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March on Washington Answers Phony Elections

'Stop the U.S. War in El Salvador'

**Zionist Terror in
Occupied Territories
Sparks Mass Protest
Inside Israel**



March 27 demonstration of 40,000 in Washington, D.C.

Lou Howort/Militant

Palestinians face Israeli terror

By Ernest Harsch

Confronted with the most widespread protests and strikes in the West Bank since it was occupied by Israel in 1967, the Zionist government has responded with bullets, clubs, and tear gas. By March 25, Israeli troops, police, and settlers had killed six Palestinians and wounded dozens of others.

The Israeli provocation that set off the upsurge in the West Bank came on March 18. On that day, about 100 Israeli troops raided the municipal offices of Al Bira, the fourth largest Arab town in the territory. The mayor, Ibrahim Tawil, was ousted from office and the town council was dissolved. An Israeli army colonel was installed as the new mayor.

The reason given for Tawil's ouster was the council's refusal to collaborate with the "civilian administration" headed by reserve Col. Menachem Milson, which was installed in late 1981. Tawil and most other prominent Palestinians have publicly condemned the administration as a cover for a "creeping annexation" of the West Bank.

The Palestinian response to the dismissal of the Al Bira council came quickly. The mayors of Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, Tulkarm, and Kalkilya called a three-day general strike — which was later extended — to protest against the dismissal and to express opposition to Milson's occupation administration.

The strike began on March 19. In most major towns in the West Bank, workers downed their tools and merchants closed their shops.

The next day, about 100 women staged a sit-in outside the Al Bira town hall. They were joined by youths and other residents. When some of the Palestinians responded to provocations from Israeli troops by throwing stones, the troops fired tear gas into the crowd and then opened fire. A seventeen-year-old youth was shot in the chest and died immediately. Several others were wounded.

Palestinians defy occupiers

Palestinian youths took to the streets throughout the occupied territory. "From Jenin, the West Bank's northernmost town, to Hebron in the south, angry crowds of Arab youths pelted Israeli Army patrols with rocks and threw gasoline-filled bottles as the Army rushed in reinforcements in an attempt to quell the disturbances," *Washington Post* correspondent William Claiborne reported from Jerusalem March 22.

David Shipler of the *New York Times* reported the same day that "Arab students confronted soldiers in cities and refugee camps, hurling stones, waving Palestinian flags, chanting slogans, blocking streets with burning tires and defying orders to disperse."

Barricades went up across main thoroughfares. Clashes between demonstrators and the

army and police erupted in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem, as merchants continued their strike in defiance of orders from military officials to open their shops.

The demonstrations spilled over into the occupied Gaza Strip as well. On March 24, a thirteen-year-old Palestinian student was shot and killed in the Gaza Strip village of Abasan when Israeli troops fired into a crowd of protesters.

Meanwhile, a five-week strike continued in the Golan Heights, which was formally annexed by Israel in December. The 13,000 Arab inhabitants of the Golan Heights, who are Sy-

Fifty thousand demonstrate in Tel Aviv against Israeli government's reign of terror. See story on p. 269.

rian citizens, have been protesting against the annexation and against attempts by the authorities to issue them Israeli identity cards.

Just two days before the Al Bira council was dismissed, a curfew was imposed on the Golan Heights town of Majdal Shams because of "repeated disruptions of public order," according to the Israeli military command.

Brutal crackdown

On March 21, Prime Minister Menachem Begin praised the "restraint" of the Israeli troops. That was after they had already killed one demonstrator, and were unleashing a reign of terror throughout the territory.

On March 20, Israeli troops and settlers from the township of Qiryat Arba broke into an Arab school in Hebron and beat students with clubs. Seven were injured.

Two days later in Nablus, troops burst into the King Talal secondary school, herded about fifty students into classrooms, and then exploded tear gas canisters while preventing the students from leaving.

Troops have also rounded up striking municipal workers and taken them forcibly to their jobs. The workers, however, simply sat behind their desks and did nothing. In Ramallah, shopkeepers were driven in police cars to their stores, and soldiers broke locks to force them to open.

On March 24, police shot to death a twenty-one-year-old Palestinian in the Jenin marketplace after he urged merchants to close their shops in protest.

Encouraged by the police and military crackdown, Israeli settlers in the West Bank have escalated their own terror campaign against the Palestinians as well.

One week after the dismissal of the Al Bira town council, the authorities also ousted the

mayors of Nablus and Ramallah, Bassam al-Shaka and Karim Khalaf. Both had been maimed in 1980 by car bombs placed by Zionist terrorists.

In a radio interview, Maj. Gen. Uri Orr claimed that the Palestinian protests had been incited by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Although the PLO enjoys massive support among the Palestinians in the occupied territories, Orr's argument was not very convincing, even to *Ha'aretz*, the most prestigious Israeli daily. It wrote that "the Government has decided to continue with Israeli rule in the territories as though they have already been annexed." It added, "In these circumstances it does not require P.L.O. directives in order to inflame the Arab population."

Settlers terrorize West Bank

The weeks leading up to the dissolution of the Al Bira council showed a clear pattern of Israeli provocations against the people of the West Bank.

In opposition to the elected Palestinian mayors, many of whom support the PLO, the authorities have set up the so-called League of Villages. Members of the league, who openly collaborate with Milson's occupation administration, have been given licenses to carry arms.

By setting up these puppet organizations and dissolving elected municipal governments, the Zionist authorities have acknowledged the failure of their attempts to give a more "democratic" image to the occupation of the West Bank. To their consternation, the municipal elections they allowed in 1976 were swept by supporters of the PLO.

Despite the enormous pressure of the Israeli authorities, many of these elected figures — backed by the Palestinian population as a whole — have remained defiant. This has become intolerable to the Israeli regime, and it is now moving to oust the most outspoken officials.

One step toward this goal was the March 11 outlawing of the Committee of National Guidance, a united front of Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories, to which a number of the mayors belonged.

Parallel to these official government moves, the Zionist settlers have also carried out frequent attacks against the Palestinian population.

On March 2, for example, a group of settlers broke into the area of the Al Aqsa mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem and stabbed an Arab youth, prompting a strike in East Jerusalem and protests throughout the West Bank.

Settlers have also kidnapped and beaten a number of Palestinian youths. One, eighteen-year-old Mohammed Abdullah Youssef Suhweil, was seized, beaten, and shot in the head. His body was found March 20 near the Zionist settlement of Shiloh.

All these provocations point toward one aim: further consolidating the Israeli grip on the West Bank by trying to terrorize and drive out the Palestinian population.

Like the Labor Party government before it, the Begin regime has been openly encouraging Jewish settlers to move into the West Bank. Despite an enormous budget deficit, the government has provided about \$200 million for the construction of settlements in the West Bank. There are now some eighty settlements there, involving 25,000 settlers. The authorities would like to increase this to 125,000 over the next five years.

The provocative placement of settlements near Arab towns and the frequent attacks against Palestinians are designed to spread fear and insecurity among the population.

One Palestinian in the village of Turmos Ayya commented to *New York Times* correspondent Shipler, "The settlements are not like they say, created for coexistence and peace, but rather to threaten the citizens."

A settler in nearby Shiloh, referring to an Arab-owned valley by his house, told Shipler, "The valley doesn't belong to us — yet."

Green light from Washington

The stepped-up Israeli attacks against the Palestinians of the West Bank is part of a broader campaign of aggression throughout the region, one that has brought the Middle East to the brink of a new war.

Last year's air assaults on Lebanon, the bombing of an Iraqi nuclear reactor site, and the formal annexation of the Golan Heights were all aimed at driving toward another war. In particular, the Israeli regime would like to strike a major blow against the PLO forces and the Palestinian population in Lebanon.

Citing Palestinian guerrilla attacks as a justification, Defense Minister Ariel Sharon again implicitly threatened an invasion of Lebanon in mid-March, warning that Israel "might be forced to take action."

But while the Israeli ruling class is driving toward war, it is also facing deepening economic and political problems within Israel itself.

Israel's severe economic crisis — which has brought sharp cuts in social services, an inflation rate of 130 percent, and growing unemployment — has led to new ferment among Jewish workers, and widespread questioning of and opposition to the government's policies.

At the same time, there has also been a rise in opposition among the Jewish population to the regime's policies in the occupied territories, and in particular to the danger of a new war.

These pressures were reflected to an extent in the March 23 debates in the Israeli Knesset (parliament). Begin's ruling Likud coalition narrowly averted falling when a no-confidence vote ended in a tie. One of the issues was the crackdown in the West Bank, with opposition Labor Party members accusing the government of actually aiding the PLO through its aggressive policies.

Although the Israeli regime's war moves and its crackdown on the Palestinian population have come under fire within Israel and throughout the region, they have nevertheless

been given a green light by Washington.

After several days of expressing mild "concern" over the situation in the West Bank, the Reagan administration on March 24 announced that it deplored "the loss of life." But it pointedly refused to lay the blame on the Israeli authorities. Instead, it urged "utmost restraint" on "all parties."

Just as the Reagan administration's refusal to condemn the repeated South African attacks on Angola has encouraged the apartheid regime to go even further, so the Begin government has been emboldened to strike out against the Arab world.

Commenting on the Israeli Knesset vote, Secretary of State Alexander Haig on March 23 summed up Washington's general stance

toward the Israeli regime: "We are following the situation closely; they are having a difficult time in Israel. We're not going to make it more difficult."

The same day, Deputy White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes, also referring to the Knesset vote, declared, "We are confident that the democratic process in Israel will work it out."

But to the Palestinian people, who daily face the clubs and bullets of the Israeli authorities, this "democratic process" is a joke.

As Mayor Hana al-Atrach of the West Bank village of Beit Sahur commented, "Israel claims to be the only oasis of democracy in the Middle East, so if this is democracy, then what is dictatorship?" □

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Death squads take a break

Washington hails 'democratic' election

By Will Reissner

The Reagan administration and the U.S. mass media are on a propaganda blitz to portray the March 28 elections in El Salvador as the rebirth of democracy in that country after fifty years of military dictatorship.

Television broadcasts and newspapers show long lines of voters supposedly defying guerrilla terrorism to cast their votes. Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte, the head of the present junta, talks of forming a new coalition to rule the country.

The Reagan administration hopes this hoopla over the elections will convince the American people that the Salvadoran regime deserves increased U.S. military and economic support.

Interviewed on the NBC news program "Meet the Press" on March 28, Secretary of State Alexander Haig told television viewers that "as far as the United States is concerned, we have supported the current regime based on

the reforms that that regime has instituted — land reform, improved pluralization, democratic reform, efforts to improve the human rights situation, economic reform."

But behind this façade of a "reformist" and "progressive" regime — steadfastly moving to break with El Salvador's bitter past of oppression, repression, and domination of politics and the economy by the infamous "fourteen families" — lies the reality expressed by the brutal record of the current military-Christian Democratic junta.

That junta took power in October 1979. With U.S. backing it overthrew the military regime of General Carlos Humberto Romero. Romero was so hated and corrupt that Washington realized he had no chance of halting the growing popular support to leftist forces.

Very quickly, however, the elements in the junta who genuinely favored reforms were forced out. Many joined the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the umbrella organiza-

tion now supporting the guerrilla struggle. And the guerrilla struggle itself was launched only after all efforts to achieve peaceful change were met with bloody repression.

This "reformist" junta responded to demands for real reforms by unleashing the government-backed death squads that have killed more than 30,000 civilians since 1979.

On March 24, 1980, rightist death squads murdered San Salvador Archbishop Oscar Romero, an outspoken critic of government repression. On November 27, 1980, six members of the national executive committee of the Revolutionary Democratic Front, meeting in a San Salvador high school, were seized by the armed forces. Their mutilated bodies were later found near the airport east of the capital.

The vaunted land reform program announced by the junta turned into a full-scale military occupation of the countryside, featuring the wholesale murder of peasant union activists.

In face of this record, the FDR and guerrillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) stated that their participation in any elections organized by this junta would be tantamount to signing their own death warrants.

The State Department claims that voter turn-

Nicaraguan leader addresses United Nations

UNITED NATIONS, New York — As Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, coordinator of the Nicaraguan Junta of National Reconstruction, entered the chambers of the UN Security Council March 25, he was greeted by loud, enthusiastic applause from the packed visitors' area.

The Nicaraguan government had requested this meeting of the Security Council to "warn the nations of the world that the Central American crisis has reached the point of a dramatic explosion" because of increasing U.S. aggression.

With quiet dignity, Ortega appealed for peace and for the right of the oppressed to break the chains of their oppression. He expressed the determination of the Nicaraguan people to defend their revolution to the last drop of blood, if necessary.

By contrast, Jeane Kirkpatrick, speaking on behalf of the U.S. government, presented a cynical diatribe, comparing the Sandinista government to the Nazis in Germany.

She was met with sounds of disbelief and disgust from the audience. Guards were stationed in front of the gallery to ensure silence.

"Throughout history, humanity has engaged in a constant struggle to attain better and more just ways of life," Ortega began.

He explained that the revolutions in Central America today are part of this historical process.

In light of Washington's support to the murderous junta in El Salvador, and of its sponsorship of counterrevolutionary attacks on Nicaragua, Ortega said, "I am obliged to appear before you because I share the legitimate concerns of the responsible men and women in the United States Congress and Senate who are making great efforts to prevent intervention; because I share the legitimate concern of the most important and serious mass media of the United States, and of the American people . . . who reject another Vietnam in their history and share the Nicaraguan people's desire for peace; and because both are peoples whose deepest historical memory contains images of intervention and pains of war."

Ortega described in detail the attacks on Nicaragua by gangs of Somozist counterrevolutionaries aided by Washington, as well as attacks by the government of Honduras and the role of Argentine military officials.

Ortega pointed out that the Nicaraguan people would defend their homeland against any attack, and that "we are the on-

ly government in Central America that can, in all confidence, distribute arms to the people."

Ortega ended by reaffirming the desire of the Nicaraguan and Cuban governments, along with the Salvadoran revolutionaries, to begin negotiations for an end to the conflict. But he insisted that such negotiations should be accompanied by an end to all hostile actions against Nicaragua by the United States.

Following Ortega, Kirkpatrick accused the Nicaraguan government of "psychological projection," because "hostility is the dominant emotion of Nicaraguan policy."

She claimed that the Nicaraguan "army is supporting the overthrow of countries in the area."

Comparing the Sandinista revolution to "a coup d'état in stages, like the Nazis," Kirkpatrick said it was moving "step by step" to ban trade unions and close down newspapers. "At each stage the government's demand for more power comes with charges of enemies without and within."

When Kirkpatrick finished, a tiny handful of people in the gallery applauded. Otherwise, there was dead silence.

— Suzanne Haig

out in the Salvadoran elections was a repudiation of the FDR and FMLN. But given the record of the government death squads, people living in government-controlled areas would be committing suicide if they did not vote.

In the military sweeps that follow the elections, anyone who does not have a stamped voter's card or an indelible ink mark on their finger could end up decapitated at the El Playón lava field, where the death squads regularly deposit their victims.

One woman in San Antonio Abad, a poor suburb of San Salvador, told *New York Times* reporter Warren Hoge that people in that neighborhood had voted out of fear. "She said," according to Hoge, "she had deliberately cast a null ballot, one with a large X across it, as guerrillas had counseled."

But even casting a void ballot was dangerous. Ballots had to be deposited into clear plastic boxes under the watchful eyes of government troops.

Contrary to the Reagan administration's claims, the guerrillas *did not* threaten people who voted. The FMLN's Radio Venceremos explicitly stated that guerrillas would not try to prevent people from voting.

Richard Meislin, writing in the March 29 *New York Times* from Zacatecoluca, El Salvador, confirmed that this was indeed the guerrillas' attitude. Meislin passed through a guerrilla roadblock on the Pan-American Highway outside the town of Santo Domingo in San Vicente province. The guerrillas, Meislin admits, were allowing people to freely cross through the checkpoint to vote if they wished.

One guerrilla told Meislin that "if they want to vote, we're not going to interfere."

But events on election day confirmed the guerrilla contention that the election would solve nothing, as heavy fighting raged throughout the country.

None of the five rightist parties running in the elections offered any solution to the real problems that have sparked the guerrilla struggle — the repression, the concentration of wealth in a few hands, the numbing poverty of the Salvadoran workers and peasants, the mass illiteracy, and the desperate lack of health care.

The roots of the guerrilla war lie in the very nature of the capitalist system in El Salvador, a system that all the participating parties support. And that system of inequality can only be maintained by savage repression.

Reagan's strategy in El Salvador borrows heavily from the policies carried out by three U.S. administrations in Vietnam. But today Saigon is called Ho Chi Minh City, and the U.S. strategy in El Salvador will be no more successful.

The phony elections in El Salvador are a key element in the Reagan administration's attempt to win international legitimacy for the killers running that country.

Similar attempts to apply a democratic veneer to the succession of U.S.-backed South

Vietnamese regimes — through sham elections, "land reform," and the like — came to naught.

Nevertheless, U.S. "political scientists" Richard Scammon and Howard Penniman, both of whom helped organize the 1967 elections in South Vietnam, were brought to El Salvador to oversee the voting there.

Similarly, the Salvadoran "land reform" program was designed by Roy Prosterman, who had previously been the architect of the "Land to the Tiller program" in South Vietnam.

As in Vietnam, the phony land reform and the sham elections are intended to hide the fact that the U.S. rulers have only one answer to any deepgoing social revolution — they must try to crush it by military force. That is precisely the course that Reagan is following in Central America.

Israel

50,000 march against occupation

'Murderers out of the West Bank!'

About 50,000 people poured into the streets of Tel Aviv March 27 to protest the Israeli government's brutal crackdown against the Arab population in the occupied territories.

It was the largest antiwar demonstration in Israel since the Peace Now movement of 1978. But it was far more militant.

The demonstrators chanted or carried signs with the slogans, "Murderers out of the West Bank," "No to the occupation," "The Golan Heights is Syrian," and "Begin, Sharon, get out of Hebron."

Although most demonstrators were Jewish, a significant Arab contingent also participated, chanting slogans in Arabic.

The Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University, which has been mobilizing opposition to the closing down of the university in Ramallah, organized a contingent of between 2,000 and 3,000 demonstrators. Although committee supporters had previously been prevented by the authorities from selling stickers and buttons with the colors of the Palestinian flag, they were able to do so at the demonstration.

Reached by phone in Tel Aviv, a leader of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), Israeli section of the Fourth International, told *Intercontinental Press*, "We must understand that what is going on in Israel is a very broad opposition to what Israel is doing in the West Bank. The government is saying that it is going after the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], that it wants to crush it in the West Bank. And there were 50,000 people in the streets saying, 'No!'"

As the demonstrations and strikes in the

While the State Department is seeking to focus attention on the Salvadoran election, Washington is moving full steam ahead with its plans for escalating U.S. military involvement.

U.S. naval maneuvers are continuing in the vicinity of Cuba, and U.S. warships are still stationed off the coast of Nicaragua.

CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries are blowing up bridges and carrying out terror raids into Nicaragua.

U.S. military personnel are now operating in Honduras as well as El Salvador, and the Reagan administration is continuing its efforts to resume U.S. military aid to the Guatemalan military dictatorship.

The Salvadoran elections were merely a public relations effort within the framework of this overall counterrevolutionary military campaign. □

West Bank and Gaza Strip continue, Palestinians inside Israel are intensifying their own solidarity actions.

A general strike of all Arabs within Israel has been called for March 30, in solidarity with the people of the occupied territories and to commemorate six demonstrators who were killed by Israeli forces on March 30, 1976. Rallies have been called for the towns of Taiyba, Kfar Cana, and Sakhnin, as well as in the Golan Heights.

These actions come at a time of rising concern over the danger of a new war in the Middle East, and particularly over the threat of an Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The March 26 issue of the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* voiced some of this concern: "The war might explode tomorrow, or in a year. But in any case, it is inevitable. . . . Since Israel does not want the PLO as a partner for dialogue in the West Bank, those who want a confrontation with the PLO think that the logical source of the opposition in the occupied territories is in Lebanon."

But more than ever before, these war moves by the Zionist government are meeting with resistance among Israeli workers.

"The question of the West Bank is having a big impact inside the Israeli working class," said the RCL leader. "What our comrades in industry see is big opposition within the working class, which is suffering from unemployment. And now the government is sending them to the West Bank to kill civilians. There is a mass and broad antiwar sentiment, which is growing." □

'Stop the U.S. war in El Salvador!'

40,000 march on Washington

By Fred Murphy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "Stop the U.S. war in El Salvador!" was the central demand voiced here March 27 as 40,000 protesters marched two and a half miles from Malcolm X Park in the city's Black community to Ronald Reagan's White House.

The crowd was made up overwhelmingly of young people, many of them participating in their first antiwar protest. A favorite chant, nonetheless, was "Hey, hey, Uncle Sam — we remember Vietnam!" The young marchers thus expressed the fear among a growing majority of the American people that Washington is dragging them into a new Vietnam-type war in Central America.

The protest came one day before the elections in El Salvador, which the U.S. rulers saw as a way to refurbish the image of the dictatorship and make support for it more palatable. But the crowd was having none of that.

Likewise, the marchers rejected Reagan's secret war against the Nicaraguan revolution. Placards and buttons with slogans like "CIA — hands off Nicaragua!" were much in evidence.

Thousands of Latin Americans march

Thousands of Latin Americans participated in the march. These included organized contingents of Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Chileans. Prorevolution Cuban youth marched under the banner of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. Many marchers chanted slogans in Spanish, and were cheered by bystanders as the march wound through Washington's Latino community.

Salvadorans and other Latin American immigrants marched as part of a contingent of New York garment workers who arrived on union-sponsored buses. Other trade unions with organized participation in the march included hospital workers and retail clerks. Many other young workers and union members took part as individuals.

Blacks also marched, some under the banners of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), the National Black United Front (NBUF), and Black Veterans for Social Justice. These three organizations were among the sponsors of the demonstration.

The action was organized by a coalition headed by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). Many of the marchers came on buses and other transportation organized by CISPES chapters throughout the eastern United States.

Smaller actions of a similar character were held on March 27 in Texas, Arizona, California, and other states. Among the largest was a

turnout of 10,000 in Seattle, Washington.

The new generation of antiwar fighters who rallied at the White House showed considerable political sophistication. In addition to grasping the impact of the Vietnam War on American society, they also understood the link between the foreign and domestic policies of the Reagan administration.

"Money for jobs, not for war," and "Jobs, not bombs" were slogans that appeared on hundreds of signs and banners and that were chanted all along the march route.

To a far greater degree than during the Vietnam War, protesters consciously identified with the rebels the U.S. government seeks to crush. Many marchers carried placards or banners with the colors or insignia of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) or the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador.

It is a strength of the new antiwar movement in the United States that a large component consciously supports the victory of the rebel forces. This has helped to increase political awareness of the issues involved in the struggle in Central America, thus reinforcing the commitment of activists to fight against U.S. intervention.

The prorebel sentiment of many of the marchers in Washington was clear from the sustained applause that greeted Arnaldo Ramos, representative of the FDR and FMLN, when he was introduced as the first speaker at the main rally following the march.

'We want peace'

Ramos devoted a substantial portion of his speech to the key role the American people must play in halting U.S. intervention in Central America. Washington's war in El Salvador, Ramos said, "is also a war against the American people."

"This administration," Ramos continued, "is acting directly against the immediate material interests of the American people. Bread is taken out of the mouths of hungry children and converted into guns. Important social programs are being cut in order to expand the lethal capabilities of the Central American armies."

"This struggle is uniting our two societies against the same enemy. One can no longer distinguish between the international and the domestic policies of this administration."

Ramos reviewed the military gains made by the rebel forces, noting that "in the past two years, the FMLN forces have successfully contained every major offensive against their zones of control." He pointed to the deepening demoralization among the junta's troops. The

rebels' main source of weapons, Ramos said, "is the U.S. government. We are receiving more and more weapons from young Salvadoran soldiers who give them away to us or who sell them to us."

"However," Ramos continued, "we do not take pride in our military activity, and we make it very clear both to this administration and to the American people that we want peace." He reiterated the FDR-FMLN's calls for negotiations, emphasizing that "our biggest responsibility is to save the lives of our people, to preserve peace in this continent."

Ramos concluded by citing again the importance of the U.S. antiwar movement: "Up to today, the American people have been responsible, against the wishes of this administration, for stopping the United States government from intervention in El Salvador."

At present, Ramos said, Washington has begun talking about negotiations, but only to buy time to strengthen the junta militarily. "Faced with this reality, the people of El Salvador are determined to fight to the last man if necessary to stop this foreign aggression. Faced with this reality, the people of the United States must not rest until they have completely stopped the U.S. military aid to the junta and to the Central American dictatorships."

'Lives are being shattered'

At another rally held in Malcolm X Park before the march began, the theme of struggle on two fronts was also taken up.

"While the United States spends billions of dollars to support brutal dictatorships around the world," said Dee Bates of the National Black Independent Political Party, "millions of people here in the United States have been thrown out of work."

"Billions of dollars have been slashed from social programs for Black and poor people who have been forced to depend on government assistance. Millions of our people's lives are being shattered by the racist policies of Reaganism and Reaganomics."

The drive toward war abroad and the attacks on living standards at home have evoked growing protests by working people and youth, of which the March 27 action in Washington is but the latest example. Four days earlier, 15,000 people turned out in New York City to picket Reagan during a presidential visit there.

In previous weeks, picket lines and demonstrations involving up to 2,500 persons greeted Reagan and other administration representatives in New Mexico, Wyoming, Minnesota, and other states.

The latter actions took up a broad range of

issues — jobs, cutbacks in social services, nuclear power, attacks on the environment, and so on — but they all had a powerful antiwar thrust as well.

Thus, the potential exists for drawing far wider sections of U.S. society into action against intervention in Central America than were represented in the March 27 protest.

Opposition in labor movement

Antiwar sentiment among rank-and-file trade unionists is already being reflected at the national level. Fourteen major U.S. unions have adopted resolutions opposing aid to the Salvadoran junta. Similar positions have been adopted by more than a dozen AFL-CIO central labor councils and by more than 100 local unions, district councils, and other union organizations.

On March 26, eleven top trade-union officials joined with a committee of New York City trade unionists to publish an advertisement in the *New York Times*. "The American people are not willing to sacrifice their sons and daughters to prop up unpopular despots," the ad declared. "Nor are they willing to finance military adventure when Federal budget cuts are threatening essential social services."

The officials, constituted as the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, called for a negotiated solution to the conflict there and declared their "opposition to United States and any other military intervention in El Salvador." They stressed that "free elections are impossible in El Salvador given the current conditions of political repression and murder."

Among those signing the ad were Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers (UAW); William Winpisinger, president of the Machinists union (IAM); and Murray Finley, president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU), one of the two main unions of U.S. garment workers.

'No Vietnam in Central America'

Another ad, this one covering an entire page, was published in the March 28 *New York Times*. It announced the formation of the Committee to End U.S. Intervention in El Salvador and was signed by Fraser, Winpisinger, and such other prominent figures as civil-rights leader Joseph Lowery of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; actor Ed Asner; Congressman Ronald Dellums and ex-members of Congress Robert Drinan and Bella Abzug; and feminist leader Gloria Steinem. Scores of other trade-union, academic, and religious figures added their names in support.

The new committee's ad called on Americans to "speak out forcefully, repeatedly, unmistakably" to demand "No Vietnam in Central America. . . . No more U.S. intervention to prop-up the collapsing Salvadoran military oligarchy."

The massive antiwar sentiment that needs to be mobilized in action has been demonstrated in several recent public-opinion polls. One taken by CBS television and the *New York*

International solidarity with El Salvador

- In **Britain**, 15,000 demonstrators marched past the U.S. embassy in London to Trafalgar Square on March 28 to demand "U.S. hands off El Salvador!" and "Victory to the FMLN and FDR!" The action was called jointly by the El Salvador Solidarity Committee and the Labour Party.

The rally was addressed by Trades Union Congress Chairman Alan Sapper and Labour Party leader Michael Foot. Foot denounced the elections in El Salvador as a "sham" and called the participation of British observers in them a "disgrace."

- In **Denmark**, thousands demonstrated in several cities March 26 under the slogan, "No to U.S. Intervention in El Salvador!" In Copenhagen, some 5,000 people marched to the U.S. embassy. Demonstrations were also held in Århus, Odense, and Ålborg.

- **West German** riot police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd of 10,000 demonstrators at the U.S. air base at Tempelhof, near West Berlin, March 27. The same day, some 4,000 marchers protested U.S.

intervention in El Salvador in the northern city of Bremen.

- On March 26, about 1,000 persons rallied outside the U.S. consulate in Amsterdam, the capital of the **Netherlands**, to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador and to commemorate the four Dutch journalists who were murdered in El Salvador by the junta's terror gangs.

- Thousands of people all across **Canada** participated in a week of actions March 20-27 in solidarity with the people of El Salvador and against U.S. intervention there. Actions were held in every province, in both large cities and small. In Vancouver, where more than 1,000 persons turned out March 27, Minister of External Affairs Mark MacGuigan was heckled by the protesters. In Ottawa, Svend Robinson, a member of parliament from the New Democratic Party (Canada's Labor Party), addressed a crowd of several hundred. Some 700 rallied in Saskatoon, more than 500 in Toronto, and several thousand in two major demonstrations in Montreal.

Times showed that 63 percent of Americans oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvador. According to the March 21 *Times*, opposition to Reagan's foreign policy was highest among people with "financial problems" — that is, the working class.

The poll also found that 76 percent of Black people in the United States oppose intervention in El Salvador. And it showed that fully 17 percent of Americans express support for the Salvadoran rebels.

Still more striking were the results of a *Washington Post/ABC* television poll reported in the March 24 *Post*. This showed not only that 72 percent oppose further military aid to the Salvadoran junta, but also that a majority of Americans — 51 percent — would support draftees who refused orders to go to El Salvador.

Debate over U.S. policy

The fact that such deep antiwar sentiment exists and that it has begun to be expressed in action in the streets has precipitated a debate inside the U.S. ruling class. One section of the capitalists fears that Reagan's headlong drive toward war might detonate an uncontrollable protest movement that would reach right into the ranks of organized labor.

The public debate between administration officials and members of Congress over how best to put down the revolutionary upsurge in Central America has presented special opportunities for antiwar activists to get out the truth about Washington's war drive and to expose the capitalist politicians of all stripes as the warmakers they are.

A wider debate over U.S. foreign policy is also picking up steam. This concerns the

danger of nuclear war. Actions for disarmament and against the production of nuclear weapons have begun to emerge alongside of, and overlapping with, the movement against U.S. war moves in Central America.

Opposition to nuclear weapons has been spurred by Reagan's attempts to paint the Central American upsurge as "Soviet- and Cuban-backed subversion." Washington's refusal to rule out military options such as a blockade of Cuba has heightened fears that the world could be brought to the brink of a nuclear confrontation, as occurred in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Next step: June 12

Plans are well under way for mobilizing the growing sentiment against nuclear weapons in a gigantic demonstration outside the United Nations in New York City on June 12. A coalition of more than 100 organizations has been formed to organize this action.

It will be crucial for the anti-interventionist forces that built the March 27 protest in Washington to play a role in the new movement against nuclear weapons. Mobilizing forces that oppose U.S. intervention in Central America to participate in the June 12 demonstration will be an effective way of convincing those who sincerely want peace that it is necessary to oppose concrete wars and war threats.

By building on the success of the March 27 protest, antiwar activists can deepen the work already begun in the labor movement, reaching out to rank-and-file, antiwar workers and bringing the power of the trade unions to bear in the fight against U.S. intervention in Central America. □

Three years of revolution

'We have no other alternative but to fight imperialism'

By Pat Kane

ST. GEORGE'S — It all started along the Carenage, St. George's inner harbor. The steel bands were assembled for their "jam down." Thousands of youth were ready for a "jump up" dance session. At 12:01 a.m. it was March 13, and Grenada was celebrating the third anniversary of its revolution.

All over the island, Grenadians were on the streets in their thousands, and the dancing lasted all night. "Liberation Day" is something to get excited about. But the highlight of the morning was the Workers' March through St. George's. At Tanteen playing field, thousands of the island's workers assembled behind their union banners. Each workplace had its own banner. There were agricultural workers and bank clerks, postal workers and hotel waiters, dockers and health workers, all in their contingents.

Just three short years ago, such a demonstration of working-class solidarity and strength would have been illegal and subject to attack by thugs of the deposed dictator Eric Gairy.

Gairy now lives in San Diego, California, and, unlike hundreds of other Grenadians living abroad, he did not return for the celebrations. In Grenada Gairy is a wanted man.

'Reagan's got a boat'

For the last year the leadership of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), Grenada's revolutionary party, has been stressing the need to extend democratic mass organization, and in particular to increase the awareness and organization of the island's workers. The demonstration was a real manifestation of the NJM's hard work.

I marched between dockers and hotel workers. To a rhythmic calypso chant, they sang "Reagan's got a boat . . . Reagan's got a boat in Barbados." This was their answer to the attempts of the U.S. government to intimidate tiny Grenada with naval maneuvers throughout the region. These workers support "the revo."

As the Workers' March reached Queen's Park, the military on parade stood to attention, the party leadership led the applause, and the thousands of Grenadians already there saluted the marchers.

Where, except in a country like Grenada where the workers and farmers have taken over the government, would you see the army welcoming a workers' march with friendship and not bullets?

'We'll send photographs'

The rally was chaired by Bernard Coard, deputy prime minister in the People's Revolu-



Flax Hermes/IP

Rally in St. George's on March 8, International Women's Day, was one of events leading up to third anniversary celebration on March 13.

tionary Government and minister of finance, trade and planning.

Coard is also a member of the Political Bureau of the NJM. "There are those in the world who would like to isolate the Grenada revolution," said Coard. "But how can you isolate a revolution that has the overwhelming majority of the people as part of the revolution, that has the support of the masses of the Caribbean, and the support of progressive and democratic forces throughout the world?"

"That is the challenge facing imperialism, and I hope that their spy satellites are able to get very good photographs of Grenada today. And in case their technology is not up to scratch, we'll send them a few photographs."

Over 500 delegates from all over the world were in attendance, and hundreds of telegrams giving support to Grenada arrived in the week before the rally.

The Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions were represented at the highest level, and thirty-three governments in all sent delegations. From Europe, East and West; from North Korea, Africa, and Latin America; from Central and North America, they had traveled to celebrate three years of the revolution with the Grenadian people.

The crowd erupted when Coard announced "representatives from the struggling and fight-

ing and revolutionary people of El Salvador." The applause lasted five minutes.

When Coard introduced the head of the Cuban delegation, Jorge Risquet Valdés, a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party, he received a huge ovation, and the Grenadian people chanted, "Cuba, Grenada, will never be defeated."

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop inspected the military parade on his arrival.

When Governor-general Sir Paul Scoon arrived, the crowd was unusually quiet. It was strange to see this representative of the British crown, whose government would not even send its parliamentary representative to Grenada — let alone give aid to overcome hundreds of years of British exploitation — waving to the revolutionary people of free Grenada.

Before the prime minister delivered the feature address, there was a huge gymnastic display. Hundreds of youth took part, along with different local dance groups. Since the revolution, the talents of Grenadians have found expression in a huge upsurge in poetry, dance, and cultural groups.

'Take back the truth'

In addition to talking about the gains of the revolution and the challenges still facing it in the realm of economic construction, Bishop

stressed, "Our people understand today that the struggle for peace and development is one and the same struggle. . . ."

"Comrades, as a revolutionary people, Grenadians are realists. We don't bury our heads in the sand on the pretense that the imperialist threat to world peace will vanish on its own. We know that we have no other alternative but to fight against this threat and resolutely mobilize ourselves in preparation for a confrontation with imperialism."

Taking up Reagan's support for the Salvadoran junta and his attacks on Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, Bishop declared that "Reagan attacks us out of desperation, out of the recognition that the people of the region now understand very clearly that there is an alternative to fascism, an alternative to nineteenth-century capitalism, an alternative to dictatorship. And that alternative was started in the glorious Cuban revolution, and continued in the Grenadian and Nicaraguan revolutions."

Finally, in addressing the guests from around the world who had come to join in the celebration of the third anniversary of the Grenada revolution, Bishop said:

"We also ask you to take back to your country the truth of our revolution, because the truth is revolutionary and we are not afraid of it."

"To the people of the world we hold out our free education, our free health care, our national bus service, our international airport, our clinics, our fishing fleets, our agroindustries, our house repair program, our Center for Popular Education. These are the great truths of the Grenadian revolution!"

After the prime minister's speech, the most outstanding Grenadian and internationalist workers were honored. When the speeches ended, the steel bands started, and another night of celebrations began.

'A beacon of hope'

At the International Solidarity Conference held last November, Maurice Bishop explained the international importance of the Grenada revolution. "This revolution is increasingly a light, a beacon of hope to the poor and exploited masses of the Caribbean. The aims, objectives, and achievements of this revolution are a crystallization of the most profound human aspirations of Caribbean people toward a better life."

"For 400 years the exploited masses of the region have struggled with dignity for bread, jobs, justice, and peace. Today in Grenada, today in free and revolutionary Grenada, this struggle at last is beginning to bear fruit. And this fruit is not for us alone."

"It is not the property of ourselves alone. Just as our struggle has been a part of the broader struggle of the working people of the Caribbean and the world, so now our revolution is an integral part of the forward movement of working people regionally and internationally!"

Many critics of the Grenada revolution had predicted that there would never be a third an-

niversary celebration. The confidence, enthusiasm, and courage of the Grenadian people

A budget for working people

Plans call for new housing, roads, daycare centers

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S — In his March 13 address on the third anniversary of the Grenada revolution, Prime Minister Maurice Bishop pointed out that given the expansion of agriculture here, Grenada is "not just the isle of spice — but becoming the isle of nectars, of vegetables, and of fruits."

True.

And with the hundreds of discussions held around the country on the national budget in the past three months, it is also becoming the isle of lay economists.

"What these discussions have done," Bishop said, referring to the meetings, presentations, and workshops, "is to demystify the whole process of the budget."

Minister of National Mobilization Selwyn Strachan put it thusly: "This is the first time in Grenada and in the Eastern Caribbean when we have had mass participation in the formation of the budget."

Finance Minister Bernard Coard phrased it this way in describing the process from his January 29 draft budget to his March 9 Budget Day presentation:

"It has taken tens of thousands of people to put this budget together. There have been hundreds of workshops; all of the suggestions, all of the proposals, all of the criticisms have been heard. And every single member of the cabinet has spent the last three weeks going through these proposals."

Proposed budget measures

The proposals included, among others, increasing taxes on business and luxury items, fining reckless drivers, establishing a government body to deal with unemployment, building more daycare centers, and restricting certain imports.

The new budget calls for EC\$214.8 million in government spending. (EC\$1 = US\$0.38.)

More than half the budget is for proposed capital spending, which includes new roads; new housing; and new port, electrical, and telephone facilities. This figure is more than double the capital spending in last year's budget. And it is more than fifteen times the amount spent in 1978 — in the last year of deposed dictator Eric Gairy's rule.

Some EC\$28 million is allocated for capital expenditure in agriculture. Neighboring Antigua, by contrast, has set aside EC\$4.72 million in its new budget for agriculture.

The total figure for projected capital spending in Grenada's new budget is more than twice the figure for recurrent spending and reflects the political priority the revolutionary

proved these cynics wrong. And the cynics will be proved wrong every year to come. □

government is placing on developing the country's economy. Spending on health, education, and housing accounts for 60 percent of the total recurrent budget.

Role of private business

Government spending plays a crucial role in Grenada's economy. Some 95 percent of total investment in the country last year was by the government; only 5 percent was by private in-

Publishing house launched

Fedon Publishers, a new state publishing house, was officially inaugurated in Grenada on March 4 to help publicize the aims and achievements of the Grenada revolution. This is an important weapon for the revolution and will enable Grenada to share its experience with thousands of workers abroad.

Two books were launched at the ceremony. *Grenada Is Not Alone* is a collection of speeches by government ministers to last year's successful International Solidarity Conference. Selwyn Strachan, minister of national mobilization, pointed out that this new company is invaluable, since it means that future generations of Grenadians will not be deprived of the experiences and example of the early days of the revolution.

Is Freedom We Making, the second book, was written by two internationalist workers now employed in the National In-Service Teacher Education Program: Merle Hodge from Trinidad and Chris Searles from Britain.

The book is a description of the new democratic system of parish councils and a selection of interviews with local Grenadians about their experiences before and after the revolution.

At the ceremony, Searles stated that he was not the coauthor. "There are 110,000 authors," he said, "since the book is about the struggles of the Grenadian people."

Searles continued, "There is nothing insular about the Grenadian revolution. It is an integral part of the world revolution. One day, the people of Britain will take your path. . . . Can you imagine it comrades, the first conference of delegates of mass organizations to discuss the economy held in Buckingham Palace? We shall see it comrades, and if not us, then our children."

— Pat Kane

initiative. But this reflects a problem — the reluctance of many businessmen to cooperate with the government in helping to advance economic construction.

Indeed, in many of the zonal council meetings and workshops on the budget, Grenadians complained of footdragging by merchants and capitalist operations.

In his March 9 speech, Coard described what he said would be “a carrot-and-stick approach” to businessmen “who want to sit on their butts and do nothing” about investment.

All businesses will face increased taxes. However, businessmen who expand or construct new hotels or factories can get a reduction in the tax rate. Businessmen investing in other fields will also get a rate reduction, although not as much. Those who choose not to invest have to pay significantly higher taxes.

As an additional source of investment funds for government projects, commercial banks will now be required to deposit 10 percent more of their holdings — over the 10 percent they must already deposit — in a fund for gov-

ernment use.

To help increase worker productivity, the government has launched an emulation program.

A farmer of the year and several workers of the year were singled out for recognition at the March 13 rally. As well, some seventy workers from various state enterprises were recognized on Emulation Day leading up to March 13.

These workers were given a certificate and a cash award by the prime minister.

Bishop explained that “if we are going to move production forward, we have to have increased productivity.”

Under the revolutionary government, Grenadians are no longer working for white colonial or neocolonial powers, where their labor serves to enrich someone else, Bishop said. Therefore, a change in work attitudes and discipline is needed.

“Emulation,” Bishop says, “is the key to productivity.”

Emulation committees are being set up at workplaces to enable workers each month to choose a colleague to be honored in an emulation ceremony. Emulation qualities include productivity, creative initiative, punctuality and work discipline, level of participation in national organizations and mass organizations, and level of voluntary work.

Also for the first time, production committees are being set up on government job sites to give workers a voice in the affairs of the economy — not only in the council meetings and mass organizations, but at the workplace as well.

Coard also called on Grenada’s revolutionary trade unions to struggle to establish these committees in the private sector.

Coard ended his Budget Day speech by explaining that presentation of the new budget was not the final step. Government bodies and zonal council meetings would continue to monitor it. Two national conferences on the economy, he said, would be held later in the year. □

El Salvador

Report from a liberated zone

Gains of rebel fighters are evident

By Jean-Pierre Beauvais

[The following article is abridged from the March 19 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

EL SALVADOR — Night had fallen a few minutes earlier. The darkness is barely disturbed by a half-moon and the flickering flames of two small candles. Here in the “camp,” which is the basic framework for organizing life in the areas the revolutionaries control, it is now time for “politics.”

Arturo, the person in charge of the discussion, comments on the reports carried by the radio station of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The station reports on the actions carried out the previous day throughout the country, the failure of the offensive launched by 2,000 government troops in the key area of the Guazapa volcano, the reactions to Reagan’s speech to the Organization of American States in Washington, and international solidarity activities.

The radio station is decisive. In an area as isolated as this one — reached after a trip on a pot-holed road followed by a several hour march on foot — the radio lets everyone know daily that they are not a member of some isolated nucleus, that their fight is part of a grow-

ing national fight, that they are supported by a vast international solidarity movement.

It is also the symbol for, and an exceptional means of asserting, the growing political authority of the FMLN and its leadership.

A day like any other

This evening the discussion centers on the radio’s instructions to the population for March 28, the day of the elections:

“Evacuate houses near barracks because they will be attacked. Stay away from military patrols because all of them will be targets for the combatants. Travel as little as possible. Many roads will be mined at strategic points. Collaborate with the guerrilla actions by building barricades near where the actions take place in order to hinder the movement of the genocidal troops.”

In practical terms this has very little to do with the poor peasants of this tiny valley. Elections? None of those meeting this evening have ever voted in their lives.

Perhaps someone voted in their name at the military post in the nearest large village, some four hours away on foot. But they don’t know anything about that. Moreover, for a number of months no army patrols have ventured near here.

So March 28 will be almost like any other day.

But it is very important that they know what will happen elsewhere, in the cities where

some of them have never been.

It is important because to a large extent this is how they concretely, little by little, become conscious that there are other forms of mobilization, other forms of struggle besides their own, for the same objectives.

This was the whole thrust of the remarkable discussion that followed. In the semi-darkness there are questions, interjections rather than speeches. They are brief comments, spoken quietly, often hesitant and punctuated by long silences.

And Arturo responds and explains tirelessly. His remarks, filled with colorful imagery, are those of someone who was born near here but has also worked in the city and was for a time a member of a trade union. Arturo gives these peasants a concrete glimpse of some of the most classic forms of proletarian struggle.

A little later the discussion becomes very lively. This part deals with problems that arose during the day and specific tasks to be accomplished tomorrow. Questions of administration, and also minor conflicts between individuals.

These nighttime meetings are already customary in numerous camps like this one. And the circles of women and men seated on the ground as they are this evening, around Arturo, among several hammocks and two tiny mud-brick peasant huts, are the most striking illustration of the reality and content of this people’s struggle, the fight of an entire people.

One would truly need the ignorant and self-

erving imagination of the Reagans, Haigs, and other criminals to see any "foreign hand" here.

The simple language spoken by the peasants here is marked by the certainty born of their experience with daily superexploitation, the certainty of the need for revolution.

One-third of territory

The "liberated" zones today cover about one-third of the Salvadoran territory. But generally they are also the most isolated areas, the most backward and the least economically "useful" zones of this small country.

Their existence, and their continual growth, concretely reflect the progress made by the revolutionaries. The zones express not only the general popular support that the guerrilla actions enjoy, but also the massive incorporation of the population in the fight.

This reality allows us to understand the considerable growth in the FMLN's military capabilities in recent months. The FMLN now carries out increasingly audacious and effective actions in regions that only a short time ago might have seemed to be bastions of the army.

From these zones, nuclei of guerrilla fighters have steadily grown into organized detachments of a true "people's revolutionary army" that today has between 5,000 and 6,000 well-trained fighters.

Through the mobilization and organization of the population in these zones, a real militia of nearly 20,000 members has been built nationally. A significant portion of the militia can already organize the self-defense of sectors of the masses, while coordinating their actions with the detachments of the people's army. All this is carried out within the perspective of an eventual general insurrection.

Despite the barbaric repression that reigns in the cities, and especially in the capital, in urban areas this militia is organized first and foremost within the working class, based on the work places and, whenever possible, within the framework of trade-union structures that have been able to survive underground.

'Workers themselves must be convinced'

El Salvador's economic, social, political, and geographic situation has its own special characteristics. And the FMLN leadership has shown a real ability to determine tactics based on that special character.

But beyond that, certain basic aspects of the current revolutionary struggle represent a considerable advance over a number of earlier experiences in Latin America.

The biggest advance in this regard is the connection between the political and military role of the "liberated" rural zones and the clandestine organizations of the workers and other urban layers. The two aspects of the struggle are interconnected and involve both self-defense and preparations for an insurrection.

An FMLN cadre explained: "When we called for the general strike last year, many workers did not follow us, even though nearly all of them felt that our struggle was also their



Salvadoran liberation fighters on patrol.

struggle. This provoked many discussions.

"Our conclusion," he continued, "was that this attitude expressed a higher level of politicization. A large part of the working class, which confronts the repression and the military every day, rightly felt that we did not have the ability to defend the strike."

He added that "given the degree of repression in the capital, before there can be any large-scale mass action, not only must this capacity for self-defense and protection really exist, but the workers themselves must be convinced that it exists through their own experience.

"The increase in the amount of territory under our control allows everyone to judge how much the military relationship of forces is changing in our favor. And this enables us to speed up the organization and training of the militia in the cities as well.

In the areas that are for all practical purposes liberated zones, certain basic points of the FMLN's program are already being applied. They are carrying out the agrarian reform, literacy campaigns, and the organization of a new public health system and collective structures of distribution side by side with self-defense and military preparation and organization.

"We have to rapidly improve the conditions in which the poor peasants who inhabit this region live. But we also have to raise their cultural level and their consciousness so they become continually more integrated into the struggle," explained the person in charge of economic questions for a Farabundist Council.

These councils are structures set up to "administer and organize the activities and life of the population." They are established in all the

territories the FMLN has stable control over. As an FMLN commander put it, "they are designed to normalize civil life here and to control and administer the collective resources and production."

The councils are generally divided into four commissions covering administration, economic life, religious questions, and self-defense. Those in charge of the first three commissions are elected by the population of the zone administered by the council.

The administrative commission is responsible for certain functions traditionally filled by a mayor — registration of births and death, marriage ceremonies, and the like.

Control of prices

The tasks and responsibilities of the economic commission are much broader. It must organize agricultural production and is therefore responsible for implementing the first measures of agrarian reform and collectivization of production on the land. It is also responsible for the equal distribution of basic foodstuffs and for price controls.

A few weeks ago there was a conference of economic officials from the various councils functioning in the FMLN's Central Front (Chalatenango province) to establish a mechanism for controlling the prices of products that do not originate in the liberated zone itself.

The person in charge of the religious commission is responsible for guaranteeing and promoting religious life. A key aspect of this is organizing discussion groups. Their function is to "make the faith into a means for conscious integration into the revolutionary process," said one priest who seemed quite comfortable in his role as a member of a Farabundist Council.

When there is no priest in the zone, a lay person is elected to carry out this function.

These religious commissions are a product of the extremely important role that rank-and-file religious communities have played in developing the consciousness and radicalization of many inhabitants of El Salvador's rural areas.

The people in charge of self-defense are also involved in the command structures of the militia. In areas that are under the stable control of the revolutionaries, the functions of militia members are quite varied. But their main responsibility is to educate and organize the whole population to stave off incursions or invasions by the junta's forces.

This includes everything from establishing a very discreet but highly effective system of look-outs, which requires perfect knowledge of the terrain, to preparing hiding places.

On this level, the Salvadoran revolutionaries have borrowed heavily from the Vietnamese experience. Complex and elaborate systems of underground caches and tunnels have been and are still being dug fairly near inhabited places. As a result, the people can at any moment, and very rapidly, go to these sites to protect themselves from possible bombing raids or to hide, and can even live there for a period. □

Women in the struggle

EL SALVADOR — She was wearing jeans, jogging shoes, a flowered blouse, an olive green cap, and carried an assault rifle and walkie-talkie. Although she looked to be eighteen, she was twenty-four.

María Isabel was waiting near a rural road with a small detachment of fighters, armed with an assortment of weapons. They were to escort us from the fluid and ever-changing borders of this liberated zone to the first camp, which was our destination. It was a long way off, a march punctuated with lengthy conversations.

To her, my coming from France meant coming from the country of François Mitterrand, "the president of an imperialist country, but one who recognizes us."

She is proud of her political and military responsibilities. Not for herself, she says, but "for what it means as a Salvadoran woman."

One of her brothers was murdered. Her father was seriously wounded and is now ill. Two cousins are orphans. She had to drop out of the school where she was studying to be a teacher due to economic problems.

"None of this is exceptional," she notes. "In my village and its surrounding area nearly all the families have been touched by the war."

Her revolutionary commitment? It goes without saying. "Things cannot continue like this, so we have to fight," she says

simply. And, very quickly, she returns to the subject dearest to her: the Salvadoran woman, her place in the revolution and in the future society.

"The situation of women is still very difficult. But among the fighters one thing is beginning to be understood: there is a conscious and increasingly widespread desire among the men themselves to fight against machismo, to not just consider us as helpers, subordinates, or even sex objects. They are finally beginning to consider us as 'compañeras,' and the word 'macho' is starting to be used as a term of derision. That's symbolic, right?"

According to María Isabel, "More than 30 percent of the FMLN fighters are women, most of them being mothers." And at different levels of responsibility the overall percentage is only "very slightly lower." In the Latin American context, this is quite exceptional.

"In the liberated zones like this, there is an immense amount of educational work to do among the peasant women who are supporters of the struggle. It is very difficult to convince them that they must not limit themselves to their traditional role as women."

María Isabel has no doubt that "this is one of the biggest challenges of the Salvadoran revolution."

— J.-P. B.

Thatcher backs U.S. threats

[The following article appeared on the front page of the March 4 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, the weekly newspaper of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Britain is supporting the increasingly hysterical campaign being waged by the United States government against the revolution in Central America. British ships are participating in a threatening naval exercise off the coast of Cuba called "Operation Safe Pass."

This exercise will pass within a few miles of Havana, and involve a landing of marines at Guantanamo, America's naval base in Cuba. Britain is going ahead with sending two "observers" to the fake elections being staged in El Salvador — most European countries have refused to do so.

The naval operation near the Cuban coast comes in the wake of the fantastic allegations about the war in El Salvador made by the head of the CIA, William Casey.

According to Casey's bizarre allegations the war in El Salvador is being run "entirely from Managua," the capital of Nicaragua. Involved in running the war are supposedly Cubans, Russians, East Germans and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as well as the Nicaraguans themselves. In fact the only "outsiders" in El Salvador are the US officers who help run the army.

The reason for this hysteria is not difficult to find. As one top US official put it last week "in El Salvador we are within inches of losing control over the situation entirely."

The brutal Salvadorean dictatorship is getting militarily hammered by the left-wing FMLN forces. And in Guatemala the left-wing guerrillas are making increasing headway against the right-wing regime.

As Mexican president López Portillo pointed out last week, the danger of US intervention in the region is very real.

It is an outrage that Britain, virtually alone among the United States' allies, is giving open support to the United States' policy of repression.

HKE challenges illegal repression

Anti-imperialist militants defend rights of workers

By Fred Murphy

The Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), one of three organizations in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International, has been coming under increasing harassment by the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor's office in recent weeks.

On March 16 representatives of local neighborhood committees, acting on the instigation of the prosecutor's office, confiscated copies of the HKE's legal weekly newspaper, *Kargar*, from a number of newsstands in Tehran. The day before, armed men went to the office of *Kargar*'s printer, Mohammed Bagher Falsafi. After questioning Falsafi about the paper's contents, they arrested him. As of March 28, Falsafi was still being held.

This harassment occurs at a time when opposition is deepening in Iran to arbitrary jailings and executions, which have created a climate of intimidation against the working class. While many of those arrested have been members of the People's Mujahedeen Organization — a petty-bourgeois group that has carried out armed attacks on government officials — the regime has also detained supporters of the revolution, and has tried to prevent unofficial public meetings and free circulation of the nongovernment press.

Public meeting halted

During the week preceding the attacks on *Kargar*, officials from the prosecutor's office repeatedly called the HKE's public headquarters and demanded that HKE leaders Babak Zahraie and Bahram Ali Atai present themselves for questioning. The officials were told that these requests would only be honored if warrants or subpoenas were presented in writing, as stipulated by Iranian law and the constitution of the Islamic Republic.

No such documents were presented, but on March 16 armed men arrived at the home of Bahram Ali Atai's mother at two o'clock in the morning. They first claimed they were friends of Atai, but after gaining entrance said they were from the prosecutor's office and had come to arrest Atai. They claimed to have a warrant, but did not present one. Upon learning that Atai was not in the house, they left.

On March 12, a public meeting the HKE had planned to commemorate the anniversary of the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry in 1951 was prevented from taking place. HKE members who arrived early at the meeting site found a notice tacked to the door saying the building had been ordered closed by the municipal government. The HKE members remained at the site to inform those arriving for the meeting that it would have to be postponed;



Kargar

Despite harassment, HKE carries on public activities like this meeting in Tehran February 18 to mark third anniversary of revolution.

while doing so, several HKE members were physically attacked and beaten by members of the local neighborhood committee.

The HKE's meeting had been officially approved by the Ministry of the Interior. It was later learned that the notice closing the building was not placed by the city government but by the prosecutor's office, and that the committee members had also been sent by that office.

Selective repression

The latest attacks on the HKE's democratic rights and on the legal status of its newspaper are part of a much broader attempt by the capitalist government to silence opposition within the working class and peasantry to its policies.

Working-class militants and political activists who support the revolution and defend it against imperialism, but who disagree with and argue against the policies of the regime, have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, imprisonment without charges, loss of employment, and even execution. At the same time, the government has been too weak to confront the workers and peasants head-on in an attempt to break their organizations.

Organized in many instances in factory committees (*shoras*), the workers continue to press for control over production in the nationalized workplaces, measures against hoarding and speculation, and all-out mobilization to defeat the eighteen-month-old Iraqi invasion.

Peasant shoras in many villages, often aided by urban youth from the Crusade for Reconstruction, are raising demands for state aid and for implementation of the land reform measures that have been stalled in parliament for more than a year.

The HKE champions such working-class and peasant struggles, and defends the revolution — including the regime that currently stands at the head of it — against imperialist attacks.

Within this framework, the HKE has firmly resisted all attempts by the regime to curtail its democratic rights or the legality of its newspaper. In each instance — even when twelve Trotskyists were sentenced to death in August 1979 — these attacks have been successfully beaten back, with the help of international solidarity.

A prime reason for such victories has been that the Trotskyists have taken their defense

campaigns directly to the working class — leafletting factories, speaking before shora meetings, and so on. They have explained that the government's use of repression against militant workers and peasants hurts the defense of the revolution against imperialism.

HKE denounces torture

The most recent defense effort carried out by the HKE was for the release of HKE Political Bureau member Bahram Ali Atai. He was arrested last December 11 and sent, without formal charges, to Tehran's Evin Prison. He was released on March 3.

In an extensive interview published in the March 8 issue of *Kargar*, Atai described his experiences in Evin Prison. In doing so, he exposed the widespread abuses and violations of Iranian law and the constitution that have been committed by prison guards and officials. The Islamic Revolutionary Courts and the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office are responsible for administering the prisons.

Atai brought to light the brutality to which many of the some 6,000 prisoners in Evin Prison have been subjected. Up to eighty persons are confined in each cell of six meters by six meters. Prisoners are often whipped on the feet, and some ten percent, Atai estimated, have suffered more severe forms of torture — such as being hanged from the ceiling with only the toes touching the floor, or having one's arms bound together, one over the head and the other behind the back, with weighted handcuffs. Atai himself was whipped on the feet on one occasion.

During the first weeks Atai was at Evin Prison, he said, secret executions were carried out on two nights each week, with about seventy-five persons being put to death each time. These ended in late January, he said.

Terrorist campaign

To the extent that it has tried to justify such extreme measures, the regime has pointed to the widespread terrorist attacks against its officials that broke out in mid-1981. These bombings and shootings took the lives of some 1,000 officials, including Iran's prime minister and president and the head of the ruling Islamic Republican Party.

Although some of the attacks — including those that were most devastating — were most likely carried out by monarchist groups or other counterrevolutionary forces linked directly to the CIA, the opening for the attacks was provided by the Mujahedeen's June 1981 announcement that they were "launching war" against the Iranian government. Since then, political statements by Mujahedeen leaders have become more and more openly proimperialist (see accompanying article).

The workers and peasants of Iran responded to the assassinations by mobilizing to defend their revolution. They have rallied in massive numbers on several occasions to repudiate the counterrevolutionary terrorist attacks.

Nonetheless, the regime's executions of thousands of middle-class youth suspected of

belonging to or supporting the Mujahedeen have been highly unpopular. The masses sense that these youth should have been won to the revolution.

Most importantly, they see the executions as an attack on their own rights, an attempt to foster a climate of intimidation.

'Kargar' gets favorable response

In responding to the terrorism, the regime has gone far beyond the relatively small layer of disoriented petty-bourgeois youth who were directly involved. Thousands of persons have been imprisoned and executed, and many of these had nothing to do with the armed attacks.

Bahram Atai pointed out that he had met in Evin Prison workers who support the revolution, and members of leftist groups such as the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and the majority faction of the Fedayan, both of which give political support to the Islamic Republican government. Many other prisoners are from groups like the Maoist Peykar faction and the Fedayan minority, which while sharing many of the views of the Mujahedeen have not taken up arms against the revolution.

What the regime has done, then, is to take advantage of the terrorist attacks in order to strike at the democratic rights of all the toilers, who more and more are pressing to advance the revolution along an anticapitalist course.

Hence, *Kargar's* exposure of the apparatus with direct responsibility for carrying out the repression — the courts and the prosecutor's office — has been widely welcomed. HKE leaders report that the issue of *Kargar* with the Bahram Atai interview sold out from Tehran newsstands within days, and that copies were being resold at a price several times higher than that listed on the cover.

Khomeini urges lighter hand

Discontent with the imprisonments and executions was already running high. The regime's sensitivity on this score was indicated by Ayatollah Khomeini's message to the nation on the third anniversary of the revolution. He called on the prosecutors and the courts to conduct "a prompt review of prisoners' files" and "prepare a list of prisoners whose pardon is not objectionable according to the holy religious laws and send them to me. It is necessary that authorities should not be strict in preparing the list. Efforts should be made to guide prisoners to join the beloved people and take the path of the Islamic Revolution along with them."

Bahram Atai reported that when this message was read to the prisoners at Evin, they responded with loud chants of "God is great!" that rang out for several hours.

When the harassment of the HKE and *Kargar* by the prosecutor's office began, leaders of the HKE immediately began calling or visiting government offices to demand a halt to such threats and violations of their rights. They found no one who would take responsibility for the attacks. Representatives of the president's office, the Supreme Court, and the Min-

istry of Islamic Guidance (which regulates the news media and publications like *Kargar*) all declared that the harassment was illegal and that they would investigate. The ministry stated it had no information on the removal of *Kargar* from newsstands.

HKE files lawsuit

The HKE has taken further steps to defend its own rights and those of all Iranian workers and peasants. A lawsuit against illegal arrests and torture — prohibited by Article 37 of the Islamic Republic's constitution — has been filed by the HKE. The interview with Bahram Atai on Evin Prison was entered as evidence in this case.

Prominent anti-imperialist intellectuals, such as Shams al-Ahmad, have spoken out against the harassment of the HKE.

HKE leader Babak Zahraie presented to Supreme Court Chief Justice Ayatollah Ardebili on March 16 an additional statement detailing other provisions of the constitution that have been violated in the case of the HKE. These include Article 34, which expressly bars harassment by officials of persons who file lawsuits against the government; and Article 31, which states that no one may be denied their rights under the constitution even when the country is in a state of war.

Zahraie's statement points out that HKE members have spent a total of 115 months in prison since the overthrow of the monarchy. Not one of the twenty-two Trotskyists who have been arrested at one time or another in Iran have ever been tried or convicted of any crime in a duly constituted court of law.

On the other hand, the HKE has been a staunch defender of the revolution against the threats and attacks of imperialism. Its members have served in the armed forces and in the volunteer militia known as the Baseej. Some HKE soldiers have been killed fighting the Iraqis at the front.

Protests needed

Because the HKE defends the revolution in practice, and because it stands up for its democratic rights within that framework, the regime has always been forced to back down from its repressive moves against the HKE.

Those outside Iran who share the HKE's stance of support for the revolution and opposition to the attacks on it by U.S. imperialism can play a role in defending the rights of socialists and working-class militants in Iran. Telegrams such as the following should be sent to Hojatolislam Mousavi Tabrizi, Prosecutor General, Islamic Revolutionary Courts, Tehran, Iran. Send copies to *Jomhuri-e-Eslami*, Tehran, Iran:

"As a supporter of the Iranian revolution and an opponent of the U.S. government's threats against it, I urge you to release the anti-shah, anti-imperialist fighter Mohammed Bagher Falsafi and halt the illegal harassment of his organization, the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), and of the HKE's legal newspaper, *Kargar*." □

What kind of international solidarity?

Liberals run for cover as imperialist attacks sharpen

By Fred Murphy

Aside from Central America, the area of sharpest confrontation today between imperialism and the world revolution is in the Middle East. There, the Israeli regime is threatening to unleash a new war against the Arab peoples, and the Iranian revolution faces an intensified U.S. destabilization campaign.

U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger toured Arab capitals in early February as part of the stepped-up drive against the Iranian revolution. Weinberger offered arms and other military aid to Saudi Arabia and the five smaller states that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council.¹

In describing this new formation, the March 8 *U.S. News & World Report* explained: "Common enemy: Not Russia, but Iran. Conservative Arabs consider gulf stability more gravely endangered by Iran's revolutionary Moslem mullahs than by the Kremlin."

Of particular concern to the proimperialist regimes in the area have been the advances made by the Iranians in beating back the eighteen-month-old Iraqi invasion. Youssef Ibrahim and Karen Elliott House reported in the February 24 *Wall Street Journal*:

"In Jordan, King Hussein is rounding up volunteers to fight alongside Iraq. Egypt is sending military supplies to Iraq and hinting that Egyptian soldiers would join the fight against Iran if the latter's troops set foot on Iraqi soil. Kuwait is offering logistical help, and the United Arab Emirates and Jordan continue to make their ports available to landlocked Iraq."

On the CIA hit-list

Besides urging a united front of the region's proimperialist regimes against the Iranian revolution, Washington has also turned loose the CIA. The spy agency's chief, William Casey, put Iran at the top of the list when asked by *U.S. News* to name "the half-dozen most dangerous spots in the world for the U.S. in the coming period."

According to the March 7 *New York Times*, the CIA is providing funds and resources to two counterrevolutionary paramilitary organizations. These groups are made up of as many as 10,000 Iranian exiles, and commanded by former top military officers of the shah.

Times correspondent Leslie Gelb explained: "Concern in the Reagan Administration and in

Courts ban 'Kargar'

On March 26, the Islamic Revolutionary Courts of Iran issued an order declaring the socialist newsweekly *Kargar* illegal. The order, printed prominently in Tehran's four main daily newspapers, accused *Kargar* of "defaming the Islamic Republic of Iran, publishing lies, and slandering the judicial authorities."

The courts also ordered Bahram Ali Atai, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), to appear for questioning. The HKE publishes *Kargar*, which recently carried a detailed interview with Atai on his experiences as a detainee at Evin Prison (see preceding article).

Atai plans to surrender publicly to the Supreme Court on March 29.

In defending themselves against these new moves, HKE leaders point out that none of the accusations against *Kargar* have been proven in a court of law. They cite Article 168 of Iran's constitution, which calls for public trials by jury in all cases involving freedom of the press.

As of March 28, *Kargar's* printer, Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, remained in detention. No charges against him have been made public.

parts of Western Europe about the Khomeini Government is mounting. This stems both from the evidence of growing Soviet-Iranian ties and from the threat that Iran's Islamic fundamentalist revolution will spread to countries important to the United States, such as Saudi Arabia."

The imperialists hate the Khomeini regime because it has shown that it will respond to the pressure of the Iranian masses and resist Washington's threats and attacks on the revolution. And Khomeini has also called on the toilers throughout the Middle East to rise up against the region's proimperialist rulers — such as the Saudi monarchy, the feudal princes of the Gulf states, and the U.S.-backed Mubarak regime in Egypt.

Flight of the liberals

The increasing imperialist pressure against the Iranian revolution has been reflected in widespread desertions of the revolution's defense by liberals and petty-bourgeois leftists, both in Iran and in the imperialist countries.

While these forces initially hailed the overthrow of the monarchy and the early anti-imperialist moves of the new government, most have now given the revolution up for dead.

The liberals and petty-bourgeois leftists are now focusing all their fire on the Khomeini government. At best, they simply ignore Washington's counteroffensive, which aims precisely at replacing Khomeini with a regime that would crush the masses instead of leaning on them in its conflicts with imperialism. At worst, they lend support to this drive.

Inside Iran, big layers of upper- and middle-class youth who participated in the battles against the shah's regime have now become disillusioned and have turned against the revolution. An important reflection of this was the declaration of "war" against Khomeini launched last June by the People's Mujahedeen Organization, a radical Islamic current based mainly among educated, middle-class youth.

The Mujahedeen's war involved a campaign of terrorist attacks against government officials. This created fresh openings for destabilization efforts by all the various counterrevolutionary forces inside and outside Iran — the monarchists, sections of the military hierarchy, liberals, and the CIA itself. Savage bombing attacks in June and August took the lives of dozens of Iranian officials, including the president and prime minister.

The Mujahedeen hailed the latter attacks and took credit for scores of other assassinations. But the Iranian masses repudiated the terror campaign. They viewed the assassinations as attacks on themselves, on their revolution, and on the government which they had elected and to which they saw no progressive alternative.

Within hours of the August 30 bombing of the prime minister's office, more than a million persons poured into the streets of Tehran, chanting slogans against U.S. imperialism.

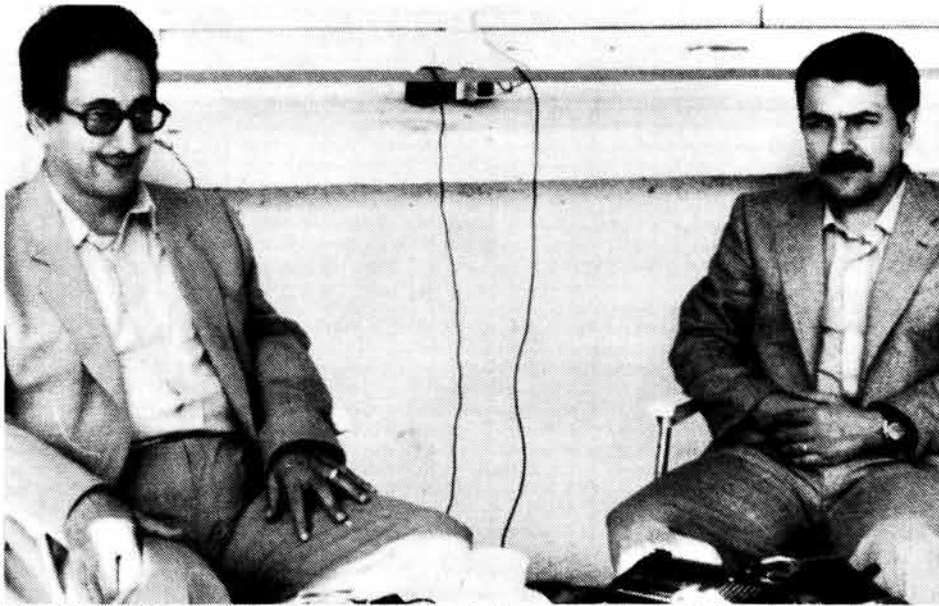
Evolution of Mujahedeen

The Mujahedeen's utter failure to rally the masses of Iran behind their anti-Khomeini drive did not cause the group's leaders to pull back. On the contrary — their political trajectory has been more and more toward accommodation with U.S. imperialism.

Thus Mujahedeen leader Massoud Rajavi now blames the Iraqi invasion of Iran on what he terms Khomeini's "reactionary policies of exporting the revolution." Ex-President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, firmly allied to the Mujahedeen, asserts that Iran should "turn to the West for help in solving its economic problems."

Bani-Sadr calls the November 1979 seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran — which was

1. The Gulf Cooperation Council is made up of the governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. For details on Weinberger's trip, see *Intercontinental Press*, March 1, page 146.



Bani-Sadr (left) and Rajavi: Imperialists are taking note of their rightward political course.

Washington's headquarters for a Chile-style assault on the Iranian revolution — "a very bad thing for Iran."²

The Mujahedeen now call on the imperialists to tighten their economic boycott against Iran. A February 8 communiqué from Rajavi's Paris office warned "all trading partners" that "Iran's foreign currency reserves are completely bankrupt." The statement noted that "officials of Khomeini's regime are now making efforts throughout the world to acquire credit" and warned that "granting Khomeini's regime any credit . . . is considered a move specifically against the people of Iran."

Another theme of the Mujahedeen's propaganda is that "after 3 years, Iran is ruled by a far more repressive and brutal dictatorship" than the U.S.-backed monarchy was. In other words, Khomeini is the same as, or worse than, the shah.

Rajavi even echoes the warnings by bourgeois commentators of an alleged Soviet threat to Iran. In a recent interview he asserted that "Iran's extraordinary geopolitical importance in the region means that its instability cannot be tolerated for too long, as it will upset the traditional pattern of political camps in the region."³

What all this adds up to is the following: Despite the subjective intentions of many of the youth among their ranks, the Mujahedeen or-

2. Rajavi's comments came in an interview published in the January 13 U.S. *Guardian* weekly. Bani-Sadr's were carried by ABC television in mid-January and quoted in the January 21 *New York Times*.

3. From translation of second part of an interview with the U.S. Persian-language publication *Iran-shahr*. The translation was published in issue No. 5 of the *Weekly Publication of the Moslem Students Society — Britain*, dated February 5, 1982. No date was given for the *Iranshahr* issue in which the interview originally appeared.

ganization is now functioning in the camp of imperialist-backed counterrevolution. Its terrorist methods must be seen in this framework, not as an error in tactics by misguided radicals trying to advance the Iranian revolution.

'On the ramparts of counterrevolution'

The course of the Mujahedeen has not gone unnoticed in Washington and allied capitals. While the *New York Times* article that exposed CIA aid to the armed exiles said such help "had been available to groups on the left up to but not including Mr. Bani-Sadr," the British business weekly *8 Days* reported the following in its January 23 issue:

"US sources say Washington, Baghdad, and Riyadh would all like to see Abol Hassan Bani Sadr restored to power in Tehran, and US officials have had substantial contact with the former Iranian president and his entourage in Paris."

Furthermore, in a March 15 *New York Times* column hailing the CIA's moves to arm the Iranian counterrevolution, former Nixon White House staff member William Safire had this to say:

"One hopes that our friends [the CIA] are in contact with those Khomeini followers who are resentful of the sellout of their revolution to the traditional enemy to the east [Safire means the Soviet Union, to the north]. Logic also suggests that we encourage support of the valiant Kurds — a unique ethnic group seeking autonomy — as well as the leftist but non-Communist Mujahedeen on the ramparts of the counterrevolution."

(Aside from Safire's modest proposal that the CIA should lend a hand to the Mujahedeen, his feigned concern for the fate of the Kurdish people should also be noted. Such imperialist hypocrisy is on a par with the protestations of Alexander Haig over the alleged plight of the Miskitu Indians in Nicaragua.)

Unfortunately, the praises of the Mujahe-

deen are not only being sung from the right wing of the political spectrum in the United States and Western Europe.

Playing on their own origins as militant anti-shah fighters, and on the widespread confusion that exists among much of the left regarding the contradictory course of the Iranian revolution, the Mujahedeen have tried to cultivate the support of social democrats, figures in the workers movement, Central American solidarity activists, and petty-bourgeois radicals.

In Britain, the pro-Mujahedeen Moslem Students Society organized a "week of action to protest against Khomeini's atrocities in Iran" between February 4 and 13. Among the endorsers of these activities were leaders of the Labour Party left such as Tony Benn, Eric Hoffer, and Joan Maynard. Labour member of Parliament Stan Newens was among the speakers at a February 13 Mujahedeen rally in London.

In France, the ruling Socialist party has provided a platform to the Mujahedeen, while the imperialist government headed by SP chief François Mitterrand supplies military aircraft and other aid to the Iraqi regime for its counter-revolutionary war against Iran.

U.S. supporters of the Mujahedeen also held activities in mid-February, for which they succeeded in gaining the sponsorship of several petty-bourgeois political currents such as the *Guardian* newspaper and the Communist Workers Party, assorted liberals, and a few local chapters of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Most U.S. antiwar forces have turned down the Mujahedeen, however, correctly sensing that their anti-Khomeini campaign is a diversion from the task of combating Reagan's threats to Central America.

'Emergency Committee' in U.S.

A number of prominent figures in the United States who have often been identified with progressive social movements have established an "Emergency Committee for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights in Iran."

The founding statement of this committee was published in the January 30 issue of the liberal weekly *Nation*, was signed by Rev. William Sloan Coffin, David Dellinger, Don Luce, and George Wald, all known for their opposition to Washington's war against the peoples of Indochina; Prof. Edward Said, a Palestinian scholar best known for his refutations of racist views on the Arab world and Islam; Ralph Schoenman, a longtime defender of the victims of political repression in many countries; and Prof. Richard Falk of Princeton University, who was a leading opponent of Washington's backing of the shah's regime and who spoke out in support of Ayatollah Khomeini during the mass revolutionary upsurge in Iran in 1978-79.

The Emergency Committee's appeal focuses exclusively on violations of democratic rights by the current Iranian government. It makes no mention of U.S. threats and attacks on the revolution, even while pledging "to in-

form the American people as accurately as possible about unfolding developments in Iran."

Setting the framework for the appeal in the January 30 *Nation* was an accompanying article by Richard Falk that echoed the themes found in Mujahedeen propaganda. The thrust of Falk's argument is that "In many respects, sad to say, Iran is worse off now than it was under the Shah."

'Victory of religious fascism'?

Falk recoils from the anti-imperialist actions taken by the Iranian masses, branding the takeover of the U.S. embassy "lawless behavior justified in the name of the revolution." He deplores "Khomeini's provocative calls for revolution throughout the Islamic world." Like Rajavi, he holds Khomeini responsible for the Iraqi invasion.

In Iran today, Falk perceives a "descent into terror" and "the victory of religious fascism." In painting the situation in such bleak terms, he is blind to the rich political process taking place among the Iranian workers and peasants.

Despite a series of difficulties, the toilers of Iran have moved forward, not back, during the past three years. They have mobilized repeatedly against the threats, pressures, and direct attacks of U.S. imperialism. They have organized committees in their workplaces and villages to fight for control over production and for land reform, and against hoarding and speculation and bureaucratic mismanagement.

At present, the toilers are the backbone of the military resistance to the counterrevolutionary Iraqi invasion. Their pressure for real anti-imperialist steps has brought down two governments (Bazargan and Bani-Sadr) and has forced the current rulers to stand up to Washington and its regional lackeys.⁴

Falk's view of masses

But to Falk, the masses are at best passive spectators. And since it is the masses that the Khomeini regime leans on, their supposed backwardness is responsible at least in part for the "religious fascism" that reigns in Iran today, according to Falk.

He even belittles the decisive role played by the Iranian toilers in bringing down the shah's regime. "The Iranians saw the revolution as a miracle wrought by the purity of Khomeini's inspirational leadership," Falk asserts. "Only divine intervention could have enabled him to defeat the Shah's superior forces with no outside help and without touching off a civil war."

Falk commits the error he ascribes to the Iranian masses: He locates the key to the current situation "somewhere in the dark genius of Ayatollah Khomeini himself," and he leaves the workers and peasants out of account when he predicts "three possibilities for post-Khomeini Iran." These are:

- muddling through "on the brink of chaos for several more years";

- a military coup and restoration of "a moderate civilian government resembling that of Bakhtiar" (the shah's last prime minister); or

- a victory by "democratic forces," which "have organized themselves into a provisional government under Bani-Sadr and Rajavi." In order to win, these forces would have to "gather enough strength within the military and the clergy," and would probably have to carry out a "civil war."

Falk clearly favors the latter alternative (although he would logically have to prefer a Bakhtiar-type "moderate civilian government" to the "religious fascism" he claims exists in Iran at present). Falk praises the Mujahedeen as "idealistic and devout Moslems" and states that "support for the democratic forces now arrayed against [Khomeini] seems entirely justified."

No revolutionary perspective

Absent from Falk's alternative scenarios for "post-Khomeini Iran" is a fourth possibility: that in the course of ongoing struggles for social justice and political rights the Iranian masses will draw lessons from their experiences and seek ways to replace the capitalist Khomeini regime with a workers and peasants government.

Such a government would consolidate, deepen, and guarantee the gains of the revolution. For leadership in this new stage of the struggle, the masses will look not to the politically bankrupt Mujahedeen but to the young anti-imperialist fighters who are emerging from the ranks of the current battles.

Along this strategic line of march, the toilers require the fullest democratic rights to discuss, assemble, demonstrate, and strike for their demands. Such rights were greatly expanded in Iran through the victorious mass struggle against the shah's dictatorship.

The current regime has attacked these rights, however, even resorting to large-scale imprisonments and executions. The govern-

ment seized the opportunity presented by the Mujahedeen's terror campaign to step up such attacks, but in recent months popular opposition to anti-working-class repression has been mounting (see accompanying article).

Right of self-determination

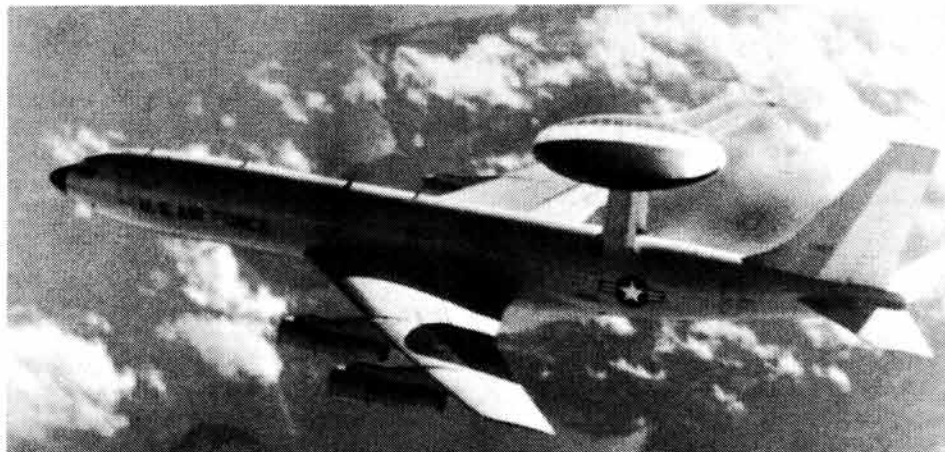
Like all the liberal critics of the Iranian revolution — and like the imperialists and their news media — Falk points to the violations of democratic rights that the Khomeini regime has indeed carried out. But Falk has nothing to say about one key democratic right of Iranians — a right that those in the imperialist countries have central responsibility for defending. That is, Iran's right of national self-determination.

Falk passes over in silence Washington's military buildup in the Persian Gulf region, its increased aid to the reactionary monarchies in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere that fear the Iranian revolution will spread, its unleashing of the CIA for a destabilization campaign inside Iran. And he agrees with and echoes the racist propaganda about "Islamic fanaticism."

By ignoring the concrete imperialist threat to all the rights and gains the Iranian people have won in the past three years, Falk forfeits any standing as a critic of the Khomeini regime's abuses.

The same problem arises with formations like the Emergency Committee for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights in Iran referred to above. Many of the aims set forth in its appeal are laudable in the abstract, but the actual political context is set by the imperialist campaign against the Iranian revolution and the utter failure of these same liberals and radicals to stand up to that campaign and to defend the right of the Iranian people to self-determination.

The main task of those in the United States and other imperialist countries who want to help the workers and peasants of Iran achieve their liberation remains the same as it was during the fight against the shah: to expose, oppose, and mobilize against any and all imperialist attempts to intervene in Iran. □



U.S. AWACS radar planes were rushed to Saudi Arabia following Iraqi invasion of Iran. The first duty of those in imperialist countries is to oppose intervention by their own governments and to defend the right of oppressed nations like Iran to self-determination.

4. For details on recent struggles by workers and peasants in Iran, see "Where revolution stands today," *Intercontinental Press*, February 15, page 102.

Poland sparks broad debate

Susan Sontag's conversion to anticommunism

By Harry Ring

[The following article appeared in the April 2 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

Susan Sontag's speech last month proved to be quite a media event.

A prominent critic and essayist known for her radicalism in the Vietnam War period, Sontag was a featured speaker at a February 6 meeting in New York City's Town Hall in support of Poland's Solidarity.

The event was publicized as a forum for radical intellectuals and unionists who wanted to speak out against the Polish crackdown without aiding President Reagan's demagogic exploitation of the issue.

Sontag took the occasion to deliver a virulent anticommunist speech and to assert that she and other radicals had been dupes of communism.

A stir in the media

Time magazine devoted two-thirds of a page to Sontag's conversion.

The *New York Times* provided an extensive report of the meeting. It published a second article recounting the debate her speech sparked in intellectual circles.

The *New York Post*, an anticommunist gutter rag, ran a story on the meeting with a block-type headline pegged to her speech: "Communism = Fascism."

The *Los Angeles Times* reprinted her speech on its Op Ed page.

The *Washington Post* did an extensive feature on the debate around Sontag's speech.

"She saw through the Left's head-in-the-sand rationale," was the title of a feature article in the Toronto *Globe & Mail*, which is read throughout English-speaking Canada.

A San Francisco *Chronicle* editorial welcomed her to the anticommunist fold.

In his syndicated column, right-winger William Buckley saluted her "courage."

Liberal anticommunist columnist James Wechsler wondered "where she had been so long."

The *New York Village Voice* devoted a number of articles to the speech.

The *Soho News*, a liberal weekly, ran the text of her speech. (Sontag initiated a damage suit because they did so without her permission.) The paper followed up with responses to the speech from academic and literary figures here and abroad.

The *Nation* magazine also ran Sontag's speech — with permission — and followed up with a similar symposium.

Why did Sontag's declaration of her conversion to anticommunism create such a media stir?

The right moment

For one thing, it came at a moment when the anticommunist campaign in this country around Poland was flagging. It was a few weeks after the government-sponsored "Let Poland Be Poland" extravaganza, which went over like the proverbial lead balloon.

And it had the added value of being the first such declaration by a significant intellectual figure in a good many years. It is obviously hoped that the Sontag stand will help speed up other liberal and radical intellectuals currently on a rightward course.

One might wonder how Sontag happened to be on the platform at the Town Hall meeting.

In a March 2 *Village Voice* article, Ralph Schoenman, principal organizer of the rally, said he felt "particularly aggrieved" because he had invited Sontag to speak. And he had explained to her that the meeting was being organized because it was "essential for the left to take up the cause of the Polish workers . . . and, above all, to deny to cold warriors the support of a workers' mass movement in Poland, which they would be the first to crush in the U.S."

Sontag, Schoenman said, declared her "full support for this approach."

And, he added, there was "no intimation" that she intended to deliver her anticommunist tirade.

That may be. But Schoenman did know in advance about another anticommunist who was given the platform at the meeting.

In the same article, Schoenman describes his discussion with Joseph Brodsky, a right-wing Soviet dissident. Despite the declared left-wing purpose of the meeting, Brodsky had been invited to speak.

This exception was made, Schoenman explains, because Brodsky had been "supportive" of individual Polish exiles.

Brodsky, in discussing the program, demanded to know why "those ridiculous PATCO people" [the striking air traffic controllers fired by Reagan] had been invited.

He accused Schoenman of wanting to have "liberal chestbeaters and fellow travelers up here."

Schoenman reports that his response to Brodsky was: "Don't feel obligated. You should only come if you feel that this is a place you want to be and a program with which you are comfortable."

Schoenman does not say why he did not simply withdraw the invitation.

In his speech at the meeting, Brodsky expressed irritation with those who spoke of Reagan's dirty war in El Salvador. The main issue, Brodsky advised, is containing the Soviet Union. He called on Reagan to impose a trade embargo on Poland.

Regarding Schoenman's aggrieved surprise at Sontag's performance, a certain skepticism is in order.

Sontag and Schoenman have known each other for years. Was he really totally oblivious of her political evolution?

Was he unaware that her latest book, *Under the Sign of Saturn*, is dedicated to Joseph Brodsky?

The invitations to Sontag and Brodsky, in the name of an undefined "unity of the left" against Stalinist repression, signified a substantial adaptation to the right.

Certainly there were worthwhile things said at the Town Hall meeting. Gregory Pardo from the air traffic controllers and other unionists effectively exposed union-buster Reagan's crocodile tears for Solidarity. Paul Robeson, Jr., pointed to Solidarity's struggle as confirming that socialism and democracy were inseparable. Pete Seeger spoke in a similar vein.

But insofar as the public impact of the meeting was concerned, all this was drowned out by the media's almost total focus on Sontag's reactionary speech.

The propaganda blitz developed around the Sontag speech makes it obligatory for left opponents of her reactionary ideas to analyze and rebut them.

At Town Hall, Sontag insisted that she agreed with the purpose of the meeting. And she did attack Reagan as a union-buster and the puppet master of the Salvadoran dictatorship.

But her attack on Reagan in relation to Poland — like that of her friend Brodsky — was from the right, not the left.

Like Brodsky, she flayed the "Western governments" — that is the imperialist governments — for continuing to refinance Polish bank loans and for not cutting off grain sales to the Soviet Union.

"That," Sontag bitterly declared, "is the kind of retaliating the Western democracies are prepared to make for the enslavement of Poland."

Massive 'retaliating'?

What kind of "retaliating" does Sontag favor?

An economic blockade of Poland and the Soviet Union by the Reagan-led "democracies"? Will that aid the Polish workers' struggle, or simply compound their difficulties?

And if such a blockade failed to end their "enslavement," what next? Military retaliation?

Defending her thesis that "Communism is fascism," Sontag declared that the entire left is corrupt and bankrupt. Not just those on the left — and they are not just a few — who closed their eyes to the crimes of Stalinism or tried to justify them. But even those who did not.

"We tried to distinguish among communisms," Sontag declared, "for example treating Stalinism, which we disavowed, as if it were an aberration."

To buttress her claim that communism equals fascism, Sontag argued, "The similarities between the Polish military junta and the right-wing dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, and other South American countries are obvious."

Putting aside the question of whether the repressive regimes in South America are military dictatorships or fascist regimes, Sontag here displayed a total lack of comprehension of what fascism — or communism — actually is.

For Marxists, it is essential to distinguish as precisely as possible between differing social systems and differing states and governments. It is not a matter of semantics, or idle theoretical speculation. Such criteria are indispensable if you are determined to help change the world. You have to know what you are fighting for and what you are fighting against — how to fight effectively for what you want and against what you do not want.

The key to this problem, for Marxists, is a materialist analysis, a class analysis. This is totally absent from Sontag's approach.

For example, there are currently repressive regimes in Argentina and Poland. But in Argentina you have capitalism. In Poland you do not.

In Poland capitalism was overturned following World War II, and a workers state — a bureaucratically deformed one — replaced it.

A class difference

So the difference between Argentina and Poland is substantial. In Argentina, the military discharges its responsibility of preserving capitalism. It is in step with the capitalist class.

In Poland, the privileged bureaucracy is a major obstacle to the advancement of the workers state towards socialism. Its interests conflict with those of the workers.

Those looking at it superficially will argue, "But what's the difference? The workers have no rights in Poland or Argentina."

That is like arguing there is no difference between slavery and wage labor.

The capitalist exploitation of wage labor is intense. And in many cases it means the most brutal repression for the workers. Yet, as counterposed to slavery, or feudalism, capitalism represented an historic advance for humanity.

The same holds true for the countries of the world where capitalism has been abolished — the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Eu-

rope, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

That is the case even though Cuba is the only one of these countries where workers democracy prevails.

Fascism equals communism, declares Sontag.

Nothing could be further from the reality. Fascism, which arose in its classic form in Italy and Germany, represents the total crisis of capitalism and the manipulation by fascist demagogues of a socially disoriented middle class as a battering ram against the organized working class.

In that sense, fascism is also different from military dictatorships that are imposed when capitalism cannot "afford" democracy. Fascism is a far deeper form of repression because, at least in its first period, it maintains power not simply with a military club, but with a mass-based counterrevolutionary movement.

What base?

Can anyone seriously argue that the regime in Poland has a mass base? It rules primarily by armed force, and even that would be insufficient if it were not backed by the potential use of Soviet troops.

And, not only is communism not equal to fascism, but what you have in Poland is not communism. Genuine communism — a classless society of cooperative producers — remains humanity's great liberating goal. We have yet to achieve anywhere even a socialist society, which Marx described as a society of economic superabundance where conflicting class antagonisms have been reduced to a minimum and the state is in the process of withering away.

Poland is a workers state. That is, it is a state where the principal means of production are no longer privately owned, where there is planned production, not production for profit.

But Poland is obviously not a healthy workers state. From the outset the Polish revolution has been dominated by Kremlin-sponsored bureaucrats who utilize their positions of power to ensure themselves substantial material privilege in the midst of general scarcity. Because they are a parasitic drain on the economy — and incompetent bureaucratic mismanagers to boot — they cannot abide workers democracy. That is why they have fought Solidarity so savagely.

And because the bureaucrats' political rule is so costly and oppressive, the Polish workers and farmers can be relied on to continue the struggle by any means necessary. The battle in Poland is far from over.

The Polish workers are not struggling against "communism." They are fighting to democratize a bureaucratically deformed workers state.

There may be varying degrees of political consciousness among the Polish workers — varying degrees of Marxist understanding, if you will — but they are not fighting for the restoration of capitalism.

The workers at the Lenin Shipyard in

Gdansk, the militant miners in Silesia, the Polish workers as a whole, are not looking for the arrival of capitalists to take over their nationalized enterprises. They want to take control of them and run them themselves — democratically.

In short, despite the present setback, the Polish workers are in the process of making a political revolution. That is, the logic of their movement is to overthrow the bureaucratic regime in Warsaw and replace it with democratic institutions of the workers.

The term political revolution is key. It distinguishes the process from the kind of revolution needed in capitalist countries, that is, a social revolution to eliminate private ownership of industry.

Sontag's failure to grasp such a class, or Marxist, approach to the political revolution in Poland stems not from a nonclass approach, but from an anti-working-class approach.

Sontag not only despises Poland's bureaucratic hacks. She fears and despises the Polish working class as well.

In her response to critics in the February 27 *Nation*, she bitterly declares:

"Neither the ruling elites nor the enslaved and disaffected people of Eastern Europe can be called 'Marxist'; and if and when these oppressed manage to overthrow their tyrants, it will not, I fear, be to embrace an alternative of our liking.

"What is brewing in Eastern Europe is not democratic socialism. The centrality of a particularly fervent Catholicism to Solidarity is not an accident or an instance of cultural lag; and, in Russia, among those who are not cynics or merely demoralized, new converts to religious fundamentalism outnumber the liberals and democratic socialists a thousand to one. . . .

"Is it now proved that we have been wrong to be hopeful that out of Communism something much better might emerge? Yes, it is now proved. We were wrong. It is the people who live in those countries who tell us that."

So much for Sontag's solidarity with Solidarity.

Response to Sontag

But what of her critics? I speak here of those who responded to her in the pages of the *Nation* and *Soho News*.

These include a range of intellectual figures and political writers, some radical, some quasi-radical, and some liberal. Plus there are others who speak in the name of liberalism or even socialism but in actuality postulate unadulterated, right-wing anticommunism.

Daniel Singer, author of a book on the Polish events, makes a particularly cogent point in the *Nation* symposium. He notes that Susan Sontag, Leonid Brezhnev, Polish General Jaruzelski, and Reagan all agree on one point — that what you have today in Poland is "communism." And, Singer adds, "They apparently all agree that there can be no other Communism than that."

He caustically adds, "Her [Sontag] other

catchy definition, 'fascism with a human face' was obviously meant for stubborn suckers like myself who refuse to swallow the cheap, fashionable equation between Marx and the barbed wire."

Singer's point is buttressed by the historical fact of Marx's political work, as well as his writing. And by the fact that Stalinism was able to come to power in the Soviet Union — and then imposed elsewhere — only on the basis of mortal struggle against genuine communists.

A slashing rejoinder to Sontag is offered in the *Soho News* by Columbia University Prof. Edward Said, a Palestinian.

Said observes that it is the responsibility of intellectuals to respond first of all to "what is closest to them," U.S. policy. Otherwise, he declares, "they become willing agents of the state, legitimizers of its policies."

"Above all," Said declares, "it is not for intellectuals to be amateur national security advisers, certifiers of patriotism, or unpaid voices of America."

Solidarity with Palestinians

He concretizes that stern admonition by citing the horrendous crimes of the Washington-sponsored Israeli regime against the Palestinian people.

"So far as I know," Said wrote, "no right-thinking group of prominent American intellectuals has met at Town Hall to protest the denial of Palestinian rights."

Is it too much to say, he inquires, that Poland's "present misery has been the occasion for much hypocrisy and bad faith?"

Unfortunately such voices as those of Said and Singer are a distinct minority in the *Nation-Soho News* symposia. Several other contributors reject Sontag's equation of communism and fascism but offer few cogent arguments against her.

Others — writer Diana Trilling and *Nation* editorial board member Aryeh Neier — chide Sontag for tardiness in joining the ranks of the "democratic" anticommunists.

With some of the contributors, the line is a more hard-nosed anticommunism.

"The situation in Poland alarms me more than the one in El Salvador," worries Prof. Julia Kristeva.

Ben Wattenberg, coeditor of *Public Opinion*, opines that such regimes as the one in El Salvador may not be as free as "we would wish," but, "do any of those nations target their missiles on America? Are they really as unfree as the Soviet-style totalitarian countries? If you're harassed in Chile these days you can leave, but can you leave if you're harassed in Russia?"

Welcoming Sontag to the anticommunist ranks, Prof. Seymour Martin Lipset — also once a radical — advises of the need "to recognize that Western society, including the United States, is more humane, more progressive . . . than any and all of the regimes that call themselves communist.

"Those who seek utopias," Lipset warns,

"are the true villains."

Another disgusting contribution to the discussion was provided by Christopher Hitchens, a contributing editor of the *Nation*.

'Good' anticommunism

Hitchens assures that he sees no sign that Sontag has moved "noticeably" to the irrational anticommunism of "the bad old days."

He adds that people can defend the Polish workers "without any throat-clearing about El Salvador."

He says: "Surely I am not the only socialist who finds comparisons between Solidarity and the fate of PATCO to be grotesque? The rights of highly paid Reaganite air controllers may have been *violated*, but the rights of Polish coal miners and shipbuilders have been *abolished*." (Emphasis in original.)

I would submit that Hitchens is as much a socialist as General Jaruzelski is a communist.

Someone who is unwilling to even "clear his throat" for the Salvadoran rebels and PATCO strikers has no moral or political claim to being a socialist. At the same time, such people are a deadly obstacle in the fight against Stalinism.

Stalinism can be fully comprehended only in the context of the international class struggle — the fight of the world's workers and peasants against capitalism and imperialism.

The whole thrust of world history today is away from capitalism and towards socialism. The rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and its damaging effects, there and elsewhere, was a product of defeats and setbacks for the world working class. The problem of Stalinism will find a progressive resolution only in the context of the fight against capitalism and for socialism.

In explaining the political degeneration that occurred in the Soviet Union with the rise of Stalinism, Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Russian revolution, likened the revolutionary process to a trade union that had achieved state power.

And, with the emergence of Stalinism, he likened the process to the bureaucratization of a previously healthy union with a class-struggle perspective.

Such bureaucrats, he explained, do a terrible disservice to the unions. They not only suppress democracy in order to protect their privileged positions, but they work consciously to achieve a status quo relationship with the employers.

The bureaucrats recognize that the ranks of a union which fights militantly to preserve and extend its gains is not likely to tolerate for long a conservative, parasitic bureaucracy.

Antibureaucratic strategy

The question is posed for members of bureaucratically dominated unions, how can we get rid of these hacks who loot the union treasury, deny the members a voice, and make sell-out deals with the employers?

Point number one, of course, for serious unionists, is to conduct the fight in such a way that it gives no aid or comfort to the employ-

ers, nor to their mock concern about labor bureaucratism, which they use to discredit unionism.

Point number two is that the bureaucrats can be fought effectively only in the context of deepening the fight against the employers. Those who are not ready to take on the bosses will hardly be effective against people who are essentially the bosses' agents within the union.

When rank-and-file unionists are locked in combat with a bureaucratic gang, all partisans of militant, democratic unionism will rally behind them.

But these workers do not need help from people who are antiunion and who advise that unionism is the root of the problem, that bureaucratism is an "inherent" feature of unionism.

Nor do workers need the help of liberals who assure that they are very much pronoun, but simply concerned that maybe there is a problem of "big labor" vs. big capital; and who maybe believe it is a bit utopian to think that ordinary workers can take control of their unions and give the bosses a run for their money.

Similarly with the fight against Stalinism, it takes consistent, revolutionary socialists to fight that bureaucratic monstrosity without giving an inch to the capitalist rulers and their politicians.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the organizers of the Town Hall meeting rejected a request from the Socialist Workers Party for a speaker at the meeting.

This although the SWP stands in full solidarity with the Polish workers and has fought Stalinism from its inception without ever compromising with capitalism.

Poor excuse

The explanation given was rather thin — there would be no representatives of organizations on the platform. That may have been the formality, but the views of such organizations as the reformist Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee were presented at the meeting.

And a platform was provided for such anti-communists as Brodsky and Sontag.

In the pages of the *Nation*, Susan Sontag brands the song, "The Internationale," as "the anthem of the oppressive state." She says she was glad the Polish workers didn't sing it and hoped the Salvadoran liberation fighters wouldn't either.

Sontag is as wrong on that as she is on everything else. Stalinist regimes may offer formal claim to the song, but they choke on its call for the revolutionary solidarity of the oppressed of the world.

Today, whether Sontag likes it or not, "The Internationale" is being sung by increasing numbers of those fighting for a new and better world. And for good reason. It is, and remains, the only way forward. In good time, the Polish workers, those of El Salvador, and yes, the U.S. workers, will together sing, "We have been naught, we shall be all." □

Behind new drive against 'bureaucratism'

Continuing political conflict inside Communist Party

By Kai Chang

[The following article appeared in the February 1982 issue of *October Review*, a revolutionary socialist monthly published in Hong Kong. The translation is by *October Review*.]

* * *

With leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) recently raising a call once again for a drive against bureaucratism and excess staffing in the state institutions, China is about to witness another purge of a section of cadres.

Antibureaucratism has long been a slogan of the Communist Party of China. But five years after the fall of the "Gang of Four,"¹ the ruling faction has had to admit that the party's style of work has gotten even worse.

Premier Zhao Ziyang's recent report on government operations reflected this:

"Recently, in social, economic, and daily life sectors, such vile phenomena as banquets, gift-giving, offers of commissions, favoritism, back-door relations, and extravagance have sprouted. . . . Corruption, robbery, theft, speculation, profiteering, smuggling, and tax evasion — all sorts of criminal economic activities — are flagrant in certain areas. . . .

"Particularly serious is the fact that some economic units and state officials connive in, support, and even directly participate in these criminal economic activities; this has gravely eroded the state organs and the ranks of cadres. . . .

"In recent years, as a result of increased international contact, phenomena caused by the intrusion of corrupt Western bourgeois thinking and lifestyles have reappeared in some places."

These phenomena are obviously widespread or they would not be regarded by Chen Yun² as "a life-and-death question for the ruling party."

Case of the 'electricity bully'

Shocking instances of this grave erosion are abundant. For example, an official magazine *Ban Yue Tan* (No. 1, 1982) reported on the case of the "electricity bully": "Surgeons at the

Military Hospital were operating on a patient when the electricity supply was suddenly cut . . . the electricity department demanded sixty military overcoats; no overcoats, no electricity supply."

If the army can be so openly bullied, one can imagine the situation of "weaker" departments. Freed from supervision by the people, corruption and privilege have reached a frightful level.

In an attempt to curb bureaucratism, the party reprinted Chen Yun's 1945 speech "Respect the Truth and Not the Reputation." Studying this article in a seminar, a group of old cadres commented that the situation has gotten much worse:

"A small number of party members and cadres have been or are being rotten. They concern themselves not with the welfare of the country and of the people, but with fishing for personal interests. It is most painful that some old cadres add to the discredit. . . . [They think] they need not be constrained by the regulations, and they react to criticism with anger and vengeance."³

'Laws are not observed'

"In general," according to the January 2, 1982, *People's Daily*, "there is the abnormal phenomena of 'hard to criticize and harder to self-criticize'; these two things "no longer work."

"At present party discipline is lax, and laws are not observed. Investigation and penalties for cases involving grave breaches of the law are not timely or serious, which is a striking indication that fundamental improvement of the party's style of work has not taken place. . . . If party discipline is not enforced, party regulations are mere scraps of paper and improvement of the party's style of work is mere empty talk."

The Communist Party's Central Commission for Investigating Discipline also admitted that it has been largely incompetent since it was set up three years ago. One reason it gave for the present difficulty in redressing the party's style of work is that "deviate tendencies are protecting deviate tendencies," which is another way of saying that bureaucrats are shielding each other. It shows that the bureaucratic forces are so deeply intertwined that they form an impenetrable wall. The party's repeated appeals for its cadres not to be afraid of a loss of face, loss of votes, or reductions in salary sound hollow in face of the strong bureaucratic forces.

The bureaucratic system is marked by a bloated bureaucratic apparatus that is extremely inefficient. Premier Zhao Ziyang's report said it was "intolerable" that so many departments have lots of excess personnel.

Take the State Council as an example. In the early 1950s it had only four committees and thirty ministries. Now there are 108 ministries. The Ministry of Machine Building alone is divided into eight ministries and bureaus, and at one time there were as many as thirty-eight ministers and vice-ministers.⁴ Under the ministries and bureaus there are some 5,000 bureau directors and assistant directors.

The State Council employs 600,000 persons. One reason for this swelling in personnel is the system of lifetime appointments for cadres. Old cadres refuse to give up their posts until they draw their last breath, but new cadres are continuously promoted. As a result, new posts are set up so that old and new cadres can all happily share the privileges.

This of course increases the state's administrative costs, and it takes more time for official documents to travel through the hierarchy. Intolerable situations therefore become more frequent.

The present leadership has announced that the State Council will set an example by cutting its personnel by one-third, i.e., about 200,000 people. It remains to be seen whether this promise can be carried out. As long as the root of the problem — the bureaucratic system — remains unchallenged, there is no guarantee against a revival of the problem.

The present leadership also proposed cancelling the system of lifetime appointments for cadres. Many old cadres in the top leadership remain unmoved by this appeal. Some have recently resigned, but they kept the same political and living treatment (as provided by the Tianjin Party Committee). They cling to their privileges even after they have left their posts.

Behind concern over excess staff

The main reason for the present campaign to fight excess staffing levels is that a large number of middle- and lower-level cadres have entered the party and won promotions since 1966.⁵

According to a January 6, 1982, report in

1. The Gang of Four — Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen — were close associates of Mao. They had risen to power during the Cultural Revolution and been part of the Mao faction in its campaign to eliminate the wing of the bureaucracy led by Deng Xiaoping and former head of state Liu Shaoqi in the late 1960s. The four were purged from the party leadership shortly after Mao's death. — IP

2. Chen Yun, a vice-chairman of the CCP, heads a party disciplinary commission formed in 1979. — IP

3. *People's Daily*, January 1, 1982.

4. See *China Handbook*, published in October 1979 by Hong Kong Ta Kung Pao, pp. 54-56. It seems that later the number was reduced by ten.

5. This was during the period of Mao's Cultural Revolution and the purges that followed it. The CCP leadership is now in the hands of those who were the victims of these purges, Vice-chairman Deng Xiaoping in particular. — IP

the Hong Kong *Wen Hui Bao*, "another old cadre, having made a grassroots investigation, returned to Peking with a worried heart. He made a report to the central committee, stressing that in Xinjiang, Shanghai, and many places, 'Gang of Four' remnants have a strong potential for activity, occupy middle- and lower-level bodies, and are resisting the central committee's line and policy." The "remnants" mentioned here refer to both diehard Maoists and those opposing the party central committee's present policies.

Red Flag (No. 2, 1982) reported on decisive measures to prevent Gang of Four people from staging a comeback. Among these measures were: criticize and unmask the Gang of Four politically, ideologically, and organizationally; "stipulate that all those who rose to power by following them and all those with strong sectarian thinking are forbidden to take leadership posts at any level, and those who already occupy such posts must be firmly removed."

Purge of dissidents

This indicates that the CCP central committee has decided to use an administrative iron hand to eliminate disloyal and opposition elements. The elimination of a sector of the administrative personnel will be conducted under the impressive name of fighting excess staffing, in conjunction with a purge of dissidents in the party.

Excess staffing must indeed be fought. But the way to decide who should be in administrative posts should be through election on a genuinely democratic basis, and those elected must be subject to recall at any time. The salary of administrative personnel must not exceed the wages of skilled workers.

These principles were drawn up by Marx and Engels after the lessons of the Paris Commune, and were elaborated by Lenin in *State and Revolution*. But today's China in no way practices this system.

The fight against excess staffing is also

aimed at getting rid of some notorious lower-rank cadres in order to shift the masses' attention away from their struggle against the CCP's bureaucratic system. They hope to preserve the bureaucracy by sacrificing some bureaucrats.

Present situation of ruling faction

The use of administrative measures to get rid of opponents reflects an intensification of factional struggles inside the CCP. Opposition to the policies of the party central committee comes not only from middle- and lower-level cadres and military cadres and militants,⁶ but also from some high-ranking cadres.⁷

The previously quoted article from *Red Flag* used a worried tone to answer the question of whether the Gang of Four would stage a comeback: "The crux of the matter is whether those of us in power can gain credit or not. If those of us now in power are even more corrupt than the corrupt forces we have overthrown, or if we commit irreparable mistakes, then the situ-

6. This mood is reflected in the speech given by Wei Guoqing, director of the People's Liberation Army General Political Department at a recent all-army conference on political work. He reiterated that "a struggle to fight wrong tendencies" must be waged in the army, and "the ideological style of work of party committees and institutions must be rectified, so that there can be a decisive improvement in the slack and weak state of ideological leadership and the party's style of work" (see *People's Daily*, January 14, 1982). On January 6, *Wen Hui Pao* reported that many militants are beginning to feel that it is "disadvantageous to be a soldier," and that since a peasant's income is higher, many soldiers want to return home.

7. The January 1, 1982, *People's Daily* reported on a forum of old cadres: "Some high-ranking cadres have committed grave historical mistakes during the ten catastrophic years [1966-76], but they never make self-criticism, and still resist after the Third Party Plenum. This should not be tolerated by the party's discipline."

ation would be dangerous."

This answer reflects the fact that even the regime itself expresses a lack of confidence in its future. No wonder Wang Congwu, the deputy secretary of the Central Commission for Investigating Discipline, said that "quite a number of cadres lack confidence in any fundamental improvement in the party's style of work."

Many facts can be used to prove the situation is "dangerous." One of the problems is that many high-ranking cadres who have returned to power after having suffered during the Cultural Revolution have changed. It is an open secret that they themselves are defending a deviate style of work.

Enormous financial deficits, a high rate of inflation, enterprises raising prices in pursuit of profit, all these cause increasing difficulties for the people's livelihood and increased discontent against the ruling faction. In foreign policy, many concessions have been made to gain an alliance with the United States, but the U.S. sale of arms to Taiwan marks China's failure in foreign policy.

In this situation where corrupt forces prevail, the central committee's supporters are isolated and under attack. The official media report on this. For example, the February 2 *People's Daily* carried an article by Sha Ying reporting that "in some units, people who support the party's orientation and policies, who work hard, who dare to struggle against deviate styles of work, are instead isolated. Anyone who becomes the model cadre or worker or receives a commendation is made fun of and rejected."

The *Workers' Daily* has published sixteen issues of a special column on the question of "why progressive elements meet isolation and attack," which is another indication of the severity of this problem.

CCP leaders fear masses

The Chinese people and the vanguard elements should give critical support to the official proclamation of fighting corruption, bureaucratism, and excess staffing — despite the fact that it is more of a gesture than real action, and despite the fact that the promoters of the campaign harbor selfish intentions — in order to force the promise to be realized and the movement to be extended and deepened to challenge the entire bureaucratic system. Only with the active participation by the broad masses can bureaucratism and corruption be effectively fought.

But the party rulers are reluctant to see the broad masses intervene with revolutionary actions. They are afraid that they could lose control over the masses, inviting catastrophe and a grave blow to their bureaucratic rule.

Therefore the party rulers carry out this campaign cautiously, and at most utilize information provided by the masses to handle cases. The campaign is, therefore, more talk than action.

With the campaign to fight excess staffing about to unfold, it has been reported that Deng Xiaoping is withdrawing to the second line,

Bureaucratic privileges after retirement

On March 2 Premier Zhao Ziyang reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the "administrative revolution" being undertaken by the Chinese regime.

According to a March 4 article by *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Takashi Oka, "reliable sources state that officials who agree to retire have been offered the following:

• Retirement at full pay for life, plus one yuan per month for every year worked since 'joining the revolution' — the communist party. . . .

• He may keep his present official apartment and telephone, plus access to se-

cret documents. He will have the use of a car.

• In some cases, he may be retired at a rank one level higher than his current rank, or be allocated larger official housing.

• Finally, depending on rank, he will be given the chance to travel by making one inspection trip per year within China."

Even so, many top officials are reluctant to retire since they will lose the ability to award good jobs to relatives, friends, and those willing to pay for the service.

Meanwhile, Oka reports that there has been a flood of "letters from lower-level cadres complaining that they have been offered none of the benefits being prepared for high-ranking officials."

and will not take part in day-to-day administration, except to give his advice on major issues. There have been unconfirmed reports that Deng is going into semiretirement.

Deng might be setting an example to force other old cadres to retire, or he might have met with opposition within the leadership as a result of recent setbacks in domestic and foreign policies. So, like the old general Ye Jianying, who left the capital to travel a year ago, he is trying to oblige others to accept his opinion.

If Deng is indeed reducing his intervention in state affairs, that would signify a weakening of his political influence and a strengthening of his opponents. Although the party general secretary and the premier were put in their present positions by Deng, they lack his prestige and will find it difficult to form a stable central leadership.

But whether Deng and his faction continue to hold real power in the top leadership (as seems to be the case today) or their position is

starting to be shaken, the struggle within the party and state apparatus is, in fact, increasingly acute.

These struggles will cause further shock waves in China's political situation, and may develop into one of the most serious events since the Cultural Revolution. This will provide a historic opportunity for the Chinese masses to launch a political revolution that genuinely fights bureaucratism, corruption, and privileges. □

FEATURES

World capitalism in crisis

Second generalized recession since World War II

By William Gottlieb

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The worsening recession in the United States — already in many ways the worst since the 1930s — is part of a worldwide recession. It is occurring just five years after the world recession of 1974-75 — the most generalized since World War II. The fact that only a few years separate these two global, cyclical capitalist economic crises indicates the depth of the historic crisis facing the capitalist system — one with devastating effects on hundreds of millions of working people throughout the world.

Western Europe hit hard

Western Europe has been severely affected. Overall industrial production was 2.5 percent less in 1981 in the countries belonging to the European Economic Community (EEC) than it was in 1980. Official unemployment in Western Europe is expected to be around 10 percent next year. As in the United States, the bosses and their governments are trying to unload the weight of this crisis onto the shoulders of working people through cuts in social spending.

The hardest hit country in Western Europe has been Britain. Between 1979 and 1981 industrial production experienced one of the biggest declines ever recorded in the history of British capitalism. Unemployment is officially around 3 million, or 11.7 percent, of the workforce. Inflation is still running at about 12 percent.

On top of that, social benefits won by workers in previous struggles and the rights of the trade unions are under attack by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Tory government.

Even the most optimistic economic experts in ruling circles agree that any upturn in the British business cycle will be extraordinarily

weak. Unemployment is expected to continue its upward climb in any event. Thus, for the British workers no end of the depression is in sight.

British capitalism is paying the bills of history that are finally falling due. Having been the first country to industrialize, Britain has some of the oldest and least efficient industries among the imperialist powers. Once British industry dominated the markets of the world. But over the years it has progressively lost markets to its more efficient imperialist competitors.

As long as the world market was expanding, British industry could still grow, though at a pace considerably slower than that of its competitors. But any stagnation on the world market is a disaster for Britain. World recession means depression in Britain.

Germany and France

West Germany's industries, which are newer and more efficient, have not been hit as hard as Britain's. But they have not escaped. Unemployment is approaching the 2 million figure. It is now higher than at any time since 1953, when Germany was still recovering from the devastating effects of World War II. Industrial production is declining, and no definite recovery is yet in sight.

The situation is somewhat different in France. France was hit by recession in 1980 and unemployment has officially reached 8.9 percent of the workforce. However, unlike other capitalist governments, the French government of President François Mitterrand is following a stimulative economic policy. The government is expanding the growth in the money supply and is restoring some of the cuts that were made in social spending by the previous government. As a result industrial production is rising, and unemployment is expected to fall slightly.

Mitterrand's big gamble

Mitterrand is gambling on a worldwide economic upturn. If this does not materialize

soon, France's already considerable balance-of-trade deficit will grow. The French franc will fall more and more on world money markets, accelerating inflation in France. This would end with a new descent into recession and austerity. The French business cycle cannot long diverge from the world business cycle.

In order to buy time, the Mitterrand government is trying to shelter France as much as possible from the world economy. The result has been a growing tendency toward French protectionism that threatens the EEC, the twenty-four-year-old European free trade zone.

The rest of Western Europe also remains in the grip of recession. Even in Sweden, where unemployment remains relatively low, industrial production has been declining. In Italy unemployment is approaching the double-digit range while inflation remains near 20 percent. Belgium is a disaster area with double-digit unemployment. Spain suffers from both double-digit inflation and double-digit unemployment.

Japan also affected

Japan is also feeling the effects of the global recession. The rate of increase of industrial production has slowed considerably. And while unemployment is still relatively low, compared to its imperialist competitors, it has begun to rise. The Japanese government has adopted the most austere budget in twenty-six years.

However, Japan has been able to cushion the effects of the worldwide recession primarily through its ability to increase exports.

Japan is in many ways in a situation opposite to that of Britain. It was the last major imperialist country to become industrialized. In addition, much of Japanese industry was destroyed during World War II, forcing Japanese corporations to rebuild plants.

Wages of Japanese workers remain well below the level of Western European or American workers. There are few governmental social programs. Workers are forced to save

more than 20 percent of their income as a reserve for retirement and medical costs. Japanese business, therefore, has had plenty of profits to invest in the construction of modern industries.

On top of all this, Japan has spent relatively little on arms. While in West Germany, Britain, and especially the United States, funds that could have gone into modernizing and building factories went into military spending, Japan was building new modern factories.

Thus Japan finds itself in a position to keep expanding its economy in the midst of the current worldwide recession — although at a greatly reduced rate — by taking away markets from its imperialist competitors.

Protectionist pressures

The United States ran a trade deficit with Japan of \$18.1 billion for 1981. At Washington's insistence Japan removed sixty-seven nontariff barriers to imports.

This, however, does not go to the heart of the problem, since Japan's highly favorable trade balance with the United States reflects not Japanese protectionism so much as the greater productivity of many branches of Japanese industry.

European capitalism is even more concerned about Japanese competition. Most European countries are enforcing quotas against Japanese cars and consumer electronics products. As a result Japanese exports of cars to Western Europe were 25 percent less at the end of 1981 than they were a year earlier.

This is just part of a recession-spawned trend toward greater protectionism.

For example, in January seven U.S. steel companies filed for import relief against eleven European, African, and South American countries. Economic nationalism is on the rise in Canada, much to Washington's dismay. Many capitalist circles are concerned that such protectionist moves could degenerate into a full-scale trade war. Such a trade war would be potentially even more disastrous than it was in the 1930s, since the world economy is much more interdependent than it was then.

Semicolonial countries

Bad as the effects of the recession have been on the workers and farmers of the imperialist countries, the effects on the toilers of the semicolonial world have been far worse. The International Labor Organization calculated that 455 million people in the countries oppressed by imperialism were either totally or partially unemployed. That comes to 43 percent of the working-age population. And in the underdeveloped capitalist countries, there are few if any cushions. It is estimated that 800 million people face hunger in the semicolonial world.

Conditions are worsening as the world recession lowers prices of raw materials that the underdeveloped countries export, while the price of the manufactured goods they buy from the imperialist countries continues to increase. Even the oil-producing countries, which have done better than other semicolonial countries,

are suffering from decreasing oil prices and sales. Throughout the semicolonial world the terrible weight of debts owed to the imperialist banks and governments is getting heavier.

Even the more industrialized semicolonial countries like Argentina, Brazil, and Chile are in deep trouble.

For example, Argentina entered a severe financial crisis in 1981. The peso fell rapidly against the dollar. This sent inflation soaring at a rate of 130 percent a year. Some sources put unemployment as high as 12 percent. The military dictatorship has frozen the level of payments to 1.8 million state workers, and 2.6 million pensioners. These measures, along with the reduction in the printing of paper money, will mean a further sharp rise in unemployment.

Mexico as the exception

One Latin American country which managed to escape recession in 1981 was Mexico.

But this "prosperity" turned out to be illusory. Except for oil, Mexican exports stagnated. The peso's exchange rate and the level of economic activity were maintained only through liquidation of Mexico's foreign currency reserves. The money finally ran out, and

on February 17 the Mexican government withdrew support from the peso. It promptly plunged 30 percent against the dollar. This means a sharp increase in the cost of imported goods in terms of pesos. It will also tend to lower the prices of Mexican exports in terms of dollars on the world market.

The devaluation of the peso will force Mexican capitalists to sell more on the world market just to get the dollars and other currencies they need to pay off their debts to the imperialist banks. This draining of commodities from the Mexican market will further drive up peso prices in Mexico. As a result the workers and peasants are suffering a severe drop in their living standards.

The Mexican government, fearing these consequences, put off devaluation to the last possible moment. As a result it faces the danger of runaway devaluation that could wreck the economy.

In order to stave off this danger the Mexican government announced an austerity program that will slash the budget by 3 percent. The workers and peasants will pay the bill for the world recession and the government's financial policies. □

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