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Central America

Reagan Pushes Toward War as Debate in U.S. Widens



Salvadoran armed forces helicopter in Morazán province. Pentagon is rushing new helicopters to replace those destroyed by rebels.

A Discussion of the Cuban Position on Poland

Debate grows as U.S. drives toward war in Central America

By Fred Murphy

Washington is preparing to go to war in Central America, and working people in the United States are becoming alarmed at the prospect. A political fight has opened up, and its outcome will be a key factor in determining how far the U.S. rulers will be able to go in carrying through a new Vietnam-type intervention.

The targets of the imperialists' moves are the freedom fighters in El Salvador and Guatemala, and the revolutionary governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada.

"There is no mistaking that the decisive battle for Central America is under way in El Salvador," says Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders.

According to Secretary of State Alexander Haig, the upsurge in Central America presents "a profound challenge to the security of our hemisphere. . . ."

"We are talking about the strategic vulnerability of the [Panama] Canal, our fundamental dependence on its being retained in friendly hands. We are, in effect, at the very core of United States hemispheric interests."

In this interview, which the *New York Times* published February 8, Haig stressed that the stakes for U.S. imperialism in Central America are even higher than they were in Vietnam. Those who draw parallels to the latter conflict in order to oppose "doing anything in Central America," Haig charged, are ignoring "basic differences between the two situations."

Parallel with Vietnam

In fact, the parallels are obvious. They have been stressed for months by opponents of U.S. intervention in Central America. Now, as a result of Washington's continuing escalation, they are being perceived by masses of U.S. working people.

Just as in Vietnam, what is taking place in El Salvador is a social revolution against an imperialist-imposed regime. The workers and peasants and their allies have taken up arms to fight for land reform and improved living standards, for democratic rights, for national independence and human dignity.

Just as in Vietnam, Washington and its local puppets in El Salvador are waging a war of genocide against an entire population, a war in which thousands of noncombatant women, children, and elderly people are being indiscriminately slaughtered.

Just as in Vietnam, the U.S. government is pursuing a policy of step-by-step escalation in El Salvador. It has set a course that must eventually result in the introduction of U.S. combat troops if the hated local dictatorship is to be maintained, as well as in the extension of

the war to surrounding countries.

And just as in Vietnam, revelations in the U.S. press have provided the American people with a glimpse of the brutality and terror the Salvadoran regime imposes on its own population with advice and aid from the Pentagon. Accounts of the constant massacres of civilians in El Salvador have deepened the moral outrage millions of Americans feel at the complicity of the rulers in Washington.

It is in face of this vast sentiment against further U.S. support for the slaughter that President Reagan certified to Congress on January 28 that the Salvadoran junta has been making a "concerted and significant effort" to respect human rights.

Credibility gap

The main effect of this certification was to widen still further the credibility gap the administration faces with regard to El Salvador.

The contradictions were so glaring that major U.S. newspapers pointed out that the president was simply lying.

The editors of the *New York Times* termed the certification "cynical humbug."

Washington Post columnist Colman McCarthy wrote the following:

"Ronald Reagan says there is progress in El Salvador. He's right. A year ago when his Administration issued its vaunted February White Paper on 'Communist Interference in El Salvador,' several weeks passed before the document was publicly discredited as partly doctored and fully biased. This February, the discrediting is occurring almost simultaneously."

The February 7 *Miami Herald* carried a lengthy article by former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador Robert White. Regarding the administration's claims of human rights progress, White said, "Unfortunately for the people of El Salvador and for the reputation of President Reagan, the exact opposite is true."

Mass opposition to U.S. intervention

When Washington intervened in Vietnam, it was able to introduce tens of thousands of combat troops and wage war for several years before massive opposition developed inside the United States. But today, with intervention in El Salvador still limited to military aid and a few dozen advisers, protests of up to 100,000 persons have already taken place in the United States. And with the U.S. economy in deep crisis, trade-union members and other working people are making the connection between the U.S. rulers' attacks on their living standards at home and the war drive against revolutions abroad.

When half a million trade unionists marched last September 19 in the "Solidarity Day" pro-

test in Washington, D.C., many carried signs reading, "Money for jobs, not for war — U.S. out of El Salvador."

And when Reagan toured midwestern state capitals in early February to seek support for his new round of social-services budget cuts, he was met at every stop by hundreds of protesting trade unionists and their families. They demonstrated not only for jobs and against cut-backs, but also against U.S. intervention in Central America. In Bloomington, Minnesota, 4,000 auto workers, steelworkers, and others turned out to tell Reagan, "We want jobs!" and to chant, "One, two, three, four — U.S. out of El Salvador!"

Such actions show the potential for massive participation in the national march on Washington set for March 27 by a coalition of groups headed by the Committee in Solidarity With the People of El Salvador (CISPES).

Congress feels the heat . . .

The rising consciousness about and opposition to Reagan's war moves have alarmed some liberal members of Congress.

At Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on February 8, the *New York Times* reported, chairman Charles Percy, an Illinois Republican, "said in introductory remarks that Congress was under strong public pressure to reject the Administration's certification that El Salvador was making progress on human rights."

The *Times* report continued: "Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island and the ranking minority member of the committee, added that public opinion was becoming increasingly inflamed on the issue. He cited a demonstration last Friday by several hundred people outside his office in Providence."

Reporting on the same hearings, the February 9 *Washington Post* noted statements by various senators "that constituents are increasingly asking what the United States intends to do with regards to El Salvador.

"Sen. Larry Pressler . . . said businessmen in his state were upset by the growing U.S. commitment. . . ."

In an attempt to take their distance from Reagan's war drive, four Democratic congressmen have introduced a resolution calling on the administration to seek "unconditional negotiations" with the Salvadoran rebels. Others have filed a lawsuit charging that Reagan has violated the 1973 War Powers Act, which bars U.S. military action abroad when Congress has not been formally consulted.

The suit also charges the Salvadoran regime with "gross violation of human rights" and asserts that it is hence ineligible for military aid under U.S. law.

. . . but continues backing Reagan

With their majority in the House of Representatives, the Democrats could cut off the money for Reagan's war moves. But the Democratic Party supports his policy.

House of Representatives Majority Leader

James Wright told the *New York Times* February 3, "I agree with the administration position, and I very actively oppose any effort to withhold assistance to the moderate Government of Duarte."

Democratic Representative Clement Zablocki, who heads the House Foreign Affairs Committee, charged that opponents of military aid "want to write El Salvador off to the fate of Cuba or Nicaragua." He urged support for Reagan's efforts "to keep El Salvador from becoming Communist."

But the growing debate in Congress and the news media has hampered Reagan and made it more difficult for him to move ahead with his war plans. When a television broadcast from El Salvador in early February showed one U.S. military adviser armed with an M-16 rifle, Reagan had to make a big show of ordering an investigation and removing the lieutenant colonel involved from his assignment. (When advisers were first sent in early 1981, the State Department had pledged they would be armed only with handguns and would not go on combat missions with Salvadoran forces or "otherwise be placed in situations where combat is likely.")

Scope of war moves

Such incidents notwithstanding, Reagan is determined to push ahead. The scope of his war drive was further indicated in a front-page story in the February 14 *Washington Post*. Correspondents Don Oberdorfer and Patrick Tyler revealed that Reagan "has authorized a broad program of U.S. planning and action in war-torn Central America, including the encouragement of political and paramilitary operations by other governments against the Cuban presence in Nicaragua. . . ."

Included in Reagan's plans, the *Post* continued, is "the possible use of U.S. forces to deter the possible introduction of Cuban military forces into Central America."

"Another aspect is planning for exertion of 'direct pressure' against Cuba, in the form of such actions as a naval quarantine to block Cuban domestic petroleum supplies, and retaliatory air actions against Cuban forces and installations."

In the wake of a series of victories by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador, shipments of U.S. aircraft, weapons, equipment, and ammunition to the junta have been stepped up. In addition, 1,600 Salvadoran troops and officers are arriving at military bases in the United States for what *Time* magazine calls "the largest program of its kind ever undertaken by the U.S. to train foreign troops on domestic soil."

At Key West, Florida, a naval base is being refurbished "to improve the position of U.S. forces should a showdown develop in the region with Cuba or the Havana-backed government in Nicaragua," according to the February 13 *Washington Post*.

Military aid to the right-wing regime in Honduras is being doubled.

"Reliable sources" cited by Oberdorfer and

Tyler pointed to the Central Intelligence Agency's role in "advising and supporting a force made up largely of anti-Sandinista exiles in Honduras in a position to harass the Nicaraguan regime." Raids by these terrorists — marked by robberies, kidnappings, rape, and murder — have left sixty Nicaraguans dead since November.

In addition, the *Post* correspondents pointed to a proposal by the CIA for "a secret \$19 million plan to build a broad political opposition to the Sandinista rule in Nicaragua, and to create 'action teams' for paramilitary, political operations and intelligence-gathering in Nicaragua and elsewhere."

In the framework of Washington's overall plans for counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean, denying victory to the rebels in El Salvador remains the most pressing task. There, as a military observer quoted in the February 15 *Newsweek* put it, "the left is

running circles around the army, and the army is getting dizzier and dizzier."

Hence the dispatch of U.S. combat troops to El Salvador is a possibility that is now being openly discussed in the major U.S. news media. Administration representatives — including Reagan himself — have repeatedly refused to rule out such a move.

The policy disputes that have surged into public view through Congress and the capitalist news media do not reflect any basic disagreements in the U.S. ruling class on the need to crush the revolutionary upsurge in Central America. The differences are over how to proceed in light of the massive antiwar sentiment among U.S. working people and the growing international condemnation of Washington's policy.

Mobilizing this sentiment in action — both inside the United States and throughout the world — is the task of the day. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Closing News Date: February 14, 1982

EL SALVADOR	124	Opening shot in junta's phony election —by Jan Verbeek
NICARAGUA	125	Foreign minister appeals to American people —by Nelson González
GRENADA	126	Young workers build the future—by Pat Kane
	127	Masses take part in economic planning —by Pat Kane
BELGIUM	129	General strike against austerity —by Will Reissner
ISRAEL	130	Broad protest against Begin's policies —by Assaf Adviv
POLAND	132	A discussion of the Cuban position —by David Frankel
WESTERN EUROPE	139	Protests against Polish crackdown —by Jacqueline Allio
GHANA	144	Workers take to the streets—by Ernest Harsch
SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT	137	
DOCUMENTS	142	'Solidarity with Polish Solidarity'
NEWS ANALYSIS	122	Debate grows as Reagan pushes toward war in Central America—by Fred Murphy

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Opening shot in junta's phony elections

Only ultrarightists need apply

By Jan Verbeek

[The following article appeared in the February 1 issue of the Managua daily *Barricada*, the newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

SAN SALVADOR — A bullet-proof vest is the first thing you need in the El Salvador election campaign. That is what the death of the general secretary of the National Conciliation Party (PCN) on the first day of campaigning for the March 28 elections showed.

Rodríguez González was machine-gunned last Wednesday [January 27] in front of his party's offices in the heart of the capital. In political circles they are saying that González's death was due to friction between the various ultraright parties.

The attack on González and the dozens of people killed daily by the regime demonstrate, in a cynical way, the regime's "promise" that there will be elections in El Salvador "even if they are under fire."

Free elections?

On Wednesday, January 27, the electoral campaign in El Salvador opened. The military-Christian Democratic junta's electoral law decrees that political propaganda is permitted only during the sixty days before the voting. The government has not lifted the state of siege or martial law, even for the elections.

Last year the junta and the U.S. government claimed the elections were the only viable solution to the war of liberation here. Their original plan called for elections in March for a Constituent Assembly with sixty seats. In 1983 there would be elections for president and parliament. According to the junta and the U.S. government there is no other way to put an end to the fifty years of military dictatorship and to restore democracy to El Salvador.

However, the development of the electoral process itself puts in sharp relief the fact that the junta is not looking for a peaceful solution through its elections. It is seeking legitimacy to continue the war against the democratic opposition and the guerrillas in the guise of a "constitutionally elected" regime.

Not even the most minimal conditions for truly democratic and free elections exist in El Salvador. The president of the Central Election Council (CCE) overseeing the body charged by the junta with the polling, as well as the general secretary of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), have admitted that the population will be able to "choose" from "parties that



DUARTE: Running on his human rights record.

range from the extreme right to moderately right of center."

This euphemism means simply that the alternatives in the forthcoming elections are so limited that the least right-wing option for the Salvadoran people is the current military-Christian Democratic junta! The other choices are even farther to the right.

Rightists vs. ultrarightists

So far, eight parties have signed up for the elections. Despite the 30,000 deaths at the hands of the repressive forces during the regime of president [José] Napoleón Duarte, his PDC has declared itself to be in the center-right of the political spectrum. Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Duarte still insists that the armed forces do not participate in the shocking human rights violations.

During the electoral campaign, the president is accusing the ultraright parties and the guerrillas of frustrating his economic reform program. Even though the PDC has lost many of its members because of its participation in the junta, the Christian Democrats hope to become the biggest party.

The Renovation Party (PAR) also says it is to the left of the ultraright parties. It is a party without any social base. The most important

activity carried out by its leader, Ernesto Oyarbide, consists of leaving letters at various embassies. The letters hold the ultraright responsible for his eventual "accidental" death.

Junta soft on communists?

The other six parties are in the camp of the extreme right. Ignoring the indiscriminate repression and the continuous military offensives, they accuse the junta of being soft on the guerrillas. They also hold the regime responsible for the fact that the national economy is on the brink of total collapse.

Their opinion is that the economic reforms which the junta has proposed but never carried out would lead El Salvador to communism. In reality they are parties with anachronistic policies.

Among these forces, Rodríguez González's party is considered the most important. In the last nineteen years four military presidents have been PCN members.

Carlos Humberto Romero, the PCN's last dictator, was overthrown in October 1979 by the coup that put the current regime in power. The PCN organized the 1972 and 1977 electoral frauds that stole the elections from the democratic opposition, which at that time included the Christian Democracy. It is widely believed the PCN will be Duarte's strongest rival.

The Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and the Popular Orientation Party (POP) have promised the voters that should they be put in office, they will annihilate the guerrillas in three months.

ARENA's slogan is "El Salvador will be the Reds' tomb." The party is led by Major [Roberto] D'Aubuisson, the well-known head of the death squadrons. From 1970 to 1979, D'Aubuisson was the chief of the National Guard's secret service. In May 1980 he had to leave the country after an attempted coup against the current government.

The POP is made up chiefly of retired colonels. Its top leader is General [José Alberto] Medrano. As chief coordinator of the secret services of dictator [Fidel] Sanchez Hernández, Medrano in 1968 had the dishonorable assignment of creating the paramilitary organization ORDEN, which has specialized in massacring peasants.

These two parties have been able to get out powerful propaganda, thanks to money from Miami, where a large part of the Salvadoran oligarchy is sitting out the war waiting for "better times." Because of this, and because of the good relations they have with the rightists in the army, the number of votes these two par-

ties may receive, for better or for worse, should not be underestimated.

A slow-motion coup?

As to the other parties, because they lack any social base and organizing ability, they are unlikely to play any significant role in the elections.

The Democratic Action Party (PAD), also known as "the Rotary Club," is made up of the lawyers of the rich. It tries to cover up its ultraright positions by using a technocratic vocabulary. The PAD proposes a government more capable of managing the crisis.

The Salvadoran People's Party (PPS), formed in 1975 by big coffee growers, has lost a big part of its small forces to its brother parties, the PCN and ARENA.

Last week a party with the lovely name of ECO (*Empresarios, Campesinos, Obreros* — Businessmen, Peasants, Workers) had just entered the lists. ECO will run only in San Vicente province. They say that ECO's leaders thought more about the name than the program.

The ultraright parties think that by forming a coalition after the elections they can win a majority in the Constituent Assembly. The president of the National Association of Private Enterprise, J. Maldonado, has confirmed that should this happen, they would pressure Duarte to resign in favor of a junta made up exclusively of military men and businessmen.

According to Maldonado, this is the only way to end the war and rescue the economy from total disaster. This scheme would mean a return to the situation preceding the 1979 coup. As Colonel [Adolfo] Majano, thrown off the junta by the army's ultraright in December 1980, predicted: "Elections under the current conditions would be simply a slow-motion coup d'etat."

Half of population excluded from vote

However, it is not only the absence of real alternatives that demonstrates the antipopular character of the junta's elections. Besides generously offering the population the choice between repression and more repression, the junta has excluded half the eligible voters from participation.

Even though the civil registries show more than 2 million Salvadorans over the age of eighteen, the president of the Central Election Council, Dr. Jorge Bustamante, has affirmed that only a million ballots have been printed. According to Bustamante, this number is adequate because they do not expect more than 800,000 people to vote.

His assertions, coming from the very person charged with organizing the elections, shows that the junta is not interested in the opinions of 1,200,000 people. On the other hand, the junta may be on to something, because it is entirely possible that these people will not want to lend themselves to the regime's electoral scheme.

The Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) will not participate in these no-

choice elections from which half the population has been excluded. There is no way to guarantee the lives of its possible candidates. Nor is there any guarantee that this time, unlike the electoral frauds of 1972 and 1977, the military will respect the results.

Formally, the government has invited the democratic opposition to participate in the elections, but under the conditions that it break its ties with the guerrillas and urge the population to turn in its arms. Conditions which mean, in reality, that they abandon their base and their source of power and deliver themselves over to a regime which in recent years has tried ceaselessly to annihilate the democratic opposition and the guerrillas.

Nicaraguan foreign minister appeals to American people

By Nelson González

[The following article appeared in the February 19 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

NEW YORK — Charging that Washington was pursuing a "dangerous and reckless policy" which threatened to spark a war throughout Central America, Nicaragua's foreign minister declared that his country wanted peaceful relations with the United States, but would not be bullied or intimidated.

Rev. Miguel D'Escoto, a Sandinista leader and Maryknoll priest, appeared at a crowded press conference here February 4. That night, in a TV debate, he defended the Nicaraguan revolution against scurrilous slanders by Jeane Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

At the press conference, D'Escoto rebutted the charge that Nicaragua was being used as a conduit for arms to the Salvadoran rebels and branded the charge a smokescreen for U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

"I have come to the United States to speak directly to the American people," the Nicaraguan leader declared, "to say that the U.S. government is making these false charges now to help provide a pretext for their increasing armed intervention in a losing battle in El Salvador."

Despite Nicaragua's efforts to normalize relations with the United States, D'Escoto said, "the Reagan administration continues to provoke us. A leading member of the administration, Ambassador Kirkpatrick, said recently that she in many ways prefers the former Somoza regime to the present Sandinista government.

"That was a regime that had the highest infant mortality rate in Latin America, one of the highest illiteracy rates in this hemisphere, one of the largest landless populations, and the most corrupt government in the region.

Accepting that formal invitation would mean abandoning hundreds of thousands of liberation fighters to the indiscriminate repression of the armed forces, which has been unable to destroy the revolutionary forces militarily.

Even though the junta and the U.S. government have rejected a dialogue with the FMLN and FDR, the revolutionaries continue their efforts to arrive at a negotiated political solution to the Salvadoran conflict.

In the coming months, stepped-up guerrilla actions are expected, to show that the junta's elections, in a country in the middle of a war of liberation, cannot lead to a real solution to the conflict. □

"It was a completely undemocratic dynasty installed by the United States, which refused to hold legitimate elections for fifty years."

He added, "If this is what the Reagan administration prefers, then we understand why they do not like what we are doing in our country."

Detailing some of the impressive social gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, D'Escoto added: "We are accused of being a militarist nation. . . . It is true that we are increasing our armed forces, which we regret the necessity of doing, but which we must do so long as the United States threatens us with blockade or invasion."

He charged: "The U.S. government knowingly makes false accusations about us. They publicly yearn for a return to a murderous regime in our country. They block our loans. They let our enemies train openly on their territory. They threaten us with blockades and invasion."

Assailing the hypocrisy of U.S. charges against his country, D'Escoto revealed that six months ago Nicaragua and Honduras had agreed to set up a joint patrol of their common border to verify that arms are not crossing into Honduras on their way to El Salvador. Honduras has done nothing to put the agreement into effect and Washington has done nothing to persuade it to do so.

In the debate that night, UN ambassador Kirkpatrick repeated the allegations that Nicaragua was serving as a conduit for Cuban arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

Aware that Honduras recently denied that any large arms shipment had passed from Nicaragua through Honduras, Kirkpatrick switched the story and claimed the guns were being shipped across the Gulf of Fonseca.

Pressed by D'Escoto for proof, she mumbled about secret satellite photos and "confidential" sources.

At one point, she actually stated that U.S. policy in El Salvador was supported by "all of

the democratic governments of Latin America, quite literally." D'Escoto reminded her that neither Mexico nor Panama supported U.S. policy and many of the governments that she claimed did support the policy did not define their position that way.

Rebutting Kirkpatrick's unsubstantiated charge that the Sandinista government was "totalitarian," D'Escoto pointed out that Amnesty International and the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists, as well as the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States, had certified in recent reports that there were no human rights violations in Nicaragua.

On one of her charges, Kirkpatrick did not evoke a denial from the Nicaraguan foreign minister. When she accused Nicaragua of complete support to the Salvadoran rebels, D'Escoto responded:

"Officially our government, and generally

our people, have reiterated our solidarity with all people who are fighting for their liberation.

"After all, we know what it means to live under oppression. We lived under seventy years of oppression since the United States intervened in Nicaragua, occupied our country, and then created the Somocista national guard to keep our people under control.

"So," D'Escoto declared, "we can sympathize with those like the Salvadoran people who have been suffering a similar type of agony for so long. . . ."

"It is understandable that we would manifest our concern, our spiritual and moral solidarity with these people."

As he had pointed out at his press conference earlier that day: "The United States is very wrong if it thinks it can commit troops to El Salvador, Guatemala, or any other country and that the other nations of Central America will stand idly by." □

and Allied Workers Union.

Martin explained that they always have full attendance at evening union meetings. "Workers know that what is discussed at these meetings is in their interests, so they all come along."

Every Thursday, they have a meeting of the National Women's Organization for the plant's sixty women. Again, it is during working hours.

Irva, a young woman worker, told me, "We talk about fundraising, cake sales, what is happening in the country."

I asked, "Do you discuss politics?" Irva smiled, and said, "Of course we do. We have already talked about the new budget, and made our suggestions. We always get reports on defense of the country, and things like that."

'The revo's moving forward'

She explained that the revolution has brought many benefits to the island's women, including the right to work. "We have had three pay raises, and women are equal in production. If there is a job that a man can do, then a woman can also do it. We have equal pay for work that both men and women do." Irva is also a member of the island's militia.

On another part of the site, they make concrete culverts used to drain away the island's frequent tropical rain storms. I met Brian, another twenty-one-year-old, who guided me around this part of the plant.

His enthusiasm was infectious. I thought he was the supervisor, he was so knowledgeable about the workings of the company. "No, I am the gateman," he told me.

They make culverts up to two feet in diameter and about two feet long. The cement, which

Grenada

Young workers build the future

Visit to Queen's Park Concrete Manufacturers

By Pat Kane

ST. GEORGE'S—Queen's Park has been the scene of many important rallies and demonstrations for the people of revolutionary Grenada. Many of their projects, problems, and aspirations have been discussed at huge rallies here. Many of the revolution's battles have been launched from its platform.

The park overlooks Queen's Park Concrete Manufacturers, where an equally important battle is now under way — the battle for production and economic independence.

I was shown around the small quarry and production site by Martin, the company's twenty-one-year-old assistant project supervisor. Martin explained that the gravel taken from the quarry goes to help build Grenada's new international airport, "and to repair and build roads. It also goes to make breeze blocks for building new houses and schools, and is made into concrete culverts for drainage."

Regular meetings of workers

It was a hot day, and about forty women were laboring in the sun. The process is almost completely manual. The only mechanized parts are the loader, or bulldozer, and one small cement mixer. Everything else is done by manual labor. The plant employs seventy-five workers, and of that total sixty are women. Even the screens for sifting the gravel are powered by hand.

The plant produces between five and ten tons of gravel per day, along with breeze blocks and concrete culverts. I asked if they have plans to increase production, since 1982 is the "Year of Economic Construction."

"Yes," replied Martin, "we are discussing this in all our meetings."

There are plenty of opportunities for discussing the progress of the plant. There is a monthly mass meeting during working hours for all the workers. They also attend monthly parish council meetings. And there are fortnightly meetings of their union, the Technical



Most of work at quarry is not mechanized.

Pat Kane/JP

comes from Cuba, is loaded along with the gravel by hand into the mixer, which holds half a ton. The cement is poured onto the ground at the other end and then packed by hand into wooden molds. Again, except for the mixer, the whole process is manual.

"We supply culverts to government ministries and to private people," Brian explained. "With all the new roads being built, there is a lot needed. They put them under the roads to take the rainwater away. We make seventeen culverts each day."

As I stood there, someone came in with an order for forty-one culverts. "A lot of work," I said. "The revo's moving forward," replied Brian.

Culverts and gravel are given free of charge to community development projects such as new schools and community centers. These projects are carried out by volunteer community work brigades.

The work at the gravel yard is hard, but the

workers all seemed determined to reach their targets before lunchbreak. They had a little discussion at the cement mixer about whether to stop to talk to me, and they decided to keep on working.

'We are working for ourselves'

Martin commented later, "That is the difference between socialist workers and capitalist workers. Capitalist workers want to laze, and do as little as possible. Only too right. But we know that we are working for ourselves, our country, and our revolution."

I asked Martin and Brian if they were in any other organizations, apart from their union. Both were in the militia and the National Youth Organization. Both had attended the NYO congress as delegates from the NYO Social Projects Unit, which coordinates voluntary work in the community.

Brian added proudly, "Martin has been selected as a New Jewel Movement party applicant." Martin explained, "I have been an appli-

cant for about a year now. It takes between two and three years to join our party. I go to study classes every week."

Request for books

As I was leaving the plant, I asked Martin what he would like most from the United States for the plant. He thought I had asked him what he wanted for himself personally.

Quickly and decisively he said, "Books. All kinds of books, but especially books about the history of the American Indians, about the history of the unions, about Malcolm X and the history of the Black Power movement. That is what I would like."

These determined young workers are the future of a new and free Grenada. They are also the reason why the U.S. rulers are so hostile to tiny Grenada. Ronald Reagan despises freedom, and there is no one more free than Irva, Martin, and Brian. They mold more than concrete culverts in their little factory — they are molding their country's future. □

Masses take part in economic planning

'The economy is the business of every Grenadian'

By Pat Kane

ST. GEORGE'S — Close to 1,000 Grenadians gathered here January 29 to attend the first National Conference of Delegates of Mass Organizations on the Economy.

The delegates represented the island's ten trade unions, the National Youth Organization and National Women's Organization, and soldiers from the People's Revolutionary Army. About 30,000 people are in these organizations — a startling total of more than 60 percent of Grenada's adult population.

The one-day conference began with an address by Minister of Finance Bernard Coard. It then divided into twenty-five smaller discussion groups, each with a cross-section of the island's workforce and mass organizations.

At a news conference earlier in the week, Coard pointed out that through meetings such as this one, the People's Revolutionary Government hopes to raise the consciousness of Grenadians about their economy, to cut out waste and corruption and to increase efficiency.

Coard said that "we see the involvement of all of the people of our country in this process. The economy of the country is the business of every Grenadian. The budget and planning process is not a secret that descends from on high once a year in the colonial tradition, but it is the property of all the people. This involvement and discussion with all the people is only the latest, if not the most dramatic, example of what we in Grenada mean by genuine people's democracy."

The economic achievements Grenada has made, and the problems still to be overcome,

were detailed for the delegates in a forty-four page report.

While the economies of even the strongest imperialist powers have been declining due to the capitalist economic crisis, Grenada has seen an increase of 10 percent in its gross domestic product — this despite a 6 percent drop in tourism. There was a 5 percent increase in agricultural production, and an increase of 15 percent in exports.

During the first year of the Grenadian revolution, there was a massive 208 percent increase in the amount spent on construction, as new schools, houses, and factories were built. This has continued in 1981, which saw a 68 percent increase in capital investment in the economy.

As Coard told the delegates at the conference, "while imperialism spends all its money on more and more weapons of savagery and destruction, on neutron bombs and missiles, we do the opposite. We build, we construct, we are the makers of the future. For imperialism, 1982 will be one of economic disaster. Our 1982, comrades — and let us proclaim it proudly — is one of Economic Construction."

Another contrast with what is happening in the imperialist countries is that in revolutionary Grenada real wages are rising. In 1981 wages in Grenada rose 17.3 percent, compared to 14.5 percent for inflation.

Democracy and planning

The conference marked the halfway stage in the process of national debate on the 1982 budget. For the last two months, members of the revolutionary government have been explaining the problems of the economy to the

various mass organizations. The conference was to allow maximum feedback from these organizations. The next stage will be an analysis of the mass of suggestions made at the conference, and their integration into the final budget.

At the December meeting of the St. George's Parish Council, Bernard Bourne, budget officer in the Ministry of Finance, explained to the 300 workers present the main outlines of the 1982 budget. "The single most important thing about the budget is its democratic preparation," explained Bourne. "This process of democratization did not spring out of nowhere. It began in 1979, when for the first time heads of departments and workers participated. In 1981 the unions were involved, and in 1982, the broad mass of the people will be involved."

"The second main feature is planning. Of course it is the first attempt at such a plan. The plan will initially be for one year. We must remember that in the first year of the revolution we saw planning from day to day, in 1980 from month to month, and in 1981 we consolidated that monthly planning. Planning is essential."

During December, thousands of Grenadian workers heard similar reports on planning and the outline of the budget. These parish council meetings were followed up by meetings in the workplaces. At Grenlec, the island's electrical generating plant, all the workers were involved in budget discussions.

Discussion at Grenlec

On the morning of December 15, Bernard Coard spoke for an hour to the assembled Gren-

lec workers. He explained the country's various accounting systems, and plans for capital expenditure and increased efficiency. He also outlined the role of the U.S. government in blocking aid and loans, especially during May 1981, when Grenada applied to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan toward the costs of building its international airport.

Coard used the example of a small farm to explain and highlight complex economic problems, and the discussion and question time lasted another hour.

For the next two mornings, officials of the Budget Office and the Ministry of Trade were at Grenlec to answer further questions. All the time, tremendous emphasis was placed on the democratic involvement of the workers. This is a practical question, as Coard explained, since it is the workers themselves who know best how the company, and country, should be operated.

At the January meeting of the St. George's

Parish Council, the economy was the main item on the agenda, Selwyn Strachan, minister of mass mobilization, told the meeting of plans for special committees to tackle economic problems in the workplace. These plans were placed before the conference of mass organizations last Friday.

Strachan asked the workers to be sure they elect delegates to the conference, and to organize discussions around the printed material that the delegates would receive.

"This year is going to be a really tough year," he told the meeting. "And there can be no skylarking. If we fail to take the economy seriously — and we have to be frank and honest with each other — the revolution will collapse. We cannot have a revolution where our economy is in a shambles. We have to learn from the mistakes of other countries.

"It will be difficult for you to participate in this particular discussion without facts. So comrades, we are going to make sure that

everytime you turn on the radio, you will be getting those facts."

Proceedings at conference

And the facts have been coming to every worker on the island. "Frank and honest" discussions have been taking place in every workplace and in the units of the army. The major achievement of the January 29 conference was that the discussion groups, which lasted three hours, were serious forums for an informed people to debate the island's economic problems.

Each group had a government officer to answer questions, and that is all the officials did. The time was open for maximum discussion from the delegates.

One delegate remarked to me that she was pleasantly surprised by the high level of political understanding of the young soldiers who represented the army units. They were active participants in every discussion.

Each group had a secretary, who noted down every idea and criticism made by the participants. Many urged increased use of locally grown crops and cutting waste and inefficiency. The civil service, which has remained largely intact since before the revolution, came in for criticism in several groups.

One delegate from each discussion group reported to a plenary meeting.

The discussion is presently being written up for distribution. There will also be a special conference for retired people, and one for small-craftspeople and shopkeepers. The final budget will be presented to the Grenadian people on March 9, which has been declared "Budget Day." □

Step forward for Kuwait women

Kuwait has become the first Arab nation on the Persian Gulf to grant women a limited right to abortion. On January 26, the national assembly passed a law permitting abortion if the pregnancy would result in "gross physical harm." The measure would also allow voluntary sterilization.

The victory came as demonstrators outside protested the assembly's earlier rejection of a bill to give women the right to vote.

"We hereby register our protest," said the Kuwait Women Social and Educational Society in a telegram to the assembly speaker. "The outcome of the voting [on the suffrage bill] runs counter to the role of Kuwaiti women and the high standards they have achieved."

Five years ago, Kuwaiti women organized large demonstrations to protest a government move to deny them the right to take office jobs. The government backed down.

"Everything or nothing should always be our motto in politics," declared Badriya al-Al-wadhi, dean of women at Kuwait University Law School. "We will fight on. We will set a precedent for all [Persian] Gulf women. Allah willing, the future is ours."

'A radical departure from tradition'

[The following editorial appeared in the January 30 issue of the *Free West Indian*, published weekly in St. George's, Grenada.]

* * *

The successful completion of the first "National Conference of Delegates of Mass Organisations on the Economy" at the Dome, signals another major victory for the new democracy being built in Grenada.

No banner headlines will appear in the Trinidad "Express," the Barbados "Advocate News" or the "Daily Gleaner" of Jamaica, but history and the Caribbean people should record that for the first time in the English-speaking Caribbean the masses of working people, the women, the youth, the farmers, are helping to decide how their hard earned money is spent and who will benefit from it.

This is a radical departure from the tradition. In all the islands, as was the practice in Grenada under [former dictator Eric] Gairy (when he chose to convene Parliament), the budget debate is an issue disconnected from the people. A few top-bracket civil servants sit down and produce a preliminary draft. The political bosses then look it over and make whatever corrections they deem necessary. With luck, the final product is read in a droning monologue by the Prime Minister or his Finance Minister, while Members of Parliament nod to sleep. Inevitably, the budget neither reflects the wishes or needs of the people.

There is a reason for all this. Under colonialism and the neo-colonial systems that remain in most of the Caribbean, it is important to present the business of Govern-

ment in general and the business of the economy in particular, as a mystifying thing, beyond the reach of anyone without an advanced university education.

In this way, technocrats, almost always trained in one or another IMF-inspired school of economics, are the only ones who can decide what is best for the country.

The conference in the Dome and the People's Budget which will emerge from it and be presented as part of the Third Festival of the Revolution celebrations on March 9, is throwing all of this out the window.

It is showing that the economy, while difficult to change in the interest of the people, can and must be understood by the whole country, particularly if genuine economic construction is to take place.

At root, the economy is built on the combined labour of the working people and it is only a voluntary increase in this labour output which will lead to an increase in production. It is this simple but profound truth that the conference is teaching.

But the real potential of this first delegates' conference will be wasted if the follow-up work is not carried through. Each delegate present has a responsibility to discuss with his or her youth group, women's group, workplace or community, all the details of the economy related in the conference and to allow, in turn, the most meaningful suggestions to flow back from these areas to the PRG [People's Revolutionary Government].

Anything less than this will detract from the final quality of the People's Budget. Democracy means increased information, but also increased responsibility.

General strike against austerity

Workers protest government wage-cutting plan

By Will Reissner

Belgium's social-democratic-led trade-union federation staged a twenty-four hour general strike February 8 to protest moves by that country's rightist government to reduce the living standards of the working class.

Unions affiliated with the Belgian General Federation of Workers (FGTB) shut down much of the French-speaking part of Belgium, Wallonia. The strike had less impact in Flemish-speaking Flanders, except for the city of Antwerp, where the social-democratic union federation has a strong following.

In Wallonia, rail traffic was halted and steel, glass, machinery, and other factories were shut down, as was the public school system and French-language broadcasting. In Flanders, the northern half of the country, production

halted in some factories and at coal mines.

The previous week, Belgium's right-wing government, the fifth headed by Wilfried Martens since 1979, won parliamentary approval for emergency powers to deal with the country's severe economic crisis. Under these powers, Martens can rule by decree, without parliamentary approval.

Through these decrees, Martens has announced plans to cut real wages by 3 percent in 1982 by gutting the present system of indexing wages to the cost of living. In addition, the prime minister will cut corporate taxes substantially, will force state-aided industries to lower wages by at least 5 percent if they are to continue receiving aid, and will reduce government social spending by \$3 billion.

Wage-indexing is a benefit that was won in

the massive workers upsurge of 1960-61. Through indexing, Belgian workers have been able to maintain their real wages despite inflation. But in January 1981 the government imposed a two-year freeze on real wages.

The Belgian government's austerity program aims to make the country's working class bear the costs of modernizing Belgian industry and extricating the country from its severe economic crisis. The unemployment rate of more than 12.5 percent is already the highest in the European Economic Community.

The steel, coal, and textile industries, which are heavily concentrated in Wallonia, have been especially hard hit by the capitalist economic crisis. In the city of Liège, one of the centers of the steel industry, the unemployment rate has been above 20 percent for two years.

The working-class response to the Martens plan was weakened by the fact that most of the trade unions aligned with the Social Christian Party did not participate in the general strike. The Confederation of Christian Unions, with about 1.2 million members concentrated in Flanders, is about the same size as the FGTB. □

South African workers protest killing

Unionist dies in police detention

By G.K. Newey

More than 50,000 industrial workers in South Africa, mainly Black, stopped working on February 11 to take part in a thirty-minute protest against the apartheid regime's practice of detaining opponents without trial. Among the factories where the stoppage was observed were the Ford and General Motors auto plants.

The strike was sparked by the death in detention of Dr. Neil Aggett, a young white physician who was secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers Union, which is mostly Black. Aggett, who was arrested on November 27 along with sixteen other opponents of the white supremacist regime in South Africa, had been held under the Terrorism Act, which allows the government to hold suspects without trial for as long as it chooses. He was found hanged in his cell on February 5, in what prison authorities claim was a suicide.

Since detention was instituted in 1963, scores of detainees have died in prison. Aggett was the first white among them. The death of Black Consciousness movement leader Steve Biko in September 1977 brought world attention to this practice.

Relatives and colleagues of Dr. Aggett have rejected the government's explanation that his death was a suicide. "He was totally the most unfazed person I ever met," David Lewis of the General Workers Union stated. "Really not emotional. I would say he was a remarkably stable kind of guy. Either he was submitted to pressure beyond belief, or he was killed."

The African Food and Canning Workers

Union issued a statement that no government inquiry would ever convince union members "that Neil Aggett took his own life."

It should be recalled that when Steve Biko's death was first revealed, South African authorities claimed that the Black leader had died while on a hunger strike. But an autopsy revealed that Biko had suffered brain damage and other injuries. A subsequent inquiry indicated that he had been kept naked and chained in his solitary confinement cell for several days after his injuries, and then transported 650 miles in a jeep to Pretoria, where he died.

Only days after Aggett's death, the security police officer in charge of Steve Biko's detention was promoted to deputy commissioner of police.

The arrest of Aggett and the other sixteen union activists was part of a broader crackdown on trade-union activity by Black workers in South Africa. At least 306 people connected with Black trade unions were arrested in the past year.

According to Louis Le Grange, the minister of police, many of the detainees will be brought to court soon in a major political trial because "they are directly involved in threatening internal security and especially because they are involved in alleged African National Congress activities."

The ANC, which is fighting to end white minority rule in South Africa, has been outlawed since 1960. Its leader, Nelson Mandela, has been serving a life sentence on Robben Island since 1964.

Mandela's wife, Winnie, has been under a "banning" order for most of the past twenty years. People who are banned in South Africa — and there are currently 115 — are confined to specific areas, cannot go out at night or on weekends, are forced to report regularly to the police, cannot meet socially with more than one person at a time, cannot write anything, even a diary, and cannot be quoted in the press, even after their death. □



Thousands of mourners, both Black and white, turned out for the funeral of Neil Aggett, Jr., in Johannesburg February 13.

Broad protest against Begin's policies

Opposition to brutality in West Bank provides focus

By Assaf Adiv

[The following article appeared in the January issue of *Matzpen Marxist* (Marxist Compass), the newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League, Israeli section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Matzpen Marxist*.]

* * *

A new power on the Israeli political scene has emerged in recent months, drawing a lot of attention — the Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University.

The turning point that led to this situation was undoubtedly the demonstration organized by the Bir Zeit Committee in Ramallah, on November 28, 1981;* it was greeted by tear gas, clubs, and arrests and stimulated Israeli public opinion.

It transformed the Bir Zeit Committee from a group representing a small part of the academic community, who, cooperating with the left, expressed their resistance to the brutal Israeli policy that stamps down on human values and needs, to a body that unifies, through its actions, vast public sentiment for a change of policy in regard to the Palestinians and the Arab world. This sentiment is based above all on a strong sense of the bankruptcy of the iron fist policy, if this barbarous and brutal conduct merits the word policy at all.

The Bir Zeit Committee's leap into the center of Israeli political life was no accident. It was a result of various factors that characterize Israeli political reality today.

Bankruptcy of iron fist policy

The scope and the degree of indignation that rose in the aftermath of the blowing up of houses in Beit Sahur and Hebron, the closure of Bir Zeit University, and other collective punishments, was itself a phenomenon of great importance.

The deep public debate that has opened in

*The November 28, 1981, demonstration in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank, was called to demand the reopening of Bir Zeit University, which had been ordered closed by the Israeli administration; an end to the ban on the Arabic-language *Al Fajr* newspaper; and an end to the demolition of Palestinian houses and other forms of collective punishment.

Following the police attack on the demonstrators, various protest activities were organized. As a result of this pressure, six detained demonstrators, who had not been released with the rest, were set free without charges being brought against them; and on January 4 the Bir Zeit University was allowed to reopen.

the wake of the decision to escalate oppressive measures and war moves — whether through the decision to impose the "civil administration," or the adoption of the "Golan Bill" [formally annexing the Syrian Golan Heights], and other obviously provocative measures intended to inflame the northern border region — expresses above all the impasse that Israel has reached on the question of the road to peace and its relations with the Arab world in general.

Prime Minister Menachem Begin's government, in a bloc with one part of the split-ridden Labor Party, was shown during recent months for all the world to see, as completely unwilling to do anything at all for peace. On the contrary, it has been shown to be determined to provoke a war at any cost.

Having totally failed in its plans to find collaborators in the occupied territories for its phony "administrative autonomy" for the Palestinians, the government is trying again, under the just as phony plan of "civil administration," to impose a new adventurist policy that is bound to fail. The political leadership of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will be pushed aside in favor of quislings appointed by the Israeli authorities as the "genuine" representatives of the population, while their very appointment demands mass oppression and terror.

The Labor Party's equal share in the policy of rejecting unequivocally any initiative for political solution, as expressed in the negation of the Saudi Fahd Plan, its complicity with the "civil administration," and its divisions on the question of the Golan Bill, leave no place for doubt.

Despite the growing public demand for new ways to break through the impasse into which Israel has led itself, as well as indignation over the government's policy and reluctance to pay its price, none of the Zionist parties responded. The Bir Zeit Committee leaped into this vacuum.

The 200 demonstrators had the support of a vast public sentiment that, while not in agreement with every position of the Bir Zeit Committee, completely agrees on the necessity for action, the need to find a new political course in view of the defaults of the iron fist policy.

Sentiment for independent mass action

The emergence of the Bir Zeit Committee in the center of the Israeli political scene is due to forces much wider than the democratic milieu that is active on issues concerning Israeli relations to the Palestinians and the Arab world.

What gives the voice of the Bir Zeit Committee the vast hearing it has, and legitimizes it in public opinion, is something much wider. What is happening in the consciousness of hundreds of thousands of workers and poor neighborhood dwellers, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population, is the development of a *sentiment for independent mass action* in order to protest and to change.

The blind alley of the ruling class is by no means limited to the political arena, and it is the working class that is paying the highest price for it.

What we have seen during recent months — in the El Al airline workers' strike, the display of solidarity from the thirteen workers committees that came to their defense, the organization and the courageous struggle of the diamond workers, and innumerable other workers struggles that are taking place — is an expression of working class resistance to an attempt by the ruling class to break out of its deadlock by means of political and ideological pressures, as well as by threats and violence, to make the workers carry the whole burden.

That is how the very workers the Labor Party depicted as fascists during the election period voted with their feet in Kiriyat Shmona and Nahariya against the war in Lebanon and for a cease-fire agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We are witnessing today a broad discussion on policy in the occupied territories and on the way forward to peace, which on the basis of deep antiwar sentiment gives legitimacy and unprecedented sympathy to voices such as the Bir Zeit Committee that point forward to coexistence and dialogue. This sentiment was behind the success of the committee.

On the one hand there is opposition to a bankrupt policy that aims to extinguish a whole people, and which is bound to fail, and on the other hand there is the search for new ways of action, a struggle for new ideas, rather than a comfortable place in the political establishment.

A genuine voice for change

The Bir Zeit Committee became an influential factor because it is politically an independent force, expressing a deep sentiment that exists in Israel, including among workers. It is no appendage of the Likud or the Labor parties, and its dynamic is clearly not aimed at political careerism and privileges.

The Bir Zeit Committee, formed in November 1981 in the aftermath of the arbitrary closure of Bir Zeit University, was initiated by

several university people from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, who viewed the government's action as a severe blow to the principles of academic freedom and to basic human values, for which they fight in their own universities.

They sincerely expressed the feeling that a regime that closes down universities in order to safeguard its rule is bankrupt and should not be allowed to continue its practices.

That group of teachers and students, who, cooperating with the left, initiated the formation of the Bir Zeit Committee, proved by their action that healthy democratic forces exist in Israel, that not everything has been marred by militarism, protectionism, and privileges — the basis of the Israeli state. It was a voice for simple human principles, for genuine democracy, against discrimination, and for peace.

What can the committee do?

As the committee gains increased sympathy, it will have more enemies who will try to pre-

vent its development and growth. The clubs and tear gas in Ramallah were only the first signal of what Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon and company has in store for their opponents.

Maintaining control over the occupied territories; the abuse of its water resources, its lands, and its cheap labor, which is kept in slave-like conditions; the existence of an empire whose bombers roam freely throughout the area — all these strategic aims of the Israeli ruling class are closely bound up with plans to reorganize the whole structure of the Israeli economy and society.

The plans for war, unemployment, recession, and "cutting the living flesh" that the Likud and the Labor parties have in store for the workers and youth in Israel are the same as those President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher have for the people of the United States and Britain.

Whoever intends to crush the Palestinian leadership and initiate a war with Syria, in

spite of the terrible price of such a course, will not hesitate to use the same means against forces that solidarize with the Palestinians, just because they are Jewish. This was demonstrated when only five days after the Ramallah demonstration, the gendarmerie was sent to crack skulls of striking diamond workers who demonstrated in Tel Aviv.

This is the harsh reality that the forces that want to seriously struggle for a deep social change have to face. But that same reality bangs against the consciousness of hundreds of thousands of workers and youth who have to confront it daily.

There is a wide consensus today that unites workers who voted Likud and the middle classes and intellectuals who voted Labor. It expresses itself in a lack of faith in the existing parties' ability to find solutions to the crisis through the policy of war and austerity, in opposition to war moves initiated by Israel, and in readiness to consider the facts about what is going on in the occupied territories and to look

'The Golan Heights is Syrian'

OCCUPIED GOLAN HEIGHTS — A delegation of about thirty Israeli citizens, Arabs and Jews, traveled here from different parts of Israel January 30 to express their opposition to Israel's annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights and to show their solidarity with the Arab population there.

Israel occupied the Golan Heights — along with the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula — during the war it launched against its Arab neighbors in June 1967. At that time there were some 150,000 people living in the Golan Heights.

The Israeli occupiers expelled all the Christian and Muslim inhabitants. Only the

Druse, a religious group derived from Islam, were allowed to stay. Today only 13,000 of the original inhabitants remain in the area and out of some 100 Arab villages, only five are still inhabited.

On December 14, the Israeli Knesset (parliament) voted to extend the laws, jurisdiction, and administration of the Zionist state to the occupied Syrian territory. This formalized an annexation that began in 1967.

The delegation from Israel, organized by the Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University, represented the growing segment of Israeli society that opposes the con-

tinued occupation of the territories seized in 1967.

Joined by Druse activists from the Golan, the Israelis formed a caravan of about twenty cars and toured the villages of Mas'ada, Bukata, Ein Kuniye, and Majdal Shams. In each village the caravan was received by all the inhabitants, the men lining up, as is Druse custom, to personally greet and shake hands with the visitors. A short rally was held in each town, with speakers from the Bir Zeit Committee and the Syrian villages.

A major theme was the link between the struggle against the occupation and the struggle against the Zionist regime's social policies inside Israel.

The Druse villagers burst into applause when one of the Israelis expressed the hope that one day they would return to visit the Golan Heights "with a visa from the government of Syria."

Sheik Mahmoud Hassan Safadi, one of the leaders of the struggle against the imposition of Israeli citizenship on the Druse, explained that their fight is "for peace and justice." He pointed out that the Israeli government claims "Arabs want to kill the Jews, but this is a lie. Jews have as much right to live as any nation. But not on our land."

A Druse construction worker summed up the sentiment of the Arab population in the Golan Heights when he told this reporter, "The Golan Heights is Syrian, and will remain Syrian no matter how long Israel stays here."

— Roberto Kopec



Roberto Kopec/IP

Demonstrations against annexation of Golan Heights were held in each village.

for an alternative.

Begin and Shimon Peres blur the fact that on these questions they are a minority by dissolving the concrete problems into generalizations. The blowing up of houses is justified because "all Palestinians are terrorists," and war with Syria is justified by misquoting Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, who allegedly said that he aspires to destroy Israel.

Begin is using the Israelis' distance from the

occupied territories, their fear of the Arab masses, and their isolation from the world and from objective sources of information in order to distort and blur the real issues.

On that very question, by exposing the truth about the reality under occupation, Israel's responsibility for inflaming the area, the legitimate and popular character of the Palestinians' struggle for independence, the concrete problems that arise under occupation, and the ne-

cessity for genuine coexistence on the basis of recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination, the Bir Zeit Committee reflects a new and true voice on the Israeli political scene. Hence the feeling of the participants in the committee that it has an authentic and new quality that can awaken people to think, to reexamine reality, and to do something about it. It can organize and unite the broad existing opposition sentiment and advance the struggle for peace and democracy. □

Poland

A discussion of the Cuban position

How can construction of socialism best be advanced?

By David Frankel

Events in Poland, particularly since the declaration of martial law there, have been the topic of considerable discussion among revolutionary fighters.

What are the forces responsible for the crisis in Poland? What social force can resolve the crisis? Does the crackdown by the Polish regime strengthen the defense of the Polish workers state against imperialism, or does it weaken it still further?

These questions are being discussed and debated throughout the world. How could it be otherwise?

One set of answers has been indicated by the revolutionary leadership in Cuba. Although there has been no government statement on the crisis in Poland, and no speeches by Fidel Castro or other Cuban Communist Party leaders on the subject, the Cuban CP daily *Granma* has provided readers with an orientation to these events.

Articles in *Granma*, written by Cuban press agency reporters from Warsaw, have expressed support for the declaration of martial law. *Granma* has also carried Polish and Soviet news agency dispatches.

Gain for imperialism?

Not surprisingly, the approach taken is in line with that indicated by Fidel in the main report to the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party held in December 1980. (See *Intercontinental Press*, February 9, 1981.) That report characterized the events in Poland since the rise of Solidarity in August 1980 as a gain for imperialism. It said:

"What happened there was partly a result of imperialism's subversive policy. . . .

"The success that reaction has had there is eloquent testimony to the fact that a revolutionary Party in power cannot deviate from Marxist-Leninist principles, neglect ideological work and divorce itself from the masses."

Fidel avoided direct attacks on Solidarity, expressing hope that the Polish United

Workers Party (PUWP) would prove capable of resolving the crisis by "leaning on the healthy forces of the country and taking advantage of the enormous moral, patriotic, and revolutionary reserve of the working class."

But, he warned, "There is not the slightest question about the socialist camp's right to save that country's integrity and ensure that it survives and resists at all costs imperialism's onslaught."

'Impending Catastrophe'

Granma's coverage of the Polish crisis has been along these lines.

A December 13 Prensa Latina dispatch from Warsaw by Alcibiades Hidalgo reported on the the imposition of martial law by paraphrasing Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski's justification of this move.

The extreme measure, stated the head of government, was adopted in accordance with the precepts of the Polish constitution and was provoked by the impending catastrophe that threatened the nation, a catastrophe that in recent weeks seemed closer each day to observers in this capital. . . .

In the very center of the capital, the seat of the Solidarity organization in the Mazowsze region, which includes Warsaw, was occupied. Its leadership had played a central role in the resurgence of opposition actions this autumn, and supported the formation of openly antisocialist political parties. . . .

Strikes, strike preparations, and protest actions, [Jaruzelski] said, have become the norm of national life. Cases of terrorism and of physical and moral threats, as well as of direct violence, are multiplying. The nation has reached the limits of its capacity for resistance, he emphasized. . . .

The opposition organization [Solidarity], on the other hand, had called protest demonstrations in the capital and principal cities for the following Thursday. These were prohibited by the authorities. In all probability there would have been confrontations with the police incited by Solidarity.

It is necessary to block that confrontation, which Solidarity considers inevitable, emphasized Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski today.

Thus, the Cuban leaders felt that the leader-

ship of Solidarity was in the hands of antisocialist elements and that Poland was on the brink of a confrontation that threatened to open wide the doors to imperialist destabilization and lead to the restoration of capitalism. As a result, they believe the crackdown was necessary and advisable.

In our view, this approach is wrong.

Defense of workers states

In looking at Poland, we have to start with the world proletarian revolution: the fight to overturn capitalism, to advance the socialist revolution, and to defend every inch of ground already conquered against imperialism's unceasing counterattacks.

Defense of the workers states against imperialism is an essential component of any working-class program. The countries where capitalism has been overturned, as in Poland, represent crucial conquests in the struggle to advance the world socialist revolution. These bastions must be defended against any threat of capitalist restoration, and against any attack by capitalist forces.

This defense is unconditional. That is, a workers state must be defended against the enemy class regardless of its political regime. In the same way, class-conscious workers defend their trade unions against attacks by the capitalists, even when their union is saddled with an undemocratic and class-collaborationist leadership.

A restoration of capitalism in Poland would be a historic defeat for the Polish working class and for working people throughout the world. Those who reject this point of view, and yet speak in the name of solidarity with the Polish workers, do nothing to advance the cause of working people in Poland or anywhere else.

Within this framework, the question that has to be addressed is whether the actions of the Polish government have advanced or hindered the defense of the Polish workers state.

Is it true that the struggle of the Polish union Solidarity was opening the door to rightist and



Police line up to stop demonstration in Warsaw on December 16.

proimperialist forces to make a bid for power?

A look at what the Polish workers have been fighting for will make the answers to these questions clear.

Why workers rebelled

Solidarity was created by a spontaneous working-class rebellion that aroused all of Polish society. The workers in their millions took part in establishing and maintaining this organization.

The grievances that led to the rebellion are well known. Topping the list were social inequality and bureaucratic privilege, corruption and mismanagement.

For example, in February, 1981, some 200,000 workers in Bielsko-Biala, a textile manufacturing center in southern Poland, struck for eleven days. They paralyzed more than 120 factories. Their main demands were for the dismissal of the governor and other top officials. These officials, the workers explained, had expropriated government buildings for their own use; constructed summer villas instead of housing for workers; allocated cars to the hated secret police instead of to doctors; and distributed priority coupons for the purchase of cars as favors or bribes.

"We had one provincial governor who built a villa at Ustron in the mountains with a brook running through it," said Miroslaw Styczen, a member of the strike committee.

"The officials whose resignation we are demanding did not look after the workers' interests. They weren't public servants at all, but social parasites," said Solidarity leader Lech

Walesa.

Nevertheless, the response of the government was to stand behind these parasites. "We have come face to face with manifestations of anarchy, with the transformation of an organization that proclaimed itself to be a trade union into something far removed from what it had declared in its statutes," former head of the PUWP Stanislaw Kania declared.

Kania charged that Solidarity was "under the direction not of the workers but of instigators," and was "being steered in the direction of a political opposition."

One strike leader replied, "If a demand that the authorities be honest is political, then this is a political strike."

For democracy and social equality

But Solidarity has also presented a positive program for advancing the interests of the working class and the construction of a socialist society. On the broadest level, it demanded a long-overdue democratization of Polish society and elimination of the arbitrary rule of uncontrolled bureaucrats.

As the Solidarity draft program put it, "No one can stand above or beyond the law." (For the draft program of Solidarity, see *Intercontinental Press*, June 22 and June 29, 1981.)

Solidarity demanded "freedom to criticize and to speak out," workers control on the job, and the right of workers to participate in making economic decisions. The union insisted that "the authorities function out in the open, and not keep covering up behind a screen of official secrecy decisions that are harmful, self-

serving, illegal, or even criminal."

And it presented a broad program for the defense of the social interests of the working class and its allies, and against privilege and bureaucracy. Thus, the draft program stated:

"The areas of poverty in our society cannot be allowed to expand. We should insist that minimum welfare be guaranteed by the government to everyone in Poland. . . ."

While recognizing the economic crisis facing the country, Solidarity declared that "the costs of the crisis should be shouldered more by those with higher incomes than by those with lower ones. It proposed concretely:

- the introduction of a universal, compulsory, and progressive tax to equalize incomes. . . .
- the taxation of exorbitant wealth (luxury cars, vacation homes, etc.),
- the restriction of unwarranted material privileges for those in the ruling apparatus (apartments, official cars, special medical services, etc.), and the publicizing of the incomes and property holdings of people occupying positions in the apparatus.

Much of the conflict between the regime and Solidarity has been around the right of workers to organize and to maintain their own union independent of control by the bureaucracy. But considerable struggle has also been generated by the social demands raised by the workers.

In November 1980, for instance, the government was forced under pressure of the mass movement to double the appropriation for education in the 1981 budget from 3 percent to 6 percent. It also agreed to allot 5 percent of the budget to health care.

In February 1981, some 300,000 workers walked off their jobs in the Jelenia Gora region. Among their demands was the conversion of an Interior Ministry sanatorium into a public hospital. They also proposed that a rest house open only to party members be converted into a community recreation center. In Nowy Sacz as well, Solidarity demanded that buildings belonging to the Ministry of the Interior be turned into much-needed health clinics.

Who provoked crisis?

As the Prensa Latina dispatch cited above correctly notes, the conflict between the Polish regime and Solidarity was coming to a head when Jaruzelski declared the state of martial law on December 13. The Polish authorities have sought to put the blame for the crisis on Solidarity, which, they contend, fell into the hands of "extremists."

In the official justifications for the crackdown, the Polish bureaucracy has contended that it was moving toward compromise and solution to the problems, but Solidarity rejected this course. The facts show the opposite to be the case.

At Solidarity's national congress in September-October 1981, a resolution was overwhelmingly adopted calling for democratic elections to the Sejm (parliament) 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 two smaller satellite parties.

Solidarity demanded an unlimited number of candidates, nominated by any citizen's 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 said.

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 a program for turning the government into one run by working people themselves.

It is only in the twisted language of the bureaucrats themselves, where "defense of socialism" really means defense of their own privileges, that this proposal for democratizing the Polish workers state can be called "antisocialist" or "provocative."

The bureaucracy had no intention of compromising with the workers' demands, although at times it was forced to make limited concessions.

Provocations by regime

Although the Solidarity leadership always made clear its willingness to discuss problems with the government, the authorities decided to move toward the use of force.

After the Solidarity congress, police began an escalating series of provocations against union members and political activists. In some cities, unionists were beaten. Others were fired from their jobs. Hundreds were investigated on suspicion of "antistate" offenses.

In the meantime, the economic crisis in the country grew worse. The authorities refused to allow the workers to take part in economic decision-making, which was what was needed to begin resolving the crisis. Coupled with the government's direct attacks on Solidarity, the economic situation provoked numerous strikes and demonstrations.

At a November 27-28 Central Committee meeting, Jaruzelski announced that he would seek 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 at least a year.

Solidarity placed the responsibility for creating this situation squarely on 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," the Solidarity leaders declared December 3, at a meeting in Radom.

According to a tape of the discussions at this meeting later broadcast by the government, Lech Walesa declared, "The confrontation is unavoidable, and confrontation will take place. One has to make people realize that we can't avoid confrontation."

A week later, Walesa declared, "We do not want confrontation, but we cannot retreat any more."

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

The next day, Jaruzelski declared martial law, implementing a plan that had been prepared long in advance.

Polish workers counterrevolutionary?

Thus, the facts show that it was not the workers, but the regime that provoked the crisis that led to the crackdown. However, the question still remains, was Solidarity opening the door to the restoration of capitalism? Involved in this question is the broader issue of the role of the working class itself in the construction of socialism.

One of the products of bureaucratic rule in Poland that is most harmful to the defense of the workers state is the caricature of Marxism that has been imposed as the state ideology and used to defend the most reactionary manifestations of bureaucratic privilege and social inequality.

Censorship is used to prevent the working masses from obtaining accurate information about the rest of the world, and even about their own country. The official media is so discredited that workers no longer believe it even when it tells the truth.

As a result, it is certainly possible to find many examples of reactionary and procapitalist ideology among working people in Poland today. Many workers there — as in other countries — have deep illusions about the character of the imperialist democracies, for example. (It is important to note, however, that these ideas are much stronger among the bureaucrats themselves than in any section of the working class.)

It is also true that many workers, repelled by the twisted version of Marxism taught by self-serving ideologues for the privileged layer, do not consider themselves Marxists or Leninists. But these weaknesses are the product of the bureaucracy, not of Solidarity's struggle.

In fact, by relying on the mobilizations of workers and farmers themselves, Solidarity has pointed the way toward a deepening of class-consciousness. This is one reason why so many members of the PUWP — an estimated one million of them — were inspired to join Solidarity, and have become members and activists in its ranks.

Solidarity's social goals

But the fact that some backward ideas exist among Polish workers is only one side of the story, and not the most important.

The Polish working class is fighting not for the denationalization of industry, or a return to capitalism with its exploitation, war, inflation,

unemployment, and extreme inequality.

Rather, what they are demanding is workers democracy. They are fighting for workers control in the factories, and in economic and social planning.

As Edward Lipinski, a socialist since 1906 and one of Poland's most renowned economists, told the Solidarity congress in September 1981, the struggle to advance socialism in Poland today "is a struggle for democratic management in the factories, for political freedom which is a characteristic of the socialist state, for the abolition of censorship, for the real possibility of a planned development of the Polish nation. . . ."

"There are no significant forces in Poland which desire the reprivatization of the means of production," he said to thunderous applause. "There are no such forces in the Katowice Steelworks or in the Lenin Steelworks." (See *Intercontinental Press*, November 16, 1981.)

Numerous figures in Solidarity have made similar points. As Solidarity adviser Bronislaw Geremek told the Paris weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*, "The problem of publicly owned property is definitively settled."

He added: "To return to the western system would be a regression in civilization." The setup in Poland is being challenged "not because it is socialist, but because it is insufficiently so."

The working class has never been and cannot be the agent of reaction. In Poland, that role is played by the ruling bureaucracy, which has gone so far as to encourage the revival of anti-Semitic filth in its struggle to maintain its privileges.

It is Solidarity that has aroused hope and inspired the masses, presenting a vision of what the workers state could become.

In the course of their struggle to correct bureaucratic abuses in Poland and to advance the construction of a socialist society, the masses of working people will find their way to a deeper understanding of Marxism and Leninism. They will enhance their understanding of their own struggle, and of the struggles of workers and peasants throughout the world, who are their allies. And they will absorb the necessary lesson that the fight for workers democracy and genuine proletarian internationalism are inseparable.

Blow to world working class

Having looked at the true goals and aspirations of Solidarity, we can see more clearly that the declaration of martial law and the efforts to crush Solidarity have done nothing to strengthen the Polish workers state. On the contrary, they have weakened it.

In the international arena, the crackdown in Poland has provided fuel for the imperialists' anti-Soviet and anticommunist propaganda drive. U.S. President Ronald Reagan, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, French President François Mitterrand, and their counterparts in the other imperialist countries have seized on the Polish events with glee.

The U.S. rulers in particular hope to defuse opposition to their drive toward military intervention in Central America, and to their efforts to introduce new nuclear missiles into Western Europe.

The bureaucratic repression of Solidarity has also provided new ammunition to procapitalist forces within the labor movement in countries like the United States. These forces argue that whatever faults capitalism may have, socialism is no answer because it simply means tyranny.

And what about within Poland itself?

Neither the construction of socialism nor the fight against bureaucratic abuses can be advanced by weakening the organization and mobilization of the working class. The crackdown in Poland has strengthened not the workers, but the petty-bourgeois bureaucracy that holds down the working class and retards the development of the workers state.

By repressing the genuinely popular movement of the toilers in the name of socialism, the privileged bureaucracy also helps to discredit socialism in the eyes of Polish workers and farmers. As a result, it further weakens the defense of the Polish workers state, which depends first of all on the consciousness of the masses.

Return to normal?

Moreover, the crackdown has done nothing to ease the crisis. Just the opposite.

A January 5 Prensa Latina dispatch from Warsaw stated that "the situation in Poland is gradually returning to normal." It quoted a government official in Warsaw as asserting that "better labor discipline and increased productivity were noticeable in the city."

But this is not the case. Demonstrations and protests by workers have continued, despite severe repression. Workers are showing up in the factories to avoid arrests for striking, but they are continuing their passive resistance.

Already, Solidarity activists around the country have begun to reorganize themselves, setting up numerous workers committees and publishing unofficial leaflets and bulletins. In response to drastic price hikes decreed by the government, groups in Gdansk and other cities have issued new calls for strikes and other protests.

The crackdown on Solidarity and the declaration of martial law is merely one more step along the same disastrous course previously followed by the Polish bureaucracy, a course that has brought the country to the crisis it now faces.

This course is not the result of mistaken policy or poor judgment. The problem is that the Polish government is in the hands of a distinct petty-bourgeois social formation whose interests are opposed to those of the workers and farmers.

This parasitic petty-bourgeois layer plays no necessary role in production — on the contrary, its only contribution is inefficiency, waste, and disorganization. Yet it skims off much of the wealth produced by the toilers for



Bureaucracy's attack on Solidarity hurts defense of the workers state.

its own private consumption. Therefore, it must monopolize political power in order to defend its privileges at the expense of the working class.

Because its privileged position is incompatible with the existence of workers democracy, the bureaucracy is incapable of finding any progressive solution to the crisis. Such a solution can only come from the working class itself.

Cuban approach to problems of bureaucracy

The approach followed by the revolutionary leadership in Cuba in dealing with the problems of bureaucratism is the opposite of the course followed by the PUWP in Poland.

Privilege, corruption, and other manifestations of bureaucratism are topics that the Cubans have frequently analyzed. Moreover, they have organized the Cuban masses to combat these ills since the earliest years of the Cuban revolution.

As Fidel put it in a speech celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Federation of Cuban Women in August 1970, "The moral principle we should embrace — above all the revolutionary vanguard, those in posts of responsibility, should be to make even more sacrifices than those that we ask of the people.

"And nobody should be surprised if any manifestation of privilege taking should arouse the most profound indignation among the masses. This is but logical."

Also discussed by Fidel in that speech was the broader question of democratizing the government apparatus.

We have scores of problems at every level. . . . We must create the institutions which give the masses decision making power over many of these

problems. We must find efficient and intelligent ways to lead them deliberately forward to this development so that it will not simply be a matter of the people having confidence in their political organizations and leaders and their willingness to carry out tasks, but that the revolutionary process be at the same time — as Lenin wished — a great school of Government in which millions of people learn to solve the problems and carry out the responsibilities of government. . . .

This implies the development of a new society and of genuinely democratic principles — really democratic — replacing the administrative work habits of the first years of the Revolution. We must begin to substitute democratic methods for the administrative methods that run the risk of becoming bureaucratic methods.

Although big strides have been made in creating democratic institutions in Cuba and in the battle against bureaucratism, this is an ongoing process. In an October 28, 1979, speech, Raúl Castro discussed the pressures on Cuba from imperialism and the problems of the Cuban economy, including low productivity among workers. Raúl pointed out:

But the main ones to blame for all these weaknesses and the lack of work discipline are not the workers but the managers and functionaries of enterprises who, we know, fiddle with the statistics, reporting land ready or planted when it's not, production that hasn't been done, using and abusing the prerogatives that go with their post and the resources of their enterprise to solve the problems of their own and of their friends. They have no standing when it comes to being demanding of others. . . .

The authority administrators have comes from a job done well, a life given over to work, a work style that is far removed from fraudulent buddyism and warping tolerance, and from living a modest life in keeping with their means. . . .

It's a question of not abusing those prerogatives that go with the job and the position, not using them

as if they owned what the people have created and paid for with their sweat and toil. What is under their control and administration is to be used for work and the social good, not for their own or their family's comfort.

Fidel also commented on the continuing battle against bureaucratism in Cuba in his report to the Second Congress of the Cuban Communist Party in December 1980, when he noted:

There were increasing signs that the spirit of austerity was flagging, that a softening-up process was going on in which some people tended to let things slide, pursue privileges, make accommodations and take other attitudes, while work discipline dropped. . . .

Was our Revolution beginning to degenerate on our imperialist enemy's doorstep? Was that an inexorable law for any revolution in power? Under no circumstances could such a thing be permitted.

Just two months before, in September 1980, with the July-August strikes in Poland and the formation of Solidarity fresh in everyone's mind, Fidel spoke on the twentieth anniversary of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs). These, he said, "represent an extraordinary political experience, . . . something that no Marxist-Leninist Party can ever ignore, and that is, the closest ties possible with the masses!"

Speaking of the CDRs and the other mass organizations in Cuba, Fidel declared, "I dare say that they are unique in the world."

Bureaucrats oppose internationalism

The Cubans are also well aware of the relationship between privilege-seeking bureaucrats and opposition to revolutionary internationalism. Those who are interested primarily in securing a better apartment or a new car are not enthusiastic about going to fight imperialism in Angola. As Raúl Castro put it, they are the ones "who vacillate and are faint of heart."

This sentiment takes on political form through a policy aimed at reaching a live-and-let-live accommodation with imperialism at the expense of the world revolution. Fidel had something to say about this question at the time of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Fidel supported that invasion on the same grounds that *Granma* supports the crackdown in Poland today. He argued that the country was heading toward the restoration of capitalism. But he also asked, if this were the case, how had such a state of affairs come to pass? Among the points he cited were:

Bureaucratic methods in the leadership of the country, lack of contact with the masses — a decisive question for every true revolutionary movement — neglect of communist ideals. And what do we mean by neglect of communist ideals? We mean forgetting that men in a class society, the exploited in a class society, the enslaved, struggle for a whole series of ideals, and when they speak of socialism and communism they are not only speaking of a society where exploitation does actually disappear and the poverty resulting from that exploitation disappears, but they are speaking also of all those beautiful aspirations that constitute the communist ideal of a classless society, a society free from selfishness, a society

in which man is no longer a miserable slave to money, in which society no longer works for personal gain. . . .

The communist ideal cannot, for a single moment, exist without internationalism. Those who struggle for communism in any country in the world can never forget the rest of the world. . . . They can never forget, for a single moment, the needs of that [underdeveloped] part of the world, and we believe that it is impossible to instill into the masses a truly international outlook, a truly communist outlook, if they are allowed to forget the realities of the world. . . .

And Fidel bluntly said, "we have seen to what extent these ideas and international sentiments, that state of alertness and awareness of the world's problems, have disappeared or are very weakly expressed in certain socialist countries in Europe."

He cited the Tass statement on the invasion of Czechoslovakia in which the Warsaw Pact governments declare "their unbreakable solidarity against any outside threat. They will never permit anyone to tear away even one link of the community of socialist states."

Fidel commented:

And we ask ourselves: "Does that declaration include Vietnam? Does that statement include Korea? Does that statement include Cuba? Do they or do they not consider Vietnam, Korea and Cuba links of the socialist camp to be safeguarded against the imperialists?"

In accordance with that declaration, Warsaw Pact divisions were sent into Czechoslovakia. And we ask ourselves: "Will Warsaw Pact divisions also be sent to Vietnam if the Yankee imperialists step up their aggression against that country and the people of Vietnam request that aid?!"

'Essence of bureaucratism'

In an interview with Chilean journalist Marta Harnecker in December 1980, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez elaborated on Cuba's approach to the problem of combating bureaucratism. Rafael Rodríguez, a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party, explained that the term "bureaucratism" has many meanings and is used to describe different things.

There is the bureaucratic attitude of the leader who is separated from the productive processes and believes that his office is the center of the universe he gets to administer. The lack of contact with reality, with the factory, with the agricultural unit, can therefore lead, and does generally lead, to mistaken bureaucratic decisions.

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

But in the final analysis the essence of bureaucratism is substituting for the role of the masses in the decision-making process, on whatever level those decisions are made, implanting an administrative or political apparatus over the workers and not taking either the workers or their organizations into account. . . .

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

lems before the masses.

You have listened to Fidel, and have listened to his constant criticism of bureaucracy, his concern that the leaders at all levels are linked to the productive process in each one of its stages. This is the policy of our party. These are its constant objectives. I think that the way that we have organized the relationship between the working class and the leaders, the role that we assign to the workers' unions and mass organizations, and our efforts to make sure that the party continually listens to the workers and knows how to assimilate their judgments with sensitivity — all this constitutes ongoing prevention against the never completely overcome tendency toward bureaucratic positions.

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

What the events in Poland show once again is that there has been a historical break in revolutionary continuity, a basic departure from what Lenin and the Bolshevik Party stood for. The approach of the Polish bureaucracy toward the workers of Poland is the exact opposite of the policy Lenin advocated and fought for in the Soviet Union.

Lenin understood that the security and defense of the workers state and its advance in the direction of socialism could only be accomplished by the workers themselves. The working class is the only revolutionary class in modern society. If given the chance to organize and participate in political activity, it will be the motor force to move all of society forward.

The rise of Solidarity in Poland is not a detour from the historic advance of the socialist revolution that we are seeing today with the victories in Nicaragua and Grenada. It is part of the same process of working class radicalization that led to these revolutions, to the Iranian revolution, and to the new awakening of the workers movement in the imperialist countries.

Solidarity has inspired working people throughout the world by its vision of a socialist society free of the diseases of privilege, inequality, and repression. Its example gives the lie to capitalist propaganda equating communism with totalitarianism. Its struggle deserves the support of all who consider themselves socialists and communists.

February 9, 1982

Socialist group legalized in Senegal

At a February 5 press conference in Dakar, leaders of the Socialist Workers Organization (OST) of Senegal announced that the group had been granted legal status in that West African country the previous day.

The OST, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, will publish a monthly newspaper called *Combat Ouvrier* (Workers Struggle).

SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

[The following selections are devoted to responses to the December 13 declaration of martial law in Poland. For further opinions, see the January 18 and 25 issues of *Intercontinental Press*.]

BARRICADA

'Barricade,' daily newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Published in Managua, Nicaragua.

Columnist Leonel Urbano discussed the situation in Poland in the January 19 issue. Entitled, "Poland, from liberation to crisis," it began with Poland's liberation from Nazi occupation at the end of World War II.

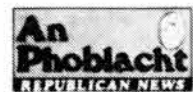
"From the underdeveloped country it was," Urbano continued, "it quadrupled its industrial capacity within a decade, but the process of agrarian transformation was held back — almost to the point of a reversion to farming on tiny plots.

"Full employment and the improvement of services raised the masses' standard of living, but the nearly exclusive economic orientation toward basic industrial production — and not toward consumer goods — and the maintenance of capitalist relations in the countryside created a contradiction between social production and popular needs. . . . This was aggravated by political leaderships that — while strongly criticized — fell into serious deviations that are today coming to light, such as abuses, corruption, and bureaucratism.

"In order to supply consumer goods, the country was artificially indebted and the changes in political leadership did not suffice to reestablish the indispensable link with the masses — who, on the contrary, moved further away from the leaders.

"Incoherence, the failure to satisfy political and economic needs, and the virtual absence of any revolutionary ideological guidance made it possible for the new proletariat, which socialist industry had created, to lose confidence in the ideas that are the basis of that system. A fertile field for reactionary ideology, which also fed off a material basis, such as the persistence of the old relations of production and the policies of imperialism.

"Ignoring internal and external warning signs, Poland hurled itself into the current crisis, the resolution of which will be long, difficult, and full of dangers."



Weekly newspaper reflecting the views of Sinn Féin and the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Published in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The December 31 issue printed a brief state-

ment on Poland by Sinn Féin:

"As far back as August of last year, Sinn Féin expressed solidarity with the independent self-governing trade union movement whose founding principles were in keeping with our own Eire Nua [New Ireland] policy of worker ownership/participation and self-management.

"We appreciated a message of sympathy from Lech Walesa on behalf of Solidarity at the time of Bobby Sands' death. Now with Poland in the grip of military rule our sympathy goes out to the entire Polish people.

"Sinn Féin stands with the popular democratic socialism of Solidarity. In Verona on December 14th and in Turin on December 19th our President, Ruairi O Bradaigh and Director of Foreign Affairs, Richard Behal, marched with Italian socialist and communist parties in support of the people of Poland.

"We deplore any attempt by Western imperialism to exploit the agony and suffering of the Polish people. This historic nation has been a buffer zone between East and West for too long and an acknowledgement of Poland's right to freedom and independence is vital for the advancement of socialism and the welfare of the Polish people."

FREE WEST INDIAN

THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF FREE GRENADA

The national newspaper of free Grenada. Published weekly in St. George's.

In its first public commentary on Poland since the December 13 imposition of martial law, the January 16 *Free West Indian* ran a major article entitled, "Poland — Hope for the Future."

"After months of strikes, chaos and economic stagnation fanned by imperialism," the article began, "stability has been restored in socialist Poland.

"It came with the declaration on December 13 by Polish Premier Wojciech Jaruzelski of a state of martial law, and of the country's rule by a Military Council of National Salvation. . . .

"This calm [following martial law] infuriated the United States and some of their allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), who were promoting the anarchy in an attempt to overthrow the PUWP [Polish United Workers Party] government and take Poland back to capitalism. . . .

"The problems Poland faced in the past few months were the result not of its socialist system, but of the mistakes and failures of the earlier Edward Gierek government, some of whose members were openly corrupt, others merely inept. . . .

"Gierek badly mismanaged Poland's economy with poor planning. He promised major gains in the standard of living, but tried to

move too far ahead too soon, in building up modern industry at the expense of agriculture.

"To finance his industrial modernisation plans, Gierek took extensive loans at high interest from Western capitalist banks. . . .

"Agriculture was not developed on a scientific scale. Collectivisation and mechanisation was neglected, and small-scale unproductive farms predominated. . . .

"Pressure from the Western banks forced the government to raise meat prices, which, in turn, triggered the July 1980 strikes for a bigger workers' voice in economic planning.

"It was here that Solidarity leaders, such as Lech Walesa, moved in to exploit the workers' legitimate grievances, for political gain, egged on by the imperialists who saw an opportunity to halt the advance of socialism in Poland.

"The same US administration of Ronald Reagan, which fired 13,000 air traffic controllers for striking and outlawed their union, and cut down welfare benefits for the poor unemployed, was voicing concern for Polish workers.

"The PUWP acknowledged its past errors. Gierek was replaced by Stanislaw Kania and economic reforms agreed upon.

"Still, Solidarity leaders and their imperialist backers were not satisfied. They wanted confrontation, state power. . . .

"Poland is now once again on the way to rebuilding its shattered economy, and last week, got help of \$2,000 million from the Soviet people."

EM TEMPO

"On Time," a socialist fortnightly published in São Paulo, Brazil.

The January 28 issue of *Em Tempo* carried an interview with Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula"), president of the Workers Party (PT) of Brazil. The following exchange on the question of Poland was included in the interview:

Question. Lula, you followed the struggle of the Polish workers for their demands with great interest. Did you expect such a reaction in a socialist country?

Answer. I did not really expect the Polish military to go to such an extreme. The workers bore less responsibility for what was happening than did the corruption, the bureaucratism, the elitism of the regime itself. That is what caused the situation to reach such an extreme. It is really inadmissible that in a socialist country, the same approach could be taken as in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, or in so many other countries of Latin America.

Question. The repression in Poland caused some despair with regard to the perspectives for building socialism. . . .

Answer. Well, in the first place it is necessary to be clear that what is at stake in Poland is not the socialist system. What is in question is the bureaucratism of those who hold power. Socialism is viable to the extent that the people themselves are the aim of socialism. So, the workers at no time called socialism into question. They simply questioned the way a government was behaving — its bureaucratic methods, its failure to put an end to corruption, its placing the official unions at the service of an elite. That is what was questioned in Poland — not the socialist system.

I think socialism is the solution for society throughout the world. What runs counter to that for many people is that what happened in Poland never should have happened. But the workers never called the socialist system into question, only the Polish government, which did not know how to govern effectively in a socialist manner.

Question. So was it the Soviet type of socialism that was called into question?

Answer. Bureaucratic socialism is not going to work anywhere in the world, because a socialist society only makes sense with the participation of the people — with the people, in effect, being the aim of socialism. The Solidarity trade union was fighting with the aim of perfecting that socialism. And what would it mean to perfect such a system? It would mean the workers having a say over what they produce. It would mean the workers having freedom of organization, of expression, of assembly.

Now, one cannot condemn a system because of the practice of one government. I think that at no time did the Polish government know how to conduct itself within a socialist system.

Question. One cannot leave aside in this entire episode the pressures exercised by the Soviet Union. How do you see those pressures and the people's capacity for resistance?

Answer. I am not familiar with the situation inside Poland. But there does exist a great deal of private property in Poland, especially in the countryside. And those people, in fact, did not have the least interest in producing for the state. It was in their interests that there be a food shortage, that people lack the conditions for survival. And if in a socialist system you leave the adversaries of the system free to refuse to produce, it is quite difficult to carry forward a program of government.

People view the events in Poland with much sadness. Solidarity created a mood of struggle among all the workers of the world.

Nor should any conservative or right-wing sector feel smug about this having happened to strikers in a socialist country. It is necessary to look at things clearly and understand that in capitalist countries such things take place much more openly. It is enough to look at what is happening in El Salvador, or in Guatemala; at what happened in Brazil in 1964, in Chile in 1973, in Argentina, in Uruguay, in Paraguay,

and so on. Because in the capitalist world far more aggressive actions have been taken against the people.

I think Walesa put too much faith in the good will of the Polish regime. I think they are paying too high a price for believing that things would be solved purely and simply through negotiations. We workers are learning from Poland that it is necessary to be far more organized and far more ready to struggle. It's no good to have illusions.



DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Press service of the Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). Published in New York.

A January 7 press release includes the text of a long editorial on Poland published in the previous day's edition of the Pyongyang newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*.

"The proclamation of a martial law and the military control in Poland are an abnormal thing hardly conceivable in a socialist country," it said.

"It is regrettable for us that things have come to such a pass in fraternal Poland. . . ."

"As a matter of fact, the creation of a crisis and proclamation of a martial law in Poland are a product of the former revisionist policy. . . ."

"As a result of the weakening of the party's leadership role, its leadership system was not established over the state and society, the party was isolated from the masses, the party's prestige and militancy were weakened and the party lost the trust and confidence of the popular masses. . . ."

"If the people's government is to discharge its mission satisfactorily, it should not only resolutely defend the socialist system which ensures freedom and happiness to the working masses but also smash the manoeuvres of the enemy who harbours enmity against this system and opposes it, and carry out economic policy which accords with socialist principles and carry on the revolution and construction in reliance upon the political enthusiasm and creative ingenuity of the popular masses. . . ."

"In Poland the counter-revolutionary elements of 'Kos Kor,' 'Confederation of Independent Poland' and 'Solidarity' free trade union openly opposed socialism, raising their heads and strutting around various circles. [They] held strikes and demonstrations and [fostered] discontent with the government's policy.

"It cannot but be considered that this is a result of the weakening of the function and role of the people's government. Socialism and communism can be successfully built only by a high degree of conscious enthusiasm of the popular masses. . . ."

"In Poland socialist democracy has not been fostered to suit the intrinsic demand of the so-

cialist system and reactionary bourgeois democracy has been allowed to infiltrate, so that dissoluteness and social disorder have been created and even the foundation of the state policy of the working class has been shaken. . . ."

"The commotion unbecoming to the socialist system and the proclamation of the martial law in Poland are surely a shameful thing which has smeared the image of socialism. Truth to tell, this is a disgrace to socialism.

"It is, of course, an unhappy thing to proclaim a martial law in a socialist country. But how could the Polish authorities sit calmly when the reactionaries attempted to overthrow the people's power and obliterate the gains of socialism in Poland?"

"We consider that the proclamation of the martial law in Poland was an inevitable step and a justifiable measure to suppress the reactionaries by revolutionary means and safeguard the power of the working people at a critical moment when socialist Poland was standing at the crossroads of survival. . . ."

کارگر

"Worker," published weekly in Tehran. Reflects the views of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), one of three Iranian organizations affiliated to the Fourth International.

The January 18 issue of *Kargar* carries a polemic against the views expressed on Poland by the weekly *Ittihad-e Mardom* (People's Unity), which is published by the Tudeh Party, Iran's pro-Moscow Communist Party.

Kargar notes that "when the bureaucrats who rule in Warsaw and Moscow announced a military government to suppress the broad working class movement for the establishment of workers democracy in Poland and began to arrest and kill workers, *Ittihad-e Mardom* hailed the action as one that was "in the interests of the people."

But *Kargar* points out that the crackdown has been to the advantage of the imperialists, who "are trying to undercut mass protests in West Europe against U.S. nuclear missiles . . . and seeking to confront the broad international solidarity with the revolutions in Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador. . . ."

"By establishing a military government in Poland," *Kargar* says, "haven't Warsaw and Moscow given the imperialist counterrevolutionaries an opportunity" for such anticommunist propaganda?

"The revolutionary policies of the Castro leadership" in Cuba, *Kargar* concludes, "show in a positive way how best to defend the gains of a socialist revolution. The antiworker policies of the Stalinists ruling in Warsaw and Moscow provide a negative example. Their policies weaken the defense of those gains against imperialism."

Protests against Polish crackdown

Unions hold demonstrations in Italy, Belgium, Scandinavia

By Jacqueline Allio

[The following article appeared in the January 11 issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris. It also appeared in a special preliminary issue of *International Viewpoint*, an English-language fortnightly review published in Paris, under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The translation is based on the one in *International Viewpoint*.]

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The rapid reaction to the news of the December 13 coup d'état in Poland showed the tremendous feeling that existed inside the working class of the Western countries for the struggle of the Polish workers. All those people who, for sixteen months, had seen in Solidarity a hope and example for the proletariat the world over, took to the streets to express their indignation and show their support for the emerging resistance movement.

After the spontaneous demonstration that brought out thousands of workers immediately on Sunday, December 13, in most of the big European towns, as well as on other continents, the mobilization continued in an intensive way during the whole of the following week.

There were more than 50,000 at the Paris demonstration called by the big trade-union confederations, with the exception of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). Twenty thousand in Rome in response to a call from all the trade-union leaderships; 10,000 in Stockholm on December 17, where the Stockholm regional leadership of the National Federation of Trade Unions (LD) jointly organized the demonstration with the Polish solidarity committee; 2,500 in Vienna and 2,000 in Copenhagen on December 14; and 1,000 in Lisbon the day after, completes the list of the main actions.

The breadth of mobilizations was generally in direct proportion to the extent of decisive support given by the leaderships of the workers movement to these initiatives. With the exception of the United States and Britain, where the mass character of the demonstrations (15,000) was due to a high participation from the Polish communities and where an anticommunist tone was undeniably struck, it is important to point out the class character and above all the working-class composition of these mobilizations.

The Communist parties and the putsch

The brutal repression meted out by the military dictatorship and the intolerable violation of democratic rights represented by the outlaw-

ing of Solidarity inevitably drew a gut response from most workers and has caused unprecedented divisions inside the workers movement.

This was the case not only in France (see box), where the Polish events are at the origin of deep divergences inside the CGT and French CP. Also in Portugal where, despite the violent declarations of the CP fully supporting Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, several national trade-union leaderships within the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP), the confederation closely linked to the CP, have declared their support for Solidarity and passed resolutions in total contradiction to the confederation's positions. Under the pressure of this movement the CGTP leadership had furthermore to modify its attitude, shifting from statements that justified the coup to a more nuanced position affirming its attachment to trade-union liberties.

Also in Italy, after the very mild declarations of the CP leadership, "very alarmed by the measures taken by the Polish government" but denouncing at the same time the positions of the extremists in each camp and preaching the need for national unity, Luciano Lama, Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL) leader and Political Bureau member of the CP, gave a speech at the central demonstration in Rome that showed that there was far from unity in the highest bodies of the party on the attitude to adopt. These were his final words in front of 20,000 workers gathered at the square:

"I want to address the last part of my speech to my CP comrades, those comrades who did not have the courage to unequivocally and unreservedly condemn the coup d'état in Poland — which is clearly equivalent to an external invasion. One cannot put an equals sign between the possible errors made by Solidarity and a coup d'état. . . . What type of socialism can defend a regime that outlaws 9 million workers? We do not want a regime of this sort."

The editorial in *l'Unita*, daily newspaper of the CP, on December 14 stated for its part that this coup d'état represented the unmitigated failure of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) leadership, demonstrating its incapacity of correctly carrying out its policy of "renewal." It added in a sentence that is too subtle by half:

"If the ruling group of the East European countries do not understand the workers' aspirations for democracy, renewal processes and emancipation — especially in these highly developed countries — they will inevitably end up coming into conflict with the very reali-

ty of socialism as it actually exists."

In one fell swoop Enrico Berlinguer adopted a tougher tone toward the PUWP during his appearance on television, the evening of the demonstration, stating that there was no longer any hope for socialism coming from the East and that it was necessary to look elsewhere for other truly democratic forms.

The Polish revolution opened a new chapter in the history of the crisis of the Western Communist parties. The fissures and ruptures appearing inside the highest levels of these parties and the trade unions they control express the refusal of an ever-greater number of rank-and-file militants to follow these leaderships' betrayal of the interests of the proletariat.

Social democrats and Poland

As for the social-democratic leaderships, if they came out of the affair better due to the demagoguery flaunted by most of them, they do not escape the criticisms of their rank and file, who become impatient when they see the thunderous declarations of the first days followed by slight effect in practice.

In West Germany, for instance, the leadership of the powerful German Trade Union Federation (DGB), the confederation under SP hegemony, declared its sympathy for the independent trade union Solidarity right from December 14 (while nevertheless pointing out that the resolution of the crisis was the business of the Polish people). However, it took the activity of the committees in "solidarity with Solidarity," which mobilized the first demonstrations, and calls on the confederations to organize actions and support those already planned by national (such as IG Metall) or regional leaderships (as in Frankfurt), for Vetter, the president of the trade-union confederation, to issue a declaration — which did not commit itself to very much and was only fifteen days behind events — announcing the establishment of a "committee to support the Polish people."

The passivity of the trade-union leadership in countries where the workers movement is dominated by social democracy explains why the latter is seen as a minority in the present campaigns. This is the case in West Germany, where the activity of the churches, right-wing organizations, and the anticommunist Polish émigrés occupies an increasing place in mass media coverage.

In the same way in Britain, the absence of the Labour Party and trade unions from the demonstration organized just after the coup (they contented themselves with sending a spokesperson) left the field open for the right wing. Consequently, with the exception of the

far-left contingents, the socialist current appeared very much as a minority in the mobilization.

As for the Belgian bureaucrats of the General Federation of Belgian Workers (FGTB), they salved their conscience by calling a one-hour strike throughout the country on December 18. But the timing — at 4:00 p.m. and just before the weekend — as well as the cynicism of the leadership who did nothing to mobilize for it, explains why the regional demonstrations that were to be the climax of the one-hour stoppage did not draw more than 5,000 people throughout the country. Hardly more than the first actions called at the initiative of the May 1 committees on December 13.

Example of Århus Dockers

Consequently, it is not at all surprising that the number of *concrete* initiatives taken up to now inside the working class to support the Polish workers' resistance has been so limited.

For the moment, the example of the Århus dockers in Denmark is an exception. The latter in fact went on strike for four days to protest against the arrival in their port of a Polish boat that was loaded in Poland by workers who had a rifle stuck in their backs. The Århus dockers specifically demanded that the national leadership of their trade unions take the lead in this mobilization.

Their action has had some effect to the extent that the Danish workers movement is tending to impose itself more clearly in a campaign that at the beginning was above all characterized by the initiative of the humanitarian organizations. Today the trade-union leaderships are not just protesting against the coup d'état but criticize these same humanitarian associations, which organize food convoys for Poland without troubling to find out if they will be really distributed to the working population.

The first task: information

However, the passivity of the trade-union leaderships is not the only obstacle to overcome in order for a mass mobilization to be developed in the Western countries. One of the essential tasks of those who are at the head of the Solidarity movement with the Polish workers must be to inform the working class in their countries of the real nature of the Solidarity trade union and the struggle it has led since August 1980.

For the "misinformation" systematically carried out by the press of the Communist parties throughout this period has left some traces in the minds of working people. There is evidence of this in Italy in particular where the modest size of the regional demonstrations — even though organized in a unitary way by the trade unions — is related to the mistrust a lot of Italian workers have of a trade union they consider manipulated by the Catholic church and to the doubts they have that it struggles for class objectives.

One of the elements that explains the almost total absence of reaction not only from the leadership of the Workers Commissions

(CCOO) in Spain but from the rank and file of the trade unions also arises from a gut anticlerical reaction that must be answered by counter-information on the real nature and objectives of Solidarity.

For unity of action

In a more general way, mobilizations in support of the Polish workers resistance makes the battle for unity in action of the various forces of the workers movement a priority — whether actions organized for food aid and financial support for Solidarity or commissions of inquiry and sponsorship schemes aiming to establish direct links with the Polish workers of such and such a town, sector, or workplace. The very example of Solidarity — a unitary trade union organizing 10 million workers — is a powerful lever in the struggle against the division and dispersal of forces and for answering the demands for aid made to the Western workers movement by Solidarity representatives outside Poland.

Role of solidarity committees

In this sense the committees in "solidarity with Solidarity" — whatever their names — have an essential role to play: Not in substituting for trade-union forces — who alone can build mobilizations of a real mass character — but as structures whose initiatives are capable of weakening the reticence of the leaderships of the workers movement and encouraging them to commit themselves to action. They can give a concrete example of what can be done *today* to support the resistance movement in Poland.

These committees have furthermore gone through a spectacular development since the December 13 coup d'état. In France, where there were less than a dozen before that date, there now exist committees in most important towns — fifty have been counted just in the Paris region — neighborhood, workplace, university, and school-based committees.

Also in Belgium, such committees have been set up in the main towns and they envisage holding a central meeting in the third month of January. It is the same in West Germany, where the national coordination of committees, which had been set up just before the coup d'état, will organize a week of action with Solidarity in mid-January and is at the moment leading an offensive in the trade unions to get them to organize a sponsorship campaign that would aim to collect maximum information on the situation of imprisoned or interned workers and to force the ruling military to free them.

Today in Sweden fifteen committees exist in various towns and the Stockholm one has had to subdivide into eight more local ones in order to cope with the number of people wanting to get involved. In Portugal the committees have chosen January 29 and 30 as the first culminating point of their campaign. Finally, in Spain, where the campaign is only getting under way, the evident importance of the initiatives taken by such committees can be seen with the first

significant meeting (400 people) that was held in Barcelona on December 23 organized by the Solidarity with Solidarity Committee, intellectuals, and some far-left organizations.

Through the propaganda and information work they carry out — most of them put out regular bulletins — these committees can be a useful tool for trade-union militants who seek to generate debate in their organizations and who need to be able to work around concrete proposals for action in order to fight for the establishment of inter-trade-union committees for Poland in their workplaces.

Even if the international coordinating meeting of the committees that was held on December 20 in Paris was not very representative, at least the three mobilizing focuses agreed by all people at the meeting can be taken up in all countries. This coordinating meeting was in favor of the following:

- an increase in food and medical aid to the Polish people, to be distributed by Solidarity and by the only legal organization independent of the regime, the church, or any other organization acceptable to the coordinating committee of Solidarity representatives in Europe;
- financial aid to the Polish workers' resistance, which will be managed by Solidarity representatives outside Poland until the right to the existence and activity of Solidarity is restored in Poland;
- immediate freedom for all political prisoners and information on the fate of all elected officers of Solidarity.

The coordinating meeting of European committees therefore proposed: "to maintain already existing links with Polish workers. One of the most effective means of doing this is the "twinning," or sponsorship, of the membership structures of the respective countries (trade unions, committees, workplace branches, etc.) with corresponding structures currently being repressed in Poland."

The essential thing for the campaign is to defend Solidarity's right to exist and organize against the brutal repression of the ruling military, to aim to create the maximum number of links with the Polish workers. The immediate task of the solidarity movement is certainly to denounce and isolate the military dictatorship, but it is above all to break the wall of silence that the latter is trying to impose on the resistance movement inside the country.

Against any economic boycott

It follows that we should oppose the proposals for an economic boycott by a part of the left in the West. Such a measure, far from helping to break the present "cordon" imposed by the Polish military council, would only cut off the Polish workers from their class brothers and sisters in the West a little more. Above all its negative effects could only fall on the backs of the Polish workers themselves at a time when the military junta wants to impose obligatory work, a six-day workweek, and a twelve-hour day. It would only aid the regime in carrying out the austerity plan it has been trying to introduce without success for months.

In addition, it provides grist for the mill of the imperialist governments, such as that of U.S. President Ronald Reagan, which proposes an economic embargo and intends to use the pretext of Soviet intervention to justify its aid to the Central American dictatorships today, its direct intervention in Central America tomorrow, and more generally a deepening of its remilitarization drive.

These imperialist governments do not give a fig about what happens to workers — whether Polish workers or those from their own country. What they are interested in is blackening the idea of socialism in the eyes of the workers in an attempt to prevent the mobilization of the working class in their own countries.

Whatever may be the tactical differences they might have on the question of economic sanctions (the refusal of Helmut Schmidt to follow Ronald Reagan along the boycott path obviously is due to the enormous interests this would put at risk in their East-West trade, particularly West Germany's commerce with Poland), they are nevertheless all agreed on one point: to declare that the responsibility of the coup d'état also falls on Solidarity, or at least its radical wing. An editorial in the London *Economist* on December 19 expresses very well the tone of the bourgeois press in general:

"Before Sunday, the radicals in Solidarity, confident that they had the nation at their back, had used the union's industrial muscle — the right to strike — to chip away mercilessly at the party's authority. By doing so they had gradually pushed their leader, Mr. Lech Walesa, into a position that he would have preferred to avoid. Their latest demands — for free elections and a national referendum on whether the Communist party was fit to govern Poland — threatened the party with political extinction. That went too far: Poland's geography requires a modicum of respect for the party, because the Russians insist on it."

In other words, it was indeed necessary to restore order. Behind the protests of bourgeois governments against the attacks on democratic rights and the crocodile tears they shed on the fate of the Polish workers, what clearly comes through is their common appreciation that "one must not go too far." It is a judgment that flows from a common policy, that of trying to impose austerity programs on their respective working classes by doing everything to limit the direct and indirect incomes of working people, as well as by unleashing systematic attacks against trade-union rights (outlawing strike pickets, etc.) and putting into question all the gains won by the working class over the last ten years.

Confronted with this, only the active support of the workers movement is equal to the needs of the Polish workers in struggle, and not some sort of boycott measures taken by imperialist governments. The solidarity developed since August 1980 in response to the unfolding Polish revolution has led to links being forged between Polish workers and the Western proletariat.

The combination of the crisis of Stalinism

and the crisis of capitalism has brought with it the beginning of a consciousness of the unity of the workers movement in the East and West. The workers of Western countries have realized that they have everything to learn from a movement that struggles in unity for its independence and for a truly democratic socialist system. Polish workers who had seen capitalism in terms of well-stocked shops and now

had the opportunity, often for the first time, to go outside their country, have often reacted violently to the unemployment and inequality in wealth.

These first steps toward a recognition of the identity of objectives fought for by one and the other explains the breadth of the spontaneous mobilization on December 13 in response to a military operation aiming to crush a movement

The response in France

There is no doubt that the most massive solidarity campaign in Europe since the military coup d'état has developed in France. This certainly has to do with the favorable situation — the positions taken by the Mitterrand-Mauroy government, whose declarations, however formal they might be and outside of the clangors dropped by various ministers, is an encouragement to the mobilization of the working class. This is contrary to what has happened in West Germany, for example, where Chancellor Helmut Schmidt had decided once and for all that it is a Polish domestic question and that above all it is necessary not to get mixed up in it.

But the breadth of the mobilization is especially due to the development of the solidarity movement even before the coup d'état. The very large number of trade-union or workplace delegations that went to Poland since August 1980, in general at the initiative of the most militant activists in the trade unions, was a lever in building the fightback and displayed — often in a united front way — the support of French workers for the Polish workers.

The advanced positions adopted by the leadership of the CFDT and the unity achieved between the main trade-union federations (with the exception of the CGT) for several initiatives are also the result of pressure exerted by the spontaneous demonstrations that were organized more or less everywhere directly after the news of the coup on December 13.

Since then we have seen the emergence in the majority of towns of local committees or inter-trade-union collectives in solidarity with the Polish people. They have set up meetings and gatherings, organized sales of posters, and collected funds in order to aid the resistance movement inside and outside the country. Students have often been in the front line of the street demonstrations, not only in Paris, but also in medium-sized towns such as Meaux, Melun, etc.

Ad hoc committees have been set up in various sectors — such as the jurists drawing together members from all the left organizations (including the CP) as well as the representatives of the lawyers trade union (SAF) and the magistrates trade

union (SM), which has set itself the task of forming judicial commissions capable of coming to the aid of all those who are victims of trials in Poland.

One of the decisive aspects of this mobilization is the position adopted — in opposition to the leadership of the CGT — by several national federations of the CGT and by an impressive number of regional and local trade-union structures.

The national leaderships of the Finance Ministry, seamen, officers and captains of the merchant navy, theater, journalists, police and prison staff unions have taken a stand. These were the unions that have been marked by an opposition to the Georges Seguy (CGT leader) line in the past, in particular on the question of SP-CP unity during presidential elections.

But they were joined this time by other trade-union structures such as the regional federation of the iron and salt miners of the Lorraine, the metalworkers union in Angers, the national inter-trade-union committee of Elf France, the St. Nazaire dockers and the La Mede oil refinery workers, as well as the leaders of twenty factories in the Longwy steel area, whose attitude up to today has always been to slavishly follow the confederation line. It must be further pointed out that the big number of workplaces from the chemical and engineering sectors (various Renault, Shell, Thompson, Pechiney-Ugine-Kuhlman factories) represent a new phenomenon that is evidence of the depth of the crisis in the ranks of the CP and the CGT.

The participation of a big number of CGT contingents in the massive December 14 demonstration in Paris and in other towns, as well as the meeting scheduled for January 12 at the Bourse de Travail at Paris called by the trade union coordinating committee ("CGT members for Solidarity") expresses the refusal of innumerable members of this trade union to follow their leadership at a time when the latter, by its silence and lies, tries to deny the real dimension of the Polish workers' struggle, which for more than a year has shown they were fighting for a socialist, self-managed, and democratic system.

— Jacqueline Allio

that represented an immense hope for workers throughout the world.

It is on this basis and in the willingness to maintain and extend the links that had begun to be forged that we should build and extend the solidarity movement. The mass character of the mobilizations of the last week has produced enough pressure for the Socialist International — in spite of its deep divisions on the attitude to take to the Polish government, both

on the diplomatic and economic levels — to finally decide to make a declaration defending democratic rights and national independence, whether in Poland, Turkey, Afghanistan, or El Salvador. It further stated: “systematic violations of human rights and trade-union rights concern us all.”

The social democratic leaders should be taken up on this statement. We must demand that they do everything to force the Polish military dictatorship to lift the state of siege and to

liberate the political prisoners.

Break the silence, demand an account of what has happened to all the imprisoned and interned Polish workers, send in commissions for on-the-spot inquiries, and get the voice of our solidarity heard inside Poland itself. These are the tasks of the hour for the workers movement of the whole world and for all those who struggle for democratic rights.

January 2, 1982

DOCUMENTS

‘Solidarity with Polish Solidarity’

PRT’s statement in Mexico City daily

[The following is the text of a half-page advertisement placed in the December 17 issue of the Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno* by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International. The advertisement was headlined “Solidarity With Polish Solidarity!” The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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On December 11 [*sic*] the Stalinist bureaucracy committed a new crime against the Polish proletariat by carrying out a coup d’état that has brought the strongman [Gen. Wojciech] Jaruzelski to power, under the cover of a Council of National Salvation. In his hands, army commander Jaruzelski has concentrated the reins of government (as prime minister) and of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) (as its general secretary).

This crime by the bureaucracy against the Polish workers extends to and has repercussions on the international level. All the international proletariat’s democratic and revolutionary causes will be negatively affected.

All the peoples’ struggles — from El Salvador to Iran, including the struggles of the proletariat of the United States and Western Europe — have been dealt a blow by this action by the Polish bureaucracy, supported unconditionally by the Moscow government.

The principal beneficiaries are the U.S. imperialists and those who support them — all the governments and reactionary forces of the capitalist world. In Mexico, of course, workers and peasants who are beginning to stand up against the reactionary policies of the government and the official party cannot hope to gain anything from this action.

Since its beginning in August 1980 in a heroic strike by the Lenin shipyard workers in the port city of Gdansk, a powerful trade-union movement — Solidarity — has been built, independent of the ruling bureaucracy’s domination. Nearly 10 million workers enthusiastically joined in the socialist and democratic renewal of Poland, converting the powerful mass

current that stood behind Solidarity into a social and political movement that reached to the very roots of the Polish people.

With its liberating and democratizing dynamic, Solidarity represented an intractable challenge to the completely bureaucratic and undemocratic power of the government and the official party (PUWP). In fact, parallel to the bureaucratic power, there emerged around Solidarity a new proletarian power that rose up as the representative of the interests and objectives of Poland’s toiling masses.

After the workers in Solidarity wrested the right to organize independently from the bureaucracy, the Polish peasants immediately demanded their right to self-organization, and the powerful Rural Solidarity grew up. This strengthened the worker-peasant alliance, the basic pillar of socialist Poland.

The democratic and socialist renewal headed by Solidarity had to confront the attacks and slanders of the Polish bureaucracy and its allies throughout the world, especially the Soviet bureaucracy. But they never really proved their charges. Solidarity never called into question the foundations of the planned economy, nationalized property, and the other gains won as a result of the defeat of the bourgeoisie in Poland.

The Solidarity movement means a step forward toward democratization and eradication of bureaucratic privileges in Poland. It is not a step back toward the restoration of capitalism. The Polish workers are the standard-bearers of the most beloved cause in the eyes of the proletariat — proletarian equality and fraternity. Therefore it is shameful and disgraceful that supposed “socialists” and even “Marxist-Leninists” in Mexico and around the world should slander the Polish workers as “fascists” and “counterrevolutionaries.”

Faced with the challenge of the proletarian movement headed by Solidarity, the bureaucracy initially decided to try delaying tactics. [Stanislaw] Kania’s role, as the PUWP general secretary who replaced [Edward] Gierek, was to “conciliate” in order to slowly drain the

mass movement’s strength. But the bureaucracy was confronted by a proletarian leadership that was loyal to and closely linked to the ranks, the most conspicuous representative being Lech Walesa.

No matter how many proposals they made, the bureaucrats were unable to trick Solidarity, and last October they had to replace Kania because of his total failure. When Jaruzelski, who was functioning as prime minister, took all the powers of the government and the PUWP into his hands last September, it was clear that the bureaucracy was preparing to change tactics and confront Solidarity strongly and firmly.

In fact, what had occurred in the first year of the Polish workers rebellion was totally unfavorable to bureaucratic rule. Solidarity came out of its first congress stronger, nationally and internationally. For the first time, the independent Polish union addressed its class brothers in other countries of Eastern Europe, calling on them to follow its example in the struggle against the bureaucracy.

And on the national level, as a terrible economic crisis that affected the daily life of the masses unfolded (shortages of milk, meat, butter, soap, and even the national drink — tea), turning the entire country into a gigantic line in front of every shop and store, the proletariat began moving down the road of economic and social self-management. In mid-year, workers councils began to arise in the main industrial regions of Gdansk, Wroclaw, Poznan, Katowice, Lodz, and of course Warsaw.

Given the bureaucracy’s obvious inability to bring Poland out of the terrible socio-economic crisis, the Polish proletariat was preparing to take the reins of the national economy out of the bureaucracy’s hands. The workers council movement had the support of the independent union, and meeting jointly they worked out a plan to establish a “social council on the economy” to bring Poland out of the crisis through workers self-management. This council, Solidarity proposed, should be set up by the union and be independent of the government. The

factory workers councils would also have to be represented in it.

Its objectives and obligations were as follows: to be in charge of defining the economic line on a national level, with decisive input in working out the economic reform plan.

The council would have to control all levels of the government and all the organs of economic administration. It would have to have access to all the government's economic information. The ministers and economic organs would have to inform the council of their activities.

Finally, this council would take for itself the right to veto erroneous decisions by the government. The council would have to present its draft laws to the Sejm (the Polish parliament) in the same way that the government would have to present its own proposals.

The proletariat was attempting to achieve control, as ruling class, in the basic area of the economy. This development was the culmination of the proletariat's struggle to see the revolutionary process win control against the bureaucracy. This forced the bureaucracy, with the support of the Soviet bureaucracy, to act through Jaruzelski's military coup.

The imperialists, who were allowed by the same bureaucracy to have access to the Polish economy, also have something to say about Poland's economic situation. They do not find the country's chaotic situation reassuring.

Poland is the "socialist country" with the highest level of indebtedness to the international banks and financial institutions (the Polish public debt to Western banks is about \$25 billion). This has had its impact on the measures imposed by the bureaucracy. For months the bureaucracy has sent delegation after delegation to all the financial forums (including the International Monetary Fund) to seek "understanding."

This, interestingly, is another aspect that the probureaucracy propaganda, especially coming out of the Soviet Union, ignores: it was not the workers in Solidarity, but the bureaucracy itself that has been allowing imperialism to intervene in the Polish economy.

Although the restrictions contained in the state of emergency decreed by the Polish government are measures of an isolated and politically weakened bureaucratic caste, they are nonetheless a heavy blow against the Polish proletariat. Its leaders are imprisoned. Its strikes are broken by military intervention. Military commissars have taken charge of government affairs in four provinces, substituting for the civilian officials.

The military coup exacerbated social tensions and makes the government even more dependent on its Soviet protectors, who are closely following all the events from across the border. The Tass news agency has stated that the Soviet leaders are ready to intervene when their "Polish allies" ask them to.

Solidarity, through a message sent from the underground, has asked for world solidarity in these decisive hours of the Polish proletariat's struggle. In Western Europe, the workers

movement in France, West Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Holland, and other countries has shown that it is not abandoning its Polish class brothers. In the United States, the trade-union movement, which used the name Solidarity when it marched against Reagan last September, is prepared to come out in favor of Polish Solidarity.

The world proletariat must fulfill its internationalist duty at this crucial moment for one of the most advanced points of its struggle against bureaucratic oppression.

If the Polish proletariat is successful, the Soviet bureaucracy will not feel it has emerged strengthened and will be less ready to continue oppressing even more the proletariats of Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union itself. And if the Polish proletariat is triumphant, Yankee imperialism will not feel it can more openly and deeply intervene in its own "sphere of influence," Central America and the Caribbean.

That means that the very fate of the Salvadoran revolution, of Sandinista Nicaragua's revolution, and of the Cuban workers state is linked to the outcome of the Polish proletariat's struggle. A defeat for the Poles will weigh very heavily on the struggle of the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan revolutionaries. A victory of the proletariat in Poland, in turn, will make the struggle of the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean invincible.

The PRT stresses to the workers and peasants of Mexico that self-serving propaganda that tries to equate the Polish military coup

with the "failure of socialism" is totally false. The Polish ruling bureaucrats are socialism's worst enemies in Poland. Everything that is most honorable and revolutionary in Poland is on the side of the workers of Solidarity.

In Mexico, the democratic and revolutionary movement has a duty to fulfill for its class brothers in Poland: the independent unions, the class-struggle tendencies, the independent professors and teachers, the revolutionary students, and the political organizations of the left must all mount our most energetic protests against the Polish government. We must demand an end to the repression, the liberation of the jailed Solidarity leaders, the reestablishment of democratic freedoms, and free access by Solidarity to the communications media.

Down with the "state of war" in Poland!
Freedom for the leaders of Solidarity!
Access by Solidarity to the communications media!
Soviet hands off Poland!
No Soviet military intervention in Poland!
Mexican solidarity with Polish Solidarity!

Everyone to today's march at 4 p.m. in solidarity with Polish Solidarity!

From the Monument to the Revolution to the Juarez Semicircle.

Revolutionary Workers Party [PRT] (Mexican section of the Fourth International)

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Workers take to the streets

'Down with imperialist domination'

By Ernest Harsch

Tens of thousands of workers, farmers, and students marched through the streets of Accra, the capital of Ghana, on January 28 to condemn imperialist threats against that West African country.

Carrying placards that read "Down with imperialist domination," "We will resist U.S. and British hypocrisy," and "Ghana is for Ghanaians," they marched to the British High Commission and U.S. embassy. The demonstrators presented protest notes in response to recent reports that British troops, with U.S. backing, had arrived in nearby Nigeria in preparation for an attempt to overthrow the new government of Ghana, headed by Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings, which seized power on December 31.

After delivering the notes, the marchers continued on to Black Star Square for a mass rally. "It was an immensely excited and happy crowd," reported a correspondent in the February 8 issue of the London weekly *West Africa*.

The demonstration, one of many that have been held in Ghana since the overthrow of President Hilla Limann, was organized by seven organizations, including the June Fourth Movement, the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana, and the New Democratic Movement.

Several of the demonstrators got up to address the crowd. They condemned the harsh living conditions of ordinary working people.

'Let there be no stability'

The main speaker, however, was Rawlings. He lashed out at the corruption of Limann's People's National Party, and promised that an equitable distribution of the country's wealth would become "the law and order of the day."

According to the report in *West Africa*, Rawlings "stressed that power for qualitative change awaited the initiative of the working people of Ghana. Soldiers and policemen could not lead the revolution because they were very limited in numbers."

Rawlings declared, "Until every productive member in this country achieves, wins, his basic and fundamental rights to be able to live in the image of God as a dignified man, let there be no stability in this country. Until enough transportation, housing, toilets, water, medical care, employment is provided the masses of this country to ensure that the country realises its creative and potential power; until the intellectual and physical power of Ghanaians is harnessed to project Ghana on the map of Africa, let there be no peace."

Rawlings, who held power in Ghana for

several months in 1979, is extremely popular among working people for his earlier attempts to fight corruption. His second takeover has aroused high hopes that major economic and social changes will be carried out in the interests of the toilers.

As part of Rawlings's call for a "holy war" against corruption, many former government officials and traders have been arrested on charges of graft.

Troops have seized large amounts of goods that were hoarded by merchants. Traders who have refused to lower their prices or who have pulled their goods off the market have had their market stalls destroyed.

As a result of the government's stern measures, prices of food, drugs, transport fares, tuition, rent, and numerous consumer items have fallen. This is particularly important in a country that last year had an inflation rate of 140 percent.

Workers form committees

"Defense committees" and "workers committees" are springing up around the country. According to Chris Atim, a former student leader and now a member of the ruling Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), these committees are to take over distribution of essential commodities, draft local laws, draw up guidelines in the workplaces, and, according to a summary of his remarks in the February 1 *West Africa*, "have the final say in the distribution of the national wealth."

One of the PNDC's first acts was to order the reinstatement of about 5,000 workers who had been fired by the Ghana Industrial Holding Corporation for a demonstration they held in June 1980.

Inspired by the developments since December 31, workers are also beginning to rebel against the class-collaborationist leadership of the 400,000-member Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC).

At a mass workers' rally in Accra January 8 in support of the PNDC's "holy war," TUC Secretary General Alhaji Issifu was chased from the platform by demonstrators.

Representatives of trade unions in the Accra-Tema region have demanded the resignation of Issifu and the TUC's entire executive board. According to the February 8 *West Africa*, a statement by the unionists "said that they disagreed with the opinion that hard work was the solution to their problems. What they needed was a new kind of workers' movement which would really champion the cause of the workers."

Other sectors of Ghanaian society have also been moving into action. In response to an ap-

peal by Rawlings for student volunteers to carry out manual labor, the NUGS has organized task forces to clean up urban refuse and move cocoa from rural areas to the port cities. In some cases, many more have volunteered than were needed.

The Ghana Muslims Representative Council, the National Association of Consumers, the Ghana National Farmers Council, and numerous other organizations have declared their support for the PNDC's measures.

Among the government's backers, however, there have been some protests against the appointment as cabinet secretaries of four former leaders of now-banned parliamentary parties. One of the demands of the January 28 demonstration was "to protest the appointment of reactionaries to high positions."

At the rally, which was provided with sound vans from the Ministry of the Interior, Rawlings attacked both Limann's PNP and "all other parties," which he said had been opposed to "the actions of the masses."

Imperialist threats and pressures

Although the Nigerian government has denied that British troops were there in preparation for an attack on Ghana, the hostility of the Nigerian, British, and U.S. authorities to the new government in Ghana is very evident.

Both the U.S. and British governments have expressed their "concern" over developments in Ghana. The Nigerian regime has imposed an indirect oil embargo on Ghana by insisting on immediate payment for deliveries. The pro-imperialist regime in Liberia, which last year hosted U.S. military exercises in that country, broke diplomatic relations with Ghana, ostensibly in retaliation for the Ghanaian government's decision to resume diplomatic ties with Libya.

With a foreign debt of \$1.5 billion, Ghana is very much in need of economic assistance. But the January 25 *West Africa* reported that "diplomats" in Accra "said Western aid to Ghana would depend on the behaviour of the new government in the field of human rights and policy-making."

The imperialist news media has already begun a propaganda campaign against Rawlings and the PNDC. Attempting to imply a Libyan role in the overthrow of Limann, it has focused on Ghana's relations with Libya (which has sent three shipments of food and medicine to Ghana since December 31).

The propaganda has also attempted to portray the takeover as a "tribal plot" by the minority Ewe people (Rawlings's mother was an Ewe).

Rawlings responded to this propaganda campaign at the January 28 rally. He defended Libya against the imperialist smears, and pointed out that the conflict between the population and all the former parliamentary parties was not a question of "tribal warfare. . . . It is nothing [other] than a question of those who have more than they need against those who have nothing at all. . . ." □