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1981 Year in Review



How to aid Polish workers

By Larry Seigle

The Polish workers and farmers, whose heroic fight to democratize the workers state in Poland has inspired working people throughout the world, are once again feeling the heel of the Stalinist bureaucracy on their necks. The imposition of martial law, the arrests of workers' leaders, and the use of force against strikers are criminal acts, condemned by working-class fighters everywhere.

The Stalinist bureaucrats are claiming that the crushing of Solidarity is necessary to defend the workers states in the face of imperialism. The facts show the opposite. The crackdown in Poland weakens the defense of the Soviet Union and all other workers states against imperialism.

By giving ammunition to the imperialist propaganda offensive, the suppression of the Polish workers has the effect of undermining the fight in Europe against NATO's plan to install new and more powerful nuclear missiles — which will be aimed at Moscow, Warsaw, and other Eastern European cities.

The Kremlin's active complicity in the crackdown on Solidarity also has worked to disrupt the fraternal relations that ought to exist between the working people of Poland and the Soviet Union. The fact that Polish workers — now more than ever before — view the Soviet Union as their oppressor instead of their class ally weakens the defense of the Soviet Union itself.

The most immediate effect of the suppression of Solidarity, however, is to heighten the danger of U.S. military action against Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and the advancing revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala. Under the protective cover of the imperialist propaganda drive against Soviet "imperialism," preparations for such a military move are being intensified.

Internationalist consciousness

Internationalist consciousness of the working class, both within the workers states and within the portion of the world remaining under capitalist rule, is essential to the defense of the workers states against imperialism. The power of such internationalism was shown by the worldwide movement in solidarity with Vietnam, a movement that played a vital role in helping the Vietnamese masses to win the war with the United States.

Year-end schedule

This is the last issue of *Intercontinental Press* before our year-end break. The next issue will appear in three weeks and will be dated January 18, 1982.

Such proletarian internationalism cannot, however, be fostered by the suppression of workers democracy. Rather, workers democracy and proletarian internationalism go hand in hand.

The Polish bureaucracy suppresses democratic rights, excludes the masses of working people from all meaningful participation in political life, and denies them the opportunity to learn the truth about what is going on in the world. The genuine ideas of Marxism and Leninism are kept hidden from the workers and farmers, replaced with a falsified, official version that serves the interests of the privileged and conservative bureaucracy.

The inseparable connection between workers democracy and proletarian internationalist consciousness can be seen in Cuba. It is no coincidence that the most democratic workers state in the world, revolutionary Cuba, is also the land where the toiling masses have achieved the highest level of political consciousness, including international consciousness. It is the most politically advanced working class in the world.

And it is this understanding that makes Cuba an unshakable defender of the Soviet workers state and at the same time places Cubans shoulder to shoulder with revolutionary fighters throughout the world — from Indochina to Nicaragua. The Cubans understand that the defense of their revolution against imperialism and the struggle to extend it are one and the same.

Privileged bureaucracies, like the one ruling Poland, view revolutionary struggles in other countries as a threat to the stability that they see as necessary to preserve their privileges. Their orientation is to reach an accommodation with imperialism in order to protect that stability.

In contrast, a government that represents the interests of the workers and farmers, such as the revolutionary government of Cuba, understands and acts on the view that victories for proletarian revolutions in other countries and defeats for imperialism everywhere are in the interests of the workers in their own country.

Why imperialists fear Solidarity

That is why the imperialists view with horror the prospect of a successful political revolution in Poland. Despite their hypocritical statements of support for union rights in Poland, they understand that a victory for the Polish working people would open the possibility of bringing to power a revolutionary government, like the one in Cuba. And the thought of a Cuba in Eastern Europe is a horrifying one for them.

Thus, while the imperialist capitalists were awash in crocodile tears from such friends of working people as Ronald Reagan and Mar-

garet Thatcher, the capitalist rulers' sigh of relief at what they hoped would be the effective crushing of Solidarity was clearly audible.

In Ottawa, according to a December 18 Reuters dispatch, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau "said today that he regretted the imposition of martial law in Poland but could not condemn it if it prevented civil war and if the military authorities did not abuse their power."

The *Wall Street Journal* observed December 18 that the crackdown in Poland did, after all, have its positive sides.

"Irving Geszel, an analyst with Bear, Stearns & Co., believes that if the Polish government is successful in quashing strikes, it may actually decrease the chances of default [on the Polish government's debts to capitalist banks], since Poles going back to work will bolster the country's withered economy," the *Journal* reported.

"If the Polish government is successful in gaining better control, or if the Russians take over, it will be unfortunate for the Polish people, but the loans will be paid off," said Mr. Geszel."

And that, after all, is what makes the world go 'round.

'Authority' vs. 'chaos'

The *New York Times* took the same position, although as usual from a somewhat more high-minded perspective. Paul Lewis, writing in the financial pages of the December 15 *Times*, reported: "The declaration of martial law over the weekend and the ban on trade union activity, many Western bankers said, was inevitable so long as the country's economy continued to plunge, leaving factories partly idle and the population with inadequate fuel supplies.

"There was no escaping the imposition of authority at some point as long as the chaos continued," said Richard Portes, an American-born economics professor at London University. . . ."

For its part, the *Washington Post* greeted the declaration of martial law in Poland with an editorial a day earlier entitled "Poland's Last Chance." The editorial asserted that the declaration of martial law was perfectly legal, invoked "under the same constitution that Solidarity has invoked to justify its demands under the law."

The *Post* went on to argue that Solidarity had, in fact, provoked the crackdown itself by asking for too much:

"Gen. Jaruzelski was deeply alarmed by Solidarity's recent and far-reaching political demands and . . . decided to use the army to suspend some part [!] of the political process and to make one last effort to steer Poland away from internal and external confrontation. He invited Solidarity's principal leader, Lech Walesa, to come to Warsaw and join him in this effort. Mr. Walesa accepted." (The *Post* does not mention that Walesa was not given the option of declining the "invitation" to Warsaw.)

These views, however, did not prevent the imperialists from having an international field day of anti-Soviet and anticommunist propaganda.

One of the "civilized" world's leading union busters, Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, expressed unwavering support for union rights in Poland.

Thatcher also demanded that the Soviet Union adhere to "a policy of strict nonintervention" in other countries, just as, she claimed, Britain has always done. She did not mention her recent move to reinforce the British army's colonial garrison in Northern Ireland.

In France, the imperialist propaganda campaign carried out under the guise of "solidarity" with Poland reached unrivaled heights. In Paris, the Socialist Party leadership, along with SP-led unions, organized a protest march against the actions of the Soviet and Polish governments. The major bourgeois parties held a demonstration at the same time and same place.

The SP decision to march was in contrast to its boycott, a few weeks earlier, of the Paris demonstration against the planned introduction of new nuclear missiles by NATO. The SP government of François Mitterrand has given wholehearted support to Reagan's military buildup in the name of countering the Soviet "threat."

In the United States, the bureaucracy of the AFL-CIO trade union federation jumped into the anticommunist campaign with a vigor noticeably missing when it comes to defending the rights of workers against the capitalists — in the United States or anywhere else.

A leaflet entitled "Support Polish Workers" issued by an AFL-CIO-sponsored youth group, summed up the message of this reactionary campaign: "the Polish workers have laid bare one of the most cherished myths of Communist totalitarianism: the myth that Communism somehow speaks for workers' interests."

AFL-CIO demonstrations hailed by rulers

The bureaucracy that sits on top of the American labor movement promotes the idea that the interests of the U.S. working class —

Bankers hail crackdown

According to a report in the December 21 *Wall Street Journal*, "many U.S. bankers see Soviet-style authoritarianism as their best hope for recovering the \$1.3 billion that Poland owes them.

"Most bankers think authoritarian governments are good because they impose discipline," said an executive at a bank with millions of dollars in Polish loans. . . .

"Who knows which political system works?" says Thomas Theobald, senior executive vice president in charge of Citibank's international division. "The only test we care about is: Can they pay their bills?"

domestically and internationally — are identical with the interests of American capitalism. Thus they loyally tag behind the policies of the government in Washington.

Their moment of glory comes when the rulers encourage them to play a more prominent role in carrying out imperialist policies, as they have done with their phony solidarity campaign around Poland.

Thus, "AFL-CIO" demonstrations against the Soviet Union have been organized throughout the United States, promoted by the news media and hailed by the capitalist politicians.

These reactionary demonstrations have been mirrored by actions called by "left-wing" anti-communist groups, such as the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC), which is affiliated to the Second International. DSOC joined with other groups to hold a "solidarity" action in New York City December 16. Some of the signs carried by demonstrators reflected the "third camp" orientation of the demonstrators: "U.S. bosses, Polish bosses — just the same"; and "Down with U.S. and Russian imperialism."

However, their real priorities were indicated by the fact that the location chosen for the protest was not some symbol of American imperialism but the Polish consulate, where a series

of demonstrations have been held. The Socialist protesters showed up shortly after a right-wing demonstration had left the same spot.

As could have been predicted, in the context of the anticommunist propaganda offensive the distinctions between the "left" anti-Soviet protest and the right-wing actions were lost in the reporting by the capitalist media.

The struggle for workers democracy in Poland has been one of the most powerful refutations of the capitalists' lie that socialism is inconceivable without bureaucratic repression. As a result, the inspiring struggle of Solidarity has won new supporters for the cause of socialism and communism in the capitalist countries.

Once again the bureaucratic rulers of the Soviet Union and Poland have revealed themselves to be the betrayers of the ideals of communism, obstacles to its advancement, and deadly enemies of the fight for workers democracy and self-determination, which were an essential element of the program that the Bolshevik Party in the time of Lenin fought to implement.

Real defense of the Polish workers begins with actively spreading this truth, and mercilessly combating and exposing the imperialist hypocrisy that is being promoted in the false name of solidarity with Solidarity. □

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

Managing Editor: David Frankel.

Editorial Staff: Sue Hagen, Ernest Harsch, Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.

Business Manager: Sandi Sherman.

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1981: Year of the capitalist offensive

Workers face wage cuts, social reaction, and drive toward war

By David Frankel

The United States is sinking into what some economists predict may be the deepest recession since the 1930s.

"Since the steep part of the slide has just begun, it is conceivable that the jobless rate could get up above 10 percent before the recession is over," *New York Times* economics writer Leonard Silk commented November 11.

By the end of that month the jobless rate had already risen to 8.4 percent, nudging the 8.7 percent rate of July 1975, the highest since World War II. In absolute terms, the 9 million unemployed in November was the largest number since 1939.

"This is the price that you have to pay for bringing down inflation," commented President Reagan's deputy press secretary as the November figures were announced.

But only a few days later the administration admitted that the 1982 deficit in the U.S. budget would hit \$109 billion — the largest in U.S. history, and some \$43 billion more than the previous record set in 1976.

Although the impact of the recession will undoubtedly moderate inflation in the short run, such a budget deficit can be expected to push prices to new heights following the recession. And record deficits are also predicted for 1983 and 1984.

'Greed level out of control'

These budget deficits are the result of huge increases in military spending and the Reagan tax program, which has gifted big business with \$750 billion in tax giveaways over the next five years.

Even Reagan's budget director, David Stockman, was a little stunned by seeing the private profit system at work at its highest levels. "Do you realize the greed that came to the forefront?" Stockman asked in an interview whose candor almost cost him his place at the trough. "The hogs were really feeding. The greed level, the level of opportunism, just got out of control."

But as far as the ruling rich are concerned, the profit orgy is only just beginning. On December 9, for example, Congress put the finishing touches on a legislative package that will allow the oil industry to bill consumers for the most costly private construction project in history, a \$43 billion natural gas pipeline from Alaska to San Francisco and Chicago.

Working people who use gas to heat their homes and cook with will be billed for the pipeline before its construction, and they will end up paying the costs even if the project is never completed.

Greed for profits is also driving forward the centralization and concentration of capital. A wave of corporate mergers included the takeover of Conoco — the fourteenth largest U.S. corporation — by Du Pont, the fifteenth largest, last August. The \$7.3 billion deal was the largest merger in U.S. history.

Currently, the U.S. Steel Corporation is seeking to buy up Marathon Oil, as is Mobil, the number two corporation in the United States. These mergers show the unwillingness of the capitalists to invest in any sweeping modernization of their operations. They will continue to divert capital to this kind of speculation until they can be assured of higher profits.

The fact that U.S. Steel has been able to come up with \$6.3 billion in cash for its takeover bid has not gone over well with tens of thousands of steelworkers who have lost their jobs due to plant shutdowns or who have been blackmailed into taking pay cuts as the only way to keep the struggling steel barons in business.

But the steelworkers are not alone. There is little that any working person has to be pleased about after Ronald Reagan's first year in the White House.

Reagan's budget

What has taken place in the United States over the past year is an across-the-board attack on the social and economic gains won by the working class and its allies over the previous half century. Although this attack was apparent under Carter, there has been a qualitative step-up in its breadth, openness, speed, and ferocity under Reagan.

As the president of the Chase Manhattan Bank put it following the passage of Reagan's tax and budget proposals in July: "The New Deal was a turning point in its day, and the President's program is what our economy and our capitalist system requires at this time."

Reagan's budget gutted some 250 domestic spending programs. Social Security benefits for the elderly were cut back by \$2.2 billion. Food stamps for the poor were chopped by \$1.7 billion. Job programs were cut by \$4.6 billion. Unemployment benefits were slashed on the eve of the recession.

Also getting the ax were aid for the handicapped, aid to education, health programs, legal services — just about anything intended to help people instead of corporations.

Government agencies supposed to defend consumers against killer drugs and poisonous food additives, to protect the health and safety of workers on the job, and to enforce laws against pollution are all being crippled by cutbacks.

Since Reagan took office, the number of mine safety inspectors has been cut by 73, and plans are to cut 150 jobs — a reduction of 10 percent. Meanwhile, during the first eight days of December, twenty-seven coal miners were killed in accidents — twenty-one of them in methane explosions that even the capitalist media admits could have been avoided had the companies followed proper safety procedures.

And the cutbacks are far from over. On December 5, for example, Reagan's Office of Management and Budget proposed that job programs getting about \$4.5 billion in the current budget be cut to \$1.56 billion in the 1983 fiscal year. These same job programs received nearly \$8 billion in the 1981 budget, and they were completely inadequate even then.

Social gains under attack

In the area of social policy, all the gains made by Blacks, Hispanics, and women during the 1960s and 1970s are now under fire. These include:

- School desegregation. Speaking for the Justice Department, which is supposed to enforce compliance with the U.S. Constitution, Assistant Attorney General William Reynolds summed up the attitude of the Reagan administration November 19 by saying: "We are not going to compel children who don't choose to have an integrated education to have one."

- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that a segregated education is inherently unequal, and therefore violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. Reynolds's statement was thus an outright declaration that the Reagan administration has no intention of enforcing the legal rights of Black schoolchildren.

- Voting rights. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is due to expire in August. It took passage and enforcement of this act — won after a massive ten-year struggle — to secure the right of Blacks to vote in large parts of the United States. This law continues to be used in cases of discrimination against Black and Hispanic voters.

- But racists in Congress have vowed to fight extension of the law. Reagan announced November 6 that he would support extension of the law for ten years, but at the same time he called for amendments that would strip it of its effectiveness.

- Affirmative action. The Justice Department has announced that it will no longer seek to enforce numerical goals or timetables in hiring to redress job discrimination against Blacks, Hispanics, and women — all of whom have been hit particularly hard by recession-related layoffs.



At the same time, the budget of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which was set up under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, has been drastically cut as a means of limiting its activity.

- Right to abortion. In May, Congress cut off federal funding for abortions even in cases of rape or incest. In July, it voted to bar 3 million government workers and their dependents from using federal health insurance to pay for abortions. Several bills now before Congress would outlaw abortion altogether. As it is, there is no place today for a woman to obtain an abortion in eight out of ten counties in the United States.

Reagan, an enthusiastic supporter of these anti-abortion measures, has appointed a number of top activists in the movement against abortion rights to government posts. These include Marjory Mecklenburg, president of American Citizens Concerned for Life. Mecklenburg, Reagan's choice to head the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, says teenagers should be taught to "postpone sexual involvement" rather than use contraceptives.

The story is the same on dozens of other issues — from passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to bilingual, bicultural education for Spanish-speaking children.

Attacks on democratic rights

Part and parcel of the Reagan offensive is the attack on democratic rights. New witch-hunt committees to combat "terrorism" have been set up in Congress. Reagan is removing the formal restrictions placed on the FBI and CIA following the revelations of government crimes after Watergate.

Concessions such as the Freedom of Information Act are being weakened. The idea that citizens have a right to know about the activities of the government is under attack.

Under the banner of the fight against crime,

the White House, Congress, courts, and cops are chipping away at constitutional protections against illegal search and seizure, detention without charges, and arbitrary legal procedures.

A particular target in this offensive are foreign-born workers, especially those who are not white. The government uses the kind of police-state tactics against undocumented workers that it would like to be able to extend to the working class as a whole. The most notorious example of Reagan's racist policy in action was the threat to blow boats carrying Haitian refugees out of the water, and the establishment of concentration camps for those managing to slip past the naval patrols.

Another taste of what the rulers have in store for American workers was Reagan's ruthless crushing of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO).

Striking air controllers were denied food stamps and unemployment compensation; their union was fined \$150 million and decertified; at least 150 of its members have been hauled into court — in some cases in chains — for taking part in an "illegal" strike; and in many cases the government has sought to prevent air controllers from being hired in new jobs.

Why the offensive?

What is involved in the budget cuts, attacks on progressive social programs and democratic rights, and actions such as the assault on the air traffic controllers is the use of governmental power in an attempt to fundamentally change the relationship of forces between capital and labor in the United States.

After World War II, U.S. corporations dominated the world market. U.S. capital expanded into new industries like plastics and electronics, and into areas such as Indochina and the Middle East that had previously been

the preserves of the European colonial powers.

But the postwar prosperity has run its course. The U.S. economy is now bumping up against its capitalist competitors at every point.

American workers produce more today than at any time in history. Yet production of commodities that are desperately needed by millions throughout the world has plunged the capitalist economy into crisis, because these commodities cannot be sold at a high enough profit. Once again, capitalism is producing poverty out of wealth.

The U.S. rulers have sought to improve their competitive position by driving down wages. "With real income in the U.S. declining for the past decade, only Britain now has lower labor costs than the U.S.," *Business Week* commented in a December 7 article on the economic situation in Europe.

But U.S. corporations must also compete with Japanese capitalists. And in the meantime, wages are under attack in Japan, as in every capitalist country. There is competition in wage-cutting as well as in marketing.

The future as William DeLancey sees it

As William DeLancey, chairman of the Republic Steel Corporation and head of the American Iron and Steel Institute, told the annual meeting of that group in May:

"Any assessment of our long-term future must of course take into account our competitiveness vis-à-vis the most efficient overseas producers. . . . As you know, the Japanese labor costs are not much more than half of ours and Korean labor costs are probably less than a quarter of the Japanese costs."

The only solution to the world economic crisis within the confines of the capitalist system is a qualitative increase in the rate of exploitation of the working class. That is the goal of the capitalist class and its government. That is what is behind their offensive.

Food, clothing, medical care, shelter — every human need — must be turned into a privilege, not a right. And to do all this, the rulers must take on the trade unions, weakening them and eventually breaking them.

Looked at from this angle, the attacks on democratic rights are essential to the economic offensive. DeLancey remarked in this regard, in the speech quoted above:

"If as a nation we miss this chance to support a president who is dedicated to reducing governmental expense and to helping us do our jobs better and more productively, the next corrective move will undoubtedly be long delayed and may have to be authoritarian when it comes."

The attacks on democratic rights are also an essential part of the imperialist drive toward war.

The drive toward war

If the world economic crisis is raising tensions between the classes in the strongest capitalist nations, that goes double for what is happening in the countries oppressed by the two

dozen imperialist powers.

Inspired by the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, and driven into action by an economic and social system that promises only further deterioration in already unbearable conditions, a whole new generation has entered on the road to revolution.

- In Central America, U.S. policymakers are confronted with the emergence of a broad revolutionary current, led by the Cubans, that they have not been able to buy, intimidate, or crush. The imperialists fear that the victory of the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada will now be repeated in El Salvador and Guatemala and result in the establishment of a chain of workers and farmers governments right up to the Mexican border.

Every indication is that a direct military confrontation between U.S. imperialism and the advancing revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean is imminent. (See article on page 1258.)

- In the Middle East, the impact of the Iranian revolution has seriously undermined the political stability of the proimperialist dictatorships in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, and North Yemen. In the latter three countries, and in Israel as well, the world economic crisis is having a devastating impact.

Reagan's response has been to speed up development of the Rapid Deployment Force initiated by Carter; to tighten up military collaboration with the Zionist regime; to pledge U.S. support to the Saudi monarchy in the event of any uprising by the Arabian people; and to step up the economic, political, and military pressures against all the anti-imperialist forces in the region — especially the Palestinian liberation fighters, Iran, and Libya. (See articles on page 1264.)

- In Southeast Asia, Reagan is continuing the attempt to strangle the Vietnamese revolution.

Washington has urged on Peking in its military attacks against Vietnam; it is pouring military aid into Thailand; and it is backing the Pol Pot forces responsible for the slaughter of 3 million Kampuchean.

On the economic front, a tightening economic embargo has resulted in the cutoff of food aid from the European Economic Community. Reagan has not stopped at barring the Mennonite church from sending notebooks and pencils to Kampuchean schoolchildren.

- In Africa, Reagan has given the racist regime in South Africa a green light for escalating its aggression against Angola and in Namibia.

Jeane Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, began her term in office by secretly meeting with top South African military figures. On August 31, Washington vetoed a UN Security Council resolution condemning South African attacks hundreds of miles inside Angola.

In December, proimperialist guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi, whose forces are seeking to overthrow the Angolan government in collaboration with South Africa, was welcomed in

Washington.

All these policies are being implemented in the context of a military buildup of unprecedented proportions. On December 15, for instance, Congress passed a \$200 billion military appropriations bill, which exceeded last year's record allocation by almost \$30 billion.

Washington's drive toward war is the other side of its austerity policy at home. No policy based on increasing the profitability of American corporations can succeed without defending the superprofits obtained through cheap raw materials, superexploited labor, and captive markets in the semicolonial countries.

Above all, the U.S. rulers must defend their "right" to exploit these countries against the kind of popular revolutions that we have seen in Nicaragua and Iran. They have no choice but to fight new Vietnam-style wars. And they intend to do it behind a nuclear screen that they hope will prevent any Soviet intervention. That is what is behind the campaign to build up U.S. nuclear forces in Europe. (See article on page 1268.)

Working class responds

Wage cuts, plant closings, massive unemployment, destruction of social programs pre-

'In solidarity, we shall prevail'

[As part of their austerity drive and their push toward war, the U.S. rulers are seeking to victimize union activists and antiwar fighters in industry. Socialist workers have recently been fired or harassed by employers acting in collusion with the government in a number of plants that are engaged in military production. These include Lockheed aircraft plants in Georgia and California, the Tenneco shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, General Dynamics Convair Division in San Diego, and Bendix in Kansas City. There have also been victimizations at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis.

[The following are excerpts from the speech delivered by Vincent Micciche, vice-president of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) local in St. Louis, at a November 14 rally of the Political Rights Defense Fund in support of three victimized McDonnell Douglas workers. The full text of the speech appeared in the December 3 issue of the *Labor Tribune*, weekly paper of the St. Louis AFL-CIO (the U.S. labor federation).]

* * *

The main thing that I have personally gained from this strike is a rude awakening. I would never have believed the amount of control that the government can exert on the press. I would never have believed the amount of control that the government can exert on industry. And I would never have believed the lengths that our government would go to repel a group that it disagrees with. I have seen the government thwart attempts of PATCO members to adopt children because of their participation in the strike. . . . I have seen PATCO members denied basic federal aid in mortgage foreclosures, unemployment and food stamps. . . . And worst of all, I have seen PATCO members chained and handcuffed . . . and all they did was refuse to work for an unfair employer.

Yes, I have had a rude awakening . . . and although I knew all of this could hap-

pen, I hoped for the sake of this country that it never would. But this experience is exactly why I am here tonight. I recently talked to an attorney from Guatemala named Enrique Torres. He told me of a struggle in his country by unionists at Coca-Cola plants. Fully fifteen union activists have been assassinated and Torres himself was forced to flee for his life because he represented the union. His story made PATCO's fight pale in comparison.

However, the turn toward totalitarianism that President Reagan has created in this country is just as real. The Political Rights Defense fund is one of the vanguards of the fight against that trend. Here in St. Louis, we're seeing political rights being challenged. Jody Curran, Barry David and Harris Freeman have been singled out of a workforce that exceeds ten thousand workers. They are members of the Socialist Workers Party and The Young Socialist Alliance; but more importantly, they are trade unionists, political activists and honest American citizens.

They are the local cause celebre in a much larger struggle that has been going on for 40 years. Forty years of government intervention. FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] infiltration and clandestine invasion of privacy. All because of a political ideology. All in spite of repeated rulings of the constitutionality of this type of action. This harassment affects us all, whether we are proponents, opponents or neutral of the political philosophy under threat. The fact is, the right to embrace any political viewpoint is one of the basic ingredients of our constitution and is worth fighting for. I am proud to represent PATCO here tonight. And I am proud to say that PATCO has joined the impressive and distinguished ranks of those dedicated to the goals of the political rights defense fund. I pledge to you, Jody, Barry and Harris, that even in our time of turmoil, PATCO will stand as one with you. In solidarity, we both shall prevail.

viously taken for granted — these are all new experiences for the American working class. They are having a deep impact.

Particularly dramatic changes in consciousness have been registered among striking air controllers as a result of their struggle. For example Ken Fairbairn, president of the PATCO local in Cleveland, spoke at a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) campaign rally on September 26.

"Nine weeks ago I voted for Reagan," Fairbairn told the meeting. "Nine weeks ago I didn't know I was a worker. Nine weeks ago I had never known about trade union solidarity or a labor party.

"And I never knew about the Socialist Workers Party. Today, I urge all of you to vote for [SWP candidates] Lynda Joyce and Amy Belvin."

As Fairbairn explained, "I've had a hell of an education" — something that has been true for quite a few PATCO strikers.

Although the PATCO example is the most dramatic, there is a deep process of thinking and discussion going on throughout the working class in the United States today. There is a hunger for new ideas, and workers on the job are eager to discuss with socialists.

The response to the Reagan offensive has also been expressed in action. On January 15 there was a demonstration by 100,000 Blacks in Washington, D.C., demanding that the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the slain civil rights leader, be made a national holiday.

Eight thousand coal miners marched on Washington on March 9 to protest cuts in black lung benefits; 25,000 rail workers marched on the capital April 29 to protest layoffs on the railroads; 100,000 people marched to protest U.S. support for the Salvadoran junta on May 3; and a trade-union demonstration against Reagan's policies in New York City drew 100,000 participants on September 7.

But the most significant demonstration of all was the historic Solidarity Day protest on September 19, when half a million trade unionists turned out for the first national demonstration ever called by the U.S. labor movement.

Solidarity Day was a powerful repudiation of Reagan's entire course. Opposition to the attacks on Black and women's rights, to the budget cuts, and to the gigantic war budget were all explicit themes of the demonstration, as was support to the PATCO strikers.

Reagan, however, did not shift his policies one iota as a result of that massive protest. Clearly, this raises the question of what the labor movement can do to counter the capitalist offensive.

'The company has to make bucks'

For those who are caught in the framework of capitalism and who cannot see beyond the alternatives offered by the capitalist system — and this includes the entire trade-union officialdom in the United States — there seems to be precious little that the labor movement can do.

Once the idea that the economy must be run for private profit is granted, there is no answer to the demands of the bosses for concessions by the workers in order to preserve profitability.

Steelworkers Vice-president Joe Odorcich explained at the time of the 1980 contract that the union moderated its demands because "to have a union, you have to have a company, and that company has to make bucks."

Steelworkers President Lloyd McBride made the same point in a newspaper interview last May. "Some of our problems," he said, "stemmed from having done too well in collective bargaining . . . and these chickens are coming home to roost. We have to face that."

This has also been the stance of the United Auto Workers leadership. Under the direction of UAW President Douglas Fraser, workers at the Chrysler Corporation signed away \$1.2 billion in wages and benefits between November 1979 and January 1981.

Now it is the turn of workers at Ford and General Motors. On December 9 the UAW executive Board broke with the union's historic policy and voted to allow the reopening of contracts at GM and Ford before they are due to expire.

"We reached the conclusion that, because of the deterioration of the economy, it was not satisfactory to have one rigid policy," Fraser said as he announced the decision.

"This is certainly welcome news," commented GM Vice-president Alfred Warren. Ford's chief labor negotiator added, "The need to resolve satisfactorily the labor cost issue is urgent. . . ."

'Solidarity Day II'

Of course, none of the questions posed by the capitalist offensive can really be resolved on the trade-union level. Budget cuts, attacks on democratic rights, the drive toward war, the more and more open use of the state to break strikes — all these problems require political answers.

The political answer proposed by the trade-union bureaucracy is for the working class to rely on the Democratic Party. At the November convention of the 15-million-member AFL-CIO (the U.S. labor federation), the union officialdom called for "Solidarity Day II" — the election of Democratic Party candidates to Congress in the November 1982 elections.

"On that Election Day, the labor movement and its allies must march to the polls in unprecedented numbers to elect a Congress that will reverse the disastrous policies of the Reagan Administration and restore humane government to the American people," was the way it was explained in the AFL-CIO resolution.

But the Democratic Party is *for* Reagan's program. Every budget cut, every increase in war spending, every attack on women's rights and Black rights has been passed with the cooperation and support of the Democratic Party majority in the House of Representatives.



Lou Howort/Militant

Trade-union demonstration against Reagan in New York City drew 100,000 September 7.

On December 4, for example, House Speaker Thomas O'Neill, a top Democratic Party leader, told reporters that he would support Reagan's proposal for an additional \$4 billion in cuts in the current federal budget because Reagan still has popular support and "we're going to give his program a chance to work."

The truth is that the majority of the American people are opposed to Reagan's economic program, as even the bourgeois opinion polls are forced to admit. A Washington Post/ABC News poll in November found that 54 percent of those questioned felt that Reagan "cares more about serving upper-income people" than others.

Asked about his alternative to the Reagan budget, O'Neill proposed a different mix of tax giveaways for big business, but rejected new job programs. "We're not going to go back to the old ways," he said.

On the same day, Democrats in the Senate voted overwhelmingly for a military budget that went even further than Reagan's request. Asked about this, Senate Democratic Party leader Alan Cranston claimed:

"There is a consensus in the country and in Congress that we need more resources for national defense. We have to consider these needs on their merits and can't link them up to social and economic needs."

The capitalist offensive is being led by Rea-



Reagan met with AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland December 18. White House announced that the two "saw eye-to-eye" on issue of Poland.

gan. But it is a *capitalist offensive*, one that grows out of the most fundamental needs of the private profit system. That is why so much of the Reagan offensive began under Carter. And that is why the liberals in the Democratic Party are solidly behind the basic thrust of Reagan's policies.

Reformists move right

As the Democratic Party has moved to the right under the pressure of the capitalist crisis, the reformist currents that tie their political perspectives to the Democratic Party have been dragged along.

This has been particularly evident in the case of the trade-union bureaucracy and its complete capitulation in face of the capitalist offensive. At the November AFL-CIO convention, for example, all proposals for action in solidarity with the PATCO strikers were voted down. The AFL-CIO leadership also lined up with the State Department's campaign against the Nicaraguan revolution, passing a shameful resolution that put it squarely behind Reagan's war drive in Central America.

There was no political division within the labor bureaucracy on these issues. William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists, calls himself a socialist and poses as a progressive within the AFL-CIO leadership. But it was Winpisinger who made the main speech in favor of "Solidarity Day II," and it is Winpisinger — whose union organizes airline mechanics around the country — who is high on the list of those responsible for the betrayal of the PATCO strikers.

Following the crackdown in Poland in December, the AFL-CIO leaders got another chance to show their solidarity with the foreign policy of U.S. imperialism. They placed themselves in the forefront of the right-wing, anti-communist campaign being whipped up by the U.S. rulers.

As always, Blacks and other oppressed na-

tionals in the United States have been hit hardest by the reactionary moves of the rulers. But the leadership of the mass organizations of the Black community, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), have proven no better than the trade-union bureaucrats at organizing a fight against the capitalist attacks.

On the contrary, their support to the Democratic Party has stood in the way of organizing an effective response, especially in those cities where Black Democrats are in office and in charge of instituting the cutbacks.

NAACP President Benjamin Hooks hailed the Solidarity II proposal at the AFL-CIO convention, saying, "Let's march to the polls . . . and let's put some folks in Congress who are responsive to the needs of the people."

A sharp swing to the right has also marked the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the biggest feminist organization in the United States.

The NOW leadership has sought to reduce the issues facing the women's movement to the refusal of the ruling class to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. It is opposed to taking up the full range of attacks on women's rights, and to putting these in the broader context of the attack on all working people.

At the group's national conference in October, the NOW leadership projected a course of deeper involvement in the Democratic Party and increased support for the imperialist foreign policy of the United States.

A prowar film opened the convention, and the NOW leadership, which has campaigned for the past year and a half in favor of the "right" of women to be drafted into the U.S. armed forces, rejected a proposal to put the organization on record against conscription. The NOW leaders also applauded the appointment of antiunion, anti-Black, anti-abortion, pro-death-penalty judge Sandra O'Connor to the

U.S. Supreme Court, calling this setback a victory for women.

Social democrats and CP

What about the left in the United States? The main social-democratic formations do not make any pretense of being opposed to the Democratic Party or to the liberal trade-union bureaucrats such as Winpisinger and Fraser.

In *These Times*, the most widely read social-democratic weekly, summed up its view of the AFL-CIO convention with the headline: "AFL-CIO leaders inch toward a more aggressive stance."

Nor does the Communist Party (CP) put forward any alternative strategy for the labor movement and its allies. CP leader George Meyers, writing in the November 25 issue of the *Daily World*, welcomed the AFL-CIO's orientation to the 1982 elections in an article called "Solidarity Day II: action at the polls."

"It is most fortunate that labor and its allies, the powerful combination that made Solidarity Day I such an historic success, are placing great emphasis on the coming elections," Meyers declared.

Turning to members and sympathizers of the CP who might have taken its rhetoric about independent political action for good coin, Meyers added:

"The AFL-CIO has decided to concentrate its work almost entirely in the Democratic Party. Executive Council members who have either publicly or privately expressed preference for a third party are going along with the majority in the interests of a united struggle against the Reagan Administration.

"This has created a problem for the many trade unionists and their supporters who advocate a break with the two-party system. However, the 1982 elections are too crucial to walk away from them."

Meyers concluded: "September 19th [Solidarity Day] has created conditions for labor-led struggles that will guarantee a crushing defeat for the Reagan Administration and its politics of poverty on election day, Nov. 2, 1982."

Black party shows the way

But the capitalist offensive is not going to be turned back by the 1982 election — or any other election, for that matter. And the kind of fight that will drive back the capitalist attack requires above all the independent organization and mobilization of the working class and its allies, not their subordination to the political parties of the ruling class.

That is why the formation of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in August was so important. The formation of NBIPP has been led by a cadre of Black fighters who have gone through the experience of two decades of struggle — from the civil rights movement in the South during the early 1960s and the rebellions of Black communities throughout the United States in the late 1960s, to the sellouts by Black Democrats in the 1970s and 1980s.

This layer of leaders concluded from these

experiences that the only road forward for Black people is political independence from the Democratic and Republican parties. As the charter adopted by NBIPP's founding conference explained:

"The party must define our attitude towards the Democratic and Republican parties. We should observe both the Democrats and Republicans as serving only the interests of the ruling class; therefore they are diametrically opposed to the interests of African and poor people."

Describing the purpose and political stance of the party, the charter states: "The National Black Independent Political Party aims to attain power to radically transform the present social-economic order, that is, to achieve self-determination and social and political freedom for the masses of Black people. Therefore, our party will actively oppose racism, imperialism, sexual oppression, and capitalist exploitation."

NBIPP leaders are also internationalists who have taken part in solidarity actions with Grenada and with the people of Palestine and southern Africa. Many also identify with the Cuban revolution.

Toward a new leadership

At the founding conference of NBIPP the Rev. Ben Chavis, a leader of the new party and one of the victims in the infamous Wilmington Ten frame-up, told the participants: "If we do not organize Black people, if Black people don't organize Black people, nobody will."

But the Black nationality in the United States is also a key part of the American working class. An independent Black political party which charts an anticapitalist and anti-imperialist course sets an example for the entire working class. It points the way forward for the trade-union movement — toward a labor party.

NBIPP also points the way toward the future in another sense. It shows how a new leadership will arise out of the struggles and experiences of the working class as a whole. As the bankruptcy of its current leaders becomes apparent, the working class will turn to new ideas and to new leaders willing and able to mobilize the masses in struggle.

Nobody can say how quickly this process will take place, although the speed of the capitalist offensive is also forcing the pace of development of working class consciousness.

American workers took some heavy blows in 1981, and the continuing capitalist offensive and the crisis of working class leadership ensure that there will be more blows in 1982. But the same objective pressures that are driving the capitalist parties and reformist leaders who look to those parties to the right, are also forcing working people to take a new look at the world and at their misleaders.

One thing is certain: the American working class is not going to sit back and allow its rights and living standards to be destroyed without a fight. The class war in the United States is just beginning. □

AFL-CIO leaders get 'militant'

Take to streets against 'communist totalitarianism'

By Harry Ring

[The following article appeared in the December 25 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

AFL-CIO officials held a quickly organized rally at the U.S. labor federation's national headquarters in Washington, D.C., December 14. They stood in the building's lobby to protest the crackdown in Poland and declare support to the Polish workers union, Solidarity. Martin Ward, chairman of the AFL-CIO's International Affairs Committee, said the labor body would organize demonstrations across the country in support of Solidarity.

Does this mean that the top bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO have finally developed some sense of solidarity with the struggles of working people in other lands?

Unfortunately, no.

These bureaucrats have no real concern for the plight of the Polish workers. They simply want to exploit the situation in Poland to promote the reactionary anticommunism to which they are so totally committed.

This was revealed in Martin Ward's speech at the rally. "The creation of Solidarity," he declared, "inspired workers everywhere."

He added: "It was a profound embarrassment to a communist country."

This is not simply Ward's point of view. It reflects the thinking of the top AFL-CIO leadership and it runs like a thread through all of its allegedly pro-Solidarity propaganda.

For example, a leaflet entitled, "Support Polish Workers" was issued by Frontlash. This is a labor youth group associated with COPE, the AFL-CIO's political arm.

The leaflet declares that "the Polish workers have laid bare one of the most cherished myths of Communist totalitarianism: the myth that Communism somehow speaks for workers' interests."

This anticommunist slander is followed by this: "We in America often take human rights for granted. The rights we enjoy as a matter of course, however, are denied to millions of people around the world."

Putting aside how many workers, especially Blacks and other oppressed minorities, take their rights for granted, it is true, certainly, that millions around the world are denied their rights.

If the declared support of the AFL-CIO brass to Polish Solidarity was genuine, they would also be standing in solidarity with some of the other people in the world whose rights are denied or threatened.

That is a test they fail.

For example, in one of the shabbier episodes in the history of these labor fakers, the AFL-CIO convention last month unanimously

adopted a resolution slandering the Nicaraguan revolution as threatening to be "more oppressive" than the regime of the late butcher Anastasio Somoza.

It is a fact that the hard-won freedom established by the Nicaraguan revolution is again threatened. But not by the workers and farmers government the revolution brought to power. The threat originates within a stone's throw of the AFL-CIO's Washington headquarters — from the White House, the Congress, the Pentagon, and the CIA.

Instead of speaking out against Washington's ominous threats to Nicaragua, as an American workers movement should, these bureaucrats join the Reagan administration's drive against the revolution there.

That is where the double standard comes that makes the alleged support to Solidarity so fraudulent. When the threat to rights comes from so-called communists, the AFL-CIO leaders are right on the stick with their speeches and leaflets.

But when the threat comes from the capitalist rulers of this country, then this craven gang simply joins the hue and cry against the victims.

Partisans of Solidarity? If the leaders of the AFL-CIO knew what the word meant, in Polish or English, they could have easily demonstrated it when the Reagan administration set out to smash the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) strike.

They did not take one single meaningful move in solidarity with PATCO.

When a PATCO leader was hauled off to prison, literally in chains, these bureaucrats sat on their butts.

But when the fight is in Poland, they suddenly get "militant."

American working people, like workers worldwide, are rightly sympathetic to the cause of the Polish workers and hostile to the reactionary moves by the bureaucrats in Warsaw and Moscow to crush Solidarity.

The cynical officials at the AFL-CIO want to manipulate that progressive sentiment for reactionary purposes. What they are trying to do aids the ruling rich in this country, not Solidarity. □

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Revolutions advance amid economic crisis

Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada show the way forward

By Matilde Zimmermann

As 1981 drew to a close, the United States government was openly threatening to take military action against the advancing socialist revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean, even at the risk of provoking all-out war in the region.

The Reagan administration has concluded that only military force can now halt the consolidation of workers and farmers governments in Nicaragua and Grenada and turn back the armed revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The war threats of November and December were the culmination of a year of attempts on Washington's part to turn back the revolutionary upsurge that began to sweep the region in 1978.

Intolerable poverty

This upsurge is rooted in the severe social and economic crisis that affects all the semicolonial countries of the area.

"In 1979, one out of every two Central Americans of fifteen years of age and over was illiterate," Commander Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua told the UN General Assembly on October 7. "One child in eight died before its first birthday. Three out of every ten Central Americans looking for work could not find any. Twelve million human beings lived without a decent roof over their heads. And for every dollar earned by a poor Central American, a wealthy one extracted forty-eight dollars."

As imperialism's own economic crisis deepens, it responds by stepping up its exploitation of the semicolonial world still more. Central America and the Caribbean, long the "back yard" of the Yankee capitalists, are among the prime victims.

These countries are largely dependent on agricultural exports, the prices of which have been falling sharply in recent years. Inflation and high interest rates in the imperialist countries, on the other hand, have pushed up borrowing costs and the prices of oil and essential manufactured imports.

Bankrupt countries

Costa Rica, for example, is now bankrupt. This country, long held up by Washington as a showcase of capitalist democracy and economic development, has seen its foreign debt triple in the past four years. The Carazo government is now unable to pay even the interest on its \$2.6 billion debt, and the International Monetary Fund and other leaders are demanding harsh austerity measures.

In Honduras, according to the November 23

Wall Street Journal, "Reserves of foreign currency dipped by \$40 million in 1980 to \$110 million and now are expected to fall to \$40 million by year's end, barely enough to cover two weeks' imports."

When a major Honduran bank could not meet its obligations earlier this year, the *Journal* reported, "Many [foreign] banks cut off all credit to Honduras. They thus implicitly threatened — a Honduran official says that one bank was quite explicit about it — to paralyze Honduras's economy."

In September, Honduran dictator Gen. Policarpo Paz García cut the public budget by \$30 million and warned further cuts would be coming. U.S. economic aid for the current fiscal year stands at \$60 million, but the country's needs are estimated at more than ten times that figure for the next two years.

Duvalier's Haiti and Seaga's Jamaica

Haiti is also fast approaching bankruptcy. Already the poorest country of Latin America, Haiti's literacy rate is scarcely more than 10 percent, while infant mortality stands at 15 percent. The country has nearly run out of foreign currency reserves.

Haiti's situation is made still worse by the corrupt and brutal regime of President-for-Life Jean-Claude Duvalier. In February the IMF cut off loans to Duvalier's government, citing the unexplained "loss" of \$20 millions of dollars in state funds over the two preceding years.

Life under Duvalier is becoming so intolerable that Haitians by the thousands have taken

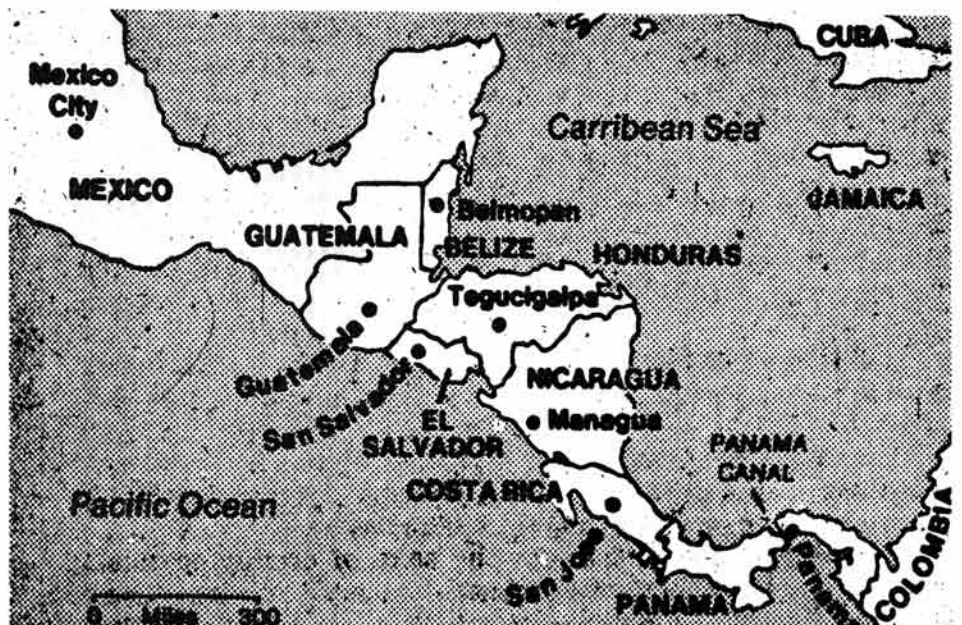
to sea in flimsy boats in an effort to reach the United States. Washington's response is to throw these refugees into concentration camps in Puerto Rico and Florida, and deport them back to Haiti.

The people of Jamaica, who have already suffered for several years under IMF-imposed austerity measures, have seen no improvement under the new right-wing government of Edward Seaga. The costs of public services and housing have increased rapidly, while unemployment remains at 26 percent or higher. Production of Jamaica's main export, bauxite, has declined owing to cutbacks by U.S. aluminum companies.

Like Jamaica's Seaga, President Antonio Guzmán of the Dominican Republic is a faithful servant of U.S. interests in the Caribbean. But Dominican unemployment stands at 30 percent while Washington is reducing economic aid and adopting tariff policies that could cause a \$25 million loss to the country's sugar industry.

In El Salvador, where a revolutionary war is now raging, the economy is in an advanced state of collapse. Industrial production is down to 50 percent of capacity, and half the work force is unemployed. Foreign currency reserves have hit bottom. The junta will need \$460 million to stay afloat in 1982, but Washington is only promising \$175 million in economic aid.

Guatemala's capitalists are also rushing to get their money out of the country as armed resistance to the Lucas García regime's terror



mounts. Foreign reserves stood at \$363 million in Guatemala at the beginning of 1981, but by October they had dropped to \$81 million. Coffee earnings were expected to drop by 35 percent in 1981, while tourism dropped 25 percent in the second quarter of the year alone.

As conditions for a pending loan to Guatemala of up to \$150 million, the IMF is demanding that Lucas García cut government spending and drive up interest rates. This can only mean further burdens on a population already suffering from a 62 percent illiteracy rate and infant mortality of 79 per 1,000 live births.

Cuba's example

The situation in Cuba stands in stark contrast to the poverty and deepening crisis elsewhere in the Caribbean and Central America. Cuban working people have seen their living standards rise dramatically during the past two decades, the fruit of having uprooted capitalism and imperialist domination from their land.

Though Cuba is very much affected by the current world economic crisis — especially by rising prices for imports and dropping sugar prices — the workers and peasants there live better than their counterparts in any other country of Latin America, and they continue to make gains in education, health care, nutrition, culture, and productivity.

In Nicaragua and Grenada, where workers and farmers governments have come to power, working people have also begun to make gains. These are the only countries outside Cuba where working people have experienced any real improvements in health care, education, living standards, and democratic rights during the past two years. But these countries too, historically dependent on imperialism and the world capitalist market, are feeling the impact of the international economic crisis.

Falling prices for key exports such as coffee, sugar, and gold have put additional strain on Nicaragua's economy, which was already severely weakened by the destruction Somoza's army wreaked in the 1979 war. The Reagan administration abruptly cut off economic aid to Nicaragua in April and began pressuring international lending institutions to do the same. In September, the revolutionary government was forced to decree a "state of economic and social emergency," cutting nonessential government spending, restricting the parallel currency market, and boosting taxes on luxury imports.

The Nicaraguan government also considered it necessary to suspend the right to strike, motivating this step on the basis of the need to strengthen working-class discipline in face of the threats and pressures bearing down from U.S. imperialism. But the overall thrust of the emergency measures was to confront the economic crisis without jeopardizing the social gains made by the workers and peasants.

Grenadian leader Maurice Bishop outlined the effects of the crisis on his country in a November 3 speech:

"With an open, dependent, economy tied to the



economies of the capitalist world, we have suffered and are suffering from the ongoing economic crisis in the capitalist world. Demand for our principal commodity exports has dropped. World market prices for nutmegs, cocoa, and bananas, which account for 97 percent of visible export earnings, fell by 22 percent in 1980 over 1979. To compound a difficult economic situation, tourism (our second most important industry) declined by 8.8 percent in 1980. . . . Revenue losses such as these serve to aggravate an already unfair, unjust, and unequal balance of trade. Although the total volume of Grenada's imports remained constant, the total cost of these imports between 1979 and 1980 rose from US\$50 million, due largely to steep increases in freight rates and fuel as well as imported inflation from the western industrial countries.

Like Nicaragua, Grenada has also had to contend with an imperialist campaign to block economic aid, discourage tourism, and sabotage domestic reconstruction.

Nonetheless, it is the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada and their leaderships that are demonstrating to all the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean the way out of poverty, backwardness, and capitalist crisis. By establishing workers and farmers governments, the peoples of Grenada and Nicaragua are proceeding along the course charted by their Cuban brothers and sisters two decades ago.

Alliance of workers and farmers

Among the most important achievements of the Nicaraguan revolution in 1981 was the consolidation of the alliance between the workers and the small farmers. In the early months of the year, assemblies of farmers were held throughout the country. The farmers were able to discuss their needs and demands, exchange views with government and FSLN representatives, and elect their own leaders.

This process culminated in April with the founding of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG).

The main demand UNAG put forward in subsequent months was for idle lands — both state-owned and private — to be made available to small farmers who lacked sufficient acreage or who wished to set up cooperatives.

On July 19, the second anniversary of the

revolution, this demand was met. Commander Daniel Ortega announced to a rally of half a million in Managua the revolution's first Agrarian Reform law. The law subjected to confiscation all idle or underutilized holdings of more than 500 manzanas (863 acres) in the western part of the country and all those larger than 1,000 manzanas in the less-developed east (the Atlantic Coast region). Accompanying this law was another authorizing confiscation of all properties of Nicaraguans who had lived outside the country for six months or more (a category that included not a few absentee landlords).

These measures, subsequently ratified by the Council of State, enabled the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) to begin distributing land titles to cooperatives and to individual farmers in October.

A key goal of UNAG, the Rural Workers Association (ATC), and the revolutionary government is to make Nicaragua self-sufficient in basic foodstuffs. Toward this end the National Food Program (PAN) was launched in April. The PAN (an acronym that means "bread" in Spanish) is providing land, credit, and technical assistance to farmers in order to boost production of rice, beans, maize, and other basic crops. This campaign is considered Nicaragua's third all-out mobilization — after the 1979 insurrection and the 1980 drive to eradicate illiteracy.

Literacy campaign and health care

The past year also saw big efforts to follow up on the success of the literacy campaign, in which half a million Nicaraguans learned to read and write. Today, some 800,000 children and adults are involved in some course of study. This is nearly one-third the population, one of the highest such proportions in the world.

On three different occasions during 1981, tens of thousands of Nicaraguans took part in People's Health Mobilizations: in April, to vaccinate all children under five for polio and measles; in August, to stave off an outbreak of dengue fever; and in November, to administer medication aimed at wiping out malaria in one blow. Although still far from adequate, health

care has been extended to the most remote rural areas and to the poorest urban neighborhoods. Some of this care, especially in the countryside, is being provided by 200 volunteer physicians sent from Cuba.

Hostility from capitalists

As the social revolution deepened in Nicaragua during 1981, the remaining capitalists and their parties and organizations took a more and more hostile attitude toward the FSLN-led government and mass organizations. On several occasions they sought to provoke crises and confrontations.

Back in November 1980 the capitalist parties had tried to create a governmental crisis by walking out of the Council of State. But that legislative body met for its full seven-month session during 1981, carried on rich debates and discussions, and passed a series of laws favoring the workers and peasants.

In March, the largest of the right-wing parties, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN), led by millionaire industrialist Alfonso Robelo, attempted to hold an anti-Sandinista rally in the town of Nandaime. Massive demonstrations and protests forced its cancellation. These events gave a big impetus to mass organizations, especially the neighborhood-based Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS).

In subsequent months, the trade unions and the ATC campaigned to expose and halt decapitalization and other forms of economic sabotage by the capitalists and big growers. This fight became linked with the struggle against right-wing terrorism, since the bands of ex-National Guardsmen and other counterrevolutionaries were financed by some of the same businessmen and growers who were decapitalizing their enterprises. Mobilizations around these two themes swept the country during June and July. The trade unions in private plants began implementing workers control measures against economic sabotage by the capitalists.

Defense of revolution

Tough new laws against decapitalization were announced at the second anniversary rally in Managua on July 19. These ratified the workers' right to exercise vigilance over the capitalists, and provided for immediate state intervention of any enterprise charged by the workers organizations with decapitalization or sabotage.

Other laws announced July 19 also confirmed the course of the revolution. One provided 80,000 families from poor neighborhoods with clear titles to their small houses and plots of land, for which they had once had to pay high rents to absentee landlords.

Another decree called for immediate expropriation of fourteen capitalist enterprises that had been shown to be decapitalizing. The state monopoly on foreign trade was strengthened, and sugar distribution was nationalized.

Throughout 1981, as Washington stepped up its threats and as armed counterrevolutionary attacks mounted, a constant concern of the

FSLN was to strengthen the revolution's defense. Key to this was the expansion and training of the Sandinista People's Militias (MPS).

A high point of the ongoing campaign to arm and organize Nicaraguan working people was the week of MPS-led rallies and demonstrations in early October, coinciding with U.S.-Honduran military maneuvers. Since November 8, Nicaragua has been on military alert, and many of the MPS reserve battalions have been called to active duty.

Progress in Grenada

In Grenada, 1981 was the "Year of Agriculture and Agro-Industries." And indeed some of the revolution's biggest gains were registered in the countryside this year. The Agricultural and General Workers Union (AGWU), organized in November 1979, emerged in 1981 as a powerful force in championing the demands of farm laborers.

In September the AGWU organized strikes on several of Grenada's biggest private estates, mobilized other workers in support of the struggles, and won a series of demands regarding wages and working conditions.

It was among farm workers that the dictator Eric Gairy claimed to enjoy the biggest support. But since its formation, the AGWU, led by members of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), has won every union recognition poll organized on agricultural estates. With a total membership of 2,000, it now represents workers on some seventy estates, including all of those larger than 100 acres.

Small and medium-sized private agricultural producers have also been organized in Grenada. In October, 1,000 of these gathered for the first general meeting of the Productive Farmers Union.

While the farm strikes were under way, the revolutionary government announced the Land Development and Utilization Law. This measure, similar to Nicaragua's new agrarian reform law, was aimed against large landholders who had refused to put their land into cultivation. Now the owners must lease these lands to the state, which is turning them over to cooperatives of small farmers.

Steps are also being taken to extend the government's profit-sharing program to private estates. Under this program, supervised by the AGWU, one-third of profits on the thirty-three state farms are shared out among the workers. Demands to make this apply to private estates as well were frequently raised during the September strikes.

The Grenadian government's agricultural measures are encompassed under the slogan "Idle Lands for Idle Hands." The aim is to solve three objective problems inherited from the Gairy dictatorship: a very high unemployment rate, the idleness of one-third of all arable land, and the fact that Grenada had to import three-quarters of its food supplies.

Mass organizations grow

In addition to the increasing role of the AGWU, 1981 saw other important steps to

strengthen the organizations of Grenadian working people. In July the Ministry of National Mobilisation was set up to insure that the masses of Grenadians are able to influence decision making and to see that decisions are actually carried out.

The National Youth Organisation (NYO) has organized nearly one-third of the country's young people, and the National Women's Organisation (NWO) is approaching a membership of 7,000. Some 90 percent of the Grenadian working class is now organized into trade unions.

In a November 3 speech, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop summed up the role that these and other organizations play in exercising power in free Grenada:

In addition to the many organizations and action groups operating at community, parish, and national level, our people meet *regularly* with the leadership of the country in parish and zonal councils and in workers' parish councils, where the twin principles of the *accountability* and *responsibility* of the leadership to the people become a reality for the first time in the English-speaking Caribbean. . . .

In Grenada the people do not only listen passively to their leaders, they talk back. They do not only glimpse their so-called representatives now and then in the press, they meet them regularly, they rub shoulders with them. In Grenada, structures have grown up and are developing daily to ensure the real participation of people — a continuous, day-by-day process, not a seasonal exercise which changes nothing. Our democratic process is our strongest weapon for change, for development, for the improvement of life in our country.

As in Nicaragua, defense of the revolution has been given a high priority in Grenada. The past year saw a big expansion of the popular militias. Grenadians mobilized in August and again in November in response to U.S. naval maneuvers in the Caribbean — maneuvers that on each occasion included what Grenadians called "practice invasions" of their country on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

Referring to these maneuvers, the Grenadian weekly *New Jewel* declared November 14: "All this is further demonstration of the increased desperation of Reagan and U.S. imperialism to stop the forward march going on in countries like Grenada, Cuba, Nicaragua, as well as in El Salvador, where the masses are not giving up one inch in their struggle."

Salvadoran struggle gains ground

Not only are the Salvadoran masses not giving up one inch, they have instead been gaining ground against the U.S.-backed junta throughout 1981.

Early in the year, after it became clear that the offensive launched January 10 by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) was not going to result in an immediate seizure of power, the junta claimed the guerrillas had suffered a fatal defeat and had been virtually eliminated. But despite its failure to bring down the dictatorship, the January offensive did show the FMLN's ability to mount coordinated attacks over a large part of

the country and deny the Salvadoran army freedom of movement.

By mid-February Duarte and the State Department were both admitting that the FMLN's tactical retreat had hardly been the decisive setback they earlier claimed.

Fresh military initiatives by the FMLN in July succeeded in extending the areas under guerrilla control. These liberated zones, mostly in northern and eastern El Salvador, are more than just military bases for the FMLN. Some of these areas have been controlled by the guerrillas for more than a year. In spite of bombing attacks, the FMLN has been able to organize health campaigns and literacy classes, set up hospitals, organize the production of basic foodstuffs, run a radio station, and establish popularly elected local governments.

Over the course of 1981 the guerrilla armies were increasingly able to take the military initiative. In their most spectacular action, in mid-October, they destroyed the heavily guarded and strategic Puente de Oro bridge.

Meanwhile, some forty different counteroffensives by government troops failed to dislodge the guerrillas from their strongholds. Clear signs of demoralization began to appear in the junta's army, including the surrender of some elite National Guard troops to the FMLN.

By November, the Salvadoran army was reportedly resorting to the drafting of children in some places. There were demonstrations of parents outside army barracks, demanding the return of their sons. The parents said boys as young as thirteen had been drafted.

Diplomatic offensive

Side by side with the FMLN's military advances were the ongoing diplomatic efforts carried out internationally by the joint political-diplomatic commission of the FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR).

A principal aim of this international offensive was to demonstrate that the revolutionary forces were actively pursuing a political resolution of the conflict, and that Reagan and Duarte were the ones rejecting the possibility of peace.

"If there is a viable political solution," said a member of the FMLN's Unified Revolutionary Directorate in February, "we are open to it. Now more than ever, before the destruction of the country and the huge loss of lives, we are for a political solution, to avoid spilling more blood and to avoid leaving the country in destruction and misery."

The FDR and FMLN's efforts were bolstered in late August by a joint declaration of the French and Mexican governments. This recognized the revolutionary organizations as a "representative political force" and dealt a sharp blow to Washington's policy in El Salvador.

Although the State Department managed to get a number of proimperialist Latin American regimes to denounce the declaration as "outside interference," the French-Mexican initiative gained wide international backing and



Nicaraguans march in solidarity with the people of El Salvador.

Fred Murphy/IP

helped to deepen Washington's isolation.

In his October 7 speech to the UN General Assembly, Commander Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua presented a set of proposals from the FDR and FMLN for unconditional talks with the junta. These were rejected out of hand by both San Salvador and Washington.

On December 16, the UN General Assembly voted 68 to 22 (with 53 abstentions) for a resolution sponsored by France and other European allies of Washington that called on "the Salvadoran parties involved" to "arrive at a negotiated political solution in order to establish, in an atmosphere free from intimidation and terror, a democratically elected government." The resolution, which was opposed by Washington, called for a suspension of "any type" of military support or arms supplies to El Salvador.

Escalation of terror

Reacting to the deterioration of its political and military situation, the junta has escalated its terror campaign against the Salvadoran people. Heavy aerial bombardment and the destruction of crops in peasant areas suspected of sympathy with the FMLN forced many people to flee their homes.

On at least three occasions — in March, April, and November — refugees fleeing to Honduras were massacred by Honduran and Salvadoran troops acting together. At least 300,000 Salvadorans have now sought refuge in other countries.

More than 30,000 Salvadoran civilians have been killed since October 1979, the majority of these during 1981. Some were killed simply for breaking the 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew. Often the bodies of people kidnapped by army troops or right-wing death squads turned up a few days afterwards, mutilated beyond recognition.

In one particularly grisly incident, almost 100 decapitated bodies were discovered near the city of Santa Ana during a brief period in August. Observers wondered where the beheadings could have taken place, because they

appeared to have been done professionally and would necessarily have left a tremendous amount of blood.

A Mexican reporter discovered that the executions had been carried out at the Quality Meats slaughterhouse in Santa Tecla, a facility owned by one of the leading families of the Salvadoran oligarchy. The reporter himself was almost killed for publishing the story and had to go into hiding until he could escape from the country.

Election fraud

These are the circumstances in which Reagan and Duarte claim that "free elections" will soon be held in El Salvador!

It is the FDR that represents the majority of the Salvadoran people. But the last time the executive committee of the FDR held a legal meeting in the country's capital, on November 27, 1980, the six central leaders of the organization were kidnapped and murdered.

It makes no sense to talk about elections in a country where all outdoor public gatherings are banned and where all radio stations are prohibited by law from broadcasting any national news whatsoever except for government communiques. But these are among the terms of the martial-law decree that has been in effect since March 1980 and is routinely extended every thirty days.

All opposition newspapers in El Salvador have been shut down, and the Catholic radio station blown up. The national university has been occupied by the army and closed. It now serves as a torture center.

The only candidates who have announced that they will participate in the phony elections are the ones with close ties to the officer corps of the armed forces and to the oligarchy. Most are even more right-wing than President Duarte's Christian Democrats. Among those now campaigning are Maj. Roberto D'Aubuisson, leader of the death squads and suspected assassin of Archbishop Oscar Romero; and Gen. José Alberto Medrano, founder of the

paramilitary organization ORDEN.

Junta's desperate situation

The relationship of forces in El Salvador during late 1981 was aptly summed up as follows in the November 27 issue of the London-based *Latin America Regional Report*:

"The Salvadorean regime and its Washington backers are now having to face up to the unpalatable fact that if the FMLN continues to enjoy the present level of success in its war of attrition, large sections of the Salvadorean armed forces will simply disintegrate."

Gains by the guerrillas in Usulután Province in November, the newsletter said, "mean that the FMLN now has control of an area which stretches from Chalatenango in the north, through Suchitoto and Guazapa, to the southeast corner of the country. The guerrillas have effectively divided El Salvador in two. . . ."

This situation — intolerable from Washington's point of view — put El Salvador in the very center of Reagan's plans to escalate U.S. military intervention in Central America.

Civil war in Guatemala

The U.S. imperialists are also extremely concerned at the advancing revolutionary struggle in Guatemala, the most populous Central American country and the one where U.S. investments are most heavily concentrated.

President Romeo Lucas García, the military dictator of Guatemala, was emboldened by the election of Ronald Reagan as president of the United States. Death-squad killings of political opposition figures, trade unionists, and peasants escalated in the weeks following Reagan's November 1980 victory, and have remained at a high level ever since.

The Lucas regime's justification for its war against the Guatemalan people is much the same as that used by the Duarte junta in El Salvador. Lucas and his generals talk about the need to "struggle against both extremes" and try to pretend that the right-wing death squads are not under their control.

But in February Amnesty International issued a report that explained in detail how Lucas García himself directly supervises the political assassinations from a top-secret annex to the National Palace in Guatemala City.

Some 11,000 Guatemalans are estimated to have died at the hands of government troops and paramilitary squads during 1981 — a figure comparable to the death toll for the same period in El Salvador.

But this unrestrained butchery has not succeeded in turning back the armed resistance to the regime. In fact, the four guerrilla organizations have been able to extend their operations and strike heavier blows against the military than ever before.

The Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), and Guatemalan Labor Party—Leadership Nucleus (PGT) united to form a single military command in October 1980. These organizations now have a considerable popular base in the central and western

parts of the country and are recruiting rapidly among the Indian peasants (who make up some 45 percent of Guatemala's population).

Scorched earth tactics

In mid-July, rebel units were able to launch coordinated attacks on police posts and army convoys in Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, El Quiché, Huehuetenango, and Sacatepéquez. Chichicastenango, an important tourist center, was briefly occupied by 500 guerrillas celebrating the anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.

In late October an EGP unit attacked government and military installations in the provincial capital of Sololá, killing the provincial governor and capturing considerable quantities of weapons, ammunition, and uniforms. And in November the ORPA occupied the town of Ostunco, just ten minutes away from a major military base. That action gave the lie to official claims that the ORPA had been nearly wiped out by the army.

In response to the widening guerrilla operations, the armed forces have turned to scorched-earth tactics against the peasant population. Entire Indian villages have been wiped out.

One of the most brutal massacres took place July 19 in the village of Coya in Huehuetenango Province. According to a statement by the January 31 People's Front (FP-31 — a bloc of worker, peasant, shantytown-dweller, and student organizations), hundreds of soldiers attacked the village with machine-guns. The residents tried to defend themselves with sticks, rocks, and machetes. The battle lasted from early morning to mid-afternoon, until the military got the upper hand using a helicopter and a plane to strafe and bomb the population. An estimated 150 to 300 persons were killed. After the massacre, the soldiers piled up the bodies and cut them to pieces.

In September, forty-five peasants were killed and eighty wounded when soldiers invaded the village of San Miguel Chicaj during a Sunday festival.

More recently, according to the December 11 *Latin America Weekly Report*, "aerial bombing has become more widespread and commonplace. . . . The methods used are reminiscent of Vietnam as each town is evacuated and then bombed. The object is to create refugees, thereby breaking up the basis of local organization."

No liberal cover

As in El Salvador, the church has been a frequent target of the Guatemalan regime's violence. Two U.S. priests were assassinated in mid-1981. Even the Christian Democratic Party, a bourgeois opposition force, has been persecuted. More than seventy Christian Democratic leaders were killed during a ten-month period in late 1980 and early 1981. Party leader Vinicio Cerezo has explained that the ruling generals "want to remove us because they know that the United States cannot accept another leftist government after Nicaragua,

and that will leave them as the only alternative."

Open terrorist rule by Lucas García has indeed left Washington with scarcely any means of making intervention in Guatemala palatable internationally or inside the United States. The State Department reportedly urged Lucas to put up a civilian candidate in the March 1982 presidential elections, but he rejected this and is backing his former defense minister, Gen. Aníbal Guevara, instead. Guevara is assured of victory against a field of candidates whose views range from the extreme right to ultra-right.

But lack of political cover or less than full cooperation from the local tyrants does not mean that U.S. imperialism will not intervene to halt the spread of socialist revolution — in Guatemala or anywhere else.

Speaking to reporters in mid-November, Undersecretary of State James Buckley spelled out Washington's problem and pointed to what the U.S. rulers hope will help solve it. "You have some pretty horrible and cruel things happening down there," Buckley said, "that we don't want to associate ourselves with in any way."

"But if Nicaragua were to be converted to some sort of an extension of Soviet power it may change the perception of the American people. Obviously, the United States would be rethinking its position not just in terms of what's good for peasants in Guatemala but in terms of our own defense interests."

U.S. propaganda campaign

This theme — that the revolutionary upsurge in Central America and the Caribbean is caused not by grinding poverty and brutal repression but by "Soviet-sponsored Cuban aggression" — has been played like a broken record by the Reagan administration since it came into office. The aim is to portray the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian revolutions as a menace to the American people, and to stampede the capitalist regimes of Latin America into line behind policies of military intervention.

The first round of Washington's campaign opened in February with the release of a State Department "White Paper." It charged that the war in El Salvador was the result of "armed aggression against a small third world country by Communist powers acting through Cuba." Allegedly based on captured FMLN documents, the White Paper concocted an elaborate international arms network that had supposedly introduced 800 tons of weapons into El Salvador.

That gambit backfired, giving rise to widespread fears of another Vietnam among U.S. working people and sparking protest demonstrations at home and abroad. It was not long before the State Department official who had drawn up the White Paper was admitting that much of the information in it was "misleading," "over-embellished," and the result of just plain "guessing."

In face of the outcry, the Reagan administra-

tion backed off from making bellicose statements for a few months. But behind the scenes it was pressing ahead with military preparations.

Military moves by Washington

Weapons, equipment, and several dozen advisers were rushed into El Salvador. The first shipment of U.S. military goods to Guatemala in four years was dispatched in June. Honduras received 7,000 tons of arms and matériel, to supplement purchases of British tanks and French jet fighters. Washington put its relations with the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships back on a friendly footing, and those regimes began providing advisers and training to the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran armed forces.

Training camps for counterrevolutionary exiles from Cuba and Nicaragua were reactivated in Florida, in open violation of U.S. law. A series of naval maneuvers was carried out in the Caribbean, involving the biggest show of U.S. seagoing strength since World War II.

None of these moves cowed the revolutionary forces in the area, however, nor did they lead to any gains for the reactionary rulers. From Washington's point of view, the situation was deteriorating rapidly.

In Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador, and Guatemala, the workers and peasants advanced on many fronts, as described above. In Cuba — targeted by Haig as "the source" of his headache — hundreds of thousands joined the new Territorial Troop Militias, continuing a campaign of popular mobilization on the island that had begun in April 1980 at the time of the Peruvian Embassy provocations.

By late October it had become clear to the U.S. imperialists that their own military might would have to be thrown into the scales. Word was leaked to the U.S. press that Secretary of State Haig had asked the Pentagon "to study a show of airpower, large naval exercises, a quarantine on the shipment of arms to [Cuba], a general blockade as part of an act of war, and an invasion by American and possibly Latin American forces."

Latin American army chiefs gathered in Washington for a closed-door conclave from which Nicaragua was excluded. The main theme there was "how to fight the Cuban-Soviet invasion of the Americas," and the keynote speaker was El Salvador's defense minister.

Barrage of slanders

A barrage of slanders against Cuba and Nicaragua was unleashed in the U.S. news media. The Sandinista government was accused of moving rapidly toward "totalitarianism" and of becoming "a Soviet strategic wedge between North and South America." All the old accusations against Cuba were hauled out as well.

"Havana," Haig charged at a meeting of the Organization of American States on December 4, "calls the leaders of violent opposition groups together, forges unity pacts among

them, trains their men, provides their arms and sends them back to mount a violent challenge to legitimate governments."

Just before the OAS gathering, Washington leaked a "classified" report asserting that Cuba had converted Grenada into "a virtual client" and that Cuba's "immediate goals are to exploit and control the revolution in Nicaragua and to induce the violent overthrow of the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala."

An article on the document in the December 2 *Washington Post* explained that its circulation was "part of an administration drive, including public statements by its highest officials, to depict Cuba as an increasingly dangerous menace to international stability."

Washington's preparations for war in Central America and the Caribbean — military, diplomatic, and propagandistic — did not go unanswered. Quite the contrary. A bold political campaign, initiated in late October by the Cuban government, began to alert working people around the world to the dangerous course the Reagan administration had embarked on.

Cubans put imperialists on the spot

The Cubans challenged Washington to present proof of its claims, and the Nicaraguans did the same. At the same time, the peoples of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada went on military alert and prepared to defend their revolutions against any eventuality.

As a result of Cuba's campaign, leading political figures and organizations in many countries made statements denouncing the U.S. threats. Marches, picket lines, and rallies were held across the United States, in Western Europe, and in Latin America.

A meeting of Communist parties from the workers states adopted a declaration warning Washington that Cuba "is a member of the community of socialist states." The widespread protests even compelled the presidents of Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico to speak out against U.S. intervention.

The way for this response had been prepared by Cuba's prominent role, especially during the past two years, as the champion of the poor and oppressed throughout the world. In speech after speech, to such varied forums as the United Nations General Assembly, the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Association of Third World Economists, Fidel Castro has hammered away at two central themes: the devastating effect of the capitalist economic crisis on the semicolonial world, and the great danger the imperialist war drive poses to world peace and even to the existence of the human race.

Clear and present danger

In 1981, Castro's efforts to alert humanity to these dangers took on added urgency. "Why do they want these arms, not just nuclear arms, but conventional ones as well?" Castro asked in an October speech.

"The enormous cost of the arms race is not only the result of strategic nuclear weapons but

also of a considerable increase in conventional weapons: bringing battleships back into active service, building more aircraft carriers, more landing craft.

"In short, the United States is preparing for a policy of interventionism throughout the world."

This clear and present danger is most acute in Central America and the Caribbean. The campaign by the Cubans and their allies has helped to expose Washington's plans. But it has also raised the stakes.

There is no sign that the imperialists are backing down. On December 15, Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé pointedly told a congressional committee that "the Joint Chiefs of Staff had prepared contingency plans for American military action in Central America if President Reagan were to order United States intervention" (according to a *New York Times* summary of Iklé's testimony).

The *Times* commented that this was especially "noteworthy" in that "United States officials habitually refrain from discussing contingency plans, especially plans directed at a particular part of the world."

International solidarity

Revolutionists, and all defenders of the right to self-determination of the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean, will have big responsibilities in 1982. We must continue to mobilize to get out the truth about Washington's plans, and to demand a halt to U.S. intervention.

As the Sandinista daily *Barricada* explained in November, "A blow against the Cuban revolution would be only a first step. Other blows would fall on all of us. We must not allow ourselves to be fragmented, we must strengthen unity through international solidarity."

In a speech in Havana in November, Cuban CP leader Jesús Montané summed up the importance of international solidarity in this fight:

"We live in a world that every day turns out to be more tightly interconnected. Now there are no isolated peoples or isolated causes. Every victory of the forces of progress is a victory for us all, and every setback hits each of us equally."

The escalation of threats against Cuba, Montané explained, results from "the failure of Yankee imperialism in its efforts to block the glorious Sandinist revolution in Nicaragua; to crush the heroic and admirable struggle of the people of El Salvador and Guatemala, who are battling with arms in hand against the bloodthirsty tyrannies propped up by the United States; and in its efforts to intimidate the Cuban revolution and to force it to yield. . . ."

"What we can say to you, dear comrades, is that Cuba will not fail, either in solidarity or in combat."

That is the attitude that the U.S. rulers cannot tolerate. It is the spirit that has led to the victories in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, and that will lead to new ones in the rest of Latin America. □

Imperialists fear new revolutions

Reagan pushes military buildup, closer alliance with Israel

By Fred Murphy

In 1981 U.S. imperialism accelerated its preparations to use military force against revolutionary upheavals in the Middle East. In doing so, the Reagan administration built on foundations laid by President Carter in reaction to the Iranian revolution in 1979.

The downfall of the shah drove home to Washington that its local clients alone cannot be relied on to stem the fresh waves of anti-imperialist popular revolt that have begun to sweep the region. The new situation called for moving the U.S. war machine itself into the Middle East, as well as strengthening collaboration with the Zionist state of Israel, whose role as a bulwark of imperialist domination has been enhanced.

Underlying the growing discontent among the workers and peasants of the Middle East is the economic crisis of world capitalism. All countries, oil-producing or not, are being affected.

With their own economies in crisis and profits declining, the imperialists have no alternative but to press harder on the semicolonial world. Through their banks and international lending institutions, they put the squeeze on countries like Turkey, Morocco, and the Sudan. They pressure the oil-producing states to hold prices down, and to divert much of their income to arms purchases or to investments inside the imperialist countries. Against the Iranian revolution and regimes like Qaddafi's in Libya, they use economic blackmail, boycotts, military threats, and armed intervention.

Inside the semicolonial countries, such imperialist pressures serve to increase social tensions and heighten the level of class struggle. This dynamic was at work in many Middle Eastern countries in 1981.

'Political tinder boxes'

In Morocco, King Hassan II's regime abruptly hiked food prices by 80 to 100 percent at the end of May, an austerity move forced through by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Three weeks later, a general strike shut down the capital, Rabat, and other major cities. In Casablanca, demonstrators battled police during the night of June 20-21. Between 200 and 600 persons were killed and more than 1,000 arrested.

"Foreign observers call big cities such as Casablanca political tinder boxes," Mary Gearhart reported in the November 21 issue of *8 Days* magazine, "their huge shanty town populations, constantly swollen by rural newcomers, ready to explode at any provocation. . . ."

"Western diplomats in Rabat are afraid that economic desperation and the pent-up frustration of the poor will almost certainly vent itself in more violent rioting."

Morocco's crisis is exacerbated by Hassan's war to conquer the Western Sahara and by the worst drought in thirty-five years. But the conditions of the masses are no different from those in most other Middle Eastern countries.

In Egypt, the economic "liberalization" introduced by the late Anwar el-Sadat in the 1970s has resulted in declining food production, increasing dependence on imports, and a widening gap in income between the rich and poor.

Forty percent of Egypt's food supplies are now imported, and the costs of these have skyrocketed owing to inflation in the imperialist countries. The country has run up a \$20 billion foreign debt since 1974, and the IMF is now demanding cuts in government food subsidies.

When Sadat tried such a measure in 1977, widespread rioting broke out. The new Mubarak regime is in an even weaker position to try to impose cuts in food subsidies than Sadat was. After eight years, the political capital of the 1973 war against Israel, which Sadat relied upon, has begun to wear somewhat thin.

Food riots in Sudan

Sudanese dictator Gaafar el-Nimeiry, facing empty government coffers and urgent demands for tough austerity measures from the IMF, announced a monetary devaluation and cuts in food subsidies on November 9. Similar measures in August 1979 touched off five days of riots and street protests in Khartoum.

According to the November 14 *Economist*, Sudan's "exports have been falling steadily for a decade; last year cotton production, the main foreign-exchange earner, was only half what it was in 1970. Ambitious agricultural schemes . . . have been undermined by the cost of expensive imports such as fertilisers and tractors. . . . At street level, the economic problems mean that there is simply not enough food to feed the population. . . . Over the past two years most big towns in Sudan have had food riots."

In June Nimeiry put down a strike by rail workers and dissolved their union, historically the country's strongest. And in August, more than 10,000 opponents of the regime were thrown in jail.

Repression in Turkey

During the late 1970s, the working class of Turkey put up fierce resistance to repeated government attempts to impose draconian aus-

terity measures demanded by the IMF. The Turkish economy was in a deep crisis owing to huge foreign debts. Finally, in September 1980, the army took over and mercilessly crushed the strongest trade-union movement in the Mideast.

Today, the officially stated figure for political prisoners in Turkey is 26,828. Other estimates put the number jailed as high as 50,000. Fifty-two trade-union leaders put on trial before a military court at the end of 1981 are in danger of execution — accused of taking part in "May Day rallies, demonstrations against a new labor law, and protests against the murder of a union member" before the 1980 coup (*New York Times*, December 10).

All Turkish political parties are outlawed, and the news media is under military censorship. University autonomy has been eliminated. Torture is systematically carried out on political prisoners.

Such rule by terror is what imperialism and the regimes it backs have in store for working people throughout the Mideast. Unable to meet the social needs of the masses, or even to lift their own capitalist economies out of crisis, the local ruling classes are resorting more and more to repression, military rule, and harsh attacks on living standards.

But as the Iranian toilers proved in their massive year-long revolt against the shah's dictatorship in 1978-79, such methods cannot guarantee stability. At a certain point, repression itself fuels revolt.

U.S. response to Iranian revolution

The Iranian revolution proved to the millions of oppressed and exploited throughout the Mideast that even the bloodiest and most heavily armed tyrants can be brought down by a determined and uncompromising mass struggle. And it forcefully reminded the imperialists that providing immense quantities of military aid to local lackeys is not sufficient to assure their domination.

Within weeks of the shah's flight from Iran in January 1979, then-U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown was touring Middle Eastern capitals, seeking to reassure proimperialist rulers in the area. He informed them that Washington was preparing to create "a 'quick-strike force' of American paratroopers and marines to be used in case of a request for help by Saudi Arabia or other oil-producing Gulf nations" (as the *New York Times* reported Brown's trip at the time).

From then until Ronald Reagan made his October 1, 1981 statement that "Saudi Arabia we will not permit to be an Iran," U.S. imperialism's overriding concern in the Mideast has

been to prepare for military action against popular revolutions.

Washington wants to put together a counter-revolutionary alliance involving the Zionist regime in Israel as well as the reactionary Arab regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and elsewhere. Along with this, and indispensable to the plan's success, is the securing of military bases in the region from which the Pentagon's own Rapid Deployment Force could operate on a permanent basis.

All this is easier planned than done, however.

Sadat mourned in Washington

The most enthusiastic supporter of the project was Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat. Before his August visit to Washington, Sadat declared: "When I see President Reagan I shall say to him that I will give the United States every facility so they can reach any Arab country on the [Persian] Gulf, so they can reach any Islamic country anywhere. . . ."

Within weeks of his return to Egypt, Sadat was dead — gunned down by some of his own troops at a military parade.

Like the Iranian revolution, the 1979 uprising in Mecca in Saudi Arabia, and the eruption of protests in Morocco and the Sudan, Sadat's assassination again exposed how fragile are the semicolonial regimes upon which Washington must base one leg of its Mideast strategy.

Sadat's passing was sincerely and deeply mourned in Washington and in other imperialist capitals. But the Egyptian masses reacted with sullen silence — except in Asyut, where a popular rebellion broke out that the army had to be sent in to crush. Cairo was turned into an armed camp, and no ordinary citizen was allowed within a mile of Sadat's funeral.

The absence of grief among Egyptians and the joyous celebrations elsewhere in the Arab world were in stark contrast to the universal mourning that marked the demise of Sadat's predecessor, Gamal Abdul Nasser, in 1970.

While Reagan praised Sadat as a "champion of peace," 72,000 U.S. troops were put on alert and a U.S. naval buildup described as "unprecedented" took place in the Mediterranean.

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

Acceleration of U.S. buildup

The weeks following Sadat's death saw an acceleration of the U.S. military buildup in the region. Plans were announced to provide \$100 million in military aid to Nimeiry in the Sudan, along with more U.S. military advisers and other aid "to strengthen internal security." The sale of five sophisticated AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia was pushed through the U.S. Congress. Two more AWACS jets — which serve as airborne command posts — were dispatched to patrol the Libyan-Egyptian border.

In November, the biggest deployment of

U.S. ground forces in the Mideast since Washington's 1958 invasion of Lebanon was staged. "Operation Bright Star" brought more than 6,000 troops from the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), tanks, bombers, and landing craft to Egypt, Oman, Somalia, and the Sudan.

In all, the new RDF involves a pool of 200,000 troops from four army and marine divisions, including the 82nd Airborne; five air force fighter wings; three aircraft-carrier battle groups; several B-52 squadrons; and AWACS aircraft. Supplies and equipment for the RDF have been positioned at the Pentagon's Indian Ocean base on the island of Diego Garcia, and military facilities are being prepared at the ports of Berbera, Somalia; Mombasa, Kenya; and Masira, Oman.

According to the December 9 *Washington Post*, "Egypt's military facilities at Ras Banas on the Red Sea are shaping up as the closest thing to a launching pad for American military power, with \$126 million earmarked for improvements this year alone." Ras Banas's runways are being enlarged to accommodate B-52s and large cargo planes.

Weinberger's 'admiration' for Turkish junta

The Turkish military dictatorship also figures into Washington's plans. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger visited Ankara in early December and confirmed plans to boost U.S. military aid to Turkey by 60 percent, to \$403 million, in fiscal 1982. Further hikes are projected for 1983. A high-level U.S.-Turkish military planning group was also announced, to "enlarge and improve defense cooperation."

"Turkey's importance to the U.S. follows from its strategic location straddling Europe and the Middle East," the *Wall Street Journal* said December 7. "It is the southeastern anchor of NATO, bordering on Iran, the Soviet Union and two Soviet Mideast allies, Iraq and Syria. As turmoil has grown in the Middle East, so has the value of Turkey to NATO."

The *Journal* saw "little danger that Turkey's political situation will interfere with U.S. aid." The truth of this understatement could be seen in Weinberger's December 5 response to a reporter's question about human-rights violations in Turkey:

"We feel that human rights can only flourish in the atmosphere in which law and order prevail, and the admiration I expressed was for the ability of the Turkish Government to do so much to eliminate what was virtually a state of anarchy and the very widespread degree of terrorism."

Washington's buildup has been accompanied by an escalation of pressures, threats and outright military moves against regimes in the region that are viewed as obstacles to U.S. plans. The principal targets have been the Khomeini government in Iran and the regime of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in Libya.

Khomeini urges masses to rebel

While the Khomeini government in Iran remains a capitalist one, it has nonetheless based

itself on the masses in resisting the threats and pressures of imperialism. This is why Washington places no confidence in it and is seeking to destabilize and overthrow it. In 1981, the Khomeini regime continued to take positions and make statements that ran counter to imperialist interests in the Mideast and elsewhere.

When Sadat was assassinated and martial law was declared in Egypt, Khomeini spoke out against this. "The Egyptians should not fear Martial Law," he said. "Like the Iranian people who flooded the streets and destroyed Martial Law, they should also flood the streets and demolish Martial Law and do away with these American lackeys."

During the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca in September, tens of thousands of Iranian pilgrims staged anti-imperialist demonstrations. Saudi King Khalid protested to Khomeini, and the ayatollah replied that the "Hajj pilgrimage . . . is interwoven with the rise of people for justice and the destruction of tyranny and exploitation. . . ." He told Khalid that if his kingdom could rely on "millions of Moslems in an Islamic political manner, it would not need America or its AWAC airplanes. . . ."

The Iranian government also spoke out in support of the Irish republican hunger strikers, extended recognition to the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador, established closer ties and trade relations with workers states such as Yugoslavia and Romania, and sent a delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Havana.

"We came to participate in the Conference," delegation leader Seyyid Mahmud Doai told the Havana daily *Granma*, "but the most important thing for us was to see Cuba and the leader of the Cuban Revolution. We thank God for our good fortune, the best part of which was being able to hear Fidel's speech, which made the imperialists so angry."

Imperialist destabilization campaign

In 1981 the Iranian revolution confronted imperialist economic sabotage, continued occupation of Iranian territory by the Iraqi armed forces, and a campaign of bombings and terrorist attacks aimed at destabilizing the country and paving the way for the overthrow of the Iranian government by proimperialist forces.

Iran faces a shortage of foreign currency, owing both to Iraqi destruction of some of its oil installations and to the refusal of major oil companies to buy large quantities of Iranian petroleum. Lack of essential imported parts and raw materials for industry had led to factory closings and declining output. More than \$2 billion in Iranian assets on deposit in Dutch and British banks have been frozen at the behest of Washington.

The Iraqi invasion of Iran, which began in September 1980 and was applauded by the imperialists, has taken a heavy toll. More than 60,000 Iranians have been killed or wounded, economic losses have been in excess of \$100 billion, and more than 1 million Iranians have become refugees.

The war remained stalemated during much

of 1981, but beginning in late September the Iranian forces began to score some victories. On September 27 Iran's army broke the siege of Abadan, a key city that had been under Iraqi attack from three sides since the first days of the war.

Further gains were scored in late November in an area of the front sixty miles north of Abadan. By November 29, Tehran Radio reported, Iranian forces had recaptured seventy villages and the border town of Bustan in an area of 100 square miles. Militia volunteers played an especially big role in the latter victories, Iranian socialists reported.

On November 24, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein offered "unconditional cooperation" to any Iranian opposition group trying to bring down the Khomeini regime, "irrespective of the stand this faction may have taken on the current war." The Iraqi government has long collaborated with counterrevolutionary Iranians, such as the shah's last prime minister, Shahpur Bakhtiari, and various monarchist generals. Hussein's November 24 offer was thus most likely directed at the opposition bloc between ex-President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr and the People's Mujahedeen Organization.

Reactionary bombing attacks

Following Bani-Sadr's ouster in June by the ruling Islamic Republican Party (IRP), a wave of terrorist attacks broke out against the IRP, government officials, and Islamic clergymen. By September, these bombings and assassinations had claimed the lives of President Mohammed Ali Rajai, Prime Minister Mohammed Javad Bahonar, the head of the supreme court, four cabinet ministers, six deputy ministers, and thirty members of parliament. The Pars news agency reported the overall death toll of government officials at more than 1,000 on October 26.

Credit for many, but not all, of these attacks was claimed by the People's Mujahedeen Organization. The Mujahedeen, in alliance with the ousted Bani-Sadr, claimed to be fighting as part of the "democratic opposition" to an "anti-popular regime."

But by "launching war" against the IRP government and Khomeini on June 18, the Mujahedeen opened the way for, and provided left cover to, stepped-up destabilization efforts by all the pro-shah, proimperialist forces that want to turn back the Iranian revolution.

The Iranian masses repudiated the attacks on their leaders with immense street demonstrations. More than 1 million persons attended the June 30 funeral for seventy-two top IRP leaders, killed in a bombing of the party's headquarters on June 28. And on August 31, a much larger crowd gathered to protest the killing the day before of President Rajai and Prime Minister Bahonar in a bombing of the latter's office. On each occasion, the demonstrators chanted slogans blaming the U.S. government for the killings.

The principal response of the regime was to carry out large-scale arrests and executions of members and sympathizers of the Majahe-

deen. This repression, a substitute for the anti-capitalist measures and working-class and peasant mobilizations that could effectively defend and advance the revolution, was not popular among the masses.

Pressure to halt the executions mounted, and by November they had practically ceased. On December 5, the Pars news agency announced that Ayatollah Khomeini had granted an amnesty to 1,932 persons arrested during the period of the terrorist attacks.

The terrorism diminished in the latter months of 1981, although on December 11 Khomeini's personal representative in Shiraz was killed along with seven companions when a bomb exploded near his house in that southern Iranian city.

The IRP regime sought in various ways to take advantage of the drive against terrorism in order to encroach on the democratic rights won by the masses through the overthrow of the shah's dictatorship. Unauthorized public meetings were prohibited; some daily newspapers and other periodicals were forced to cease publication; socialists, other militant workers, and revolutionary intellectuals were imprisoned.

Masses exert pressure

But the government and the Iranian capitalists were in no position to confront the workers and peasants head on. Throughout the year, the masses continued to exert pressure for solutions to the serious economic and social problems they face.

Peasants organized and demonstrated in many parts of the country for implementation of the long-stalled Section C of the government's land-reform program, which calls for distribution of big private estates.

Through their *shoras* (committees) and other forms of organization, factory workers pressed for control over production in order to halt sabotage by private capitalists and inefficient management by state bureaucrats. Demands were also raised for enforcement of the constitutional provision for a state monopoly on foreign trade, in order to strike against hoarding and speculation.

Further struggles around demands of this kind can be expected in 1982. It is through their experience in fighting for such social and economic measures that the Iranian masses will come to see the need to replace the current regime with one that truly represents their interests — with a workers and farmers government that can effectively defend and advance the revolution.

Qaddafi makes the 'enemies list'

Another Middle Eastern regime that makes the imperialists angry is that of Colonel Qaddafi in Libya. Since at least 1977, Qaddafi's regime has been near the top of Washington's enemies list, owing to his support to anti-imperialist struggles in many parts of the world.

A considerable part in the Reagan administration's public justification for its military buildup in the Mideast has been played by the alleged "Libyan threat." After Sadat's assassi-

nation, Sudanese dictator Nimeiry claimed that a Libyan invasion of his country was imminent; U.S. military aid to the Sudan was tripled soon thereafter.

In July, the Pentagon warned of a "Libyan tank threat" to Tunisia and announced plans to sell \$92 million worth of tanks to the regime of President-for-Life Bourguiba there.

Libya's support for the Polisario freedom fighters in the Western Sahara has been cited to justify Reagan's approval of a deal to sell 108 M-60 tanks to King Hassan II in Morocco.

The Egyptian armed forces, which fought a brief war against Libya in 1977, began concentrating troops and building fortifications along the Egyptian border with Libya in August. In November, the White House gave the Mubarak regime "assurances of a U.S. military umbrella against the Soviet Union in case of an Egyptian attack on Libya" (*Washington Post*, November 8).

Besides arming the proimperialist regimes that surround Libya and encouraging them to blame all their internal problems on "agents of Qaddafi," Washington has also been planning and carrying out actions of its own against the North African country.

In May, Reagan ordered all Libyan diplomats to leave the United States. In July, U.S. oil companies were urged to remove their American personnel from the country. In August, the U.S. Sixth Fleet was sent into waters claimed by Libya in the Gulf of Sidra, and U.S. Navy jets shot down two Libyan air force planes over the gulf.

U.S.-Israeli 'strategic cooperation'

The campaign was stepped up another notch in early December, when the White House leaked fantastic reports that a Libyan "hit squad" was gunning for President Reagan and other top officials. This served as the pretext to invalidate all U.S. passports for travel to Libya and to order all U.S. citizens to leave that country at once. Once the latter moves had been carried through, the "hit squad" stories were virtually dropped.

Economic pressure has also been brought to bear. Declining Western orders for Libyan oil caused a 65 percent drop in production during the last half of 1981. Exxon Corporation announced in November that it was halting all operations in Libya, and other companies began hinting at similar moves.

Colonel Qaddafi has rejected Washington's threats and accusations. When asked by *Newsweek* magazine in July about charges of "terrorism," the Libyan leader replied that "Israel is terrorizing the Arabs with its nuclear program. The West German people are terrorized because the United States is putting its missiles there. We in Libya are terrorized by the presence of the American fleet in the Mediterranean. This is real terrorism."

What really upsets Washington, Qaddafi pointed out in a December interview with a British television network, is that "We fight against colonialism. This is a right and a duty."

The Zionist regime in Israel occupies a spec-



Iranian soldiers fighting Iraqi invasion.

ial and permanent place in the plans of U.S. imperialism to halt and roll back revolutionary developments in the Mideast. This relationship was further formalized in November 1981 with the signing of a "memorandum of understanding" between Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

"United States-Israeli strategic cooperation," the memo stated, "is designed against the threat to peace and security of the region caused by the Soviet Union or Soviet-controlled forces from outside the region introduced into the region." The memo thus used Washington's time-honored code words for socialist revolution.

The central target of the Zionist regime remains the Palestinian liberation movement. From the mid-1970s, the main battleground in this confrontation has been Lebanon. Since achieving a separate peace on their southern front with Egypt, through the 1978 Camp David accords, the Israelis have launched three major attacks across their northern border in efforts to smash the Palestinians' struggle to regain their homeland.

On each occasion the Zionist army and air force have wreaked terror and destruction upon the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian populations. But they have failed to wipe out the armed Palestinian resistance movement.

On July 17, Israeli Prime Minister Mena-

chem Begin ordered his U.S.-supplied warplanes to bomb heavily populated districts in the Lebanese capital, Beirut. This act of premeditated mass murder, which killed at least 300 persons and wounded 800 more, came during a fourteen-day Israeli offensive against Palestinian positions in southern Lebanon.

But despite extensive bombing raids against Palestinian towns and villages and two major ground assaults, Begin was forced to agree to a cease-fire on July 24. The Israelis failed to achieve their aims of driving the Palestinian forces out of southern Lebanon or creating a situation that would enable further steps toward gradual annexation of the area.

"The heavy Israeli attacks appear to have inflicted little or no military damage on the Palestinian guerrillas," a dispatch from Beirut to the July 25 *New York Times* reported. "Conversations with guerrillas in the past week indicated that morale was high, largely as a result of the guerrillas' perception that Mr. Begin's tactics were costing him heavily in international support."

The terror bombing of Beirut was not the first occasion in 1981 when Begin's provocative tactics provoked international repudiation. On June 7 Israeli jets destroyed a nuclear reactor near the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. Begin claimed this raid was justified because the Iraqis were planning to build nuclear weapons. Afterwards, Lt. Gen. David Ivri of the Israeli

air force "said the Iraqi operation is behind while the Syrian problem lies ahead" (*Washington Post*, June 10).

Threats against Syria

Ivri's reference was to Israel's repeated demands upon Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to remove defensive antiaircraft missiles from both Lebanon and parts of Syria itself. The region had been brought to the brink of full-scale war in April when Israeli jets downed two Syrian helicopters over Lebanon. Syria had responded by moving some of its antiaircraft batteries into Lebanon.

The Israeli provocations against Syria dovetailed with mounting pressure on the Assad regime from Washington. In April, \$130 million in scheduled U.S. economic aid to Syria was cancelled, and Reagan announced that he would seek no new aid for Syria in his 1982 budget.

Assad had angered Washington by persisting in his refusal to go along with the Camp David accords, denouncing U.S. attacks on the Iranian revolution, forming an alliance with Qaddafi's regime in Libya, and signing a long-term treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union.

Washington viewed the Israeli demands on Syria with favor, and egged Begin on as he intervened in Lebanon to back up right-wing Christian militia forces against Syrian troops stationed there. But once it became clear that the Syrians were going to stand up to the Zionist demands, and that the fighting might escalate into full-scale war, the Reagan administration called on Begin to back off.

This pointed up the frictions that continually arise between Washington and Tel-Aviv over the Zionist state's own drive toward war. The conflict surfaced again in a sharper way in mid-December when Begin abruptly annexed the Golan Heights — an area of Syria occupied by the Israelis in the June 1967 war.

Israel's drive toward war

Washington reacted to the latter move by suspending implementation of the new "strategic accord" with Israel. According to the December 19 *New York Times*, "High Administration officials said this was a deliberately tough step with two purposes: to put Israel on notice that Washington will not passively tolerate unilateral moves deeply affecting the Middle East and specifically to deter Israel from major military operations in southern Lebanon."

For some time now the Israeli ruling class has been champing at the bit for a new war of aggression against Lebanon, Syria, and the other Arab states that have rejected the Camp David accords.

The Zionist rulers hope that a 1967-style victory will alleviate the deepening economic crisis inside Israel, gain them fresh markets and areas of investment, smash the Palestinian resistance, and reduce the political and military pressure they feel from the Arab regimes.

This drive toward war is becoming more

acute inasmuch as Tel-Aviv is committed under the Camp David accords to withdraw from the Sinai peninsula in April 1982. The Israelis entered those accords in the first place in order to free their hands against the Syrian regime and for expansionist moves into southern Lebanon, aims that have not yet been achieved.

Zionist aggression is essential to Washington as well, but for different reasons. The Israeli war machine plays a key part in guaranteeing imperialist domination in the Middle East as a whole. And it is becoming still more indispensable as the popular struggle against such domination advances.

Nonetheless, Washington is not eager to confront the consequences that an all-out Middle East war might bring — in particular, the possibility of new revolutionary upheavals in the Arab world. Hence it must continually seek to rein in the Zionists and enforce discipline in

the imperialist camp. The moves it makes to do this never fundamentally alter U.S.-Israeli relations, of course.

Thus when the Golan annexation was announced, Washington suspended the new "strategic accord" and voted in the UN Security Council to declare the annexation "null and void," but it did not touch the \$2.2 billion in economic and military aid provided to Israel on an annual basis.

The strictly limited nature of the U.S.-Israeli frictions was spelled out by the *Washington Post's* State Department correspondent John Goshko in a December 19 article:

"In private, senior U.S. officials conceded that they do not think it possible for Begin to reverse the Golan decision outright because it would cause serious political upheaval in Israel.

"But they insisted that Israel will have to be

what one called 'more forthcoming in making at least some cosmetic gesture of contrition or good faith. . . .'

"At the same time, the officials emphasized that there is no 'line being drawn in the sand' about what Washington expects Israel to do. They said the United States was not demanding that Israel rescind the Golan decision. . . ."

Whatever tactical disputes may arise from time to time among the rulers of the United States and Israel, they remain firmly in accord on the overriding strategic goal: to prevent further anti-imperialist victories in the Middle East, and to roll back those already achieved.

Washington will proceed with its military buildup, but the workers and peasants of Iran, the displaced masses of Palestinians, and the oppressed and exploited throughout the region will yet have the final say. □

Western Europe

Capitalist offensive leads to polarization

Workers resist militarization and austerity

By Will Reissner

For Western Europe, 1981 was a year in which the social and economic crisis of the capitalist system became more apparent than ever. It was a year of urban rebellions in Britain, a massive upsurge in the Irish freedom struggle, huge protests against nuclear weapons, and leftward movement among the working masses in a number of countries. All this took place in the context of a sick economy.

The steady postwar economic growth in Western Europe screeched to a halt in the 1974-75 recession and has never fully recovered. In 1975, for the first time in more than two decades, all the major economies of the European Economic Community (EEC) experienced absolute declines.

Although economic growth returned in 1976, the inability of European capitalists to improve their profit rates sufficiently has caused a slowdown in capital investment and a steady rise in unemployment. Since 1979, economic growth has again ground to a standstill.

Unemployment in Western Europe now stands at the highest level since the EEC was established in 1958. From a rate of slightly over 3 percent in 1973, the toll of joblessness has grown to nearly 9 percent today (almost 10 million people) and is expected to continue rising in 1982 and 1983. Some EEC officials say the 1982 unemployment rate could rise to 12 percent among adult workers and more than 40 percent among youth.

'Stagflation'

In spite of steadily mounting unemployment, the inflation rate continues to run at dou-

ble-digit levels in much of Western Europe. This combination of economic stagnation and mounting inflation, or "stagflation," is shaking up the political and economic relationships that developed in the postwar boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

The steady economic growth of the postwar period allowed the consolidation of a generation of trade-union officials and leaders of workers parties who were committed to methods of class collaboration and compromise with the bourgeoisie. Social peace, class peace, became the norm. The steadily growing pie, out of which the workers' slice constantly grew in absolute if not relative terms, provided for seemingly automatic real growth in the standard of living of the working class.

The long postwar boom also made it possible to increase arms budgets without cutting social spending or forcing down living standards.

But the period of rapid economic growth that made all this possible is over. The pie is not growing, and in some cases is shrinking, forcing West European employers to try to cut the workers' share of national income.

Drive down wages

Since the generalized recession of the mid-1970s, austerity measures have been the rule throughout Western Europe as employers try to improve their profit margins by driving down the living standards of the working class. The employers are demanding that the workers bear the full burden of the economic crisis, and pay the price for restructuring industry, as unprofitable sectors of the economy are shrunk or

shut down and government spending for social services is slashed.

A key aim of this continentwide austerity drive is to increase the competitiveness of the European capitalists in world markets.

But because the European trade unions are generally linked to powerful mass workers parties, over the past decade the European imperialists and their governments have been less successful than their American counterparts in reducing the living standards of the working class. Wage costs are now lower in the United States than in most European countries.

Economist Ulrich Schröder of the Westdeutsche Landesbank put his finger on the major obstacle facing European employers: "Of all of Europe's problems, one of the most serious is a feeling that people are entitled to keep all the gains in living standards and social benefits that have been achieved in the last three decades" (*Business Week*, December 7).

The attempts to solve that "problem" are leading to major collisions between classes in Western Europe as workers resist the austerity drive.

While the scope of the economic recession varies in degree and duration from country to country, the general framework is the same.

British industry ravaged

Britain has suffered the longest and deepest economic crisis. Under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, unemployment has risen from 5.7 percent at the end of 1979 to over 12 percent in 1981. The number of jobless in Britain is now around 3 million, and even

the British Treasury projects unemployment rising to 3.7 million by 1983.

The British gross domestic product (GDP) dropped 5.5 percent in 1980 and another 2 percent in 1981. The most optimistic projections for 1982 forecast a rise of only 1 percent in the GDP, far lower than the 4-5 percent needed to cut unemployment.

In the course of the economic crisis, much of British heavy industry has been ravaged. The scope of the decline can be seen from the steel and automobile industries.

In 1970, British auto manufacturers produced 1,640,000 cars. Ten years later the figure had dropped to 924,000.

The decline in the steel industry has been even more dramatic. British steel production plummeted from 28 million metric tons in 1970 to only 11.2 million in 1980. Today industrial production in Britain has dropped to 1970 levels.

Same picture throughout Europe

But the highest unemployment levels in Europe are in Belgium, not Britain. Official unemployment there is 12.6 percent. The steel and textile industries have been hardest hit by the crisis and the attempts at restructuring; and the rising unemployment has hit French-speaking Wallonia especially hard.

Denmark has also been very badly bruised by the recession. Between 1976 and 1980 the real disposable income of Danish workers dropped 12.5 percent. In December the official unemployment rate stood at 9.3 percent, an increase of 2 percent in one year. Wage increases have been running well below the inflation rate.

The Danish foreign debt has been steadily rising, to the point where it now equals 25 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

In Portugal, unemployment now stands at nearly 9 percent. Prices are climbing 25 percent per year. The Portuguese balance-of-payments deficit is \$2.4 billion, and the country will soon have to approach the International Monetary Fund for a new loan. The IMF will demand the imposition of heavy new austerity measures.

Portuguese currency is being devalued monthly, and investment is paralyzed. Growth in the economy is projected at only 1 percent in 1982.

The inflation rate in France is about 15 percent and unemployment will top 2 million by the year's end.

In Italy the inflation rate is at least 19 percent. More than 2 million workers are unemployed, a 25 percent jump since August. The budget deficit for 1981 is estimated at \$42 billion, up 41 percent from the previous year.

Greece has been hit by the same problems as the rest of Western Europe. Prior to the October 18 elections, a government official acknowledged that the economic situation was "lamentable." The inflation rate is over 25 percent per year, and more than 200,000 people are jobless in a population of 9 million. Average real income is falling.



German workers in October 1981 protest against plans to close Adler metalworks.

In Spain real income has been dropping since 1977. Unemployment is over 12 percent and rising.

The economic recession hit West Germany somewhat later than other countries in the EEC. Unemployment stands at 5 percent nationally, although it is considerably higher in industrial areas, and the inflation rate, at 7 percent, is also lower than elsewhere. But the West German economy will not prove immune to the crisis plaguing the world capitalist system, and the impact of the crisis there is already being felt in budget cuts.

Rising competition

The economic crisis that has hit the entire capitalist world is putting a severe strain on political and economic relations between the imperialist nations. Structures like the European Economic Community, which was designed to cut tariff barriers in Western Europe and provide European capitalists with a "home market" comparable to that of their U.S. counterparts, are beginning to break down as the crisis pushes each state to protect the specific interests of its own capitalists. Protectionism is growing fast, with barriers being erected against imports from inside as well as outside the Common Market.

The growing competition between European capitalists, and between the Europeans, Americans, and Japanese, also makes it more difficult for them to agree on a common strategy toward the workers states of Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Most West European states, hoping to maintain and if possible increase their ex-

port markets in Eastern Europe, have been reluctant to align themselves with the Reagan administration's policy of pressuring the Soviet Union through trade restrictions.

Those West European governments that went along with President Carter's sanctions against the Soviets after the intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 found to their chagrin that the sales they gave up were snapped up by European competitors.

Structures like the European Monetary System, which was designed to eliminate the individual fluctuation of most West European currencies in order to facilitate trade relations, are also breaking down as governments follow contradictory monetary policies aimed at serving the needs of their own economies.

Old methods not working

The reformist leaders of the trade unions and workers parties in Western Europe have been unable to develop an effective response to the economic crisis and the mounting attacks on living standards and social benefits.

Where social-democratic parties have been in office and have tried to manage the capitalist economy, the logic of the crisis has forced them to carry out attacks on the living standards of workers, and they have paid a price at the ballot box.

The first example of this was the defeat of Olof Palme's Social Democratic Labor government in the 1976 elections in Sweden, ending forty-three years of social-democratic rule there.

The same thing happened in Britain, where

the Labour government of James Callaghan was defeated in 1979. Between 1976 and 1978, a period during which the Labour government convinced the trade unions to lower their wage claims as part of a "social contract" with the employers, living standards in Britain suffered their worst two-year decline in this century.

A similar development led to the defeat of the Socialist Party government of Mario Soares in Portugal in December 1979. And in the December 8 election in Denmark, the ruling Social Democrats, who had cut social spending and pledged to increase the arms budget by 2 percent per year after inflation, were unable to continue in power after losing nine seats.

The West German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which rules in a coalition with the capitalist Free Democrats, has also been following the logic of carrying out the austerity drive for the capitalists, cutting previous social gains of the working class for the first time since World War II.

It too is paying for its inability to offer any solution to the economic problems except lowered living standards. In a number of recent local elections, the SPD's share of the vote has dropped dramatically.

'Opposition' parties help capitalists

Mass workers parties that are not governing parties — for instance, the Communist parties in Italy and Spain and the Spanish social democrats — have reacted to the crisis in a similar way, pledging cooperation with the capitalists to overcome the economic problems. This political stance stymied the ability of the workers to fight back in defense of their standard of living, while encouraging the capitalists to accelerate their attacks.

In Italy, the Communist Party's policy of "national unity," wherein it agreed to support the Christian Democratic government in parliament, effectively prevented the establishment of a CP-SP government and gave the Christian Democrats a free hand to carry out their austerity plans. But the Italian CP paid a price for that policy, losing 4 percent of its vote nationally in the June 1979 elections. Until then the CP vote had been steadily rising.

CP leader Enrico Berlinguer acknowledged in July 1981 that "after the 1979 elections we ran the risk of a defeat that could have brought us to our knees. . . . During the governments of National Unity we had lost direct contact with the masses. . . ."

In Spain, the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the Communist Party also offered the capitalists their cooperation in solving the economic crisis. In 1977 both parties signed the Moncloa Pact with the government, agreeing to keep wage increases below inflation in return for tax reforms and other measures.

But the Moncloa Pact has been disastrous to the living standards of the working class in Spain, which has been unable to mount an ef-

fective defense of its interests because the two mass workers parties, and the unions they influence, accept the rightist government's policies.

New trends

As yet, the offensive of the bosses has not sufficiently driven down the living standards of the working class to boost profit levels and improve competitiveness. As a result, the pace of the austerity offensive has been increasing.

This is leading to a steady polarization of politics in Western Europe. The polarization is reflected in a further rightward evolution of the main bourgeois parties as they try to drive through the attacks.

But the polarization is also being reflected in the working class and the mass workers parties. Under the impact of the attacks, left-wing tendencies are beginning to emerge.

The growing polarization in Europe was behind the defeat of rightist governments in France and Greece in 1981. But this polarization has developed the furthest in Britain.

Thus far, the Thatcher government and the employers have been winning most of their battles against the workers. Using the threat of mass unemployment, the British capitalists have forced acceptance of wage settlements far below the level of inflation, have sharply boosted productivity in key sectors by attacking working conditions, and have closed down less competitive sectors of British industry.

Under the blows of the Tories, however, many British workers are beginning to recognize that their problems require new solutions. The established, class-collaborationist view, in which the unions are assigned the task of defending only the economic interests of the workers on the job, while broad political issues are left to the Parliamentary Labour Party, is being challenged.

It is the government that manages much of British industry, and it is the government that is spearheading the economic offensive. This poses the need for the unions to address political issues and to assert their control over the Labour Party. In order to bring down the Thatcher government, the unions and the Labour Party must be transformed into fighting instruments that present a real alternative to Thatcher's policies.

Fight within the Labour Party

Unless the Labour Party is turned into an instrument of class struggle, committed to a thoroughgoing transformation of British society, a new Labour government would be forced by the economic crisis to operate in the same manner as the disastrous Callaghan government, further slashing the living standards of the working class.

The struggle to transform the Labour Party has focused around the fight waged by the Labour left wing to elect Tony Benn as deputy party leader, and to give the ranks democratic control over the party's program and candidates.

Although Benn's campaign for deputy lead-

er was initially dismissed by the media as a hopeless quest, the Labour left wing came within a whisker of electing him at the annual Labour Party conference in September.

Benn lost, but the conference registered the gains the left has made. It supported, by a two-thirds majority, unilateral British nuclear disarmament. It maintained the new rules giving greater control to the trade unions and local party groups and less control to the parliamentary caucus. It began to question the traditional bipartisan support for continued British rule over Northern Ireland, and opposed the Thatcher government's proposal for a 4 percent ceiling on wage increases.

The struggle to transform the Labour Party has brought in 80,000 new members in the course of a year.

The Labour Party has also sponsored a series of mass demonstrations against Tory policies. In November 1980 some 150,000 people marched in Liverpool for jobs. In February, a similar march in Glasgow, organized by the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress (TUC), attracted about 100,000 participants, the biggest demonstration in Scotland in many decades.

A month-long People's March for Jobs culminated in a May 31 rally of 150,000 in London.

The Labour Party is also participating in the campaign to prevent the placement of 572 U.S. Cruise and Pershing II nuclear missiles in Western Europe. Britain is scheduled to be the base for 162 Cruise missiles.

The TUC and the Labour Party both had speakers at the October 24 London march of 250,000 people against the NATO missiles and against the Thatcher government's decision to spend more than \$15 billion on Trident II submarine-launched nuclear missiles at a time when social services are being sharply cut.

Formation of SDP

Because of the leftward shift of the Labour Party and the steps made by the unions toward winning control of its parliamentary caucus, the British ruling class now views the Labour Party as too dangerous to entrust with running the capitalist state.

With a crushing Tory defeat virtually certain in the next general election, the ruling class has promoted and encouraged a split in the Labour Party in order to establish a "responsible" alternative to Conservative rule.

This split was consummated with the establishment of the Social Democratic Party on March 26 and its subsequent alliance with the small Liberal Party. Two dozen Labour members of Parliament and one Conservative switched their affiliation to the SDP, and the SDP has elected one MP in its own right. It has also won over some local councilors to its ranks.

The British press is trumpeting the SDP as the real opposition to Thatcher's government and hopes its progress can block a Labour victory in the next general election.



Cindy Jaquith/Militant

Participants in October 24 demonstration of 250,000 against NATO missiles in Britain.

The key to defeating the SDP lies in the growing interdependence of struggles in the trade unions and in the Labour Party. A growing number of militant fighters recognize that both forces must be transformed if the attacks against the working class are to be turned back. If Labour presents no real alternative to the Tory austerity drive, the SDP will continue to gain in strength.

But a consistent campaign for class-struggle policies in the unions and the Labour Party can provide the working class with an alternative that can bring down the Thatcher government and solve the crisis in the interests of the workers.

Mine union election

One encouraging step in this direction was the landslide victory of Arthur Scargill in the election for president of the 250,000-member National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in December.

Scargill is well-known as a supporter of the Labour left wing and as an opponent of any policy of wage restraint. The election of a more militant leadership in the NUM, which brought down Edward Heath's Conservative government through its 1974 strike, and which forced Thatcher to back off from a plan to eliminate 30,000 mining jobs in February 1981, will strengthen the entire labor movement.

When the NUM election results were announced, the current right-wing leadership of the union felt constrained to reject the National Coal Board's 9.1 percent wage offer. If the miners can force the government to give them a bigger increase, through a strike or the threat

of strike, that will make the rest of the labor movement less likely to accept the much lower raises being offered them.

The *Economist*, a British business weekly, worried in its December 12 issue that a large settlement for the miners could jeopardize the "painful progress" made in the past year in holding wage settlements below the level of inflation.

Struggle in Ireland

No discussion of the class struggle in Britain would be complete without mention of the freedom struggle in Ireland.

The seven-month-long hunger strike by freedom fighters in British jails in Northern Ireland, in which ten prisoners lost their lives, has inspired a new generation of Irish youth and raised the struggle to free Ireland to its highest point since the 1920s.

The election of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron to the British Parliament, of Kieran Doherty and Paddy Agnew to the Irish Parliament, and the victories of hunger-strike supporters in local elections in Northern Ireland demonstrated the depth of support for the prisoners on both sides of the British-imposed border.

The hunger strike also led to the creation of a mass movement throughout Ireland. The National H-Block/Armagh Committee developed into an organization of more than 400 local groups, encompassing a wide range of political views but united around support for demands of the prisoners.

With the end of the hunger strike, the British and Irish governments and the reactionary elements in Irish society are attempting to drive

back the gains the freedom struggle has made.

A key element in defending the struggle is defense of the Embassy Twenty and the Belfast Thirty-four.

The Dublin government is selectively prosecuting twenty people in connection with a July 18 march to the British embassy, which was broken up by riot police. They are charged under the Offences Against the State Act, which means they will be tried in juryless courts, and face two- to seven-year sentences if convicted.

The Belfast Thirty-four were arrested at a peaceful protest in front of the Belfast City Hall on June 27. The demonstration was attempting to assert the right of opponents of British rule to demonstrate in the Belfast city center, a right enjoyed by the pro-British organizations in Northern Ireland.

Such repression, however, cannot wipe out the gains that have been made in the consciousness of working people in Ireland and throughout the world as a result of the heroic struggle carried out by the hunger strikers.

Mitterrand's victory

In France, the workers won a sweeping victory May 10 when they ended more than two decades of rightist rule by electing Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand as president. That victory, coming after years of bitter rivalry between the SP and CP, set the stage for the landslide by the workers parties in the June legislative elections.

The CP and SP now hold 64 percent of the seats in the national assembly, and Mitterrand's cabinet includes four members of the Communist Party, the first CP ministers in France since 1947.

As a result of the elections, the self-confidence of the French working class has grown, as has its determination to win back what was lost under the austerity policies of the previous regime.

The French workers expect the new government to act in *their* interests. For that reason, traditional forms of working-class struggle have been largely on hold since May, while workers wait for the government to enact its program of nationalizations, improved social benefits, and job creation.

Although the ruling class is hostile to and fearful of Mitterrand's victory, as reflected in the huge capital outflow and the 12 percent decline in investment in 1981, they do not yet feel strong enough for a confrontation with the new government. Instead, the employers are exerting constant pressure on the government to back down from its plans and election promises. This pressure has been echoed by some elements in Mitterrand's own cabinet, like Finance Minister Jacques Delors, who is calling for a "pause" in carrying out any further reforms.

On October 18, the Greek working class clearly showed its desire to fight back, voting the right-wing Rallis government out of office. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) of Andreas Papandreu scored a huge victory, winning an absolute majority in parlia-

ment and 48 percent of the popular vote. In addition, the Communist Party took 11 percent of the vote.

Papandreou ran on a program of opposition to Greek membership in NATO and the EEC, called for the removal of the four U.S. military bases in Greece, and promised to "socialize" key industries.

Following his victory, the imperialist press in Europe and the United States warned Papandreou that any attempt to carry out such a program could provoke a military coup. Greek capitalists issued dire warnings about going too far in carrying out reforms.

Resistance to Schmidt

In West Germany, resistance is growing in the SPD ranks to Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's attempts to push through capitalist austerity plans and the NATO military buildup.

Entire sections of the SPD, for example, supported the February 28 demonstration of 100,000 against the Brokdorf nuclear power plant, despite Schmidt's support for the facility.

Similarly, the October 10 antimissiles demonstration of 300,000 in Bonn had widespread support in the SPD and the trade unions, even though Schmidt tried to prevent SPD members from participating. A prominent member of the SPD parliamentary delegation even addressed the rally.

Opposition to Schmidt's policies is particularly strong in the party's youth group, the Young Socialists. In addition, for the first time since World War II we are seeing the formation of a "parliamentary left" made up of several dozen SPD members who voted against Schmidt's 1982 federal budget, which then only passed with votes of the opposition Christian Democrats.

Spanish CP in crisis

Since the February 23 attempted military coup in Spain, the democratic gains of the post-Franco period have come under attack by the government in the name of defending democracy.

The Spanish social democrats and CP have been urging the working class to moderate its demands since 1977. But following the attempted coup, both parties have gone further and argued for a "strategic retreat." They have accepted an expansion of the government's executive powers and new curtailments of civil liberties.

The CP's policies in this regard have deepened its already existing crisis. Since 1977 the CP has lost half its membership. Its daily newspaper became a weekly in 1980, and the party recently saw the bulk of its organization in the Basque country split away.

In addition, major currents that oppose the party's acceptance of austerity have developed in the CP's strongest centers — Catalonia, Andalusia, and Madrid. Oppositional currents are also gaining strength in the CP-controlled trade-union federation, the Workers Commissions.

The fight against the right-wing offensive scored two major electoral victories in Italy in the past year. In May, voters overwhelmingly rejected two referenda that would have limited women's right to abortion, dealing a big defeat to the Christian Democratic Party, the country's main bourgeois formation.

In addition, the Christian Democrats hit one of their historic low points in the June 21 regional elections, receiving only 30.8 percent of the vote. By contrast, the workers parties got their highest totals ever, 47.4 percent.

Rise of peace movement

The area in which the rising tide of resistance to the capitalist austerity and militarization drive has been most dramatically seen is in the explosion of a continentwide struggle in the past year and a half against NATO's plans to place 572 U.S. nuclear missiles in Western Europe.

Since October more than 2 million people in Western Europe have taken to the streets against the NATO missile plan or against membership in NATO itself.

On October 10, more than 300,000 people demonstrated in Bonn, West Germany. On October 24, some 250,000 demonstrated against the missile plan in London, and 300,000 took to the streets in Rome.

On October 25, one of the largest demonstrations in Belgian history occurred as 200,000 people marched through Brussels. There was also a much smaller demonstration in Paris that day.

On November 15, half a million Spaniards rallied in Madrid against the Spanish government's plan to join the NATO alliance. The government has refused to put the question to a referendum, fearing it would lose.

On the same day, 200,000 people in Athens marched past the U.S. embassy calling for Greek withdrawal from NATO.

On November 21, the scene shifted to Amsterdam, where 400,000 people marched through the city demanding that the Dutch government refuse to accept the forty-eight Cruise missiles scheduled for deployment in the Netherlands.

Other mass demonstrations have taken place in Milan, Helsinki, Copenhagen, and many other cities.

Role of Mitterrand

The commitment by European members of NATO to increase their arms spending by 3 percent per year, after inflation, for five years beginning in 1978, has also run up against two formidable obstacles: the deepening economic crisis and the unwillingness of working people to sacrifice their living standards for an arms buildup.

In fact, of the West European NATO members, only France under Giscard and now Mitterrand has carried out that decision.

While the election of Mitterrand reflects a radicalization of French politics and demonstrates the desire of French workers for

change, it has not impeded the imperialist arms buildup.

The fact is that Mitterrand's imperialist government is proceeding with the development of a French neutron bomb. It is building a seventh French nuclear submarine. It has spearheaded the anticommunist propaganda campaign around Poland and is providing arms to Iraq in its reactionary war against Iran.

Mitterrand and members of his cabinet have also sharply attacked the anti-NATO and anti-missiles demonstrations.

Because of the unwillingness of the reformist leaders of the workers movement to confront Mitterrand's government, it has been able to get away with continuing much of Giscard's interventionist policy in defense of imperialist interests in Africa.

European imperialism in action

It is important to bear in mind that the European capitalist states are imperialist powers in their own right, and their foreign policy is geared to defending their imperialist interests.

The Belgian army sent troops to Zaire in 1977 and 1978. French troops have intervened in Chad from 1968 to 1972 and again from 1978 to 1980, in Zaire in 1977 and 1978, in the Central African Republic in 1979, and in Saudi Arabia in 1979.

The French air force provided air support for Moroccan troops fighting in the Western Sahara in 1977 and 1978.

A French naval fleet, including one of the country's two aircraft carriers, is stationed in the Indian Ocean near the Persian Gulf.

Similarly, British troops operate in Oman, on the Persian Gulf, where they command the Omani armed forces. Dutch naval forces have taken part in joint maneuvers with the U.S. and French fleets in the Caribbean.

All this points up the need for the European antiwar movement to link the missile issue to the day-to-day policies of the West European imperialists, both in foreign policy and in the capitalist austerity drive. In particular, the antiwar struggle needs to be taken into the trade-union movement.

In addition, the antiwar movement needs to explain that the real danger of the war today is through imperialist intervention in Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East.

The changes that have been taking place in the last half-decade in Western Europe — the growing polarization of class politics, the growth of left-wing movements inside and outside the mass workers parties, the increasing connection between struggles in industry and struggles in the political arena, the burgeoning opposition to imperialist arms programs, the resistance to austerity programs — will deepen and mature in the next few years as the economic slump continues.

Major class battles loom in Western Europe as the employers attempt to drive through their austerity programs and the working class re-groups its forces and steps up defense of its living standards. □

A revolution for workers democracy

More than a year of mass upheaval

By Ernest Harsch

Almost a year and a half after the start of the Polish revolution, the decisive political confrontation between the working people and the ruling bureaucracy has begun.

Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's December 13 imposition of martial law was a clear provocation, a direct threat to everything that the Polish workers and farmers have won in that time. The very survival of Solidarity, the 9.5-million-member union movement, is at stake. With strikes and protests outlawed, with thousands of Solidarity activists in detention, with all civil liberties suspended, the extreme seriousness of this crackdown is clear.

Despite the suddenness of the move and the detention of many of their leaders, Polish workers immediately responded. Workers in factories around the country went on strike, in many cases occupying their plants.

So as 1981 drew to a close, the battlelines in Poland had been clearly drawn. On one side stood the workers and their allies — the vast majority of Polish society. On the other side stood the government and ruling bureaucracy, supported by the bureaucrats in the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe.

But this is a fight that does not only concern working people in Eastern Europe. It affects the vital interests of workers everywhere. The Polish revolution is an integral part of the international class struggle, and from its inception Solidarity has been an inspiration to workers in other countries. If the Polish and Soviet authorities are able to crush Solidarity, it will be a blow to the entire world proletariat.

Imperialist propaganda

The counterrevolutionary policies followed by the Polish and Soviet governments are a direct aid to the imperialists. It makes it easier for them to try to discredit socialist ideas, and to justify cracking down on workers in their own countries or in countries under imperialist domination.

From the beginning, the imperialist governments and mass media have tried to exploit the events in Poland to their own advantage.

They have hailed the Polish workers and Solidarity, while trying to distort the real meaning of the Polish struggle to present it as a fight against communism. At the same time, every threat by Moscow was roundly condemned, and cited as further proof of Washington's contentions about the danger of Soviet "expansionism."

This propaganda campaign has been stepped up in the wake of Jaruzelski's crackdown.

The imperialist propaganda campaign

around Poland is aimed at justifying their war moves against the colonial revolution, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean. It is being used as a cover for Washington's massive arms buildup.

Such expressions of "support" do nothing to help the Polish workers. To the contrary, they aid the Stalinists' efforts to try to sow confusion about Solidarity's real aims and to isolate it from working people in other countries.

At the same time, amid their ongoing claims of support to the Polish union, the big-business press in the United States and Western Europe have become much more open about their real attitudes toward Solidarity. As the union took up more and more social and political questions in Poland, the tone of the Western media coverage turned increasingly critical.

The London *Economist*, in an editorial under the headline "Solidarity, whoa!" characterized the decisions of Solidarity's national congress as "bravery-cum-foolhardiness." The London *Guardian* stated that the congress's statement of support for other Eastern European workers was "reckless," adding, "Banging on about free elections, a free press, freedom for political prisoners and an end to oppression is equally unnecessary."

These attacks on Solidarity flow from two main considerations.

First, the imperialists want Poland to repay the \$27 billion that it owed to Western governments and banks for outstanding loans. They know that the Polish government has very few hard currency reserves left. The only solution, as they see it, is for the authorities to impose an austerity policy on the workers — the same prescription the imperialists hold out to workers in their own countries.

An editorial in the *New York Times* in early September, for example, counseled Solidarity to make "hard choices" and accept "reduced incomes and increased productivity." But Solidarity has stated that it will not accept austerity as long as the Polish workers do not have a say over economic policy.

The second consideration is more directly political. The imperialists, like the bureaucrats, fear the example of Solidarity. Its unity, its democratic organization, and particularly its championing of broad social issues shows working people in the capitalist countries how they can fight back against their rulers.

A deep revolution

The sharpness of the confrontation in Poland is a reflection of the power of the revolution, the deepest and most massive revolutionary

upheaval in the country's thousand-year history.

For a year and a half, workers, farmers, students, and other social layers have shaken Polish society from top to bottom. They built their own independent, representative organizations. They conquered many democratic rights. The powers of the censors were curbed. Culture flowered. Heated political discussions took place in the smallest and most remote villages. Virtually nothing in Poland remained unaffected.

Never before had Poland or any other bureaucratized workers state seen such a massive and sustained struggle for workers democracy. Never before had the privileges and authoritarian methods of a Stalinist ruling caste faced such a profound challenge. Neither the Hungarian revolution of 1956 nor the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968 were able to go so far.

The great strength of the Polish revolution lies in the level of mobilization of the country's large working class. It is a revolution led directly by the workers themselves, through their own organizations and using their own forms of struggle. Its support comes from many layers of the Polish population, but the core of its strength flows from the industrial workers — those in the mines, shipyards, steel mills, and large factories.

This is a deadly threat to the survival of the entire system of bureaucratic rule in Poland, which was imposed with Soviet backing following the Second World War. Although capitalism was abolished and a workers state established through the nationalization of basic industry, the establishment of a planned economy, and the adoption of a state monopoly on foreign trade, the workers and farmers were blocked from having any say over how the society was run.

The Polish rulers' only political authority came from their claim that they governed on behalf of the workers. That fig leaf has now been stripped away. The bureaucracy has been exposed to the entire society for what it really is: a parasitic layer of position-seekers who feed off the workers state, impede the country's rounded economic development, thrive on social injustice, and stand squarely opposed to the basic interests of working people.

Article 1 of the Polish constitution states that the workers are the rightful rulers of Poland. What they have been doing is simply striving to put that concept into practice.

A fighting union

The greatest achievement of the Polish revolution was the construction of a strong, demo-

cratic, and militant organization controlled by the workers themselves — Solidarity. It has been the main organized force pushing the entire revolutionary process forward.

From the time of its creation after the massive July-August 1980 strike wave, Solidarity has grown into the most authoritative body in the country. It claims a big majority of all workers. Those who look to Solidarity for leadership comprise the bulk of Poland's entire population of 36 million.

"Solidarity is a fighting trade union," according to Lech Walesa, its national chairman.

A key factor in this militancy is the union's internal democracy, which has allowed the initiatives of the rank and file to determine Solidarity's course. All leaders, at whatever level, were democratically elected. They were accountable to the ranks and had to give periodic reports of their activities and submit major questions to discussion and vote. The inevitable tactical differences that arose among leaders were debated out in the open.

In preparation for its first national congress, the Solidarity leadership published a draft program in April for discussion by the entire union membership.

When the program was finally adopted on October 7 — six months after the draft originally appeared — it was a substantially altered document, reflecting not only new developments, but also the proposals, suggestions, and ideas of millions of union members.

It was this kind of democracy that made the Solidarity congress the most representative national assembly ever to take place in Poland. Held in two phases, September 5-10 and September 26-October 7, the congress elected a new leadership and took up the most burning questions facing Polish society.

For a people who have experienced almost nothing in the past thirty years but carefully orchestrated official gatherings where there is no real debate and where top officials are ritually praised and routinely returned to office, Solidarity's democratic example has proven extremely attractive.

Approach of leadership

Because the Solidarity leadership realized the necessity of winning the backing of a majority of society, each move by the union was carefully explained. The Solidarity leaders presented their demands in a defensive manner, and always declared their willingness to negotiate, to make it absolutely clear to everyone that the real source of violence and tension was the ruling bureaucracy.

At the same time, the union refused to be intimidated and responded to each government or police provocation.

This approach helped to build confidence among Solidarity members and consolidated the union's base of popular support.

The extent of Solidarity's authority was demonstrated repeatedly, despite government claims that its support was slipping.

Twice before the imposition of martial law, on March 27 and October 28, it called out its

members in brief nationwide protest strikes. The first was in response to a brutal police attack on union activists in Bydgoszcz and the second against food shortages and stepped-up government harassment of the union. Except for certain essential services that the union consciously exempted from the strike calls, the response in both cases was virtually total. Even Communist Party members who belonged to Solidarity joined the strikes — in open defiance of the party leadership's directives.

'Everything concerns us'

While Solidarity is organized as a trade union, it is much more than that. It is concerned not only with shop floor issues, but with virtually all social, economic and political questions that affect the Polish nation as a whole.

Solidarity's program stated, "Everything concerns us, not just living conditions, though life is bad and work is hard and often unrewarding. History has taught us that there is no bread without freedom. What concerns us is justice, democracy, truth, the rule of law, human dignity, freedom of thought, and renewal of the republic, not only bread, butter, and sausages."

Solidarity, the program stated, had the character of "a trade union and a great social movement. The combination of these characteristics accounts for our organization's strength and its role in the life of the entire country."

The past year and a half has shown that "solidarity" is not just the name of an organization. It is a concept that has been widely accepted, that has helped unite different sectors of the working class — and of the population as a whole — in support of each other's struggles and to help further their common aims.

Solidarity members are very conscious of the strength that flows from this. As one delegate to the Solidarity congress said to Lawrence Weschler, a U.S. journalist, in regard to the American air controllers' strike, "The failure of American labor to stand together is a reflection of its inadequacy. . . . Apart from a few flimsy resolutions and token gestures, the American air controllers' colleagues in labor stood idly by while Reagan gutted the isolated union. . . . If American labor had been similarly organized [like Solidarity] this summer, Reagan would never have been able to emasculate your air-traffic controllers" (*New Yorker*, November 16, 1981).

Social consciousness

As an organization that is based on the majority of the population, Solidarity is naturally influenced by the general level of consciousness in Poland, a consciousness that has been forged in a country where capitalism no longer exists, but where the despised authorities masquerade behind the slogans of Marxism.

Consequently, not many people in Poland today, including members and leaders of Solidarity, would call themselves Marxists, or even socialists. Many would stress their adher-

ence to democratic ideals or Christian ethics. Others, basing themselves on Poland's long history of struggle against national oppression, would describe themselves as Polish patriots. And some would, in fact, call themselves socialists.

At the same time, there are some people who harbor antisocialist ideas. The responsibility for this rests with the Polish authorities themselves, who have carried out innumerable crimes in the name of socialism. They then cynically seize on the expression of backward ideas to justify their repression, which simply aggravates the problem. The only way to combat such ideas and attitudes is politically, through free and open discussion in a society where the norms of workers democracy prevail.

The overwhelming majority of people in Poland, however, agree that there can be no restoration of the capitalist system, whatever terminology they may use to describe their own aspirations. The very thrust of Solidarity's demands — for working people to gain greater control over their society — points in the opposite direction.

Thus, despite the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, a genuine revolution in social consciousness has taken root in Poland over the past thirty years.

The idea of social justice is deeply ingrained in popular thinking. It is commonly accepted that those sectors of the population who are least well-off should be given preferential treatment. In this context, the privileges of the bureaucracy are particularly hated.

Stefan Nowak, a prominent Polish sociologist, pointed to these common beliefs in an article in the July 1981 issue of the U.S. monthly *Scientific American*. Basing his conclusions on more than 150 surveys conducted in Poland since 1956, he wrote, "The great changes in the social and economic organization of the society — the nationalization of industry, land reform, economic planning, the abolition of the pre-war class structure — were accepted by the people."

When the Polish authorities accuse Solidarity leaders of being "antisocialist," they are simply trying to justify their repression and mask the true character of their own policies.

As Edward Lipinski, a prominent economist, declared at the Solidarity congress, it was the bureaucracy's "socialism of waste . . . of prisons, censorship and police" that was "anti-socialist and anti-revolutionary." His remarks were greeted by the delegates with thunderous applause.

The political consciousness of the Polish people has been heightened even further by the events of the past year and a half. Whatever the outcome of the current confrontation, they have learned important political lessons that will better equip them for the struggles ahead.

A broad movement

The growth and consolidation of Solidarity was but one reflection of the depth of the Po-

lish revolution. Behind its banner emerged numerous other organizations and movements.

Among the most important allies of the Polish workers are the farmers. Despite the country's extensive industrialization and official agricultural policies that seek to starve private farmers of funds and resources, small farmers are still a significant layer, numbering 3.5 million. They own three-quarters of all agricultural land and account for a big majority of farm production.

By late 1980 several independent farmers' groups had been formed, and in March 1981 they united, during a conference in Poznan, to establish the Independent and Self-governing Trade Union of Individual Farmers (NSZZRI), commonly known as Rural Solidarity. The following month it was officially recognized.

Rural Solidarity grew to encompass about half of all individual farmers, established numerous offices, and began publishing its own periodicals.

Students, too, organized themselves. In January-February 1981, students throughout the country carried out university occupations to demand official recognition for the Independent Student Association (NZS), which the authorities granted on February 18. The NZS then grew into a major force on the campuses, and in many universities was much larger than the party-controlled Socialist Union of Polish Students.

Even small business people — artisans, shopkeepers, petty merchants — were inspired by Solidarity, forming the Independent and Self-governing Trade Union of Individual Handicrafts, Solidarity.

To this list could be added literally scores of other groups: ecology clubs, often affiliated to Solidarity, that investigated and sought to initiate action on Poland's particularly severe pollution problems; committees for the release of political prisoners; independent publishing houses that did not submit their publications to censorship; numerous professional and artistic associations.

Workers councils

One of the most important developments during 1981 was the emergence of a strong movement for workers control of the factories, known as the self-management movement.

It arose in response to the deteriorating economic situation, caused by the bureaucracy's mismanagement of economic life. Because of a lack of spare parts, raw materials, energy, or adequate transportation, production at many factories was drastically curtailed. The workers employed in these plants knew that they could organize production much better than the party-appointed bureaucrats who now manage them.

Since early 1981, groups have been formed in factories around the country — especially in the largest enterprises — to fight for control over production; the right to elect directors accountable to the workers; access to the books;

and powers over financing, investment decisions, and work norms. At the same time, they pressed for the involvement of workers in broader economic decision-making, including democratic control over the determination of



the economic plan.

By September, some 14,000 committees had been established, accounting for 60 to 70 percent of all factories in Poland. These were either democratically elected Workers Councils or Workers Self-management Organizing Committees.

Under the pressure of this movement, the Sejm (parliament) adopted a Law on Workers Self-management on September 25 that granted Workers Councils some powers, although many Solidarity members were dissatisfied with the limited nature of the law.

Following that decision, the movement continued to spread and to consolidate itself. In October, representatives of Workers Councils and coordinating bodies in twenty regions met to begin organizing a national federation of such bodies. A new national newspaper, *Samorzad* (Self-management), was launched to reflect the views of the movement.

Pressure on church

Besides throwing up new organizations, the workers revolution also put considerable pressure on existing institutions. One of these is the Catholic church, to which a majority of Poles, including Solidarity members, belong.

Throughout the crisis, the church hierarchy has tried to maneuver between the authorities and the masses. At times it has played a mediating role, arranging negotiations and counseling both sides to make some concessions in the name of maintaining calm. It has sought to use the workers movement to strengthen its position in relation to the regime.

Sometimes church officials have issued vaguely worded statements calling for peace during periods of sharp conflicts. The authorities have been able to seize on these to try to convince workers not to respond to government provocations.

But in general, the church has provided important backing to the workers movement. Archbishop Jozef Glemp has sharply criticized moves to adopt an Emergency Powers Act, allowing for the banning of strikes and protests. On December 16 he issued a statement denouncing the imposition of martial law, and specifically demanding the freeing of political prisoners and Solidarity's right to function.

The considerable influence of the Catholic church — and the extent to which Poles are still influenced by religious ideas — is itself a product of the government's policies.

In prewar Poland, the church had become greatly discredited among working people because of its defense of the hated capitalists and landlords. But the Stalinists' subsequent persecution of the church, and of religion in general, drove people back into its arms.

At the same time, Polish workers identify the church with Poland's historical struggle against national oppression. Before the emergence of Solidarity, it was one of the few vehicles through which criticisms of the government's policies could be made without incurring immediate repression.

While many Solidarity members look to the church for moral support, and sometimes listen to the advice of figures like Glemp, they decide their own policies and course of action. As Walesa declared at a regional congress of Solidarity in July, "I have always tried to prevent the party or the church from taking over Solidarity, because, as I have repeatedly said, this is a movement of working people in the factories."

Bureaucracy weakened

Despite the force of the upheaval in Poland, the ruling bureaucracy managed to retain its privileges and its positions of authority. The government, army, police, mass media, party apparatus, and central economic and administrative organs remained firmly in their hands.

But the bureaucrats were forced to tread carefully. With the rise of Solidarity, the rulers could no longer even pretend that they had a majority of Polish society behind them, let alone the working class in whose name they claimed to govern.

A number of the bureaucracy's key institutions of control were also greatly weakened.

The ranks of the Polish United Workers Par-

ty (PUWP, the Communist Party), many of whom are themselves industrial workers, were profoundly affected by the upsurge. About one million party members joined Solidarity, and surveys indicated that they were more loyal to the union than to the party. During the first half of 1981, many of them explicitly challenged the antiworker policies of the party leadership.

In addition, the PUWP revealed on December 1 that it had lost 415,000 party members — 13.2 percent of its total members — since June 30, 1980. That brought its membership down to 2.7 million.

Although the police remain a central pillar of bureaucratic rule, they too have not escaped the pressures of the mass movement. Some police have attempted to form their own independent union, explicitly rejecting their traditional role in Poland as a repressive arm directed against the workers. Representatives of this current attended Solidarity's congress in Gdansk, and they claimed to have the support of 42,000 policemen around the country.

Following the police storming of a strike-bound Warsaw firefighters academy on December 2, the unofficial police union issued a statement condemning the assault, declaring that it "is not the way to build confidence in the police in a socialist society. The task of the police is to defend the interests of society, and not just the interests of a governing minority."

Support for the demands of the workers also penetrated the ranks of the army, which is composed largely of conscript soldiers. With Jaruzelski's imposition of martial law, the extent of this support will be put to a sharp test.

Layers of the bureaucracy itself became deeply demoralized. In an interview in the September 14 West German weekly *Der Spiegel*, Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski complained that provincial officials and factory managers had to face the pressure of Solidarity on a daily basis. "They are now simply tired," he said.

Soviet threat

Ever since the beginning of the Polish revolution in 1980, the workers have faced intense hostility not only from the bureaucracy in Poland itself, but also from the one that rules in the Soviet Union.

Hardly a week went by without some attack on Solidarity, which was described as "anti-socialist" and "counterrevolutionary." And when the Polish authorities were forced to make concessions to Solidarity or did not adopt a stance that was firm enough for Moscow's liking, they too were openly criticized.

The Kremlin's opposition to the Polish workers revolution stems from its fear of Solidarity's political example. A defeat for the Polish bureaucracy — or even a prolonged challenge to its rule — could inspire working people in other bureaucratized workers states to step up their own struggles.

There have already been signs of that. Dur-

ing Solidarity's national congress, messages of support were received from workers groups in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, where attempts have been made to launch independent trade unions along the lines of Solidarity.

In Romania, leaflets appeared in February 1981 calling for the formation of independent unions. In mid-October, a wave of strikes and protest actions broke out in several parts of Romania in response to food shortages and the introduction of bread rationing.

For the Soviet bureaucrats — and those in other countries as well — Solidarity's survival as an independent and democratic organization of working people was intolerable.

In March, during a period of particularly sharp tensions in Poland, Soviet-led Warsaw Pact troops staged threatening maneuvers in Poland. In September, just before the opening of Solidarity's national congress, some 100,000 Soviet troops, accompanied by tanks, planes, and warships, began another series of military maneuvers in the Baltic Sea and near the Polish border.

These attempts at intimidation were obvious. They carried the clear message that Moscow was prepared to invade if that proved necessary, as it had done in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The fact that Moscow hesitated to send troops against Solidarity was one testimony of the strength of the Polish revolution. The Soviet authorities knew that they would have to pay a very high political price within the international workers movement. They also knew that they could face serious resistance, particularly in a country as large as Poland, with a history of armed opposition to foreign domination.

Under the circumstances, Moscow chose to back up the Polish bureaucracy's own efforts to reestablish control, in the hopes that would be sufficient. But the danger of a direct Soviet intervention still remains, especially if Jaruzelski's crackdown fails.

A devastated economy

The outbreak of the 1980 strikes and the emergence of Solidarity, while directed against the entire system of bureaucratic rule in Poland, were in large part brought on by the disastrous state of the country's economy.

Under the pressure of the imperialist banks, who were seeking repayment of their loans, the Polish government in July 1980 announced price increases on meat and other food items, setting off the avalanche of strikes and protests.

Poland's extraordinarily large foreign debt is a legacy of the bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy, particularly of the policies followed in the 1970s by the Edward Gierek regime. Many enormous, badly planned, and often unnecessary industrialization projects were launched under Gierek, financed by Western loans. Many of these projects were bungled. Much of the foreign financing was wasted.

At the same time, farmers were denied sufficient state financial aid, fertilizer, and agricultural equipment — even when they were available — making it impossible to increase food production.

As a result of this mismanagement, many basic food items became scarce, especially over the past year. Meat, sugar, cheese, eggs, cooking oils, and other consumer goods were often unavailable, even after the introduction of rationing.

Despite increasingly insistent demands from Solidarity for the introduction of basic economic reforms, including the establishment of workers control over production, the government refused to budget. In some areas Solidarity chapters offered to take over responsibility for food distribution. The government turned down the proposal.

The authorities were totally unwilling to relinquish their monopoly over economic decision-making, even if that meant a worsening of the crisis. In fact, that may very well have been their intention.

The authorities counted on the economic crisis weakening the morale of working people and undercutting active support for the union. The government repeatedly blamed Solidarity for the decline in production. Strikes (the number of which were greatly exaggerated in the official press) were starving the nation, they claimed.

Some people were taken in by this propaganda campaign. Walesa himself publicly acknowledged that there was some grumbling about Solidarity's inability to do anything about the shortages. A poll of Solidarity members in the Warsaw area in October (and published in the union's national weekly, *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*) found that 42 percent of the unionists thought that most strikes should be avoided if possible, largely because of the economic situation.

At the same time, however, most working people continued to blame the authorities for the crisis. Many also believed that the food shortages were deliberately contrived by the government. (The fact that days after Jaruzelski's crackdown the authorities were able to arrange deliveries of food and consumer goods in quantities not seen in months tends to confirm this view.)

As a result of popular anger over food shortages, numerous hunger marches, strikes, and protest rallies began to sweep across the country in late July. They were all directed against the government, and were often led by local Solidarity chapters.

These marches were an important new gain in the population's growing political consciousness. Until then, unauthorized street demonstrations were still relatively rare.

Besides the hunger marches, a whole wave of strikes, usually around local issues, broke out in mid-October. Some were provoked by police actions. Just as the strikes started to taper off a month later, farmers launched sit-ins in several provincial towns to dramatize their own demands, and more than 100,000 students

went on strike nationally to press for educational reform.

These actions, for the most part, were uncoordinated. They were the result of local initiatives. The fact that some of them were launched in defiance of appeals by the national Solidarity leadership for an end to such uncoordinated protests was an indication of the depth of popular anger against the authorities.

A 'self-governed republic'

The government's clear refusal to do anything to alleviate the economic and social crisis impelled more and more Poles to raise questions about the character of the government itself — and about the need for a political response.

They came to realize that the existence of Solidarity, while a vital step forward for the Polish revolution, was by itself not enough to ensure that democratic changes were carried through and the interests of the workers were adequately protected. As long as the bureaucracy controlled the state apparatus, it would do everything in its power to sabotage and ultimately suppress the workers movement.

Beginning in the middle of 1981, discussion about the need for basic changes in the character of the government became more common and explicit.

At first, this was broached in a somewhat indirect way. Activists in the movement for workers control raised the idea of establishing a second chamber of parliament, a "Self-management Chamber," which would represent the Workers Councils, trade unions, consumer federations, and professional and scientific associations. Its purpose would have been to decide on all major social and economic questions, including approval of the economic plan. Obviously, this would have greatly diminished the prerogatives of the government and the PUWP-dominated Sejm.

Soon, however, union activists began to explicitly challenge the PUWP's monopoly on political power. Jerzy Milewski, a key figure in the movement for workers control, recommended that Solidarity form a political party, and himself launched a small group called the Polish Labor Party.

During a meeting of Solidarity's National Coordinating Committee in late July, such proposals were taken up. Jacek Kuron, a prominent adviser to Solidarity's national leadership, noted, "Many people think that since neither Solidarity nor anyone else can bring about the rehabilitation of the system, we should form a party to do so."

But Kuron argued that the Polish revolution should "consciously limit itself," that is, not directly challenge the government or the party leadership's control of it, since that would most likely lead to a Soviet invasion. Implicit in this view was the idea that the Polish and Soviet bureaucracies were primarily interested in formal political power, and could accept the existence of an independent union and the establishment of workers control over the economy. At that time, Kuron argued against

forming a party or demanding free elections. The Solidarity leadership agreed with him.

But that did not keep the issue from being continually raised. By August, a number of opposition groups that called themselves political parties had been formed.

During Solidarity's national congress in Gdansk, the views of the union leadership itself began to shift. A resolution was overwhelmingly adopted calling for democratic elections to the Sejm and local People's Councils, free of control by the PUWP. Currently, candidates are nominated by the National Unity Front, composed of the PUWP and its two satellite parties, the Democratic and United Peasant parties. Solidarity demanded an unlimited number of candidates, nominated by any citizens' group or political organization, with the union having the right to have poll watchers.

"The road to the nation's sovereignty leads via democratic elections to representative organizations," the resolution declared.

The Solidarity program adopted later in the congress called for the establishment of a "self-governed republic" based on the Workers Councils and governing bodies democratically elected at all levels. It was, in short, a program for placing the government in the hands of working people themselves.

Bureaucracy provokes confrontation

Although the bureaucrats had been carrying out provocations against Solidarity since its formation, these stepped up sharply in the wake of the union's national congress. The authorities were clearly alarmed by the increasingly radical course that Solidarity was following in response to the crisis.

On October 18, less than two weeks after the close of the Solidarity congress, the PUWP dumped Stanislaw Kania as party first secretary. General Jaruzelski, who was already prime minister and minister of defense, was chosen to replace him, with clear Soviet support.

The selection of a military officer to be party first secretary is virtually unprecedented in Eastern Europe. It was a reflection of the extreme political weakness of the bureaucracy, and an attempt to cash in on the army's relative popularity, compared to other state institutions. (The army had not been used against workers protests on any significant scale since 1956, and its credibility had not been damaged by exposures of corruption.)

But most of all, Jaruzelski's elevation marked a decision by the bureaucracy to adopt a directly confrontational course. Assured of Soviet backing — without which they could not have taken on the union — the authorities prepared the ground for a showdown step by step.

Police began an escalating series of provocations against union members and political activists. In some cities unionists were beaten up. Others were dismissed from their jobs. Editors of regional union newspapers were charged with violating censorship laws. Sever-

al hundred people were placed under investigation for "antistate" offenses.

In the three weeks leading up to the imposition of martial law, such attacks increased even further. At a November 27-28 Central Committee meeting, Jaruzelski announced that he would ask the Sejm to pass a new law giving the government sweeping "emergency" powers to outlaw strikes and protests. The Council of Ministers decreed that various economic reform measures that had previously been agreed to would be postponed for at least a year.

And on December 2, as a direct prelude to the general crackdown, riot police stormed the Warsaw firefighters academy.

'We cannot retreat'

Solidarity placed the responsibility for this situation squarely with the authorities. "The events of the past few days prove that the government has rejected the possibility of dialogue with society and has embarked on the road of violence," a meeting of Solidarity leaders held in Radom December 3 declared.

To the Solidarity leaders, it was clear that a confrontation was coming. According to a tape of the discussions at the Radom meeting later broadcast by the government, Walesa stated, "The confrontation is unavoidable, and confrontation will take place. One has to make people realize that we can't avoid confrontation."

Other Solidarity leaders were quoted as calling for the formation of "workers militias" and a "provisional government."

The authorities broadcast selected portions of these tapes to try to make it appear that it was Solidarity that was provoking the confrontation.

But as Walesa said on December 10, "We do not want confrontation, but we cannot retreat anymore."

The union had no choice but to respond. It called for mass rallies throughout the country on December 17 to protest the government's attacks. At a National Committee meeting in Gdansk December 11-12, it passed a resolution calling for a national referendum in which people would be asked if they had confidence in the Jaruzelski government or favored the formation of a provisional government and free elections.

The next day, Jaruzelski declared martial law. Solidarity's activities were suspended and many organizations were banned. A series of draconian measures were decreed that directly threatened all the gains the Polish workers and their allies had won.

But the Polish revolution is not over. It has entered a new — but critical — stage.

The Polish workers have learned much over the past year and a half. And they have already shown that they will not accept Jaruzelski's crackdown without a fight.

As one strike poster outside a Warsaw steelworks declared, repeating the first line of the Polish national anthem, "Poland has not yet perished while we are still alive." □

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