iraq boosted support for the regime again—people voluntarily queued up to go to the war to fight.

But again the economic problems and the lack of democratic rights undermined support for the regime, though not so much for Khomeini. There has been growing disillusion with the regime. For example after the hostages issue people's reaction was: "If they were spies why have they been released? And if they weren't why have we had to suffer the economic consequences of holding them?"

There is now absolutely no base of support left for the regime. Their support comes from some bazaaris, and their paid agents in the Revolutionary Guards and committees along with their families. These are the people, especially kids who are on their demonstrations supposedly of one million people.

The Tudeh (Communist) Party and the Fedayeen Majority group also back the regime. At their last congress they decided that one of their duties was to inform on "counterrevolutionaries." The Tudeh party exposed one headquarters of the Peykar (Maoist) group to the authorities leading to a number of arrests.

To understand how fed up people are you have to grasp how few rights they feel they have left. I met a woman in a hairdresser who was crying. She told the hairdresser to dye her blond hair black because she had just received a Ministry of Health circular saying that as well as her scarf and overalls women had also to all have dark brown or black hair!

The people hate the mullahs. They have closed down the parks—they were "centres of the counter-revolution." You can't even go mountain-climbing—mountains are also the "centre of the counter-revolution." There's only Mohammed on at the cinema and no TV—so people are very fed up.

It is common now to hear people say: "If this is Islam then we don't even want the Mujahedin who are Islamic. Probably communism is better." And they don't mean Russia or the Tudeh party by that.

Q. What is the repression like at the moment?

A. Since the IRP headquarters was blown up it has intensified. Not just 72 people were killed; it was more like 110. The Mujahedin refer to the bombings as "revolutionary acts of the people" and there is no doubt that they were popular.

Our comrades in the factories reported that there were celebrations among the workers at the explosion of the IRP headquarters. But within a week the regime had killed 300 people in revenge, many were only between 9 and 15 years old, sympathisers of the Mujahedin. The regime is so brutal because it is so weak. It has no control over the situation.

A sympathiser of ours, Gharani Karimi, age 29, who had been a student at Hatfield Polytechnic, was killed by the regime during this time. He was a very important Kurdish mil-

itant arrested before the IRP bombing. The regime considered him to be important enough to be on a list of prisoners for exchange with the Kurds for Revolutionary Guards held prisoner. He had his throat cut.

I met a woman whose son was missing. She went to Evin prison and found hundreds of other parents looking for their children. She went back each day for news and the crowds were smaller each day. She hoped this was a good sign that their children had been found. But after some weeks when she eventually saw the authorities they gave her ten albums of photos of young people and children who had been shot. She saw her son in one photo with five bullets in his chest where he had been shot dead. Underneath the photo it said "suspected Mujahedin sympathiser, convicted for refusing to give his name."

Gravediggers report that busloads of bodies were taken to the cemetery for burial. Whenever the regime announces a number of executions there are always in reality many more killed.

The assassinations have paralysed the regime but they have also created a certain demoralisation and passivity, a feeling of "what can we do?"

People are reduced to betting on who will be next to be blown up. This passivity shows the substitutionism of the Mujahedin for the masses. A political struggle is needed against the regime. There needs to be a general strike through organising the workers in the factories. This has to lead to civil war and armed confrontation with the regime, and its Revolutionary Guards.

Q. If you favour overthrowing the regime what do you call for to replace it?

A. We are not for an alliance with the Mujahedin as such but we would fight alongside them to overthrow the regime. While we criticise them for their bourgeois programme we recognise that rank and file Mujahedin comrades are courageous fighters giving up their lives for the struggle.

Our slogans are for: Independent working class organisation, a constituent assembly, and for workers' councils in the factories. We stand for generalising these councils all over Iran into a national workers' council.

Q. What is the situation with the war with Iraq and the struggle of the oppressed nationalities?

A. Only the Kurds are well organised with real autonomy over their areas. The other nationalities were not able to fully utilise the post-Shah period. The Kurds have a long history of struggle against the central authorities. Their territory is still very backward though, mainly peasants and no industry.

The war with Iraq continues—it is a year old now. But neither side knows how to win it. The economic damage to both sides is enormous and increases both their dependence on the West. There is now in Iran rationing and a

black market at triple prices for goods. To queue for the bare necessities takes hours.

The regime could have survived the economic crisis through paying for its imports for everything with cash from oil. But the regime has just announced that for the first seven months of 1981 the import bill was 7.9 billion dollars and oil sales were only 500 million dollars per month—so the money is running out. The regime has already announced cuts for the winter.

This economic crisis, combined with the massive political crisis, obviously puts into question how long the regime can survive. □

Danish socialists set election campaign

The second congress of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), the Danish section of the Fourth International, projected an ambitious campaign to run candidates in the municipal and parliamentary elections. Prior to the convention, held July 4-7 in Nyborg, the SAP had collected 30,000 signatures to run in the parliamentary elections.

"This task was a rich political experience," according to SAP executive committee member Gitte Hesselmann. "Think of how many people we have been in contact with to get those signatures," Hesselmann said in an interview in the August 6-12 issue of *Klassekampen*, the SAP's newspaper.

She noted that through its petitioning campaign the party was able to explain its working-class politics, its call for a workers united front, and its program for a workers government that would benefit the working class rather than the bourgeoisie.

The SAP is also running candidates in the November 17 municipal elections. According to executive committee member Finn Jensen, "the elections give us an opportunity to talk politics with people."

SAP candidates, Jensen told *Klassekampen*, will stress the deteriorating quality of life and increasing unemployment. "We will present working-class solutions to these problems," he said. "We propose cutting the workweek, nationalizing industry, and so on."

The SAP congress also discussed its experiences in building a youth organization, the Socialist Youth League (SUF). The party is also involved in international solidarity work, especially around support for the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador and opposition to U.S. military intervention. Jensen pointed out that "in this way we are also supporting the revolutions in Nicaragua and Cuba."

The SAP participates in the campaign of the Organization for Information about Nuclear Energy (OOA) to close the Barsebäck nuclear power plant in Sweden, very near Denmark. When the Danish parliament meets in October it will consider a proposal that it call for the closing of Barsebäck. To that end the OOA has called a Barsebäck protest on October 10. □

The Cuban revolution, the Castroist current, and the Fourth International

[In this issue *Intercontinental Press* continues 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 cen-

tral 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 resolution on the Cuban revolution, the Castroist current, and the Fourth International was passed by majority vote of the IEC.]

I. The historic gain of the Cuban revolution

1. The victory of the Cuban revolution took place within the framework of a crisis which was affecting a whole series of countries in Latin America. This crisis was the result of a combination of factors such as: the petering out of the relatively favorable economic conditions created first of all by the Second World War and then by the Korean boom; the decline of the old oligarchies under the blows of economic restructuring and the recomposition of the ruling classes. On the political level the crisis of the national-populist movements had broken out or was in the process of breaking out. These movements, thanks to the criminal orientation of the Stalinist Communist parties, had succeeded in taking advantage of the anti-imperialist aspirations of the broad masses.

In Cuba the crisis was even more serious because the increasingly dictatorial Batista regime, while benefiting from imperialist support, was being challenged not only by the working class, the peasantry, and a very considerable sector of the petty-bourgeoisie, but also by sectors of the ruling classes. The Stalinist People's Socialist Party (PSP), compromised by its past collaboration with Batista and tainted with its leadership's betrayals was incapable of taking advantage of this crisis.

The group around Fidel Castro, which was outside of the Stalinist tradition, emerged as the most radical wing of the populist movement. It was rooted in the best anti-imperialist traditions of the Cuban people. It rapidly became a force of attraction for radicalized petty-bourgeois layers. From the first days of the guerrilla struggle—which was also able to survive thanks to the collaboration of nuclei of militants organized in the towns—the Castroist current won support from among poor peasants of the Sierra Maestra. It radicalized and increasingly clarified its orientation as it took up the point of view of the consistent defense of the interests of the oppressed masses.

Fidel Castro knew how to exploit a context marked by divisions inside the ruling classes and the oscillations of American imperialism itself, certain sectors of which, convinced that the Batista regime was doomed, were looking for an alternative. The Castro leadership never envisaged sharing real leadership of the struggle with bourgeois formations or politicians and having, in particular, drawn the lesson of the defeat of the reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, it conceived no path except armed struggle in the perspective of the destruction of the dictatorship's apparatus and of developing the anti-imperialist struggle on a Latin American scale.

In this way it played a decisive role in the victory of the revolution.

This victory was possible thanks to the combination of the following factors:

- The revolutionary orientation of the Fidelista nucleus;
- The struggle of the Rebel Army, which, progressively reinforced by the influx of fighters from the poor peasantry, agricultural proleta-

riat, petty-bourgeoisie, and to a lesser extent, the working class, and enjoying increasingly massive support from the people, broke up the dictatorship's repressive apparatus;

- The big mobilizations and the general strike at the beginning of January 1959 which scuttled attempts of the old ruling classes and their political personnel to channel the revolutionary movement into a framework maintaining a neocolonial regime.

After the overthrow of Batista, throughout 1959-1960, the Castroist leadership pushed forward the mobilizations of the masses against imperialism. Thus the dialectic between the mass mobilizations and the authentically revolutionary orientation of the leadership (whatever might be its programmatic and theoretical limits) stimulated the evolution of the leadership team itself and linked it more and more closely to the worker and peasant masses. This process inevitably led to a showdown in the short-term with imperialism and the national bourgeoisie (whose representatives were rather quickly kicked out of the positions they had been given immediately after the fall of Batista). This made a recomposition of the traditional state apparatus impossible and imposed a reconstruction of the state and the administration under the hegemony of the Rebel Army. The result was the emergence of a workers state following the wave of generalized expropriations which after sweeping away the imperialist holdings, eliminated the property of the Cuban bourgeoisie in October 1960 as well.

Thus a revolution which had been launched with democratic and anti-imperialist objectives was rapidly transformed into a socialist revolution which broke the mechanism of capitalist accumulation and destroyed all the power of the exploiting classes.

The victory of this revolution signified a major blow against North American imperialism and imperialism generally and it contributed to a later evolution of the world relationship of forces to the detriment of capitalism. It demonstrated that capitalism could be overturned on the very doorstep of the United States and that the socialist revolution in Latin America corresponded not only to an historic necessity but also to a concrete possibility. It structurally weakened the imperialist system in a region of great strategic importance for the United States and it objectively reinforced the struggle of the exploited classes in Latin America. The Cuban revolution provoked or speeded up important conflicts and differentiations in the nationalist-populist movements of a series of countries and stimulated crises in the Latin American workers movement and in particular in the Communist parties. The disastrous effects of Stalinism on class consciousness was thus attacked head on in vanguard sectors who had broken with the CPs and their youth organizations, weakening them in a lasting way. This has permitted the emergence of a new generation of revolutionaries in the Latin American con-

continent as a whole.

It is the consciousness of this reality which is the basis of Wall Street's hostility against the Cuban revolutionary regime and explains the maintenance to this day of the economic blockade.

2. The Cuban workers state has been built and consolidated in extremely difficult conditions in the course of the last two decades. The underdeveloped point of departure, inherited from the neocolonial regime, could not be rapidly transformed. The economic blockade—even more serious for a country whose economy was more than any other in Latin America tied to that of the United States—added supplementary difficulties whose dreadful consequences cannot be underestimated.

Despite all this the revolution has enormous gains to its credit. A simple comparison between the present situation in Cuba and the reality of the underdeveloped countries still under the domination of imperialism, particularly in Latin America, allows us to give an historical verdict to the question. It confirms that the creation of collectivist relations of production is an indispensable condition for overcoming underdevelopment.

It suffices just to recall the following points:

- The economy has unquestionably grown through a reorganization and modernization of pre-existing sectors, sugar production is increasingly mechanized, there is "take-off" in new sectors and considerable progress in agricultural production mechanization;
- Thanks to planning and agreements with the workers states the risks of monoculture have been reduced, and the economic and social consequences of sugar price movements on the world market have been limited and indeed nullified during certain periods;
- The historical plague of unemployment has been eliminated;
- The masses' standard of living has been substantially improved (price stability, salary increases, drastic reduction of rent, introduction of a social security system covering the whole working population, the generalization of paid holidays etc.);
- Substantial progress has been made concerning the integration of women into social and economic life and in the creation of material conditions for their liberation;
- Free medical treatment has been introduced for everybody at all

II. The first ten years of the workers state

4. From the beginning specific characteristics have determined and marked the Cuban revolutionary process. Above all the struggle against the neocolonial regime had been led to victory by a leadership team and political current which did not come out of the traditional workers movement. Even if some of its members had belonged to the PSP or its youth organization, it was not tainted by the conceptions and methods of Stalinism. That is why for a whole stage—corresponding by and large to the first decade—the leadership of the workers state outlined, and tried to put into practice conceptions of building socialism which in some aspects were original. At least a part of the leadership team, with Guevara at its head, was stimulated even more to work in this direction by a consciousness of the profound bureaucratic deformations of the other workers states, the ill deeds of Stalinism and the past conduct of the PSP.

5. The economic choices made and the perspectives outlined have gone through significant oscillations and modifications. However we can delineate the following important characteristics.

The transition to socialism was not conceived as going along the same lines as those followed by the East European "People's Democracies." From the beginning radical expropriation measures were adopted. The first agrarian reform, while not eliminating the mechanism of capitalist accumulation, gave over 40 percent of land to collective farms belonging to the state. The massive exodus of people who did not want to accept the new regime stimulated still more the expropriations even of layers of the traditional middle classes. During the period 1963 to 1965, under the impetus of Che Guevara, there was an effort to find an original

levels, the rate of infant mortality has been drastically reduced, and life expectancy lengthened considerably;

• Free generalized education exists which has permitted Cuba to catch up with the levels of the most developed countries in a rather short period;

• The sporting and leisure system has been radically transformed in such a way as to allow the broadest masses to benefit from them.

The old ruling classes play no role either economically or politically: the majority of their representatives left the country a long time ago. Only the small and middle peasant landholders who are not integrated into collective agriculture survive from the old prerevolutionary society. These layers still have a certain weight in the production of certain products and, since 1980, they supply a free market. But, within the framework of the collectivist economy, neither their composition nor any dynamic they might represent, presents any danger for a regime towards which they, in general, have no hostility. As for the traditional urban petty-bourgeois layers, they have an absolutely marginal, indeed insignificant role, especially after the 1968 expropriation measures.

Those are the historical gains which are the basis of the deep attachment of the Cuban people to the revolution. This explains their support for the workers state and why they have continued to mobilize in a massive way at crucial times in the struggle against imperialism.

3. We must also put on the credit side of the Cuban revolution its contribution to the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggles in certain countries in the spirit of the best internationalist traditions. Cuba has committed itself very concretely at the side of other peoples and revolutionary forces, in several countries in Latin America and Africa. This continuity has been maintained in its solidarity with the Latin American guerrillas of the 1960s, the direct participation in the liberation war in Angola, and up to the substantial aid given to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua and to the revolutionary front in El Salvador. In spite of some serious failures and despite all the risks such an internationalist attitude involved and continues to involve more than ever today.

Whatever might be the vicissitudes of the next years and decades, the Cuban revolution has already written an indelible page in the history of the socialist revolutions of our time.

orientation for economic policy which avoided at one and the same time the errors of "market socialism" and of hypercentralized bureaucratic planning. But in the second half of the decade this attempt slid into pilot experiences presented as the anticipation of a communist society. All this was accompanied by a certain overestimation of the rhythms of construction of a socialist society and even led to a blurring of the differences between the communist phase and the socialist one—conceiving in a simplistic way the withering away of the categories and values of capitalism in a transitional society.

From 1964 on the policy of rapid industrialization and diversification of agricultural production was abandoned. Judged unrealistic because of



Ernesto "Che" Guevara



the effects of the economic blockade and the consequences of the exodus of a significant part of the cadres and technicians, it was replaced with a policy aiming to increase sugar production to the maximum and to use the foreign exchange resources gained in this way to mechanize and modernize this production. But from this came the error of subordinating everything to unrealistic objectives like the *zafra* (sugar harvest) of 10 million tons. In this context planning was only very partially applied. The role of material incentives was underestimated.

6. On the political level the ruling group did not understand the necessity for an institutionalization of workers democracy, that is the creation of governing bodies that could permit a real systematic participation of the masses in economic management and political decision-making, and the democratic restructuring of the mass organizations. The relations between the leadership team and the masses were not, for all that, weakened, thanks to the attention of the leaders to not losing contact with the base and to understanding and expressing the needs and feelings of the workers.

One of the most serious consequences of such a conception, characterized at the same time by paternalism and spontaneism according to Castro's analysis itself, was that the administrative apparatus was only partially renewed, and what was worse, even the new personnel were assimilated by the old. Besides this, on the one hand the army provided a basic framework in a whole series of domains and on the other hand the vacuum created by the absence of democratic revolutionary institutions was occupied by an apparatus of middle and higher cadres. These people carried out greater and greater leadership functions. In that context, more often than not, they adopted authoritarian methods, tried to consolidate their power positions and benefited from social privileges.

The PSP apparatus constituted a framework capable of hardening out these layers. This apparatus which had maintained itself through the ups and downs of the armed struggle, which it had first rejected, and of the revolution which it was slow in rallying to, was pretty well discredited in the eyes of the masses. However it was able to take on a growing weight because it had a greater number of cadres than the July 26 Movement while USSR aid against the blockade gave it a more solid base of support.

It is one of the merits of the leadership team around Castro that they understood rather rapidly the implications of the tendencies that were clearly appearing and the danger that a process of bureaucratic degeneration could also develop in Cuba. Several times they launched campaigns and real mobilizations against this danger, by denouncing before the masses the actions of certain bureaucratic cliques and apparatuses. The most significant episodes in this battle were the attack made in 1962 against the Anibal Escalante (old leader of the PSP) clique which had an analogous position to the apparatus of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) that Stalin had had in the 1920s in the Soviet Union, and the political and ideological campaign led in 1967 against bureaucratization which denounced not only leadership methods, work styles, and moral attitudes but also clearly underlined the social content of the problem. These campaigns also involved a reserve towards and even an

explicit criticism of the Soviet "model" and the practices imposed by the USSR and the other workers states' bureaucracies. It also involved polemics against the bureaucratic conception of the party which counterposed, to paraphrase Castro, "the free association of revolutionaries" to "the army of domesticated and drilled revolutionaries." It was even written that the "countries of the socialist camp were undermined by the bureaucracy."

7. Faced with imperialist threats and attacks and the economic blockade, Cuba, from the first years of the revolution, chose the path of an alliance with the other workers states and especially with the Soviet Union. It was a necessary decision.

Beyond conjunctural oscillations and occasional serious tactical concessions such a choice was not translated in the first years into an automatic policy alignment with the "socialist camp." Where it has thought it necessary the Cuban leadership indeed did not hesitate to publicly express its disagreement with the Kremlin. We just have to recall the criticisms made of the compromise reached by Khrushchev with Kennedy during the missile crisis of 1962 and of Moscow's attitude towards various Latin American countries and of Soviet, as well as Chinese, conduct during a whole phase of the Vietnam war. Even the Castro speech approving the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia contained a cautious critique of the conceptions and methods of the bureaucracy.

At the same time the Cuban leaders did not water down their critiques and attacks against Latin American communist parties and their strategy. The Cuban leadership reaffirmed the necessity in general of adopting revolutionary methods of struggle for Latin America and put forward ideas close to that of the theory of the permanent revolution. They did not hesitate to stimulate the formation of movements and organizations in opposition to the CPs and to other traditional parties and to promote through the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS), a center for the coordination of revolutionary struggles on a continental level. Besides this they did not limit themselves to "principled declarations"—they were practically involved in open support to the armed struggle in a series of countries as well as taking direct initiatives. In relation to this the struggle of Ernesto Guevara in Bolivia acquired a symbolic importance.

All this implies the Castroist leadership group based its politics on the idea that the fate of the Cuban workers state was indissolubly linked to the fate of the Latin American revolution and that it had the duty to work concretely to aid the extension of the revolution. It has thus accepted all the risks that flow from this and the consequences of a blockade that North American imperialism had inevitably maintained as a reprisal measure.

At the same time Cuba put itself in the front line of the struggle for active solidarity with the Vietnamese people. It campaigned that the necessity of anti-imperialist unity against North American aggression must not be sacrificed to the conflicts that set China and the USSR against one another and split the international movement of Communist parties. Also on this terrain it took up a vanguard role in the spirit of the best traditions of proletarian internationalism.

III. The turn: The new orientation of the 1970s

8. At the beginning of the second decade of the workers state, the Cuban leadership made a turn which had multiple and contradictory implications. It was the result of a series of events both internally and at the international level.

Internally the factor determining this turn was the failure of the 1970 *zafra*. The enormous effort that had been made at the time not only had not permitted the target of 10 million tons to be reached but it had provoked the disorganization of other important sectors of the economy with lasting negative repercussions at the level of mass consumption. On the international level it was the defeat of the Bolivian guerrillas which stimulated a self-critical reflexion, although the new perspectives may not have been spelled out precisely until some years later.

The turn was made after rather lively internal debates and was accompanied by changes at the level of intermediary cadres and leaderships

and also of people centrally responsible for economic policy. But it did not provoke fractures in the leadership group where Castro continued to play his essential role of initiator, arbitrator, and homogenizer.

9. The economic turn, the starting point of which had been the self-criticism speech of Castro on the failure of the 1970 *zafra*, was concretized in the following measures:

- The abandonment of the "special" or "mini" plans policy concerning specific sectors of economic activity which were not coordinated in practice. A more rational and long-term organization of planning under the management of the JUCEPLAN (central junta of planning) was adopted. The objective of the leadership was in the first instance to put an end to the wastage and inefficiency of investment and to determine priorities taking into account the difficulties and tensions caused by the



Cuban troops in Angola.

underdeveloped base of departure as well as the possibilities of the different economic sectors.

- A first significant rectification of the methods of management in the workplaces involving giving them much greater autonomy and within this framework increasing the personal responsibility of the director.

- A revision of work organization aiming essentially to ensure productivity, to impose stricter discipline and to combat the absenteeism phenomenon. Along the same lines there was the generalized introduction of the norms system, the reorganization of the criteria of pay which meant a first widening of the salary scale and the recourse to piecework, productivity-linked money wages, as well as bonuses on a much greater scale. These measures taken as a whole went against the egalitarian objectives put forward previously and were aimed more at the workers than the bureaucrats. It was in this period that a law providing for sanctions against those who do not work (*ley de vagancia*) was adopted while the role of voluntary work was reduced. In a general way the emphasis was increasingly put on material incentives, particularly those of an individual character.

- The maintenance of the status quo concerning relations in the countryside with a rigorous respect for the voluntary character of peasants' adhesion to the cooperatives and even more to their integration in the collectivist sector. These measures took on a more systematic character from the First Congress of the Communist Party (1975) and have been developed even more in the most recent period with the setting up of the new "System of management and planning of the economy."

These options go generally along the same lines as those made in other workers states from the middle of the sixties. They are particularly inspired by certain orientations adopted in Hungary and the ideas of the Soviet economists of the Lieberman school. They involve the same dangers. Thus the reference to the law of value being able to regulate production, and therefore being able to become a factor determining the choice of investment, combined with an increased autonomy of the enterprises under the authority of the director, risks becoming a factor of disorganization of planning and introducing new inequalities between economic sectors. It can also increase differentiation between sectors of the working class, as well as between workers and technical or administrative functionaries.

The new general reform of the salary system, which increases the

spread of wage rates and increases still more the importance of bonuses, can also be considered as a first step along this road. It is in this framework that it is necessary to see the option taken in favor of a greater satisfaction of individual needs especially in consumer durable goods. The recent introduction of a free peasant market simultaneously increases the possibilities for the supply of foodstuffs and also for social inequality (the difference between the free market price and the state distribution price being considerable).

The option of maintaining very close relations with the USSR and the other workers states of Eastern Europe has been reinforced since the joinings of COMECON in 1972. This creates a pressure to take into account, if only partially, the plans of these states as a framework of reference.

10. The target of the 1970 self-criticism was the previous criteria of economic construction considered as Raul Castro was to say later, as idealist and utopian: "We had misunderstood the objective economic laws that we must respect and the experience of other countries on which we must base ourselves and we had started, at certain times, to invent original procedures for managing the economy." (Raul Castro, March 3, 1976.)

At the same time it targeted administrative methods of leadership and the absence of the organized participation of the masses.

It was on the basis of this assertion that the Cuban leadership also launched a systematic campaign to achieve two main objectives, that is:

- The relaunching, the reinforcement and the more democratic functioning of mass organizations at the base and the definitive structuring of the party;

- The setting up of a system of People's Power at both local and national levels, which favors on the one hand the participation of the masses on the local level in sorting out the more flagrant problems of daily life, and on the other hand institutionalizes the central control of the party on the national level.

The congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) in 1973 (which also has as an objective the constitution of an organizational relay for implementing the new economic policy by contributing to stimulating production), the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) congress in 1977, the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) congress in 1977 registered the main stages in the effort to attain the first objective. The reorganization of the judicial system, pilot-experience of organization in Matanzas Province in 1974, the adoption of the new Constitution in 1976 and the setting up of the system of People's Power in the whole country at the end of the same year marked the steps taken in order to reach the second objective.

Thus from then on the Cuban workers state was based on a system of organization of the masses which had been clearly reinforced and on a political structure which, despite all its limits, represented an important change in relation to the first decade after the victory of the revolution and which ensured a more active participation of the masses in the solution of their immediate problems. That is one of the factors which explains why, despite all the difficulties and efforts that have had to be made during more than twenty years, the leadership can count on a base of support that is still massive and which is expressed in a new wave of powerful mobilizations after the victory of the insurrection in Nicaragua—in particular on the questions of defense of Cuba against imperialism and support for the revolution in other countries.

11. At the beginning of the 1970s, the international policy of Cuba went through an evolution. This led to an alignment on a number of key policy stands with the Soviet leadership (without embracing the Kremlin's global strategy of peaceful coexistence), to openings towards Latin American bourgeois governments and regimes characterized as anti-imperialist and revolutionary, to a rapprochement with the Communist parties and to some "stand-offs," even some ruptures with revolutionary movements in certain countries in Latin America.

Such an attitude was not dictated only by the fact that Cuba still had need of economic and military aid from the USSR. That carried weight previously. The new factor was that after the defeat of a whole series of guerrilla movements the Cuban leaders modified their analyses of the

situation in Latin America and drew their conclusions.

They did not give up the strategic perspective of a victory of the revolution in Latin America, but they no longer saw this coming within the short term. They chose therefore to integrate themselves more within the "socialist camp" and at the same time endeavored to exploit any possibility of alliances with bourgeois nationalist or national populist governments (Peru, Panama, Ecuador, for some years Venezuela, Argentina during the period of the second edition of Peronism, Mexico). From that followed the substantial improvement of their relations with the Communist parties with which all polemic was halted. The conference and resolution of the Latin American CPs of 1975 reflected the rapprochement which had come about.

This alignment on a number of the key policy stands of the Soviet leadership, which was presented as authentically Leninist and revolutionary, was accompanied with an acceptance of many general conceptions proper to the Soviet bureaucracy. An analogous attitude was taken towards the leaderships of countries under the influence of Moscow,

IV. A workers state with bureaucratic deformations

12. According to the balance sheet drawn at the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba the objectives of the 1976-1980 plan have not been reached, the rate of growth had been inferior to what had been forecast.

While having made enormous progress in relation to the situation in 1959—confirmed among other indicators by the fact that industrial investment is today preponderant—and having created the conditions for great social gains on a mass scale, the Cuban economy has not yet overcome the consequences of underdevelopment inherited from the colonial and neocolonial era and it is still undergoing serious tensions and contradictions. That has been explicitly recognized on several occasions by the leadership themselves.

In the course of the last two years, speeches, congress documents, and articles have denounced the fact that:

- "Considerable domains" of the economy (Raúl Castro) are characterized by a lack of efficiency;
- Work productivity remains too low and absenteeism and passivity are far from being eliminated;
- Extremely serious phenomena of bureaucratic disorder exist both within the workplaces and at the level of production as a whole;
- The new planning methods and new management of the workplaces have not put an end to the administrative irresponsibility and anarchy;
- The norms system has produced serious drawbacks;
- Active mass participation in production is not generalized and too often leaders and cadres are guilty of harmful, slack attitudes;
- Careerism and "amiguismo" (old boy network) as well as the scramble for privileges wreak havoc;
- The survival of a relatively substantial private sector continues to represent an obstacle to the rationalization and mechanization of agriculture and the rhythm of growth of cooperatives remains insufficient.

With some ups and downs the remedies envisaged and the measures taken from 1970 on have had positive effects in the domain of economic rationality, production growth, and the improvement of the masses' standard of living. But the experiences of other workers states show that as long as there is no really democratic planning and management in practice of the enterprises by the workers, reforms aiming to ensure greater autonomy of the workplaces nourish centrifugal tendencies which are capable of disorganizing the plan and of creating and aggravating economic disequilibrium. They can also increase the decision-making power, and in the last analysis the privileges, of a layer of bureaucrats. Furthermore these changes are being carried out in an unfavorable economic context. The growing differentials in wages also imply a dangerous social and political dynamic which can begin to impinge over the long term, on the homogeneity of the working class itself and create conflicts of interests within it.

13. If in Cuba analogous problems to those that other workers states have experienced or are going through are being posed, and if certain of

even those most hated by the masses, such as that of Czechoslovakia. As regards China the official statements and the press rival the Soviet texts in the extreme character of their attacks and ideological polemic.

Towards the middle of the 1970s Cuba made some attempts to re-establish links with the United States in the hope above all of achieving the end of the economic blockade. The fact that the Castroist leadership never envisaged major concessions demonstrates however that these attempts did not involve any renunciation of its fundamental anti-imperialist orientation.

The Angolan events resolved this question. Cuba did not hesitate to directly intervene in another continent, contributing in a decisive way to the defeat of the imperialists and the South African racists and defying Washington just at the very moment when it was looking for the opening of dialogue. The USSR itself was also fully involved in the success of the Angolan operation, which it had supported logistically, but that doesn't at all change the internationalist character of the Cuban enterprise, which received broad support from the masses.

the solutions envisaged resemble solutions tried elsewhere, it is because both on the political terrain and on the economic terrain analogies exist between Cuba and the other workers states. More concretely:

- In the same way as in other workers states planning is essentially decided from above. The possibility exists to contest and rectify objectives at a local or workplace level and the decision-making powers at the local level are real. But this does not prevent the fact that the options at the macroeconomic level are the prerogative of a limited number of leaders;
- The management of the workplaces provides a preponderant role for the director, who is designated from above. Workers participation in the organization of production, through the intermediary of the trade unions, does not imply any decision-making powers;
- Work organization is based on norms and "socialist emulation." Material incentives are now given priority and the salary reform involves an accentuation of the differentials within the working class and even more between the working class and the cadre and leaders at the technical and administrative level;
- The party, which is not composed in its majority of workers, especially at the regional and national leadership levels, constitutionally exercises a role of leadership and control over all institutions and mass organizations, by predetermining, to a very large extent, their decisions. It is conceived as a monolithic entity which excludes the right to have tendencies or for alternative positions to be reflected internally. Members do not know about the debates which take place inside the leading group and congresses are more often than not ritual affairs, which, furthermore are convened only at long intervals;
- The trade union is also under the leadership of the party and it is only the leaders who can eventually influence decision-making on the economic plan. The right of tendency is forbidden;
- The monolithism of the party is combined with ideological monolithism, the party is considered the guarantor of the strictest orthodoxy;
- Whatever might be Cuba's links with COMECON (of which it is a member) and the way this consequently conditions certain economic options, socialist construction is still essentially conceived of within the nation state.

14. The question is posed of deciding if the analogies outlined above, following from the developments of the last ten years, indicate that Cuba itself has undergone a bureaucratic degeneration.

Bureaucratic tendencies were already manifest in the first period of the revolution created by the economically and culturally backward starting point. These tendencies especially concerned the cadre and leaders at the intermediary level. The limitation to this level does not eliminate in itself the danger. It was a case of a relatively numerous layer which had a considerable weight in the application of the orientations and measures decided by the leading group and which partially could also influence the elaboration of central decisions. In the USSR of the

twenties, incidentally, it was exactly an analogous layer which played a primary role in the process of bureaucratization.

The evolution that the structures and organization of the economy have gone through and the latest decisions enlarging the power of the workplaces and their managements, objectively favors a reinforcement of these tendencies. These people can also exploit to their advantage the tight links between Cuba and the degenerated Soviet workers state which has led the Castroist leadership to express an unconditional support to the bureaucrats both in the USSR and the other East European countries against any critical movement, mass action or strike.

The fact that education of cadre and leaders takes place often in the USSR, is based on Soviet sources and that even school texts borrow largely from Moscow's ideological arsenal, has even more serious consequences. Since bureaucratic conceptions are transmitted by this bias the education of the young generations can only suffer seriously as a result.

The institutionalization achieved since 1976 has contradictory aspects. On the one hand, at the municipal level it stimulates a more active participation of the masses and favors their active intervention. The electoral system itself assures the possibility of choice to electors. The latter have the possibility of exercising a control on the activity of their elected representatives in the report-back/balance-sheet meetings, even if, as Fidel Castro himself stated at the Second Congress, this is unevenly applied in practice. The right of recall exists not only in principle but it has also been exercised in practice in a nonnegligible number of cases.

But on the other hand at the regional level the mechanisms for participation are much less effective and in any case are indirect. For the National Assembly, which is formed from a secondary election (from the votes of delegates elected at lower levels), representatives can even be elected who have not been directly elected by the people and the candidatures are proposed by the party or organizations under its control. In any case the overwhelming majority of the representatives are members of the party. The plenary sessions of the assembly only take place twice a year for several days. It is the Council of State and the commissions which directly take or determine the most important decisions on which the electorate has no chance of having a say.

Therefore there exists at a local level a democracy with real participation, while at the central level there is no participation with real decision-making power. Besides this there is a heavy concentration of powers at the summit, symbolized by the fact that Fidel Castro is at one and the same time, the president of the Council of State, prime minister, and also secretary of the party. It is, on the other hand, also significant that the campaign led in the last months of 1979 against disorder, irresponsibility, and bureaucracy, etc., ended up with the adding of supplementary

functions and an increased power of control to Castro himself and some other members of the restricted leading group.

Similar considerations apply in relation to the mass organizations which often have an active, even enthusiastic, membership and have in principle a democratic functioning at the local and sectoral level, but without that implying a possibility of participating in central decisions which in the last analysis belongs to the leadership group of the party. This contradictory situation is clearly shown in relation to the CDRs, defined by Castro at the Second Congress as the original contribution made by Cuba to the experience of the international workers movement (and which indeed does not have an equivalent in other workers states). On the one hand these gather together about half the population and facilitate, among other things, active participation in the rank-and-file institutions of People's Power, but on the other hand they only held their first national conference seventeen years after their foundation.

15. The Cuban workers state is characterized by contradictory traits and tendencies, partly determined by its historical origin, partly as a consequence of the choices made by its leadership team. On the one hand bureaucratic tendencies exist, expressed by a layer of cadres and leaders who, thanks to posts of control and command in the structures of the state, army, and party, benefit from social privileges. Furthermore structures and mechanisms exist which favor bureaucratization and are analogous to those in other workers states. Pressures linked to the USSR's military and economic aid, which Cuba needs, strongly encourages these tendencies. On the other hand substantial differences remain in comparison to the bureaucratized workers states. They reside in the fact that there is not a bureaucracy crystallized as a privileged social layer comparable to that which reigns in other workers states. The privileges that a layer of bureaucrats enjoy in Cuba still remain limited. The leadership grouping remains essentially the one which was the protagonist of the struggle for the overthrow of the neocolonial regime and of the first years of the workers state. It does not act from the point of view of defending the interests of this layer of bureaucrats and it is not a question for them of reinforcing and consolidating these forces. It strives, within the framework of its conceptions, to defend and express the interests of the masses.

The relations which the leaders maintain with the masses, while not lacking in paternalism, are incomparably more alive and direct than in any other workers state. The structures of institutionalization are not organs of a true socialist democracy, but neither are they moribund bodies which prevent any real mass participation.

On the level of military organization and mobilization an important role is given over to the militias, which have just been relaunched in a big way at the Second Congress as the riposte to imperialist threats in Central America.

All this explains why, contrary to what has happened in other workers states, the masses do not consider the leading group as hostile or foreign to their interests and aspirations. They have always ensured it their support through mass mobilizations which, far from being eroded, have gone through a new powerful upsurge faced with the internal difficulties of spring 1980 and the more recent threats of imperialism made following the impact of revolutionary developments in Latin America.

Revolutionary Marxists therefore do not put forward the same strategic objectives for Cuba as they advance for the USSR and the other workers states. They do not put forward a policy of a political revolution for the overturn of a bureaucratic caste. They reject at the same time any fatalistic idea according to which in the last analysis the bureaucratic degeneration of Cuba is inevitable. The tendencies to bureaucratization can be successfully reversed by internal transformations, by the extension of the revolution in Latin America which would break Cuba's isolation and, even more so, by the combination of the two.

Progress towards a socialist society in Cuba presupposes a democratic socialist reorganization which transforms the present structures and builds new ones with the aim of ensuring the democratic management of the plan and self-management of the workplaces, as well as the effective participation of the masses in political leadership at all levels. This implies organs of a workers/people's council type, democratically centralized, which could result, for instance, from a development of bodies



Prensa Latina

Territorial Militia marches on May 1, 1981.



Prensa Latina

May Day 1981 parade in Havana.

such as the CDRs or Assemblies of People's Power.

The realization of this objective necessitates freedom of expression and the right to organize—even if the demand for this right, in the framework of the new society and with respect for its laws, does not signify necessarily that revolutionary Marxists would want to create a new party. It implies that the debates on planning and the big economic options are developed at all levels, that different opinions can be expressed on all the vital problems regarding the construction of socialism and communism and there should be no restriction on theoretical debate. The right to strike must be recognized. Trade unions have to be really independent from the state and the party and have an effectively democratic internal structure with the right of expressing different points of view and forming tendencies. The same democratic rights must exist within the party. The struggle for women's liberation must be pursued in order to achieve complete sexual equality. All material or moral discrimination against homosexuals must be eliminated. A clear distinction also should exist between the state and government on the one hand, with their immediate economic, diplomatic and military constraints, and the party on the other hand, which in all circumstances must defend the global interests of the proletariat.

Those are the main objectives pursued by revolutionary Marxists in Cuba.

16. The specificities and internal contradictions of the Cuban workers state cannot but be reflected in its international policy.

The alignment on a number of the key policy stands of Moscow's political line led the Cuban leadership group to accept the theory of "two camps." It is in this framework that it is necessary to situate approval to the intervention of the Soviet army in Kabul and what is more serious an appreciation of the Polish events which fits in with the interests of the Warsaw and Moscow bureaucracies and results in an anticipated acceptance of an eventual intervention which would aim to "save the integrity of the socialist camp." Besides that the warm support expressed each time the occasion presents itself for a regime like that of Husak in Czech-

oslovakia, which is hated by the masses, has annulled even the criticisms Castro formulated in 1968 at the same time as he approved the entry of the Warsaw Pact troops into Prague.

Cuban policy in the so-called "nonaligned movement" aims legitimately to exploit the contradictions between these countries and the imperialist powers. But it also involves apologetic attitudes towards regimes which in the majority of cases exploit and brutally oppress the masses of their countries. This is expressed, by among other things, theorizations bereft of any scientific basis and taken from the Moscow ideological armory which include among the countries who "have proclaimed socialism or who have a socialist orientation," a series of neocolonial regimes of Africa and the Arab world. The practical consequences of such conceptions can be verified in the light of the attitude adopted by Cuba faced with the war between Iran and Iraq. Nobody challenges the right of Cuban diplomacy to try and mediate to end the military conflict. But when Castro speaks about "two peoples engaged in revolutionary processes" he blurs the essential difference between the Iranian revolution, which revolutionaries throughout the world must defend and the Ba'athist regime in Iraq which has put itself in the front line of the attacks against this revolution.

Cuban political support to a certain number of neocolonial states on the African continent is not situated only on the level of defense against imperialism or of state-to-state diplomatic relations.

The Cuban CP apologetically covers for petty-bourgeois leaderships who govern these bourgeois states, like the "jacobin" Ethiopian leadership or the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

The construction of the Fourth International, the formation of revolutionary parties on the African continent, precisely passes through the rupture of militants and groups with petty-bourgeois nationalism and the illusions invested in these supposedly "progressive" states (which in reality accommodate to imperialist domination and do not respect the essential demands of the masses).

Such a policy by the Cuban leadership in no way facilitates or favors the emergence of radical political currents on the African continent. It constitutes a real obstacle in the path of building revolutionary parties in Africa.

To analyze the Cuban support for the Angolan, Ethiopian, and Congolese regimes only as a revolutionary internationalist attitude without any nuances is to whitewash the petty-bourgeois leaderships at the head of these states and, by aligning on their political positions, help prevent the building of the Fourth International in these countries and in this continent.

The intervention in Angola is also not without contradictions. It has been justly acclaimed by revolutionaries as an anti-imperialist and internationalist action. However the presence of Cuban forces did not represent only a guarantee against an imperialist counteroffensive, but also implied unreserved support to the regime and on this the judgment cannot be the same. In spite of the Angolan regime's official rhetoric, it is not at all socialist and is in reality constructing a neocolonial state in the framework of a compromise with imperialism and in agreement with some of the most reactionary neocolonial regimes. It does not hesitate to have recourse to repression against currents of the mass movement. Similar considerations hold for Ethiopia. Here if the Cubans were not directly involved in the campaign against Eritrea, that did not stop them continuing to support a government which denies the Eritrean people the right to self-determination. Thus they swallowed one of the "fundamental principles" of this "holy alliance" which is the Organization of African Unity (OAU)—that is, the principle of the inviolability of frontiers which had been fixed more often than not in function of colonial and neocolonial interests without any consideration for the aspirations of peoples and nationalities.

The Cuban government is perfectly right to exploit the contradictions which exist between the imperialist countries and to come to economic agreements with them which limit however slightly the consequences of the economic blockade. The criteria outlined on this point in the Second Congress report are correct. From this however it is absolutely not the case that it is correct to give a cover to representatives of the bourgeoisie by expressing positive appreciations on their political role. When Castro, for example, eulogizes Adolfo Suárez, who supposedly ensured the

"transition in Spain in a brilliant and progressive way," he certainly does not share the opinion of the working class of the Spanish state and does not help their struggle.

Furthermore, the Cuban leaders do not go along with the criticisms made even by certain West European communist parties of the USSR and the "socialist camp." However they do not express any fundamental reservations about those parties neoreformist perspectives and strategy and they present them each time as the real defenders of the interests of the masses in their respective countries.

In relation to Latin America the Cuban leaders maintain their perspective of opening dialogue with bourgeois governments and regimes that they consider "progressive" or "anti-imperialist." The most significant example remains that of its attitude to the Mexican government and to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) which are presented as anti-imperialist, indeed as revolutionary. The least one can say is that such an attitude, precisely because of the prestige of Cuba, can only complicate even more the difficult task of those who struggle in Mexico for the essential objective of the political independence of the workers movement in relation to the bourgeoisie. It does not educate the Latin American masses any more than prepare the Cuban masses for the blows that the Mexican bourgeoisie will inevitably strike them with when that corresponds to its immediate class interests. In other cases, despite partial rectifications, the orientation remains ambiguous. This is the case particularly with Argentina. Cuba has to denounce the crimes of the dictatorship but at the same time it has wanted, and seems to want to continue, to avoid a conflict with the line of the USSR which has excellent relations with Videla, and with the Argentinian CP itself. Finally with regard to Peru the Cuban leaders do not seem to have made any critical reflection on their support to the bourgeois populist military regime.

However in the course of the last two years and especially starting from the outbreak of the revolutionary crisis in Nicaragua, the policy of the Cuban leadership towards certain countries in Latin America has been reorientated within the perspective of an active intervention in the developing revolutionary struggles. It provided a determinant aid on all terrains to the Nicaragua FSLN whose reunification it facilitated and after the victorious insurrection the Cuban leadership strongly committed itself, despite considerable sacrifices, to the reconstruction and defense of the country. It has played and continues to play an analogous role in relation to the revolutionary movement in El Salvador. It has helped, and continues to help, the forces struggling against the proimperialist terrorist regime in Guatemala. It supports the new regime in Grenada. At the July 26 anniversary celebrations Castro solemnly reaffirmed that

the experiences of El Salvador, Chile, and Bolivia proved that there was only "a single road: revolution" and a "single means: armed revolutionary struggle," . . . "the road taken by Cuba, Grenada and Nicaragua."

The report approved by the Second Congress of the Cuban CP indicates even more clearly that such an orientation is based on an analysis of the changes that have taken place in the Latin American situation, which are shown concretely with "the tremendous popular victories in Nicaragua and Grenada, the irresistible struggle of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan peoples, the combativity of the masses which has reached an unprecedented level" more generally in the continent and the Caribbean, "the fierce resistance of the Chilean people, the heroic struggles" being carried out in Bolivia and elsewhere, "the unprecedented strikes" in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, and "the constant struggle of the Argentinian workers."

The Cuban leadership has decided to exploit this new situation—while being conscious of the risks they are taking. It is also conscious of the fact that the evolution of the relationship of forces at a world level to the detriment of imperialism—which was another theme of the Second Congress analysis—carries with it the danger of criminal reactions from imperialism and Cuba could be one of the priority targets for this response. It does not run for cover, it does not conceal from its people that the revolutionary crisis in Central America could provoke aggression from the North American imperialists as a last resort to avoid the disintegration of a strategic position already shaken by the Nicaraguan revolution. Its reply has been clear: while being disposed to sort out its differences with the United States, Cuba is not at all ready to trade its solidarity with Central American revolutionaries, or its internationalist initiatives more generally, nor break its alliances. It commits itself forcefully, and will continue to, so that imperialism is forced to give up its criminal operations, or in the case that it does not do that, to draw it into a new Vietnam in Central America, Cuba itself and certain other Latin American countries.

The significance of such an orientation is clear: the Cuban leadership is banking on the extension of the revolution in Latin America. It considers this possible and necessary and, in the last analysis, this represents the only real guarantee of the survival and development of the revolution in Cuba itself. This is a supplementary proof that it is not adopting a conservative orientation which would reflect the interests of a bureaucratic caste. In spite of its contradictions and in particular some of the attitudes of its leadership confronted with the problems and struggle of the other sectors of the world revolution, it continues to make a major contribution to the victory of the revolution in Latin America.

V. Our orientation to the Cuban revolution and the Castroist current

17. The Fourth International hailed the formation of the Cuban workers state in 1960 as a victory of historic significance for the working class and exploited masses of Latin America. In all countries where it had forces and in the first place in Latin America, it mobilized in active campaigns of solidarity with the Cuban revolution. Trotskyist organizations participated in the congress of Latin American youth which took place in Havana at a crucial moment in the confrontation between the revolution and North American imperialism.

The common analysis and positions taken in relation to the Cuban revolution greatly contributed to the 1963 reunification. The theses of the reunification congress explained that: "In its evolution toward revolutionary Marxism, the July 26 Movement set a pattern that now stands as an example for a number of other countries." And another text of the same congress pointed out the specificities of the Castroist current, whose leadership was characterized as, "by far the most advanced political leadership of all the workers states." The 1965 congress defined the Castroist current as an "autonomous, fundamentally revolutionary current of the communist movement." When OLAS was set up, the Fourth International reaffirmed its appreciation of Cuba's role in Latin America and expressed its willingness to undertake united actions with OLAS and its affiliated organizations, despite divergences of methods and political conceptions.

At the present stage it considers the defense of the Cuban workers

state as more than ever a priority task. Mobilizations along these lines must be closely combined with mobilizations in defense of the workers and peasants government in Nicaragua and the regime set up as a result of the insurrection in Grenada as well as solidarity with the revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala.

18. A Castroist current emerged in Latin America immediately after the victory of the revolution in Cuba. It reached its zenith at the OLAS conference in 1967. It became eclipsed as a result of the defeats of the guerrilla movements and the changes made by the Cuban leaders to their political line in Latin America. It has continued to exist thanks to the anti-imperialist role constantly being played by the Cuban workers state. This also represents something materially and ideologically important for Latin American militants persecuted by the dictators and hounded from their countries. It entered a new phase of growth starting with the revolutionary crisis in Nicaragua and its new development is continuing as a result of the victories of the revolution in Nicaragua and the popular insurrection in Grenada—as well as with the heroic struggle which is already undermining the base of the neocolonial regime in El Salvador.

It is necessary to distinguish two aspects of the phenomenon.

The first aspect is represented by the Cuban leadership, which for a whole period has put itself forward as a current of the international workers movement differentiating itself, including through public po-

lemics, from all other currents. In the middle of the 1960s it tried to set up, with Vietnam and North Korea, a convergence on international policy whose basis would be the fact that the three countries were the most directly exposed to the blows of North American imperialism. It was looking also to establish more or less direct agreements with other Latin American currents and even with some communist parties or with tendencies working within them. It toned down these specific traits after 1970 by underlining its alignment with the USSR and its integration into the "Socialist Camp."

Especially during this period the Cuban leadership completed the elaboration of an ideology and overall political orientation which, while placing itself within the framework of a consistent struggle against imperialism, combined:

- A mobilization of the masses to defend the Cuban workers state against any reactionary threat both from the exterior and from within, and support of revolutionary struggles particularly in Central America;
- An alignment on some of the key policy stands of the international policy and ideological positions of the Soviet bureaucracy and therefore an opposition to the antibureaucratic struggles carried out by the working class in the USSR and in the other bureaucratized workers states.

The Cuban leadership is therefore revolutionary because it has led the revolutionary process in Cuba and supported the extension of the revolution in other countries, such as today in Central America. But it is not revolutionary Marxist to the extent that, from the point of view of the world revolution as a whole, it oscillates between supporting the extension of the revolution on the one hand and, on the other hand, aligning itself on certain major axes of the international policy of the USSR. This leads it to take positions that go against the fundamental interests of the working class (as the attitude taken towards the big struggles of the Polish workers demonstrates).

In the present phase, it has taken up the initiative again by fully committing itself in Central America and by de facto differentiating itself, on this terrain, both from the other workers states and from most Latin American communist parties.

The second aspect is represented by movements and organizations which at different times, have established relations with the Cuban leadership with the aim of gaining from its experience and receiving material aid. They constitute a specific current in the sense that they have drawn analogous lessons from the Cuban revolution and rejected both the conceptions of the Soviet bureaucracy and the communist parties under its influence, as well as Maoism, without, for all that, coming to revolutionary Marxism. But it is a heterogenous current which has never elaborated a common, lasting and overall theoretical and political base. The fact that the majority of its components underwent very serious crises—a certain number disappeared, others went through many vicissitudes and still others have broken with Cuba—is the practical proof of this. Even the current which maintained the greatest continuity and never suffered a major defeat, the Nicaraguan FSLN had its ups and downs, at one time resulting in a serious rupture, with the adoption for a certain period, by important sectors (if not by a majority) of its militants, of positions rather different from those of the Cubans. It was only in the final phase of the struggle and after the victory that their ideas became closer and increasingly homogenized with the Cubans. In El Salvador the process has been even more complex and it is difficult to say right now what the implications of a prolongation of the struggle or a short term victory would be for the homogenization of a common current. The existence of a workers and peasants government in Nicaragua and, even more so, a future victory of the revolution in El Salvador, would inevitably pose new problems flowing both from the specificities of the developments in each country as well as the interaction between these developments and the Cuban process.

The victory of the revolution in Nicaragua and the development of struggles in El Salvador, in any case, has resulted in an increase in the prestige of the Cuban leadership in the eyes of the masses and revolutionary militants in a whole series of Latin American countries and therefore their receptivity to the ideas and perspectives put forward by it. In this sense not only is the Castroist current a reality but it is capable of exercising a growing force of attraction.



Fred Murphy/IFP

Grenadian leader Maurice Bishop at rally in Nicaragua.

19. The Fourth International has systematically looked for unity of action and collaboration in the perspective of a common struggle against imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation with currents involved in revolutionary struggles. In this spirit it has rejected and will continue to reject any sectarian attitude towards the Cuban leadership despite the wrong positions the latter has taken on events as crucial as May 1968 in France, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, and the present crisis of the Polish bureaucratic regime. This applies also to those movements identifying with Castroist conceptions and political tradition. Its orientation towards them remains one of the search for united activities.

Sections of the Fourth International, in the first place in Latin America, will be in the vanguard of solidarity campaigns with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada against all imperialist threats and maneuvers. In Western Europe, North America, and Japan it will take all necessary initiatives for making the workers movements and its mass organizations conscious of the problems faced by the liberation fighters of Central America. We will try and organize campaigns like we did during the aggression against Vietnam. A worldwide solidarity campaign against imperialist action in Central America must be considered a priority task in this period for the International.

In Nicaragua revolutionary Marxists must be fully part of any project of the FSLN to construct a revolutionary party and, in this framework, they put forward proposals for developing and consolidating the revolution. In El Salvador they join the FMLN and in Guatemala they integrate themselves in the organizations leading the struggle against the proimperialist dictatorship. They carry out this orientation as loyal revolutionary militants. At the same time as they respect the organizational framework in which they operate they struggle for the program of the Fourth International and they group together its supporters.

It would be to commit a sectarian error to make a pretext of existing

divergences and reject any possibility of collaboration in a perspective of common revolutionary struggle. It would be to commit just as serious an opportunist error to believe that, in order to achieve this collaboration it is preferable to ignore or to blur over disagreements, to idealize the other's positions. An already long experience has taught us that people who commit these symmetrical errors can pass quite abruptly from one extreme to the other.

At the present stage, the questions that must be debated in the workers and revolutionary movement in Latin America are the following:

- What are the lessons we can draw right now from the revolution in Central America, to what extent are they valid for other Latin American countries?

- What should be the content of a united front policy against imperialism and the dictatorships, what policy for unity with revolutionary organizations, what attitude must be taken, within the framework of class independence towards bourgeois sectors or personalities who oppose existing regimes?

- What must be the specific tasks of trade-union organizations, the struggle for their independence from the state and what relations must be established between mass organizations and political formations?

- How should one conceive of relations with forces who are struggling in other sectors of the world revolution: the working class in the capitalist industrialized countries and the masses who are mobilizing in the antibureaucratic struggles in the workers states; the need for an international mass organization synthesizing the essential lessons of the revolutionary struggles throughout the world.

- The necessary differentiation between the role of the workers state and that of the party in these states must be clear.

In this debate revolutionary Marxists give the following responses:

- The experience of Nicaragua, following that of Cuba, has confirmed that the overthrow of proimperialist regimes is only possible through revolutionary struggle which breaks the bourgeois state apparatus and culminates in an insurrection whose protagonist will be the broad exploited masses organized in democratic revolutionary bodies. The active and organized participation of the masses is a *sine qua non* condition for blocking any attempt to restore a neocolonial regime.

- It would be wrong however to think that the lessons of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions are automatically applicable to other Latin American countries whose socioeconomic structures and political history are different. In particular it would be wrong to think that in such

countries one should adopt the same formula of political alliances.

- The conquest of the political independence of the working class from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces must represent the central axis of the struggle of revolutionaries.

- It would be puerile not to play on the contradictions of the bourgeoisie, it would be absurd to refuse unity in action with some bourgeois personalities or groups and not to make tactical agreements with them. But no programmatic or strategic compromise is possible with bourgeois forces. Such compromises would inevitably put into question the independence and leadership role of the proletariat, supported by other exploited layers, and can only hold back or divert their mobilizations.

- The trade-union organizations must be independent from the state and existing governments which implies a hard fight against the corrupt and traitorous bureaucracies, for trade-union democracy, for the unitary character of the trade union which must accept in its ranks all workers independent of their political, philosophical, or religious opinions, for trade unions' organizational independence from political parties.

- Imperialism will not be progressively weakened, placed in an impossible position for launching counterattacks, and then finally overturned unless all sectors of the world revolution progress. The revolutionaries in Latin America, like those of all the other colonial countries have therefore an interest in the successful development of workers struggles in the industrialized capitalist countries. In these countries also victory will not be possible through reformist strategies by the electoral road; it will only be won by the revolutionary road. Finally revolutionaries throughout the world have the duty to support the struggles of the masses in the bureaucratized workers states unleashed for the defense of their interests and for elementary democratic rights against the privileged bureaucratic caste which oppresses them.

It is the common experience of the revolutionary Marxists and the other revolutionary Latin American currents in all the unfolding struggles which will permit the clarification of these questions, the verification of the respective positions and the significance of the divergences, and the testing out of the possibilities of the coming together of different currents in the workers movement.

The Fourth International will play its role not only through political and theoretical debates and clarification but especially to the extent that it is capable of proving in practice the validity of its program and its capacity of leading the struggles of the masses through its own organized forces. □

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



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

Yes! Start my subscription now!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

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

Make checks payable to:
Intercontinental Press
Mail to:
Intercontinental Press
410 West Street
New York, N.Y. 10014

First three months of the new diplomacy

Socialist Party continues defense of imperialist interests

By Christian Picquet

[The following article appeared in the September 25 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

In the September 12 issue of the French Socialist Party's journal *l'Unité*, Claude Cheysson, the minister of foreign relations, defined the "two principal aspects" of French foreign policy in this way:

"A certain view of man, which leads us to oppose all totalitarianism; and also, since we are unfortunately right in the main path where the two great powers confront each other, we are in the Atlantic alliance."

The conference of the main capitalist countries held last July in Ottawa clearly showed how the new leadership group intends to approach one of these "aspects." Like the other delegations, the group led by François Mitterrand clearly lined up with Washington's demands, justifying the intensification of the arms race by "concern" over the "ongoing growth of Soviet power."

Alignment with Washington

This is not really surprising since several days earlier President Mitterrand had told the West German weekly *Stern*:

"If I condemn neutralism, it is because I believe that peace is linked to the balance of forces in the world. The installation of Soviet SS-20 missiles and Backfire bombers breaks that balance in Europe. I do not accept this and I agree that it is necessary to rearm to reestablish the balance point."

But this orientation is not restricted to supporting the new bellicose views of U.S. diplomacy. For some time the Pentagon has been pressing the European states to massively increase their arms spending.

France under former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, although formally outside of NATO, had been committed to this path.

By making preparations to build the neutron bomb, Premier Pierre Mauroy's government has committed itself to following its predecessor's path.

This policy leads to serious contradictions with the other Social Democratic parties in Europe. It has led Cheysson to publicly condemn the British Labour Party's program favoring unilateral disarmament. In addition, the chief French diplomat has openly called for Spain's entry into NATO, while the Socialists in that

country are fighting the move. As Felipe González, leader of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) remarked, "To be more consistent, Claude Cheysson should also carry out a campaign in favor of France's reintegration into the alliance's military structure."

Finally, the French representatives at the September 10 meeting of the bureau of the Union of Socialist Parties of the European



FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND

Community caused the rejection of a motion by the Dutch party condemning the U.S. decision to build the neutron bombs.

At the same time, the French authorities have stepped up their noble-sounding declarations regarding the Third World. They have argued for the development of North-South relations, they have recognized the people's forces in El Salvador, they have condemned apartheid in South Africa. In the present context, such initiatives are in marked contrast to Washington's strategy and have undeniably positive effect. Nonetheless, they do not form a truly anti-imperialist policy.

"Planetary New Deal"

In the first place, Paris is trying at all costs to preserve the traditional spheres of influence

of French imperialism, especially in Africa, against the U.S. attempts to gain control over that region. "We will be present in Africa," Mitterrand told *Stern*, "and will not allow anyone to decide to replace us in the role that our African friends expect of us."

That is why the French foreign ministry has done everything it can to reassure the local powers. French troops are still stationed in various countries. It is now certain that French Transall military transport planes based in Dakar, Senegal, carried the Senegalese troops during that country's intervention in Gambia in July.

In addition, under the terms of bilateral military cooperation agreements that have just been renewed, seventy-seven French officers and noncommissioned officers will continue to serve in Cameroon and fifty others will serve in Tunisia.

The second aspect of this policy involves reorienting French foreign trade toward new agreements with Third World states. This is the thrust of the "Planetary New Deal" that Cheysson spoke of at a recent conference of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In doing this he intends to make it possible for French firms to occupy ground that present American policy runs the risk of leaving vacant.

In addition, the minister of foreign relations is asking that the East-West conflict not be steadily thrust into relations with the developing countries. "If one embarks on a very sophisticated arms race," Cheysson told *l'Unité*, "very soon these countries will no longer be able to make the necessary effort. They will then have to deliver themselves to whichever of the super powers will, directly or indirectly, furnish them the means they need."

In a word, Cheysson wants to prevent a tendency that could harm the interests of the less strong bourgeoisies, starting with the bourgeoisies of the European countries.

This policy has already yielded results. To take only one example, on August 12 India and France extended the contract that had been signed in 1977 by the French Petroleum Company for exploitation of the Bombay High oil deposit (14 million tons per year in 1984). In addition, negotiations concerning a contract to sell 200 Mirage-2000 warplanes has entered its final phase.

In all this, what remains of this "view of man" that Cheysson spoke of? Very little, in that regimes such as those of India, Morocco, Tunisia, or Cameroon can hardly be taken for defenders of basic rights. □