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British flotilla of more than 50 ships threatens Argentina.

**Stop the
Imperialist
Aggression
Against
Argentina!**

Washington Finds New Ally in 'Commander Zero'

**Pastora's Betrayal Opens New Front in
Drive Against Nicaraguan Revolution**

Washington finds new ally in campaign against Nicaragua

By Michael Baumann
and Jane Harris

MANAGUA — While Washington is talking about opening negotiations on relations with the revolutionary government here, four U.S. destroyers have positioned themselves in Nicaragua's territorial waters off the Atlantic Coast. Nicaraguans are wondering if this new act of aggression is a step toward a naval blockade.

On April 15, the very day the Nicaraguan government extended the current state of emergency for 30 days, the Nicaraguan revolution was attacked from a new direction.

Adding fuel to the imperialists' fire, former guerrilla commander Edén Pastora ("Commander Zero") — who describes himself as the "most loved of all the commanders," but who is currently busy reopening the business interests he held in Costa Rica before the revolution — chose this week to publicly declare his 180-degree turn to the right.

In a stunning betrayal of the revolution, he delivered an anticommunist tirade, declaring that the time had come "to straighten things out" in Nicaragua "by driving the government out with bullets."

Apparently expecting an outpouring of support in the army and militia, the former vice-minister of defense and chief of the militias received instead the rejection of virtually the entire country, and of revolutionary forces in Guatemala and El Salvador as well.

What Pastora said

Ten months ago, Pastora left Nicaragua, telling friends he was headed to Guatemala to continue Che Guevara's internationalist heritage.

Yet on April 15, he personally invited some 100 journalists to a news conference in a luxury hotel on the outskirts of San José, Costa Rica, with the opposite goal in mind. At the press conference Pastora read a two-hour long statement!

What did the ex-commander have to say?

He accused not Reagan, not Haig, not the CIA, but the nine commanders of the Nicaraguan revolution of betraying their people by "alienating" U.S. imperialism. He said this could cause the United States to attack Nicaragua and "could cost the lives of 200,000 people."

Making no reference to the complete military encirclement of Nicaragua by U.S. and other counterrevolutionary forces, Pastora argued that *Nicaragua* was engaged in a dangerous military buildup.

He complained of the alleged Cuban and Soviet military presence in Nicaragua, calling on the Nicaraguan people to "remain on a war

footing" as long as a single foreign soldier remains in the country.

Pastora threatened "military action" to change the course of the revolution.

He cried out over land and factories being confiscated.

Almost screaming, he declared that Commanders of the Revolution Humberto and Daniel Ortega had clearly defined themselves as communists.

Echoing U.S. lies, Pastora lamented "seeing our Miskitu, Sumo, and Rama Indians persecuted, imprisoned, and killed without the radio and press being able to expose to the world this regime of terror that reigns on the Atlantic Coast, that rules in all Nicaragua, under the guise of the now feared State Security apparatus."

Scanty evidence

The evidence Pastora gave for all his charges?

The fact that the nine members of the FSLN National Directorate, who lived for years in the mountains, in jail, or in exile, are now living in homes expropriated from the Somozaists, many of whom are now living in Miami.

Other proof?

The Sandinistas are using the Mercedes-Benz automobiles left by the Somozaists for government transportation needs (in addition to a far greater number of Toyota jeeps).

For these grave offenses, Pastora told reporters, he would "drive [the nine commanders] out of their mansions and Mercedes Benzes with bullets."

Who was Pastora, and what is his real complaint?

Nobody would deny that Edén Pastora played a significant role in the Nicaraguan revolution.

He participated in the armed opposition actions of the 1950s. In the 1960s he helped in recruitment and carried out logistical work for Sandinista guerrilla operations.

In 1967 he was imprisoned. After his release he worked with peasants in two central provinces, Matagalpa and Jinotega.

He lived in exile until he returned as "Commander Zero" in charge of the famous August 22, 1978, attack on the National Palace, through which many imprisoned Sandinista leaders were freed. During the final offensive he became the military commander of the Southern Front.

After the revolution Pastora was assigned to be vice-minister of defense and was placed in charge of the Sandinista People's Militias.

Indeed, Pastora was very popular.

Like most Nicaraguans, he opposed Somoza and was willing to risk his life to rid Nicaragua

of the tyrant.

But he could not accept that getting rid of Somoza also meant getting rid of a whole system of rule propped up by the United States for more than a century, which denied peasants access to the land they worked and kept the vast majority of the population submerged in illiteracy, hunger, disease, and other ills. These social evils exist throughout Latin America — except in Cuba. They cannot be eliminated without challenging the capitalist system.

Pastora, a businessman who comes from a landowning family, was not willing to break with his class and go all the way with the revolutionary process. He has now become its open enemy.

A keen sense of timing

The timing of Pastora's betrayal was ideal from the imperialist point of view. By attacking the victim instead of the criminal, he helped shift world attention away from the latest escalation of U.S. military threats — the stationing of four warships armed with guided missiles off the Nicaraguan coast.

And by intervening after the exposure of U.S. lies by the young Nicaraguan fighter Orlando Tardencilla, and after the Nicaraguan diplomatic victory in the United Nations that forced Washington to offer peace negotiations, Pastora gave the imperialist diplomats the pretext they were looking for to shelve the talks before they could even start.

The *Washington Post* reported April 16 that Reagan had been looking for some time for a leader who could "crystallize" alleged "discontent growing in Nicaragua," and "Pastora would seem to fit the bill."

U.S. imperialism made immediate use of its new ally.

"It is undeniable," a representative of the State Department told Agence France-Presse, "that the administration now holds a stronger negotiating position. . . ."

"We are no longer alone," he said, "because now we have a guerrilla commander, above suspicion of being an American agent, who is saying the same thing we have been saying for three months: Nicaragua is becoming a pawn of Cuba and the Soviet Union, repressing freedom, trampling on human rights, and choking off private enterprise."

Revolutionary fighters reply

In statements issued April 16, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador all blasted Pastora's betrayal of the struggle he formerly supported.

The FSLN National Directorate declared his action "one more element in the campaign of aggression, destabilization, and threats the current U.S. government has mounted against our revolution."

Imperialism's aim, the nine top leaders of the revolution said, is to use Pastora's former

reputation "to create divisions . . . thereby facilitating armed aggression against the revolution and its conquests."

Pastora "has declared a war that cannot be carried out without support from imperialism, that cannot be fought without the mercenaries and the Somozaist bands waiting on the other side of the border for an order to attack."

The Sandinista leadership also revealed facts about Pastora that had previously not been made public.

When he left Nicaragua last year, allegedly to join the revolutionaries fighting in Guatemala, every effort was made to maintain friendly relations with him, "despite increasingly disturbing reports we received about the type of persons of dubious moral standing, and forces hostile to the Nicaraguan people and our revolution that he was increasingly surrounding himself with."

"We must accept that our efforts failed," the FSLN concluded.

The URNG, a coalition of the four main revolutionary organizations in Guatemala, explained Pastora's real role in the struggle there.

Pastora's request to join the revolutionary fighters was viewed favorably at first, the URNG said, "but his supposed internationalist commitment never materialized, as he continually refused to actually join our struggle in the countryside."

"Instead, over a period of 10 months, he demonstrated a surprising immaturity, ideological and political inconsistency, and a profound lack of revolutionary commitment."

Apart from the reasons that kept Pastora himself from seeking to join the struggle, the URNG concluded, "our organization decided to break off all connections with him because he insisted on maintaining relations with individuals and forces linked to the counterrevolution in our region."

Commander Ana María of El Salvador's FMLN issued a statement expressing confidence that Pastora's betrayal would in no way undermine the Nicaraguan revolution.

"When a leader betrays his people," she said, "and goes before television cameras and reporters to declare his treason, this does not divide the revolution from the people, but instead earns the traitor the hatred of those who formerly believed in him."

Her words were borne out as militia members throughout the country began turning in their militia cards, which still bear Pastora's signature. In a demonstration in downtown Managua April 17, hundreds of militia members showed their support for the government by burning their old membership cards. "We don't want a militia card signed by a traitor!" they chanted.

The day before, leaders of the FSLN, the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), the Rural Workers Association (ATC), and Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) fanned out across the country, holding mass meetings in factories, villages, and fields, to discuss and denounce Pastora's betrayal.

Reports of these meetings in *Barricada* indi-

cated scattered instances in which local reactionaries had tried to take advantage of Pastora's statement. But it summed up the general conclusion by Nicaraguans as "Kirkpatrick [the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations], Reagan, Pastora . . . all the same."

The leaders of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, apparently waiting to see which way the wind would blow, made themselves hard to find and generally declined to issue any statement whatever about Pastora. Alfonso Robelo, the main leader of the capitalist opposition, could not be reached for comment because he was in Washington meeting with the State Department.

The reaction to Pastora's comments is not surprising. It is widely understood in Nicaragua, ATC General Secretary Edgardo García pointed out, that Pastora's "attacks on the National Directorate are really aimed against the workers, because we are the ones who have been demanding the land confiscations, and we are the ones who have been denouncing the

bosses who decapitalize and support the counterrevolutionary bands."

Perhaps the most welcome response to Pastora's betrayal came from Commander Jaime Wheelock, Nicaragua's minister of agricultural development and agrarian reform. The day following Pastora's press conference, Wheelock announced that 28,000 more manzanas of land (1 manzana = 1.73 acres) would be distributed to peasants around the country, as the revolution continued to fulfill the pledge that "no campesino will be left without land."

The revolutionary government has expropriated more than 100,000 manzanas of land so far. The latest expropriations will benefit more than 1,200 landless peasant families.

While Edén Pastora opens shop in Costa Rica, while Robelo meets with the State Department, while four U.S. destroyers station themselves in the Atlantic, the Nicaraguan people once again are sending the message to Washington that as far as their revolution is concerned, they are not about to turn back. □

IN THIS ISSUE

Closing News Date: April 19, 1982

MIDDLE EAST	340	Zionist aggression provokes huge protest — by Ernest Harsch
ARGENTINA	342	British armada threatens war — by Fred Murphy
BELGIUM	346	Regime wins round one in austerity fight — by Will Reissner
POLAND	348	Wide support for Solidarity — by Ernest Harsch
IRAN	349	Why regime has been attacking working-class newspapers Campaign for defense of imprisoned socialists
PERU	352	Hugo Blanco points to regime's role in death threats — by Nelson González
GUYANA	353	IMF-imposed austerity results in hunger
GRENADA	354	Revolution and the dockworkers — by Pat Kane
MICRONESIA	356	Pacific islanders take on the Pentagon — by Duncan Williams
SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT	344	The Malvinas Islands crisis
DOCUMENTS	358	Speech by Nicaraguan leader Sergio Ramírez

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Zionist aggression provokes huge protest

General strike answers attack at Dome of the Rock

By Ernest Harsch

Millions of Muslims participated in an unprecedented general strike throughout much of the Middle East April 14. They were protesting the attack by an Israeli soldier three days earlier on worshippers at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, one of the holiest Islamic religious sites, and against the Israeli government's brutal crackdown on the Palestinians of the occupied territories.

This protest — coming at a time when Israeli military forces are being readied for a new war of aggression against Lebanon — was a dramatic reminder of the extent of opposition that the Zionist state faces throughout the Middle East.

In response to outrage over the Dome of the Rock shooting, in which two Palestinians were killed, King Khalid of Saudi Arabia urged the world's 700 million Muslims to "extend the hand of assistance" to the Palestinians by going on strike.

That one of the most proimperialist regimes in the Arab world felt obliged to issue such a call is testimony to the depth of the anti-Zionist sentiment that is building among the masses of the region.

According to a report in the April 15 *Washington Post*, "The strike grounded airliners along the Persian Gulf through Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Freighters stood in lines in idle gulf ports and the flow of petrodollars halted in closed banks and ministries. In Saudi Arabia and several of its conservative gulf neighbors, telephone and telex lines were severed until dusk, and shops were closed as tightly as on the Moslem day of rest. . . ."

"Non-Arab Moslem states participating included Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey."

In the southern Lebanese cities of Tyre and Sidon, Palestinians held demonstrations and hanged effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, in response to a call for a week-long general strike by Palestinian figures in Jerusalem, were also shut down.

Million protest in Tehran

The most militant response to the strike call outside of Palestine itself was in Iran.

More than 1 million persons demonstrated in Tehran, the capital, near the former American embassy. They shouted slogans and carried signs denouncing both the Zionist regime and American imperialism. Significantly, there were also mass demonstrations in Mahabad, Naqadeh, and other cities in Kurdistan.

Iranian President Hojatolislam Ali Khomeini, speaking to the huge crowd in Tehran,

called for the creation of a multinational army of volunteers from throughout the Islamic world to fight in support of the Palestinians. He also urged Muslim oil-producing countries to cut off or reduce their oil exports to Washington and other imperialist powers that support Israel. He said that "the oil weapon should be used in support of our Palestinian brothers against the Zionist regime."

This point was also touched on in a statement by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which was read out at the rally and broadcast over the official radio. "It is shameful," Khomeini said, "for Islamic countries that have the jugular vein of the world superpowers in their hands to sit and watch America set a corrupt and worthless entity against them."

Israel masses troops

One factor behind the broad scope of these protests is the realization throughout the region that the Zionist government is driving systematically toward a new Middle East war.

Just the week leading up to the general strike, the Israeli authorities made some of their most threatening statements and military moves in months.

On April 5, Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that the armed forces would strike out at the Palestinian organizations, "their heads, their leaders, their centers, their bases — everywhere that we find them. We will strike at them without reservation, without end. . . ."

A few days later, several divisions of Israeli troops were massed in northern Israel, along the border with Lebanon. United Nations sources reported sighting large numbers of Israeli tanks just south of the border and in the Israeli-controlled enclave where the rightist Lebanese forces of Maj. Saad Haddad are entrenched.

Col. Asmi Seghair, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) commander in Tyre, just 12 miles inside Lebanon, said April 9 that the number of Israeli helicopter patrols had increased in previous days.

In an interview with *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis on April 11, PLO leader Yasir Arafat warned of an imminent Israeli invasion of Lebanon. "The military massing has been completed," he said. "There are three to four divisions."

Arafat said that in addition to planes, tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles, the Israeli forces had "forbidden weapons — cluster bombs, fragmentation bombs, gas bombs and napalm."

"I'm preparing for the worst case," he said, anticipating Israeli bombings of Palestinian re-

fugee "camps and centers, Lebanese villages and cities."

The Lebanese government also took the threats of an invasion quite seriously. On April 10, President Elias Sarkis met with the American and Soviet ambassadors and appealed for their intervention to stave off an Israeli invasion.

The next day, U.S. ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis, after meeting with Begin for several hours, said that Begin had assured him that "the Israeli Cabinet has taken no decision to go into Lebanon. . . ."

In light of the military buildup, however, such assurances were not too convincing. In a dispatch from Beirut that same day, *Times* correspondent Marvin Howe reported, "Lebanese and Palestinian leaders express the conviction privately that Israel has decided on a major strike on Palestinian positions in Lebanon and the only questions that remain are when and what the pretext will be."

Opposition to war policies

So far, however, the Israeli government has hesitated to actually launch the war. And Washington has been reluctant to give its blessing.

Both powers would dearly love to strike a major blow against the Palestinian national liberation movement, and against other anti-imperialist struggles in the Middle East. But they are also weighing the risks involved. Given the deepening opposition to the Zionist regime — both internationally and within Israel itself — a misstep could prove disastrous for them.

Provoked by new Israeli measures to tighten Tel Aviv's grip on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the 1.3 million Palestinians of those territories have been in revolt against the Zionist authorities for a month now, holding general strikes, staging marches and demonstrations, and engaging in running street battles with Israeli troops and police.

In the Golan Heights, which was formally annexed to Israel in December, the 14,000 Arabs there, who consider themselves Syrian citizens, have been on strike for two months, refusing to accept Israeli identity cards.

The March 31 *Jerusalem Post* commented that the Israeli crackdown in the occupied territories "is bound sooner or later to affect the thinking of Arabs within Israel."

That has already happened, as the *Jerusalem Post* itself is well aware. The day before, March 30, Arabs throughout Israel went on strike in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights and against the discrimination and op-



Palestinians demonstrate on West Bank.

pression that they themselves face from the Zionist state.

Nor are the Palestinians the only ones to oppose Israeli government policies. Jewish workers in Israel are already resisting the high inflation rate, growing unemployment, and the regime's austerity measures. More and more of them are also realizing that the Begin regime is determined to drag them into war.

On March 27, some 40,000 to 50,000 Jews and Arabs demonstrated in Tel Aviv against Begin's war threats and the repression in the occupied territories.

Arafat, in his interview with Flora Lewis, stressed the political significance of this development. Referring to the demonstrations in the occupied territories as a "referendum," he added, "But most important is the Tel Aviv demonstration of Peace Now. . . . It's a referendum, not only for Palestinians, even among Israelis."

This antiwar sentiment in Israel has given Begin's generals pause for thought. As the April 14 *New York Times* noted, "the casualties of an invasion can be accepted only if there is a broad consensus on its wisdom and necessity. There appears to be no such consensus about invading Lebanon."

From the Malvinas to the Sinai

The American imperialists are also well aware of the opposition that an Israeli invasion of Lebanon would arouse throughout the region — not only against Israel, but also against Washington.

In considering the timing of any Israeli military move, Washington likewise has to take into account the situation in other parts of the world. An Israeli move would be particularly embarrassing at a time when the imperialist rulers around the world are denouncing Argentine "aggression."

"In fact," John Goshko reported in the April 11 *Washington Post*, "the danger posed by the Falklands crisis was understood to be one of the arguments being used by the United States in urging restraint on Begin."

A more immediate consideration is the ef-

fect an Israeli invasion of Lebanon could have on the Egyptian regime of Hosni Mubarak.

Following the Egyptian and Israeli signing of the Camp David accords in 1978 — and particularly under the impact of the Iranian revolution — no other Arab governments were willing to join in this framework. The Egyptian regime found itself politically isolated in the Arab world.

The Mubarak government has taken some steps to try to mend its fences with other Arab regimes.

At a conference of the Nonaligned Movement held in Kuwait in early April, the Egyptian delegate made no mention of the accords or their provision for Palestinian "autonomy" in the occupied territories. Instead, he called for the removal of the Israeli settlements from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and for "the rights of the Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation of their territories."

The Begin government screamed that this was "hostile propaganda" and a violation of the Camp David accords. It stepped up the pressures on the Mubarak regime by hinting that the return of the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, which was scheduled to be completed April 25, may be postponed. In exchange for handing over the Sinai, the Israeli authorities demanded a new expression of political fealty from Mubarak.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Walter Stoessel was dispatched to Tel Aviv and Cairo to act as intermediary. As a result, Mubarak sent a letter to Begin April 16 that contained "very many expressions of goodwill," according to an Israeli official.

Mubarak's "expressions of goodwill" came just two days after the general strike in support of the Palestinians, and in the context of the Israeli war moves, the shooting at the Dome of the Rock, and the repression in the occupied territories.

An Israeli press secretary described Begin as pleased with the letter and stated that "there is no reason to reconsider" the scheduled return of the Sinai. But nevertheless the Israeli authorities continued to press for even more concessions.

Whatever hesitations there are in Washington or Tel Aviv about the timing of a new Israeli military drive, they are agreed that some attempt has to be made to drive back the anti-imperialist struggle in the Middle East, beginning with the Palestinians.

For fiscal 1983, the White House has approved a \$1.7 billion arms sales package to Israel, on top of \$785 million in economic assistance. On March 31 it was revealed that the military sales will include a new squadron of about 20 F-15 jet fighters.

These arms are intended for only one purpose: to strike out at the Arab revolution.

The upsurge in the occupied territories, the strength of the PLO, the massive anti-Zionist sentiment expressed by the April 14 general strike, all make the Israeli and American imperialists weigh the risks carefully. But at the same time they make it even more imperative for them to try to inflict a major blow against the Arab masses.

The new David

While Begin prepares for war against the Arab masses on a large scale, the same policy was put into effect on a smaller scale at the Dome of the Rock.

Begin brushed aside the attack as the work of "a mentally ill man."

But it is the racist character of the Zionist state, and the terrorist actions of the Israeli government that created the atmosphere in which the shooting spree was carried out. In the weeks leading up to it, Israeli troops and settlers gunned down at least nine Palestinians in the occupied territories. One of them, a 50-year-old woman farmer, was shot while working in a field near a military base.

Following the Dome of the Rock shooting, Israeli troops reacted to the subsequent Palestinian protests with yet more terror.

In Jerusalem, near the Al Aqsa Mosque, an Israeli soldier, "with a laugh, threw a tear gas grenade near the mosque, upwind of the main door. Smoke from the perfectly placed cannister blew into the mosque, and worshippers came out coughing and wiping their eyes. One elderly man was carried to an ambulance. A few of the troops walked away laughing" (*New York Times*, April 12).

Dozens of Palestinians were wounded in the following days, and three youths were killed in the Gaza Strip.

Given the incessant Israeli provocations, the extent of the Palestinian response, especially among youths, is not surprising. As Rashid Shawa, the mayor of Gaza town, commented to reporters, "The people don't care any more. They feel they have nothing to lose by attacking the soldiers."

In his interview with Flora Lewis, Yasir Arafat referred to these youths. "This is the new David throwing stones at Goliath."

Arafat then went on, "I am a man of history. Sooner or later we'll achieve our goals. I'm not worried about losing the West Bank. The stones are on our side, the side of the new David." □

British armada threatens war

As Haig helps London step up the pressure

By Fred Murphy

As a British armada of more than 50 ships continues on its course toward the Malvinas Islands, Washington has been stepping up its pressure on the Argentine government.

After condemning the Argentine reoccupation of the Malvinas in the United Nations, the Reagan administration announced that it was "neutral" in the dispute in order to enable Secretary of State Alexander Haig to act in negotiations. But as *New York Times* correspondent Edward Schumacher reported from Buenos Aires April 18, "Members of the ruling military junta are increasingly resentful of what they see as a pro-British tilt" by Washington.

When questioned by reporters in the Argentine capital April 18, Haig pointedly referred to "our longstanding obligations to Great Britain, which are well known."

Washington is even playing a direct and indispensable role in London's military moves. According to the April 15 *Wall Street Journal*, "the U.S. is providing Britain with fuel for its ships and aircraft, intelligence on the disposition of Argentine forces, weather information from space satellites, and a satellite communications channel."

At the U.S. military base on Ascension Island in the mid-Atlantic, the *New York Times* said April 17, "For more than 10 days, British aircraft have been ferrying in men, helicopters, ammunition and equipment so that it can be used as a forward staging point for the forces operating farther south."

'International piracy?'

Meanwhile, the capitalist news media in the United States have been virtually unanimous in cheering on the British fleet and urging Reagan to do still more for London's drive to reassert colonial rule over the Malvinas.

On April 13, the editors of the *New York Times* hailed the stiff economic sanctions imposed on Argentina by Britain and the other imperialist powers in the European Economic Community. Two days later, the *Times* cautioned Reagan that he should not be "mistakenly eager to demonstrate neutrality" and that "negotiation can occur only after a clearer American tilt toward London."

"If the British Navy is capable of lowering the Argentine flag over the islands, at least temporarily, that fact needs to register in Buenos Aires," the *Times* editorial said.

"There is no reason I can think of why the British should even consider negotiating," said columnist Joseph Harsch in the April 15 *Christian Science Monitor*. Harsch concluded:

"If the US favors stability in the world it had best support Britain's duty to rescue its own

people from an act of international piracy. Besides, it would help hold the NATO alliance together."

Even the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* — erstwhile fans of the Argentine junta and other "authoritarian" Latin regimes — are now calling on Reagan to "stop apologizing for aiding the British with a little intelligence and start aiding them with an aircraft carrier." They agree that negotiations may help, but "the way to break the standoff will be to make it clear that if a British invasion is necessary the U.S. will not allow it to fail."

To do otherwise, say the *Journal* editors, "would probably mean the fall of the Thatcher government, a proven friend of American interests. The spectacle of so close a friend falling while the U.S. wrings its hands would have grave consequences for the Western alliance."

'If missiles start to fly . . .'

Of course, Washington would prefer to have Argentina relinquish the Malvinas without a fight. The U.S. rulers would rather not lose the advantages they have gained during their past year's rapprochement with the Buenos Aires junta — above all, collaboration in counterrevolutionary activity in Central America. Washington also knows that anti-interventionist protests would sweep Latin America in the event of a direct British attack.

"If an Argentine ship goes down, forget it," a White House aide told *Newsweek*, "then all of Latin America will coalesce around Argentina."

Nonetheless, when push comes to shove the U.S. rulers have no real choice but to stand with their closest imperialist ally. It would be foolish to think that the semicolonial regime in Argentina holds a place in Washington's global policy considerations even approaching that of the British ruling class, with its financial and industrial might, its worldwide military role, and its NATO-linked nuclear weaponry.

—The British rulers are well aware that Washington is on their side, despite secondary complaints regarding Reagan's diplomacy. The April 17 *London Economist* expressed confidence, for example, that Washington will "impose its own ban on imports from Argentina if General Galtieri refuses to negotiate along Mr. Haig's lines."

An editorial in the same issue of the top financial weekly concluded that "if negotiations should fail and missiles start to fly the United States will back Britain."

Thin support for Thatcher

The Thatcher government and the British

press have been working overtime to whip up jingoism and support for military moves among the country's population. They have been aided in this, unfortunately, by the leaders of the opposition Labour Party, including most of those considered left-wingers.

However, the April 17 *Economist* cited the results of a poll taken in Britain on April 14 and complained that only 44 percent agreed that "retaining British sovereignty over the islands is important enough to justify the loss of British servicemen's lives."

The *London Guardian* warned April 15 that "if the shooting starts, if lives are lost, if we now become involved in a bloody and expensive war . . . then unity in the Commons [Parliament] will very likely collapse and the Government will be out on its own."

In this situation, antiwar forces in Britain can play an important role in stopping Thatcher's drive toward an attack on Argentina. On April 18 the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), which has received important Labour Party support in the past, issued a statement demanding that Thatcher withdraw the British fleet and cancel the naval blockade around the Malvinas already being enforced by nuclear submarines. The CND charged that Thatcher's policies showed a "dangerous spirit of military adventurism."

The British government claims to be defending the rights of the residents of the Malvinas. But many of these have expressed opposition to British military moves. Moreover, the April 12 *Wall Street Journal* reported, "according to a handful [of islanders] who have left since the invasion, there is growing sentiment that the islands might receive more development assistance from Buenos Aires."

Such feelings are not unrelated to something noted by two *Christian Science Monitor* correspondents in a dispatch from the islands' capital, Port Stanley (now renamed Puerto Rivero): ". . . the overriding political fact of the Falklands is that it has been treated as a private-profit domain by British absentee landlords. These landlords held control of most of the land and sheep, and for the most part took their profits out of the islands instead of reinvesting in their holdings."

Argentine workers strengthened

While support for Thatcher's stand can be expected to decline rapidly inside Britain if her government gets British soldiers killed, any British attack would deepen anti-imperialist sentiment among Argentine working people.

"As the British fleet approaches, national unity is in fact growing broader and stronger," *Le Monde's* Buenos Aires correspondent wrote

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in the April 11-12 edition. "Paradoxically, it is the traditional oligarchy, the main supporter of the regime up to now, that has expressed the most hesitation."

Capitulation by Argentina's military rulers in face of British and U.S. threats would immediately cause a redoubling of the antidictatorial ferment that led the junta to occupy the Malvinas in the first place. And resistance to any serious British attack will require the kind of mass mobilization and political activity that the dictatorship was installed to prevent.

Galtieri's initial aim was to gain some popularity and stave off his regime's impending collapse. For the maneuver to work, he had to accompany the popular move against British colonialism with some real concessions. Soon after the Malvinas were retaken, all 2,000 persons jailed during demonstrations against the regime the previous week were released.

Thus, no matter what motivated the Argentine dictatorship, its concrete anti-imperialist measure has strengthened the position of Ar-

gentine workers and their allies.

This is always the case when an outpost of colonialism and imperialism is eliminated, no matter what the character of the regime involved. Wouldn't the Cuban workers and farmers now be in a stronger position if the Batista dictatorship had for some reason forced the Pentagon out of its Guantánamo Bay naval base in the 1950s, for example? Wouldn't it be a gain for the toilers of the Middle East if Washington and London had to give up their Indian Ocean enclave of Diego García?

'The generals are cornered'

Many liberals in the imperialist countries have lined up behind Thatcher out of disgust for the Argentine junta's record of brutality and terror against its own population. But the real process now unfolding in Argentina was summed up in a dispatch from Buenos Aires to the April 17 *Economist*:

"The government may still be destroyed by the nationalist sentiment it has spurred into ac-

tion. Opposition leaders make no secret of the fact that, by applauding the Falkland Islands seizure so heartily, they hope to be able to turn on the government if it shows any weakening of resolve."

According to the April 18 *Washington Post*, one group of Argentine opposition leaders has issued a statement criticizing Galtieri's talks with the U.S. secretary of state. "The evidence doesn't allow for considering Haig, or the government of the United States, as an objective actor for peace and understanding," they said, "but more so as a spokesman for a return to the colonialistic status quo."

An Argentine editor quoted in the April 19 *New York Times* explained the situation this way: "Galtieri and the generals are cornered; they have nowhere to go but forward. If they go backward, they will be swept away."

Or, as a foreign diplomat quoted in the same article put it, "If Galtieri and the junta lose, they could be strung up in the Plaza de Mayo." □

'We do not put all wars on the same plane'

[The following is from a September 1937 letter sent by the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky to Mexican artist Diego Rivera. When the Japanese imperialists opened up a war against China in July 1937, there were some communists who balked at taking the side of China, which was ruled by the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek at that time. The considerations raised by Trotsky in regard to the Sino-Japanese war are also relevant to the conflict between Britain and Argentina today. The complete letter is printed in *Leon Trotsky on China*, available for \$9.95 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.]

* * *

We do not and never have put all wars on the same plane. Marx and Engels supported the revolutionary struggle of the Irish against Great Britain, of the Poles against the tsar, even though in these two nationalist wars the leaders were, for the most part, members of the bourgeoisie and even at times of the feudal aristocracy . . . at all events, Catholic reactionaries. When Abdel-Krim¹ rose up against France, the democrats and Social Democrats spoke with hate

1. The Berber tribes in the Rif region of Morocco revolted against Spanish colonial rule in 1921 under the leadership of Abd-el-Krim. After defeating the Spanish colonialists, they attacked the French sector of Morocco, but were defeated by a combined Spanish and French army in 1926.

2. The French Socialist Party.

of the struggle of a "savage tyrant" against the "democracy." The party of Léon Blum² supported this point of view. But we, Marxists and Bolsheviks, considered the struggle of the Rifians against imperialist domination as a progressive war. Lenin wrote hundreds of pages demonstrating the primary necessity of distinguishing between imperialist nations and the colonial and semicolonial nations which comprise the great majority of humanity. To speak of "revolutionary defeatism" in general, without distinguishing between exploiter and exploited countries, is to make a miserable caricature of Bolshevism and to put that caricature at the service of the imperialists.

In the Far East we have a classic example. China is a semicolonial country which Japan is transforming, under our very eyes, into a colonial country. Japan's struggle is imperialist and reactionary. China's struggle is emancipatory and progressive.

But Chiang Kai-shek? We need have no illusions about Chiang Kai-shek, his party, or the whole ruling class of China, just as Marx and Engels had no illusions about the ruling classes of Ireland and Poland. Chiang Kai-shek is the executioner of the Chinese workers and peasants. But today he is forced, despite himself, to struggle against Japan for the remainder of the independence of China. Tomorrow he may again betray. It is possible. It is probable. It is even inevitable. But today he is struggling. Only cowards, scoundrels, or complete imbeciles can refuse to participate in that struggle.

Let us use the example of a strike to clarify the question. We do not support all

strikes. If, for example, a strike is called for the exclusion of Negro, Chinese, or Japanese workers from a factory, we are opposed to that strike. But if a strike aims at bettering — insofar as it can — the conditions of the workers, we are the first to participate in it, whatever the leadership. In the vast majority of strikes, the leaders are reformists, traitors by profession, agents of capital. They oppose every strike. But from time to time the pressure of the masses or of the objective situation forces them into the path of struggle.

Let us imagine, for an instant, a worker saying to himself: "I do not want to participate in the strike because the leaders are agents of capital." This doctrine of this ultraleft imbecile would serve to brand him by his real name: a *strikebreaker*. The case of the Sino-Japanese War, is from this point of view, entirely analogous. If Japan is an imperialist country and if China is the victim of imperialism, we favor China. Japanese patriotism is the hideous mask of worldwide robbery. Chinese patriotism is legitimate and progressive. . . .

But can Chiang Kai-shek assure the victory? I do not believe so. It is he, however, who began the war and who today directs it. To be able to replace him it is necessary to gain decisive influence among the proletariat and in the army, and to do this it is necessary not to remain suspended in the air but to place oneself in the midst of the struggle. We must win influence and prestige in the *military* struggle against the foreign invasion and in the *political* struggle against the weaknesses, the deficiencies, and the internal betrayal.

SELECTIONS FROM THE LEFT

[The following selections are devoted to comment on the crisis over the Malvinas Islands.]

klasse-kampen

"Class Struggle," published weekly in Copenhagen by the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Danish section of the Fourth International.

The April 8-14 issue carried an article entitled "Argentina: The military occupies the Falkland Islands to keep power."

The article first described the mounting opposition to the Argentine military dictatorship, especially as the economic crisis has deepened.

"The biggest demonstration since the 1976 military coup took place on March 30. More than 100,000 demonstrators — mostly dockworkers and auto workers — turned out in defiance of the regime's prohibition and a colossal show of police power. They marched to the Plaza de Mayo in front of the government palace in Buenos Aires, the capital, demanding 'peace, bread, and jobs.'"

Klassekampen noted that the Argentine trade-union movement has been changing under the pressure of the rank-and-file workers. "Leaders who collaborate with the junta are losing ground, while those who have refused and instead demand its immediate resignation are gaining support."

The article explained how all the regime's attempts to unite the country behind it had failed. "The economic downturn continued, while resistance and demands for free elections mounted. . . . The occupation of the Falkland Islands is therefore the final attempt to achieve 'national unity.'"

Klassekampen explained that the regime's action does not fit well into Reagan's plans for the Argentine military to play a role in Central America. "This plan has not been altered, but the differences have grown, first and foremost in relation to British imperialism."

In conclusion, the article said: "The Argentine occupation of the Falkland Islands does not represent just an expression of ordinary chauvinism. Argentina's people understand the ravages of imperialism and capitalist exploitation of Third World countries. Therefore, many Argentines are happy that still another British colony is being ripped out of the hands of the once-so-mighty British imperialists."

"The British action to reconquer the Falkland Islands must be strongly condemned by the workers parties in the imperialist countries. It will not only cause meaningless victims to be sacrificed on the altar of imperialism. It will also genuinely bolster the Argentine military

dictatorship and add fuel to its campaign for national unity against wealthy England. Keeping the British fleet out, on the other hand, would cause the effect of the conquest to die down quickly. The fight against the Argentine military dictatorship could then come to the fore with renewed strength."

THE MILITANT

A socialist weekly published in the interests of working people. Printed in New York City.

A front-page editorial in the April 23 issue is headlined "Stop British warships! Hands off Argentina!"

"The largest British naval armada since World War II is steaming toward the Malvinas Islands off the coast of Argentina," the editorial notes. It cites the support of the imperialist powers for "the British government's aggression," and takes up the claim that the British rulers are acting in defense of the right of self-determination.

"The real question of self-determination involved is Argentina's right to determine its own affairs, including its sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands," the *Militant* says. It continues:

"The big-business press around the world has seized on the fact that Argentina is ruled by an unpopular military dictatorship — a dictatorship that imperialism helped to install — to neutralize working-class opposition to the British action.

"Millions of workers throughout the world know the Argentine regime's bloody record of repression and its support for imperialist efforts to crush the liberation fighters in El Salvador and to destabilize the revolutionary government in Nicaragua. It is a regime that working people in Argentina are struggling to replace.

"The Argentine junta's austerity program and repression are designed to squeeze more out of Argentine workers and farmers to pay the debts owed to British and U.S. banks.

"It is in the interests of Argentine workers to do everything possible to weaken British domination over their country. The Argentine masses, correctly, see repulsing the British war fleet as a step in this direction.

"The character of the current Argentine regime can't be the starting point for working people in determining their approach to the British aggression.

"The military junta is forced, despite itself, to struggle at the moment against Britain for Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. . . .

"The junta is waging this struggle with its own methods and cannot be counted on in this struggle. But a struggle is under way, and no class-conscious worker can be neutral.

"It's like a strike against an employer. In many strikes, the leaders are reformists, bureaucrats by profession, agents of the bosses. . . .

"A worker would never say, 'I don't want to participate in the strike because the leaders have a history of collaborating with the employers.' . . .

"The case of the British-Argentine conflict is, from this point of view, entirely analogous. Britain is an imperialist country and Argentina is the victim of imperialism. We favor Argentina. British patriotism is the hideous mask of worldwide robbery. Argentine patriotism is legitimate and progressive. The two can't be placed on the same plane. . . .

"The workers of the world have a stake in forcing the British to withdraw their fleet and in demanding a halt to the imperialist embargo against Argentina."

Two pages of news and background coverage inside the paper includes a report from Britain by Alan Freeman, a staffwriter for the Trotskyist weekly *Socialist Challenge*. In addition, there is a report on a demonstration at the United Nations in support of Argentina.

Participants in the action, which drew some 2,000 people, were mostly Argentine residents of the New York area. Many of those at the demonstration were opponents of the military regime. As one protester told the *Militant*, "What's involved here is that we are all united as Argentines against the threat to our homeland."

Rouge

"Red," weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. Published in Paris.

The April 9-15 issue of *Rouge* contains two articles on the Malvinas crisis. One, dated April 6, is entitled "A Colonial Heritage in Shreds." In it, Christian Picquet writes that what at first seemed like a comic opera has become a serious international crisis and even threatens to degenerate into an armed conflict.

"The Argentine government's action has spotlighted the crisis of British imperialism and its problems in getting others to respect its spheres of influence," Picquet says.

If the British were driven out of the islands, he adds, this would be an indication of weakness that would encourage others still living under British rule to rebel. In addition, "such a defeat would be a serious setback to the policy of the capitalist powers, who now aim, under the aegis of Washington, to restore their leadership over the Western world and their ability to intervene against liberation struggles."

For that reason, Picquet continues, "all anti-

imperialists must denounce the Royal Navy's show of force and its war preparations. This does not, however, mean giving any support whatsoever to the Buenos Aires dictatorship. Its policy of terrorism and social regression could only develop with the financial, diplomatic, and military aid of imperialism, and it is simply trying to exploit the nationalist sentiments of the population for its own ends."

Gen. Galtieri's military move against the Malvinas, Picquet writes, also revealed something about the Mitterrand government in France: "the French government, even more vigorously than its partners, demanded 'the immediate withdrawal' of Buenos Aires's troops, thus choosing to unreservedly defend the international interests of the colonial power."

Picquet concludes by saying that "the Western governments are going to warm up all the diplomatic solutions in order to avoid an armed confrontation among 'allies,' which can only hurt the imperialist camp."

In the second article, A. Heredia poses the question: "Why did General Galtieri's regime strike now?"

Heredia points to the tremendous economic crisis afflicting Argentina, which has "sparked growing discontent among the workers," and to the fact that the labor movement had called for a general strike to protest the regime's repression.

"In the face of this dangerous situation," ac-



ording to Heredia, "the military junta found an answer: the Malvinas Islands."

"It is true," Heredia continues, "that from a historic and legal point of view this archipelago is a part of Argentine territory that was occupied by an imperialist power." But it is not true, Heredia contends, that "the anti-imperialist struggle takes place through the recovery of the Malvinas."

"Imperialism is in fact comfortably installed in the Casa Rosada [the presidential palace], the central bank, the multinational corporations, the lending institutions and financial

groups, and inside the armed forces."

According to Heredia, the regime's move gives the junta a chance to present itself as the defender of national sovereignty. But, he says: "The Argentine people have seen on many occasions how the armed forces sacrificed national sovereignty to the interests of the imperialist powers. For the workers, sovereignty means above all the right to decide their future, the right to strike, to free association, to free press and expression, the right to work. From this point of view, the enemy does not occupy the Malvinas, but rather occupies the national and multinational corporations which, among themselves, have robbed the workers of the gains produced by more than a century of struggle."

The military junta, Heredia asserts, will now use the situation that it has created, and especially the threats of a British counteroffensive, "to demand discipline, to exalt the spirit of sacrifice, to militarize the country in the name of the war effort, and to divert the masses' attention from their own demands."

In Britain itself, Heredia notes, the opposition Labour Party had joined with the Conservatives "for the defense of the crown's colonial possessions."

Heredia concludes that "these are the disastrous effects of this stupid escalation, which could turn out to be deadly. Neither the workers in Buenos Aires nor those in London have anything to gain from it."

Cuba: 'The Malvinas are an inalienable part of Argentina'

[The following is the complete text of an April 14 English-language broadcast on Radio Havana.]

* * *

The Malvinas Islands crisis is drawing world attention to the colonialism still in effect in parts of Latin America. That phenomenon has come under harsh criticism from the UN and the Nonaligned Movement. We have the details on today's *Spotlight on Latin America*.

The Nonaligned Movement's sixth summit, held in Havana in 1979, recalled the long struggle of the Latin American nations for their independence and sovereignty. It was also pleased with their determination to follow a nonaligned policy, fighting imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, and all forms of foreign domination.

The nonaligned leaders indicated that Latin America historically has been one part of the world consistently victimized by Washington's acts of aggression, as well as those of the European imperialist powers. The leaders expressed their conviction that colonialism, in all shapes and forms, should be wiped out of the Caribbean and Latin America.

Shortly after the summit, on Oct. 12, 1979, top Cuban leader Fidel Castro addressed the UN General Assembly on the question of the Malvinas Islands. As president of the Nonaligned Movement, he reiterated its firm support of Argentina's right to regain sovereignty of the islands. The movement asked that talks to accomplish that end be speeded up.

In asking for the restoration of the Malvinas Islands to Argentina, Fidel said, the Havana summit again confirmed the essence of nonalignment spelled out in its declaration. That is to say, the fight against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, apartheid, racism — including Zionism — and any other form of aggression, occupation, domination, intervention, or foreign expansionism.

At the Foreign Ministers Conference in New Delhi in February 1981, the non-aligned countries ratified the understanding they reached on the Malvinas during the Havana summit. Once again, Argentina got the solid backing of most of the world's countries, which make up the movement.

After the New Delhi Conference, in the economic part of the final statement, the nonaligned prime ministers reiterated their

support of nations still suffering under colonial domination and foreign occupation, and reaffirmed these nations' inalienable right to full sovereignty over their natural resources and economic activity, and to use all means possible to liberate their countries from foreign control.

The foreign ministers also expressed the duty of all nations to work against colonial domination and foreign occupation, and to support those countries still colonized. They highlighted the goal of getting rid of these major obstacles to freedom at the earliest possible date.

As Cuba's ambassador to Argentina has said: "The Malvinas are an inalienable part of Argentina, and Cuba has always maintained a very clear position on this point. We defended it in all international forums, we said it in every possible way. Even our president, Fidel Castro, urged the restoration of the Malvinas to Argentina during his student days."

The situation is clear enough. The confrontation is between a Latin American country, belonging to the Nonaligned Movement, and a colonial power, who had been controlling part of Argentina's territory for 149 years.

Regime wins round one in austerity fight

Beats back massive challenge by working class

By Will Reissner

In 10 weeks of intense struggle, from January to the end of March, Belgian workers fought government austerity policies aimed at slashing their living standards, real wages, and social benefits.

Although these struggles were the largest seen in Belgium since the 1960-61 general strike, the right-wing coalition government of Prime Minister Wilfried Martens has weathered the storm for the time being. Martens is holding fast to his course, making the working class bear the full brunt of the economic crisis rocking the country, while the employers get more than \$2.2 billion in tax breaks and other aid.

In January, Martens, who has only a six-vote majority in parliament, received special decree powers enabling him to implement his program without specific parliamentary approval. Since then the government has frozen cost-of-living wage increases, cut family allotments and unemployment benefits, and increased social security taxes.

Jobs cut

Budget cuts will eliminate thousands of jobs in education, the railroads, and SABENA airlines. The steel industry has been a special target for cuts. Under a government plan, steel-making capacity, which was over 12 million tons in 1974, will decline to less than 6 million tons in coming years. More than 10,000 jobs in the industry will be eliminated, on top of more than 20,000 lost in the past decade.

Belgium already has the highest unemployment rate in the European Economic Community. The elimination of thousands of government and steel jobs will make that situation even worse.

In February, Martens decreed an 8.5 percent devaluation of the Belgian franc, resulting in higher prices and cuts in real wages. The real wages of workers are expected to drop about 5 percent this year as a result of the cost-of-living freeze, the devaluation, and higher taxes. Some estimates project a drop of more than 10 percent.

Belgian workers mounted an impressive fightback against these policies. The scope of their actions can be seen in a brief summary of some high points:

- On February 8, a 24-hour general strike shut down French-speaking Wallonia, the southern part of Belgium, as well as parts of Flemish-speaking Flanders. Three days later, 10,000 Walloon steelworkers marched on Brussels, Belgium's capital, to protest gov-

ernment plans to cut production. They were attacked by police.

- From February 22 to 26, there was an explosion of working-class protest in the steel centers of Liège and Charleroi in Wallonia. More than 100,000 workers took part in strikes. Spontaneous demonstrations formed, and flying picket squads spread the strikes to new plants. Railroad stations were occupied and roads were blocked.

General strikes

- During the first week of March, rotating 24-hour general strikes paralyzed each province in Wallonia in succession.

- On March 6, some 15,000 people took part in a Brussels demonstration organized by Women Against the Economic Crisis. Two days later, a wave of railway station occupations protested planned cuts in train service. These occupations continued throughout March.

- On March 9, the province of Liège was shut down by a 24-hour general strike. Two days later, 5,000 employees of SABENA airline marched on Brussels to protest government plans to cut their wages by 15 to 30 percent and eliminate thousands of jobs. The march was attacked by police using fire hoses and tear gas.

- On March 16, a 24-hour general strike took place in the Flemish provinces of Antwerp and Limburg and the Flemish part of Brabant, as well as the Charleroi basin in Wallonia. The same day, 15,000 steelworkers demonstrating in Brussels were again attacked by police. A three-hour pitched battle ensued.

- On March 18, general strikes took place in the Walloon provinces of Namur and Luxembourg, and in East Flanders.

- On March 22, a general strike began in the city of Mons and the densely populated area around it. All roads in the region were blocked and train stations were occupied. The regional general strike continued until March 27, with delegations sent around the country to try to extend it to a national level.

- On March 26, the Belgian General Federation of Workers (FGTB) called a 24-hour strike for all of Belgium. The action was effective in Wallonia, and had mixed results in Flanders and the industrial suburbs of Brussels.

- The following day, the Confederation of Christian Unions (CSC) sponsored a demonstration of 40,000 in Brussels.

- On March 31 a national teachers' strike took place to protest government plans to cut 6,000 teaching jobs. During the strike 30,000

teachers and students marched in Brussels.

- While all these activities were taking place, steelworkers in Wallonia shut the industry down in a four-week strike.

Divisions in workers movement

The Martens government was able to withstand this wave of protest only because the workers movement in Belgium is deeply divided — organizationally, politically, and ethnically. In the course of the latest struggles, there was a strong trend toward overcoming these divisions, but it did not develop fast enough to determine the outcome of the fight.

The Belgian trade-union movement encompasses more than 80 percent of the workforce. But the 2.5 million members are divided into two competing union federations of roughly equal size — the social-democratic FGTB and the Catholic CSC.

This division is also reflected in political terms. The FGTB is linked to the Belgian Socialist Party, which is now in opposition in parliament, while the CSC has ties to the Social Christian Party, which is in Martens's coalition government.

Even more important, the division in the union movement reflects the ethnic divisions in Belgium. Of the country's nearly 10 million inhabitants, about 56 percent are Flemish-speaking (Flemish is related to Dutch), 43 percent are French-speaking, and 1 percent German-speaking. In four provinces Flemish is the official language, and in four the language is French. The province of Brabant is divided in the middle between Flemish and French, and the capital is officially bilingual.

Wallonia hit hardest

The FGTB is the dominant union federation in French-speaking Wallonia, which is the traditional industrial heartland of Belgium. The region has longer traditions of working-class organization and struggle than Flanders. In addition, because the steel, coal, and textile industries in Wallonia have been especially hard hit by the economic crisis, the working class there has been quicker to go into action than its counterpart in Flanders.

With steel centers like Liège already reeling under 20 percent unemployment rates, the further gutting of the steel industry threatens to turn the whole region into a disaster area.

In Flanders, where the CSC is the main union, the process of industrialization began

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much later. For decades it was far less developed economically than Wallonia. But today Flanders has a more modern and diversified industrial base than Wallonia and has suffered less in the crisis.

FGTB takes lead

Both because the crisis has hit Wallonia hardest, and because the Socialist Party is not in the government, the FGTB took the lead in the three months of struggle.

Throughout the struggle the FGTB tried to draw the national leadership of the CSC into a joint campaign. But CSC leaders resisted, fearing that such a campaign would imperil the political fortunes of the Social Christian Party.

On the local level, however, CSC members did take part in common strikes and demonstrations with the FGTB in many places, particularly in Wallonia.

By late March, the working class throughout Belgium was coming to the conclusion that individual demonstrations and 24-hour general strikes in different provinces on different days could not bring down the government, which was recognized as the only way to turn back the austerity drive. The ranks, having gained experience in these struggles, were pressing for the organization of an all-out general strike on a national level. Motions for such a strike were passed in many heavily-attended union assemblies.

Pressure for all-out battle

There were three threads of struggle converging toward a general strike: the hard-fought battles of specific sectors of the workers, such as the steel and rail workers and teachers; the creeping general strike in Wallonia; and the growing unity developing among the ranks of the FGTB and CSC in Flanders.

An all-out general strike could have emerged out of the March 26 one-day national strike called by the FGTB. But despite pressure from the ranks, the CSC national leadership refused to support the March 26 strike. It chose instead to organize its own demonstration in Brussels for the following day, and criticized the FGTB strike as politically motivated.

Even in face of the CSC leadership's opposition, however, the ranks of the CSC could have been drawn into the strike. For that to happen, the FGTB strike, which was solid in Wallonia, would have had to last more than a single day. Many FGTB activists and local leaders proposed that the federation call an all-out strike, without a time limit, which would sweep Wallonia and could then draw the workers of Flanders in behind it. But when the FGTB national leadership refused to do this, the wave of struggle ended.

Although the ranks of both federations favored unity, and although local leaders and activists were moving rapidly in the direction of building that unity, they were unable to overcome the opposition of the top leadership.

While the Martens government has won an important battle in its drive to impose austerity



on the Belgian workers, it has not won the war. In the course of the struggle the political consciousness of the participants has grown. Large layers of the working class now have a clearer understanding of the role of the government and have witnessed the Socialist Party's abstention from the struggle.

Need for workers government

In the April 2 issue of *La Gauche*, the French-language weekly of the Revolutionary Communist League (LRT), the Belgian section of the Fourth International, the LRT argues that while the workers want to get rid of the Martens government, "they do not want another round of Socialist participation in a government with the right. By collaborating for years in managing the crisis," the LRT states, the SP "prepared the ground" for the present government.

But, the LRT states, "there is an alternative: a government of the workers, uniting the representatives of the two big families of the workers movement, and based on the mobili-

zation of the 2.5 million members of the FGTB and CSC.

"To move along this path," the LRT continues, "the union movement must work out a program of demands against the crisis and insist that all the parties that claim to represent the working class commit themselves to apply it."

No 'Walloon solution'

There is also a clearer understanding of the role and limitations of the leaders of the CSC and FGTB. An intense discussion is taking place in the ranks of the working class regarding strategies to confront and overcome the economic crisis.

Some elements in the FGTB, however, are reacting to their experiences by writing off the Flemish workers movement. They are suggesting that future struggles should concentrate solely on Wallonia and seek a "Walloon solution" to the crisis.

In the April 2 *La Gauche*, the LRT argues that such a strategy is doomed to failure.

The LRT supports real federalism in which "the Walloon and Flemish workers can decide their affairs in complete autonomy." But it notes that the key capitalist forces and the main financial levers of government in Belgium operate on a national rather than a regional basis. Therefore, the LRT argues, "the federalism that the workers of Flanders and Wallonia want can only result from the resolute anticapitalist activity of the Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels workers."

The organization concludes that "the general strike by Walloon workers could have forged this unity in action." But "having scuttled this possibility, the Walloon FGTB leadership is preparing to fall back on Wallonia, in the name of federalism." □

Luxembourg shut down by general strike

By Will Reissner

An estimated 80,000 workers in Luxembourg took part in a 24-hour general strike April 5 against the government's austerity policies. It was the largest protest action in that country since a 1942 demonstration against the policies of the German occupation forces.

The strike shut down the huge steel industry, mass transit, the railroads, and most small and medium-sized companies. Nearly 80 percent of all wage-earners in the country took part in the work stoppage. Luxembourg has a total population of about 365,000.

Despite police intervention, strikers were able to isolate the country from the outside world for much of the day by closing down the French, Belgian, and German borders.

As the strike was taking place, parliament adopted the government's economic program by a vote of 41 to 3. The parliamentary deputies of the Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party (POSL) had walked out of the chamber before the vote took place.

Luxembourg's steel industry, which dominates the country's economy, has been hard hit by the general economic crisis in Western Europe. Along with mounting unemployment, the country faces a 14 percent inflation rate. The economic problems were further exacerbated by the recent 8.5 percent devaluation of the Belgian franc, to which the Luxembourg franc is automatically tied in a monetary union.

John Castegnaro, head of the Luxembourg General Confederation of Labor (OGBL) argued that the government's policies mean that "wage workers, the retired, and the unemployed are the only ones hit" by the crisis. He noted that the workers movement is fighting to maintain free medicine, pension levels, and to improve the educational system.

On March 27, between 30,000 and 40,000 people demonstrated in the capital against the austerity policies. That demonstration was also organized by the trade-union movement. □

Wide support for Solidarity

Demonstrations, strikes, clandestine bulletins

By Ernest Harsch

Precisely at 9:00 p.m. on April 12 people in apartments throughout Warsaw tuned their FM radios to 70.1 on the dial. "Radio Solidarity" was on the air.

The clandestine broadcast, which lasted eight minutes, was a dramatic and audacious reminder of the Solidarity union movement's continued resistance to martial law.

At the beginning of its transmission, "Radio Solidarity" asked its audience to take part in a public survey indicating how well they were receiving its broadcast. A male announcer called on listeners to flick their lights three times if the signal was coming in strongly, twice for well, and once for adequately. Lights in homes throughout the capital flickered, as union observers noted the strength of the signal in different parts of the city.

The announcers, a man and a woman, then spoke about the government's declaration of a state of war, "a war that the authorities declared against their own people." They cited the continued detention of some 4,000 unionists and political activists, and reports of beatings of political prisoners.

"Let us recall these events when we are told that life is returning to normal," the woman announcer said.

"There cannot be normalization in the country when people are being beaten or the innocent jailed, when human rights are being trampled on. To accept this as normal is to be a renegade to your conscience.

"We must fight for the release of those imprisoned, for the restoration of human dignity. Our radio station has taken up this struggle. All honorable Poles should do the same."

A song about a 14-day strike at the Piast coal mine against the imposition of martial law followed, and a call to listeners to mark the next day, the fourth month of martial law, with symbolic protests. The announcers promised that the underground station would be back on the air April 30.

Mass demonstration in Gdansk

Three weeks earlier, in the coastal city of Gdansk where Solidarity was born out of the August 1980 strikes, tens of thousands of protesters turned out March 21 for the largest single demonstration since martial law was imposed.

The occasion was the baptismal ceremony for the seven-week-old daughter of Lech Walesa, Solidarity's imprisoned national chairperson. Walesa was not allowed to attend the ceremony, but the presence of the union that he helped build was obvious to everyone.

The crowd outside the church was huge. Estimates of its size ranged up to 50,000. Many

of those in the crowd wore Solidarity buttons, although the wearing of union insignia is now outlawed. Others wore small electronic resistors on their lapels as symbols of their opposition to military rule.

Workers' delegations from around the country came to express their solidarity, including from the largest factories in the coastal region and from Warsaw, Poznan, Koszalin, and Katowice. Each delegation gave Walesa's wife, Danuta, a bouquet of white and red flowers, in Poland's national colors.

When Danuta Walesa came out of the church, the crowd broke into chants of "Solidarity! Solidarity!" "Give Lech back to us!" and "Wiktoria!" the name of the Walesas' daughter, which was accompanied by V-for-victory signs. Everyone then sang the national anthem and a religious hymn.

Solidarity reorganizes

The Radio Solidarity broadcast and the Gdansk demonstration were only two of the most dramatic displays of the union's continued mass support and its spirit of resistance.

The imposition of martial law, the suppression of many democratic rights, and the detention of most of Solidarity's national leadership was a major blow to the union and its 10 million members. But it was far from fatal.

Throughout the country, young activists and more seasoned union veterans have set up workers committees and resistance "circles." They provide assistance to the families of detained unionists or those who have been fired from their jobs, organize symbolic protest actions and strikes, and circulate information and discussion bulletins.

Regional Solidarity coordinating bodies have been set up in Warsaw, Wroclaw, Lodz, Gdansk, Katowice, and other cities. A national body, the All-Poland Resistance Committee, has also been established, composed in part of members of Solidarity's National Committee who managed to evade arrest.

Nearly 700 illegal bulletins and newsheets are in circulation. Some of them are typewritten, others are printed on offset presses. In Warsaw, *Wiadomosc Dnia* (Daily News) appears in editions of 120,000 copies every three weeks. *Tygodnik Mazowski*, also in Warsaw, comes out every week in press runs of 10,000 each. Such publications are distributed by the bundle to factories and housing complexes. Each issue calls on its readers to make typewritten facsimiles and circulate them even more widely.

Although the government-run news media ignores any reports of protest strikes, these bulletins have reported a growing number of

work stoppages in Gdansk, Warsaw, and other cities, usually lasting 15 minutes or so. One of them took place at the Ursus tractor factory near Warsaw March 19.

Detained leaders join debates

Nor are the Solidarity leaders who have been detained totally cut off from the rest of the union. A number of prominent figures have smuggled out statements that have been publicized in the bulletins.

A major statement by Jacek Kuron, one of the most prominent political activists in Poland, who is interned at the Bialoleka camp near Warsaw, appeared in *Tygodnik Mazowski*. Kuron argued for the building of a mass resistance movement and preparations for the ouster of the government as a way to force the authorities to compromise. (For the full text of Kuron's statement, see last week's issue of *Intercontinental Press*.)

The same issue of the bulletin published articles by Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski, two Solidarity leaders in the Warsaw area who have evaded arrest. They polemicized against aspects of Kuron's statement. Bujak argued against building a centralized resistance movement, maintaining that it should be decentralized to minimize the effects of the repression. He also stressed that a "showdown" with the government could lead to greater repression and Soviet intervention.

Even within the internment camps, clandestine bulletins are being published. Four have appeared at the Bialoleka camp alone. (Internees, as distinct from prisoners awaiting trial on specific charges, are allowed paper and various writing materials.)

Threats to ban Solidarity

It is clear that the government and military hierarchy, four months after the imposition of martial law, have been unsuccessful in breaking Solidarity or in undermining the massive support for it.

Their original aim, immediately after the imposition of martial law, was to try to win over at least some Solidarity leaders with the aim of reviving the union under strict government control. But this attempt foundered when no Solidarity leader of any significance agreed to go along with it.

As a result, the authorities are now threatening to ban Solidarity outright (at the moment it is officially "suspended").

Official press attacks have been more strident in attacking the union as a whole. Zdzislaw Morawski, the editor of the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, wrote in the paper, "The only realistic and politically honest solution is to legally dissolve all the trade unions and begin creating the trade union movement from scratch."

These threats follow the formal dissolution in late March of the Polish Journalists Association, which has strongly supported Solidarity since late 1980.

These moves are a sign of the government's

political isolation within the country. Without any significant base of popular support, it has had to rely primarily on repression to maintain the bureaucracy's rule and privileges.

One reason for this isolation is Poland's disastrous economic situation, caused by years of bureaucratic mismanagement. The authorities are unable to couple their repression with material concessions to the workers, as they have done in the past.

This economic crisis, especially the severe food shortages, has heightened social tensions within the country. In one *Solidarity* bulletin, Bujak and Kulerski warned that the shortages and high prices could lead to "explosive outbursts."

A similar warning was hinted at in the Warsaw weekly *Polityka*, which is edited by Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski. It gave a detailed account of a "typical" Polish

working-class family's monthly budget. In February, the family spent all their money on food and other essentials, eschewing entertainment, alcohol, or more expensive items like fruit juices. Even then their income was insufficient to meet their expenses, and they were able to get by only thanks to a wage bonus.

"What will happen in two to three months," *Polityka* asked, "when this bonus runs out?" □

Iran

Freedom of press and class struggle

Why the government has been attacking working-class newspapers

[The Iranian socialist weekly *Kargar*, published by the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), one of three organizations in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International, was ordered to halt publication on March 26 by the Tehran Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. Since then, the publications of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and of the two tendencies in the majority faction of the Fedayan have also been forced to shut down. (See *Intercontinental Press*, April 19, page 325.)

[The following editorial from the February 22 issue of *Kargar* puts the regime's attacks on the rights of the working-class press in the framework of the overall situation in the class struggle in Iran. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Last week, the people responsible for organizing the press conference of the government's spokesperson, Mr. [Ahmad] Tavakkoli, prohibited a *Kargar* reporter from attending. Mr. Tavakkoli expressed his approval of this illegal step. Referring to *Kargar*, he said, "This paper absolutely must be closed down."

According to statements by the prime minister, all newspapers are to be allowed to participate in the government's press conferences. Therefore, such a measure by a government representative goes completely counter to the role officials play as the overseers and executors of the constitution. In fact, it is an illegal act.

Why the threats?

Of course, this was not simply the result of Mr. Tavakkoli's personality, or his personal opposition to *Kargar*'s democratic rights. There are deeper roots, which are determined by the whole framework of the state's policies. By not breaking with the capitalists and their politicians, these policies fail to lead to decisive measures to meet the needs of the toilers.

On the other hand, the latest victories of the fighters at the front and the renewed perspective of defeating [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein have caused the workers and the toil-

ers to feel more than ever the need to discuss the problems facing the revolution. Under these circumstances, *Kargar* has devoted its pages to discussions of the anti-imperialist struggle. In order to more fully reflect the facts about the revolution, we sent our reporter to cover Mr. Tavakkoli's news conference. Now we are faced with his threat of "absolute closure."

It has been established in the course of the revolution that the people elect their government representatives and that the government is the servant of the people. Thus freedom of the press is a tool to advance the anti-imperialist struggle. It enables the people to control those in charge of the government.

Judging from Mr. Tavakkoli's statement, however, it would seem that for him it is the government that has elected the people and that must keep the people under supervision and order them around. This means that even the constitutional articles on freedom of ex-

pression and freedom of the press, which give Mr. Tavakkoli such a headache, "absolutely must be closed down."

Imperialist attacks

To clarify these policies, it is necessary to review the intrigues and threats of the imperialists and their local agents, the capitalists and landlords, who oppose the revolution. We must also review the government's economic policies for putting an end to such intrigues and threats.

It is clear that by overthrowing the monarchy, the Iranian revolution dealt an immense blow to imperialism and its internal agents, the capitalists and landlords. By expanding the anti-imperialist struggle, organizing the workers' and people's movement, and bringing the masses onto the political scene, the revolution has put the interests of the imperialists and the capitalists in still greater



Victories at front have encouraged discussion of problems facing revolution.

danger.

This is why imperialism has always subjected the Iranian revolution to economic and military threats and invasions. The disgraceful events at Tabas [Carter's April 1980 military raid], the abortive coup d'état, and the war imposed by Iraq have all been the result of the imperialists' plots to drown the revolution in blood.

At the international level the imperialists are trying to paralyze the Iranian economy by enforcing an economic boycott. This in turn encourages the profiteering capitalists to hoard merchandise, create shortages and inflation, and sabotage production. In this way they seek to advance their aims of breaking up the revolutionary forces of the masses in their millions.

The government and its representative, Mr. Tavakkoli, have admitted this. At the very end of his February 17 news conference, for exam-

ple, Mr. Tavakkoli referred to the problem of high prices and the government's measures to control the supplies of consumer goods.

Need for anti-imperialist policy

It is clear that any government enjoying the support of the decisive majority of the masses of people in the country and basing itself on the needs of the revolution and the demands of this vast majority, would have to choose a decisive anti-imperialist policy. It would have to act against destruction and sabotage by the capitalists and landlords in the war effort, in production, and in industrial reconstruction.

Armed with such a policy and based on the mobilization of the millions of toilers who have time and again demonstrated their support for this, such a government could neutralize all these intrigues and cut off the hands of the capitalists and landlords, who are the prin-

cipal cause of hoarding, inflation, unemployment, and so on. The examples of the governments of Cuba and Nicaragua today illustrate this truth.

But unfortunately, three years after the February insurrection, the officials of this government have shown that they are not capable of choosing such a decisive policy.

Three viewpoints

There are three basic currents of thought on the economic problems facing Iran:

- That of the imperialists, who never rest from dealing blow after blow to the Iranian revolution.

- That of the workers and toilers, the consistent supporters of the revolution, who want an effective economic plan based on the country's need to confront the imperialist and capitalist plots. The toilers know that a land reform

Campaign for release of imprisoned socialists

Two leaders of Iran's Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, are being held without charges in Evin Prison in Tehran. The HKE is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International.

Atai is a member of the HKE's Political Bureau. He was taken to prison on March 29 after responding to a subpoena from the Tehran Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office. Less than a month earlier, Atai had been released from Evin Prison after being held there since December 11 of last year.

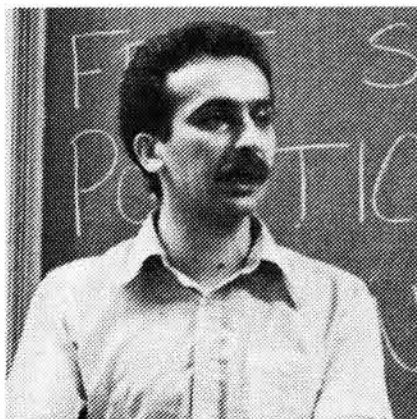
In an interview published in the March 8 issue of *Kargar* Atai had described widespread abuses and violations of the law by officials and guards at Evin Prison that he witnessed during his confinement there. (See *Intercontinental Press*, April 5, page 277.)

After the interview with Atai was published, officials from the prosecutor's office went to the office of Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, who is responsible for printing *Kargar*. They questioned him about the paper's contents and then arrested him. He has been held at Evin Prison since March 15.

Harassment against *Kargar* was subsequently stepped up. On March 26, the prosecutor's office issued an order suspending the paper's publication.

Another ominous move against *Kargar* and its supporters came during the first week of April, when a young soldier, Hassan Sadegh, was sentenced by a military court in Ahwaz to 10 years in prison. Sadegh had been charged with reading and circulating *Kargar* to his fellow soldiers.

Atai and Falsafi are both longtime members of the Iranian Trotskyist movement. Both were active defenders of vic-



BAHRAM ATAİ

tims of the shah's regime during their years of exile in the United States prior to the revolution. Upon returning to Iran, they worked at the Iran National auto factory.

When the Iraqi regime launched its invasion of Iran in September 1980, Atai and Falsafi were both among the many Iran National workers who volunteered for service in the Baseej-e-Mustazafin (Mobilization Corps of the Oppressed). Atai served at the war front, and Falsafi was the elected leader of his Baseej unit at Iran National.

The two socialist leaders were dismissed from their jobs at Iran National when the management appointed by the Khomeini government began removing militant workers in early 1981.

Falsafi and Atai both have lawsuits against the government pending in the Iranian courts. The suit filed by Falsafi charges that he was illegally detained and beaten in early February during another incident of harassment of *Kargar's* printing office.

Atai's lawsuit calls for an end to the illegal abuses committed by prison officials and witnessed by him in Evin Prison during his earlier confinement there.

The HKE is carrying on a campaign inside Iran to gain the release of Atai, Falsafi, and Sadegh, and to defend its right to legally publish *Kargar*. The newspaper's formal certification of legality by the Ministry of Islamic Guidance has not been rescinded, so the action of the prosecutor's office is clearly illegal.

The socialists are taking their campaign to the workers' organizations in the factories and to organizations like the Baseej, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Crusade for Reconstruction (an organization of young volunteers who teach literacy and provide other forms of assistance to the rural population). The HKE explains that attacks on the democratic rights of the toilers weakens defense of the revolution against imperialism.

Efforts by those who support the Iranian revolution and oppose U.S. imperialism's attacks on it can help to free these anti-imperialist, working-class fighters. Telegrams such as the following should be sent to Hojatoleslam 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 fighters Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, who are being held without charges at Evin Prison in Tehran. I also urge the release of the anti-imperialist soldier Hassan Sadegh, who has been unjustly sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in Ahwaz."

to cut off the hands of the landlords is the basic solution to the agrarian question. They know that the workers must exercise control through elected *shoras* [councils] in the factories. Merging similar industries into one nationwide unit with a common set of accounting books, and the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade are effective measures for rebuilding the economy.

Based on their own experiences in the struggle against oppression and in advancing the anti-imperialist struggle and the war against the invading forces, the masses know the extension of the revolution is only possible through unity in the ranks of the workers and toilers.

• In the middle are those who see the enemy, the dangers and shortcomings, but are afraid to organize the workers and toilers to do anything about it. They prevent the workers from clenching their fist to smash imperialism to bits. Instead, they tell the masses that imperialism can only be fought within the framework of the government bureaucracy left over from the times of the monarchy. They claim bureaucratic planning is a tool in the anti-imperialist struggle, but this is a tool that was molded by the capitalists and landlords with the aid of imperialism itself.

Policy of Bazargan and Bani-Sadr

This third policy is a legacy of the Bazargan government. After the overthrow of the monarchy this regime came to power on the wave of revolution as a result of the crisis of leadership. The same policy was continued by Bani-Sadr. These first governments after the fall of the monarchy carried out a policy of confrontation with the revolution — against the workers and toilers, against the people's organizations like the Revolutionary Guards, the Crusade for Reconstruction, the Islamic factory shoras and *anjomans* [societies]. They became embroiled in quarrels over bureaucratic posts.

But the power of the revolution was greater than these obstacles. With the advance of the revolution, the Bazargan and Bani-Sadr governments were shoved aside one after the other.

The experience of three years of revolution has confirmed that this third policy — failure to break with the capitalists and letting everything revolve around the government bureaucracy — will never meet the needs of the anti-imperialist struggle or economic reconstruction, or facilitate victory in the war and in driving the Iraqi invaders out.

Solving the economic problems that result from the intrigues of the imperialists and the capitalists requires a decisive policy of breaking with the government bureaucracy and the capitalists and relying on the mobilization of the workers and toilers.

Refused to break with capitalism

Moreover, the specific aspects of the government's economic plans and its weakness in dealing with problems are becoming clear. Because the measures proposed by the govern-

ment are confined to the framework of the state bureaucracy, despite all its words about the downtrodden and dispossessed, the rule of the capitalists is still not being called into question.

At the same time, the failure to break from capitalist policies brings up another point. The Iranian capitalist class, which fled and suffered blows after the overthrow of the monarchy, has been severely weakened through the advance of the revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle. It is moribund. This capitalism is so weak and incapacitated that it cannot even tolerate superficial democracy of the kind used by its masters in America and Europe. In the past, the capitalists maintained their rule through monarchy, oppression, and repression; they have the 50-year history of Pahlavi rule to their credit.

Since the revolution, the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and the capitalist politicians who gained posts in the government still have not broken with this class. They have been unable to create the conditions for broad discussions among the workers and toilers. As a result, the revolution brings to mind periods of clashes more than periods of calm discussion and decisions.

The president of the republic, Mr. [Ali] Khomeini, stated in his message at the beginning of the fourth year of the revolution, pointing to the clashes with Bani-Sadr's faction:

"In those days everyone, and particularly the forces following the Imam's line, was under pressure. The apparatus of pressure made a club out of every speech and brought it down on the speaker's head."

This is an example of the weakness of bourgeois democracy when faced with the revolution's demand for discussion and clarification.

Needs of working class

In face of this situation, the working class — which produces all the country's industrial commodities and vital materials — needs democratic discussion and a free political atmosphere in order to advance the revolution, to organize the anti-imperialist struggle still more thoroughly, and to put an end to control by the capitalists and landlords over the economy. Such a discussion and exchange of views strengthens the working class and raises their level of political consciousness. It keeps them alert to the imperialists' intrigues.

The workers and toilers also need to build their own independent organizations. Islamic factory shoras have developed as the continuation of strike committees that arose before the insurrection. These have included the most conscious Islamic workers. They express the burning needs felt by the workers in the thick of the struggle against oppression and imperialism.

With the advance of the revolution over the past three years, these needs of the toilers have not been met. Instead they have become sharper.

But in the context of the deepening of the revolution and the intensifying contradictions

between the workers and imperialism, the government — acting through Mr. Tavakkoli one and a half months ago — blocked the further organization of Islamic shoras in the factories. This not only weakens the workers' resources for discussing economic problems and controlling production, but, by weakening the organization of workers in industry and in the whole society, it in fact weakens the government itself in face of the intrigues of imperialism and of the capitalists and landlords inside the country.

This opens the way for the destructive elements to continue to wreck production and dismiss militant and Islamic workers. Through their management positions in industry, and through hoarding and profiteering in the bazaar, they will intensify the shortages of commodities and the inflation of prices.

Thus it is not surprising that the policies approved by the government's spokesperson or those of any other cabinet member — despite their sincerity — are not constructive. For by closing off the workers' resources for discussion, the only means of reconstructing the economy — that is, workers control — is forfeited. The way is instead opened for the agents of capitalist influence and for their profiteering and destruction of the economy.

Attacks on working class

It is in light of these overall policies of the state that Mr. Tavakkoli's threats of "absolute closure" of *Kargar* can be understood. One day, the government spokesperson announced the suspension of the organization of Islamic factory shoras, thus weakening the workers organizations against imperialism. The next day, he defended Article 33 of the idolatrous labor law [which authorizes punitive firings]. And then, without anyone's permission, he threatened to close *Kargar*, which vigorously puts forward independent working-class and anti-imperialist policies. It is clear that the workers cannot agree with any of these measures.

Three years' experience by the workers and toilers in the struggle against imperialism have shown that such policies of confrontation implemented by petty-bourgeois intellectuals and capitalist politicians can only hurt this sacred struggle.

On the contrary: the necessity of winning victory in the war; of economic reconstruction; of expanding the organization of the workers and toilers and people's movements like the Islamic shoras, the Crusade for Reconstruction, the Revolutionary Guards, the Baseej, and the literacy movement all require the creation of an atmosphere of free discussion and democracy for all forces that defend the revolution.

Through their own independent organizations, in an atmosphere free of clashes, the workers and toilers can arrive at the broadest mobilizations of the masses in their millions against imperialism. Through discussions and an exchange of views, the workers can arrive at the best means of achieving a government of the downtrodden — that is, a workers and peasants government. □

More austerity, more repression

Hugo Blanco points to regime's role in death threats

By Nelson González

MEXICO CITY — The Peruvian regime of President Fernando Belaúnde Terry is preparing to unleash further repression against the workers and peasants in order to quell rising opposition to its austerity policies.

At the insistence of the International Monetary Fund, Belaúnde has instituted policies that have depressed wages and rolled back reforms won as a result of struggles during the preceding regime. These included the nationalization of certain industries and a limited agrarian reform.

Among the Belaúnde regime's plans is to foster large-scale capitalist agriculture and agro-industries. As a result, the regime has moved to destroy the peasant cooperatives that were set up under the Velasco Alvarado government in the early 1970s. Velasco's land reform was aimed at defusing the big peasant struggles of the 1960s.

Under Belaúnde, land has been taken away from the peasant cooperatives and handed over to large capitalist concerns backed by imperialist investments.

With respect to mineral, oil, and lumber resources, the government is making huge concessions to North American capitalists, reprivatizing nationalized enterprises, and encouraging foreign imperialist investments.

Arrests in Cuzco

Three members of the Cuzco city council were arrested at the airport there on April 12 soon after they had sought to visit some of the dozens of persons who have been jailed in the area on suspicion of "terrorism."

Cuzco is located east of the province of Ayacucho, where police repression has been intense since a series of guerrilla actions in early March.

The three council members, all brothers, are Adrián, Tany, and Carlos Valer Delgado. They were elected to their posts on the Left Unity slate, which involves the majority of Peru's working-class political tendencies. Adrián Valer Delgado is a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), the Peruvian section of the Fourth International. (The PRT participates in the local Left Unity bloc in Cuzco but is not a member at the national level.)

As of April 14, the three were still being held. According to PRT members in Peru, none of those arrested in the past six weeks have been released.

These economic policies have led to further increases in Peru's already huge foreign debt. They have also exacerbated the country's persistent high inflation rate and brought further unemployment.

Discontent with this situation is rising. In addition to strikes and peasant struggles for land, this has also been reflected in armed actions against government installations in Ayacucho province in south-central Peru. A leftist grouping of Maoist origin known as Sendero Luminoso (Shining Pathway) has been accused of many of these attacks.

The most spectacular recent armed action was a March 3 raid on the Ayacucho prison. Some 300 prisoners were freed, including 90 who had been accused of terrorist activities.

In retaliation, security forces — including uniformed Republican Guards — raided a hospital in nearby Huamanga. Four alleged members of Sendero Luminoso who were being held there were dragged from their beds. One was beaten severely and nearly strangled with his own intravenous feeding tube, and the other three were hauled into the street outside the hospital and shot to death by the cops.

Dozens of persons were arrested in house-to-house searches in subsequent days in Ayacucho and neighboring towns.

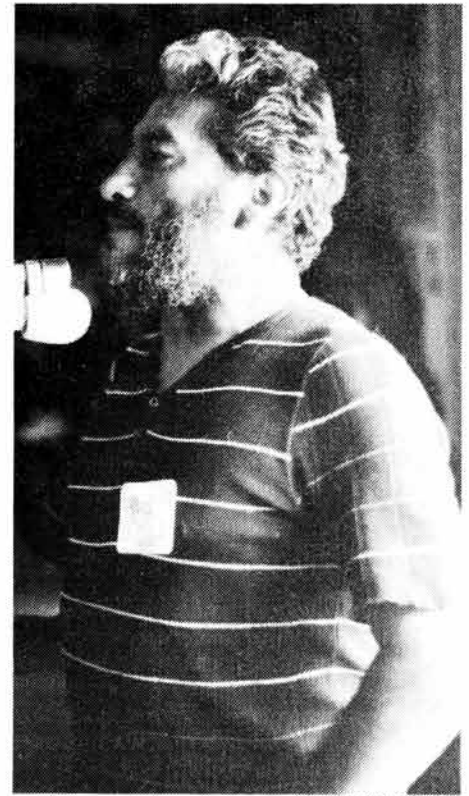
Among those killed at the hospital was Jimmy Russell Wensjoe Mantilla, the son of a retired air force officer. Two of his brothers went to the hospital immediately after the attack and learned of the police role. Because of their father's position, they were able to break through the communications blackout imposed by the police. They made statements to the press denouncing the murder of their brother.

Implication of the government's security forces in the hospital killings became a public scandal. It served to put the authorities on the defensive.

However, many Peruvians now fear that in light of this discrediting of the official police forces, the regime may resort to extralegal repression through paramilitary gangs or death squads.

On March 16, the well-known Peruvian socialist leader Hugo Blanco was the target of a death threat. An anonymous caller told the Lima daily *La República*, "This is the White Rightist Command. We are going to take measures against Sendero Luminoso. Our first victim will be Hugo Blanco."

I interviewed Blanco here in Mexico City on March 29 while he was attending the International Conference in Solidarity With the Salvadoran People. Blanco had come as a delegate from his organization, the Revolutionary



Lisa Hickler/Young Socialist

Hugo Blanco speaking at El Salvador solidarity conference in Mexico City.

Workers Party (PRT), Peruvian section of the Fourth International.

* * *

Question. Could you first explain the specific nature of the threat on your life?

Answer. One of the daily newspapers in Lima, *La República*, published on its front page several weeks ago the transcript of a call they received announcing the formation of a rightist death squad called the White Rightist Command. The alleged purpose of this group was to combat the guerrillas, but they named me as their first victim.

Q. Do you think the government is involved in the creation of this group?

A. We have to remember the context in which these death threats take place. The murder of the air force officer's son resulted in a tremendous loss of prestige for the government's repressive forces.

So it is natural that they would now attempt to carry out their repressive activity under the guise of civilian paramilitary squads. In that way, the police could deny any link with their actions. We are accustomed to seeing this in Latin America. There are many examples: the ORDEN in El Salvador, the Mano Blanca in Guatemala, the Death Squadrons in Brazil, the Triple-A in Argentina.

Q. Why have the threats been directed against you in particular?

A. I am an elected member of parliament. I am also one of the better-known figures on the left as a result of the role I have played in leading and participating in peasant struggles. Currently I am a leader of the Peruvian Peasant Federation.

My organization, the Revolutionary Workers Party, has always been identified with the struggles of the people.

As a result of all this, I have suffered many personal attacks. First I was sentenced to death in 1962 for my role in the peasant struggles in La Convención and Lares. Thanks to a worldwide solidarity effort, the sentence was commuted to 25 years in jail, of which I served eight. I was released only to be deported shortly afterwards because I supported a strike by Peruvian teachers.

After my return to Peru I was deported again, this time because of big demonstrations by shantytown dwellers — even though I had not been involved in organizing those struggles.

In 1978, a group calling itself the Peruvian Anticommunist Alliance attempted to kidnap me, but I was able to escape with the help of my comrades. Three other members of my party were captured, tortured, and dumped in the countryside.

In 1980 I was elected as a deputy to the Peruvian parliament. Since then, whenever shantytown dwellers or workers whose factories have been shut down have called on me to march with them, I have responded.

Such activities have linked me to the mass movement. So I believe the right wing would like to use the death threats against me to intimidate everyone who is beginning to organize to fight back against the regime.

This, combined with the refusal of the government and the parliament to investigate the past attacks and current threats, points to police and government involvement. The paramilitary organization that has just surfaced is merely a vehicle to carry out such repression.

Q. What kind of response is being organized against the overall repression and in particular against the threats on your life?

A. Of course, there have been many protests against the police attack on the hospital in Huamanga and other acts of repression.

My party, the PRT, has also sent a letter to the newspaper *La República* detailing the history of government attacks against me and placing the blame for the current attacks on the government. We also have called for solidarity in the face of these attacks, reminding everyone that in the past it has been national and worldwide solidarity that has stayed the hand of the repressive forces.

Q. What can be done outside Peru to help?

A. We think that if many telegrams are sent to the Belaúnde regime denouncing these

threats and holding the government responsible for anything that might happen to me, this could have the effect of slowing them down. It would put pressure on the Peruvian government: for the sake of international relations, they would like to maintain their facade of democracy. They will think twice before they

make an attempt on my life.

* * *

Telegrams may be sent to Peruvian embassies or to Fernando Belaúnde Terry, Presidente de la República, Palacio Presidencial, Lima, Peru. □

Food shortages in Guyana

IMF-imposed austerity results in hunger

[The following article appeared in the March 1982 issue of *Guyana Information Bulletin*, published by the People's Progressive Party of Guyana.]

* * *

The battle for bread goes on in Guyana. Queues are getting longer for bread, for biscuits, for flour, rice — for almost every essential commodity. There has been a second death on a food line, an aged woman from the countryside who trekked all the way to the city for cooking oil. In the bauxite town, Linden, as well as in the sugar belt, acts of violence have erupted in the food lines, and isolated cases of looting of state outlets are being reported.

The situation is becoming desperate. Food supplies are drying up since the [Forbes] Burnham government is unable to make fresh orders for imports due to the fact that the regime has not paid overseas creditors. For example, Domtar, a Canadian firm which supplies Guyana with roll paper, has frozen further credits, which may lead to the closure of the local toilet paper factory.

But there is emerging organised resistance against the worsening food situation, which has been compounded by the banning of essential items such as cheese, peas, cooking oil and malted beverages, for which there are no substitutes at the present time.

The People's Progressive Party [PPP] has launched a campaign against the unjust imposition of bans on basic foodstuffs, continuing shortages of essential foods and the impending layoff of between 17,000 and 20,000 workers in the public service and state sector.

The protest campaign began with a march of women through the city of Georgetown on International Women's Day, carrying placards and distributing leaflets. The militant women drawn from the Women's Progressive Organisation kept up a powerful chant "No Food, No Production!" — a slogan which was picked up by their menfolk who staged a similar march in the city days later. They also gave content to the slogan by staging lightning strikes in the sugar belt where there is glaring discrimination in favour of PNC [People's National Congress] supporters at the food outlets. At one such demonstration during late March the people brought out their kitchen utensils to dramatise both their hunger and anger.

The Party views the growing burdens on the

working people as oppressive and leading to further deterioration in living standards, which are already at a hazardous level. Malnutrition is growing, with Guyana already having one of the highest percentages in the Caribbean. With unemployment expected to rise drastically in the next few weeks, and with no unemployment relief of any kind, the Party expects the plight of low income workers and unemployed to worsen.

While the Burnham regime continues to harass consumers by shortages, high prices and banning of essentials, claiming that these are necessary because of shortage of foreign exchange, the government continues to import luxuries and high priced cars for the elite; it continues to buy more and more military hardware in a country already heavily militarised and continues extravagant expenditures for overseas missions and elaborate trips in chartered aircraft, etc.

The crisis is not affecting the PNC elite, which continues to receive high salaries, fantastic allowances of all sorts, and perquisites.

The PPP says that in the interest of the nation, government should close down several ministries, lay off redundant ministers, cut spending on luxuries, slash the salaries and abolish allowances of the bloated ministerial corps, cut expenditures on, and prune the size of, the standing army, and scrap national service.

The Party is calling on workers to agitate through their unions and demand action to bring down the PNC government, which has installed itself in the seats of power by every conceivable fraudulent means.

The PPP says categorically that the economic mess Guyana is now in is a result of poor or no planning, mismanagement, wasteful expenditure, and widespread corruption. The PNC is in the clutches of the IMF [International Monetary Fund] which is demanding large-scale retrenchment and massive cuts in essential imported goods, with no planned substitution policy, all at the expense of the working people. □

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Revolution and the dockworkers

The fight to transform a key union

By Pat Kane

ST. GEORGE'S — Grenada is a tiny developing island. This is a simple fact, but it has big implications.

The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) of Grenada has decided on a bold plan of capital investment to build roads, schools, houses, a new telephone system and electrical generating station, and new industrial plants.

But Pearls Airport, which is the only one on the island right now, is only used by small passenger planes. It has no facilities for night landing, or for large cargo planes.

So, the question is — how do all the machinery, supplies, and equipment get to Grenada in the first place? The answer — through the port facilities of the island's capital, St. George's.

Role of dockworkers

Port facilities is a phrase often used to describe the massive dock facilities in industrialized countries. St. George's docks are only a few hundred yards long, and employ around 300 stevedores and longshoremen, organized in the Seamen's and Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU). An additional 250 unskilled and casual workers are organized in the island's largest union, the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU). The docks, and the well-being of the dockworkers, are central to the whole future development process here in Grenada.

Grenada's dockers opposed dictator Eric Gairy, and supported the March 13, 1979, revolution that overthrew him. They had good reason to, explained William Robert St. Luis, better known as "Conqueror."

Conqueror is 34 years old and a skilled dockworker. He has been on the waterfront since 1962. "The union was always asking for our rights to Gairy," explained Conqueror. "We asked about the surfacing of the dock, new equipment and so forth.

"Time and time again the union stood up because when members leave work at night, some been ambushed and beat by secret police. Some been falsely arrested after going home from work, and all sort of things like that. This helped the dockmen to come on more during the '74 struggle."

Workers fight Gairy

The '74 struggle was an islandwide general strike demanding the resignation of the Gairy government. The strike was led by anti-Gairy elements in the capitalist class who formed the Committee of 22.

The New Jewel Movement (NJM), Grena-

da's revolutionary party, was newly formed and untested by the masses of the Grenadian people at that time. It was excluded from the committee because of its militant line.

Gairy had the NJM leaders brutally beaten on the eve of the strike, and by its end Gairy had blood on his hands. Gairy's police thugs had viciously attacked a mass demonstration of Grenadian workers, and Rupert Bishop, father of the present prime minister, had been murdered. In the harbor were British and Canadian frigates.

But the struggle was not defeated by the repression — it was cynically betrayed by the leaders of the SWWU, at the direct request of the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL).

After two months, and at a time when the country was becoming completely paralyzed, the executive committee of the SWWU ordered their members back to work, and broke the general strike.

"When we went back to work," continued Conqueror, "it wasn't a majority rule decision. The membership didn't understand anything about going back to work. All that we heard over the radio was that we'd be going back to work on a given day. It was an executive decision."

Without the dockers, the strike collapsed.

Lessons of the struggle

Lessons were being drawn by all concerned. Gairy accelerated his march toward dictatorship, and increased his police force. The NJM widened its base of support, and realized that it had to fight *within* the unions against the right-wing leadership.

The Committee of 22 was confused and demoralized, but militant workers like the Conqueror resolved that next time it would be different, and that unions had to be under the control of their members.

The strike also revealed that the leadership of the SWWU had political support from the regional, proimperialist union federation, the CCL. These links were to be used to the full after the March 1979 revolution to try to destabilize the new revolutionary government.

Destabilization attempts

The first attempt came only months after the revolution. A leadership that normally only called strikes *off*, starting calling for strike action against the new government.

The rightist leaders wanted strikes against taxation, but the dockers paid the same tax they paid Gairy, and the PRG had already announced cuts in taxation by one-third. So there was no enthusiasm for a strike.

SWWU leaders then tried to organize a strike against the midnight curfew, imposed after counterrevolutionary attacks took place. The SWWU claimed that the curfew affected dockers loading bananas, but these workers finished at 11 p.m. The attempt again failed.

But the SWWU leadership finally got the confrontation it was looking for. In December 1980, a shipment of milk arrived from Europe. The milk was destined for Grenada's children as part of a free milk program introduced by the PRG after discussion with the National Women's Organization (NWO).

Instead of helping to unload the milk, however, the SWWU leaders tried to blackmail the government. On Dec. 30, 1980, the SWWU leadership called a strike to enforce their demands.

PRG says no to blackmail

The SWWU's members are among the highest-paid workers in Grenada. The lowest-grade SWWU worker earns EC\$5.72 per hour [1 Eastern Caribbean (EC) dollar = US\$0.38]. An agricultural worker, in contrast, receives EC\$8.50 *per day*.

As highly paid and skilled workers, a layer of these dockworkers had developed craft prejudices. At the same time, because the work on the docks is irregular, most of the dockers are also forced to seek other sources of income. They run taxis, small businesses, farm small plots of land. Some even run small bars and guest houses.

Banking on the craft prejudices and individualist outlooks that have developed under these circumstances, the SWWU leadership sought to turn the dockers against the revolution.

The PRG had a tough decision to make. If the milk was not quickly unloaded, it would spoil. Demonstrations of women and children took place demanding that it be unloaded.

The government decided that the interests of the majority had to be met, and it authorized semiskilled workers who were members of the BGWU to carry out the job. Skilled workers like "Conqueror" supervised, and were later threatened with expulsion from the SWWU by the rightist leadership. Since the union leadership also controls who makes up the stevedore and longshoremen's work teams, they have a powerful lever over the rank and file.

A recent book on Grenada by a Washington-based Christian organization called EPICA* exposes the links between these union leaders

*Grenada: The Peaceful Revolution. Available for \$4.95 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

and the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). EPICA shows that four main SWWU leaders had links with this proimperialist organization.

AIFLD, which has close links with both the U.S. government and the CIA, was founded by the Kennedy administration as part of its Alliance for Progress in 1961.

EPICA reveals that the CIA had put several years' study into a new program of anticommunist and anti-Castro labor organizing.

According to former CIA agent Philip Agee:

First priority of AIFLD is to establish in all Latin American countries training institutes. . . . Although these training institutes will nominally and administratively be controlled by AIFLD in Washington it is planned that as many as possible will be headed by salaried CIA agents with operational control exercised by the CIA stations. . . . spotting and assessment of potential agents for labor organizing will be a continuing function of the Agency-controlled staff members, both in the training courses in Latin America, and in Washington courses.

Over the last 21 years this organization has played an active role in Latin American politics, participating in the destabilization of governments on the CIA hit-list. It is currently involved in the U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

One right-winger in the SWWU received a salary from AIFLD without the knowledge of the union's membership. Others have attended "training" courses in Washington.

'Unfounded accusations'?

I asked Eric Pierre, the SWWU's full-time organizer, how he answered the charge that he was implicated with the CIA.

"This whole accusation is unfounded," he said. "A couple of our members attended the AIFLD training courses in Washington. We have no evidence to the effect that AIFLD is connected with the CIA. We have questioned them when they came back, and we have no evidence that they were indoctrinated by the CIA."

Pierre's claims are hard to believe, given his own role in the Grenadian labor movement, and the mountains of evidence linking AIFLD with the CIA.

Pierre is completely negative about the achievements of the revolution. He claims that the government's proworker legislation has not helped SWWU members, describes his relations with the PRG as "cool," is against his union being involved in politics, and does not involve his members in social programs like the literacy campaign.

His union is undemocratic and has irregular membership meetings. I showed Conqueror a copy of an agreement between the union and the shipping agents. It was a year old, but Conqueror pointed out that very few working dockers had received any copies.

'Only way we can build is by unity'

Alongside the SWWU, the semiskilled workers are involved as active members of the BGWU, a union led by revolutionaries.

"I personally am a member of SWWU," said Conqueror, "and I don't like to run them down, but heart of hearts, Bank and General is a more efficient union. A union that seeks to educate the membership of the entire union, whether the section of the dock or the business section.

"I'm not in BGWU, but I see fit to work along with them because the dock work have to get done, if we want to see the economy develop. It needs skilled men, and I'm one of them. All in all, we hope some day we have one union on the dock, and not two. The dock going to be very important for our future.

"Now regular dockers are beginning to come back and work on government jobs. They are now back unloading cement which is a gift from Cuba. We have no use of segregat-

ing ourselves, because we are trying to build. The only way we can build is by unity."

No government can unload ships without dockers, and the port is growing with the revolution. The huge expansion of Grenadian unions over the last year has brought the ordinary workers into union activities, and this has broken the control of the right wing in several unions.

But the SWWU still remains in the hands of right-wing leaders, who seek to divide the dockworkers and isolate them from the revolutionary process.

Meanwhile, the revolutionaries argue for unity in action, and if all the other Grenadian unions are anything to go by, it will not be long until they reach that unity, and have a new democratic leadership in the SWWU. □

New housing in Nicaragua

By Jane Harris

MANAGUA — "Welcome to Nueva Libia" in big bold letters read the banner that greeted several hundred of us as we approached the newly constructed *barrio* (neighborhood) of New Libya here April 4.

Flags representing Nicaragua, Libya, and Spain were raised above the banner, as these are the three countries working together to provide adequate housing for some 1,500 persons who now live in the new project.

An outdoor early morning ceremony with dancing, music, and speeches of solidarity marked the opening of this community.

Paula Ricarda Castro, a mother of ten children who had been in makeshift housing on someone else's land for several months, was obviously overwhelmed. "How happy I am to know that now nobody can move me out of here," she told her new neighbors.

Gilberto Vanegas, an electrician, added that "for years I've been moving all over, from one part of town to another, because I didn't have money for a plot of land to build a small house. Now, I can sleep peacefully; I have confidence in the revolutionary government and I'm sure that our Libyan brothers will help us to transform this *barrio* into one of the best in Managua."

The lots will be eight by twenty meters, with ample space for growing families. Planting of shrubs, palms, and other plants has already begun.

The Nicaraguan Ministry of Housing has so far invested 250,000 córdobas (1 córdoba = US\$0.10) in leveling the land, dividing the lots, laying out roads, installing nine water outlets, and in other necessary work. The Ministry of Health has donated 20 outdoor sanitary facilities.

Spain is providing a health clinic, a park, and a library for the new community. Hundreds of textbooks have just arrived.

Ibrahim Farhat, representing the Libyan government, pointed out, "Here you defeated a great dictator, Somoza, and in Libya we de-

feated a king, a puppet of imperialism. Both our countries are following the example of Cuba, which defeated Batista — and also the examples of Angola, Grenada, and Ethiopia. We are brothers of the Sandinista revolution against Yankee imperialism.

"Now we face a new battle — for development — which will take many years. Nicaragua needs more aid, more solidarity."

Farhat said Libya would be at Nicaragua's side. After all, he explained, they too had experienced imperialist attack last August, when U.S. forces shot down one of their planes.

Near-daily attacks force the Nicaraguan government to spend much-needed money on defense. "However," as Sandinista leader Omar Cabezas explained to the new residents, "even though the Revolutionary Government doesn't have any money right now to build homes for the thousands who need them, it will provide land for you to build them yourselves." □

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Pacific islanders take on the Pentagon

Demand an end to nuclear terror

By Duncan Williams

[The following article appeared in the April 9 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

NEW YORK CITY — One of the most important contingents at the June 12 demonstration at the United Nations in New York against nuclear weapons will be coming from the Pacific islands known as Micronesia.

Their contingent will be only 10 or so, but their suffering at the hands of the U.S. military-nuclear gang is the most damning indictment of the Pentagon's arms buildup. And their struggle against the death merchants in Washington has placed them in the forefront of the international movement against nuclear arms.

Micronesia is the name given to the islands in the Western Pacific between Hawaii and the Philippines. It is the home of roughly 110,000 people, with a land mass about the size of Rhode Island. It is often called an island paradise for its white beaches, coral reefs, volcanic rock formations, and lush vegetation.

Roman Bedor is a leader of the Nuclear Free Pacific Movement and of the struggle for independence of Belau, an island republic in western Micronesia. He has been touring U.S. cities to explain the situation of the islanders and to win support for their struggle against the nuclearization and militarization of the Pacific.

'Dark side of paradise'

In his talks, accompanied by a dramatic slide presentation, and in an interview with the *Militant*, Bedor illuminated what he calls "the dark side of the island paradise."

Micronesia has been under colonial domination for centuries. Until 1899 the islands belonged to Spain; from 1899 to 1919, to Germany; and from then until the end of World War II, to Japan. Since 1947, Micronesia has been a U.S. colony, formally designated a United Nations Trust Territory.

As a result, Bedor said, "my generation learned English as a second language, my parents learned Japanese, their parents German, and before that it was Spanish."

Thousands of islanders died in World War II "when the U.S. and Japan made our islands into a battlefield in a war many of our people believe we should not have been a part of."

With the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Micronesians hoped for a return to a peaceful way of life. "But for our people, as the older ones say, World War II has never ended." For soon after the war, the United States began using their home as a testing ground for its nuclear arsenal.



Micronesia was introduced into the nuclear age when the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki was stored on the island of Tinian. "According to a U.S. military official at the time," Bedor said, "this was done so if there was an accident, no American children would be affected."

Between 1945 and 1963, more than 60 atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted by the U.S. government in the Marshall Islands, in eastern Micronesia. These included one of the first detonations of a hydrogen bomb, in March 1954 in the Bikini atoll.

'For good of mankind'

"The U.S. government told us this was for the good of all mankind, to end all wars," Bedor noted. But the reality has been otherwise for the people of Micronesia.

The U.S. Navy forcibly evacuated thousands of people from their islands, allowing them to take only what they could carry. The tests wiped several islands literally off the face of the earth. Others are contaminated and will not be fit for human habitation for 25,000 years. Plant and sea life have been contaminated as well.

"We know now," Bedor stated, "that the military deliberately evacuated our people to islands downwind of the blasts, using them as guinea pigs for nuclear fallout."

Many islanders, mainly children, suffered acute skin burns, rashes, and loss of hair as a result of the blasts and the "black snow" that followed. People of Roman Bedor's generation often bear deformed children because of genetic damage caused by radiation.

Although the U.S. government discontinued its testing in 1963, the nuclear horror is not over for the people of the Pacific. Bedor indicated that France has conducted more than 70 tests in the last 10 years in the Mororea islands in the South Pacific. (In 1981, during the French presidential elections, Socialist Party candidate François Mitterrand promised to end testing. But the French government began again last August with an atmospheric detonation of a neutron bomb.)

Japan is seeking to use the waters of Belau as a dumping ground for radioactive waste from its nuclear reactors.

And the U.S. government is moving ahead with plans to build a base in Belau for its Trident nuclear submarines.

U.S. military domination

U.S. military domination is present throughout the islands. One example: the people of Kwajalein were evacuated from their homes to make room for a U.S. Navy base, complete with baseball fields, tennis courts, and private homes for base personnel. Now the original inhabitants live in barracks on Ebeye island.

"This is the only reservation in the Pacific," Bedor said. "Eight thousand people live on an island you can walk around in 20 minutes."

Micronesia is the only remaining UN Trust Territory. The U.S. government still administers the islands through the Department of the Interior.

The island people have charted a course toward independence in their fight to free themselves from U.S. nuclear and military domination.

In 1979 the people of Belau held a convention and drew up a constitution, the first and probably the only constitution in the world that prohibits all testing and storage of nuclear weapons, all nuclear power, and all dumping of nuclear waste on the islands and within their 200-mile territorial waters.

After the constitution was ratified by 92 percent of the electorate in July 1979, "the U.S. ambassador said that the United States did not recognize the vote," Bedor explained.

"So they sent a lawyer from Chicago to meet with nine men who we did not choose, and they came up with a constitution that was acceptable to the U.S."

Instead of independence, Washington wants to force a "Compact of Free Association" on the Belauans. This would allow the United States, in return for \$40 million a year for the next 15 years, to build the Trident submarine base; to use 30,000 acres of Belau's main island for military training and maneuvers and for ammunition storage; and to expand the airport to accommodate anti-submarine-warfare planes from Japan.

It would also give the U.S. the right to "defend" Belau for 50 years and to deny any other country the use of the islands for 100 years.

Tries to buy votes

The U.S. government spent more than \$100,000 in trying to buy the votes of Belauans. But the new constitution was defeated in a 1980 referendum. Then the Belauan voters went back to the polls in July of last year to ratify the original antinuclear constitution, this time by a 78 percent majority.

Washington has shown it has no intention of honoring the will of the people of Belau and has escalated its efforts to subvert their democratic and human rights and force the "Compact," which is up for a vote this summer. In September 1981 the office of the president of Belau was destroyed by a bomb blast. "We do not make bombs in Belau," Bedor noted. "It is illegal even to own firearms. We know that this bomb was made in the U.S.A."

American working people have every reason to support the people of Micronesia in their fight for independence and against nuclear weapons. They face the same enemy as we do in this country — the capitalist government and its war machine. They also hear the same arguments we get when we protest against budget cutbacks, nuclear weapons, the draft, and U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean — it is all necessary for national defense.

As Bedor noted: "Our people have lived in peace for thousands of years, long before the U.S. government was established. When we ask why we need missiles and military bases, we are told it is to protect and defend us.

"'From what?' we ask. They say, 'from the Russians and communism.' But who will protect us from the U.S. military bases?"

Bedor's tour in the United States is the first of its kind. It resulted from a decision in 1981 that "if the American people are informed of

what their country is doing to us in the name of human rights and democracy, they probably would give us much support."

He spoke before church and student groups

Kurdish prisoners killed in Turkey

At least 13 Kurdish political prisoners were killed in a military prison in Diyarbakir province in eastern Turkey in March, according to an April 10 press release by the New York-based Committee for Human Rights and Democracy in Turkey.

Citing an account in the Turkish-language monthly *Demokrat Turkiye*, published in West Germany, the committee reported that Mazlum Dogan, a member of the Central Committee of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), was taken from his prison cell on the night of March 14 to be tortured. His fellow inmates launched a hunger strike to protest his torture.

A week later, on the night of March 21, Dogan's body was found in one of the cells. He had been suffocated.

That same night, which coincides with the Kurdish New Year, at least 12 other prisoners were killed by prison guards who moved into the cells to put down the protests.

According to a different account, the com-

mittee reported, as many as 37 may have been killed.

In an ongoing military trial of PKK members, the prosecutor is demanding death sentences for 97 of the 447 defendants, who are accused of "separatism" and "terrorism." During the trial, the defendants have complained about being tortured and about restrictions imposed on legal counsel.

According to a December 1981 Amnesty International release, the last of the PKK's lawyers who had not already been arrested, Huseyin Yildirim, was seized by the security forces. He subsequently disappeared.

The trial, torture, and killings are part of the Turkish military junta's campaign to crush internal opposition. This campaign has been particularly brutal in the Kurdish areas, where nationalist sentiment runs deep. The government does not recognize the Kurds as a national minority, and the Kurdish language is outlawed.

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Speech by Sergio Ramírez

'U.S. workers will oppose a new Vietnam'

[The following is the text of a speech by Sergio Ramírez, a member of Nicaragua's Junta of National Reconstruction, to a March 4 meeting in Managua of the Standing Committee of Intellectuals for the Sovereignty of the Peoples of Our America. The committee was founded at a congress in Havana in September 1981. We have taken the English translation from the March 28 issue of *Granma Weekly Review*, published in Havana.]

* * *

On behalf of the government of National Reconstruction I would like to greet you all, both the members of the Standing Committee of Intellectuals for the Sovereignty of the Peoples of Our America and the other writers and artists who have been invited by our Revolution to participate in this meeting. To all, a warm welcome to our liberated land.

The committee of which you are members is a committee of intellectuals formed for the purpose of defending and promoting the sovereignty of our peoples; and today I want to say to you that we have before us an

The sovereignty of Central America, the sovereignty of the Caribbean, the sovereignty of Nicaragua are threatened as never before . . .

urgent case, very close to home. The sovereignty of Central America, the sovereignty of the Caribbean, the sovereignty of Nicaragua are threatened as never before by the arrogance and the imperialist pretensions of those who are trying to revive the past history of aggression. Both in the shadows and in the glare of the public eye, a web of aggressive actions and threats against Nicaragua is being woven, and we are sure that many underground and official mechanisms have been put in motion to prepare the way for this aggression.

Once again, we have heard how the U.S. government justifies its assumption of imperial rights over our country, speaking of its "fourth frontier" under the pretext that its national security interests and the safety of its maritime trade routes come before the sovereignty of our country. Like an echo from the past we are hearing again of the "American continent" in terms that see the whole hemisphere as [President James] Monroe saw it in the 19th century — as a Yankee hunting reserve. We are hearing the same old voices proclaiming "manifest destiny," we are hearing [President William] Howard Taft again trumpeting "gunboat diplomacy" and Theodore Roosevelt announcing sending his imperial forces out over the Caribbean. And we are also hearing [former CIA Director] Allen Dulles again plotting diabolical machinations against Central America as he did in Guatemala in 1954, and we are hearing how they are hastily preparing to land on our soil, as happened in 1912 and 1926, and in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

Here we have very long experience of Yankee intervention. We learned to defend our sovereignty not through theoretical rumination, but on the most heroic battlefield of practice. Our nation, our nationality, our sovereignty, our territorial integrity, our autonomy as a nation, as General Sandino called it — we have constantly defended them, we have consolidated them with arms and with the decision to use those arms whenever necessary.

In recent months we have watched the growth of maneuvers and threats against our country and our Revolution. What is being used against Nicaragua is not merely imperialist rhetoric; they are using terrorism, military plans, intimidation of neighboring countries, and the

most aggressive weapons of diplomacy, such as blackmail and covert operations. Just from the immediate past we can make the following list of acts that are evidence of this forbidding picture:

The establishment of the so-called Democratic Community formed by Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica is a U.S. ploy to legitimate the use of an intervention force linked to the implementation of the Inter-American Treaty of Mutual Assistance (ITMA) in Central America. This "community" has subsequently been joined by the United States and Colombia, the latter having authorized the setting up of U.S. military bases, and still more recently Guatemala. The intention is obviously to surround Nicaragua by a political — and doubtless military — cordon.

U.S. military bases are being set up, such as those presently being established on the island of Amapala, in the Gulf of Fonseca and on the Caribbean island of San Andrés, on Nicaragua's continental shelf. What is envisaged here are naval and air bases whose presence is intended to ensnare Nicaragua between her two oceans.

U.S. warships carrying highly sophisticated communications equipment are present in the Gulf of Fonseca with the admitted authorization of the president of the Salvadoran junta, [José] Napoleón Duarte.

Money, training and arms are being supplied to groups of former National Guardsmen operating from inside Honduras as part of a covert operation handled by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The existence of this operation was admitted by the assistant secretary of state for Latin American affairs, Mr. Thomas Enders, to the Joint Intelligence Committee of the U.S. Congress, in a secret session held in December 1981.

President Reagan's roving ambassador, retired general Vernon Walters, has undertaken the job of carrying out preparations in the area, and Néstor Sánchez, a long-time CIA agent and assistant to the secretary of defense for Latin American affairs, has been placed in charge of the operation.

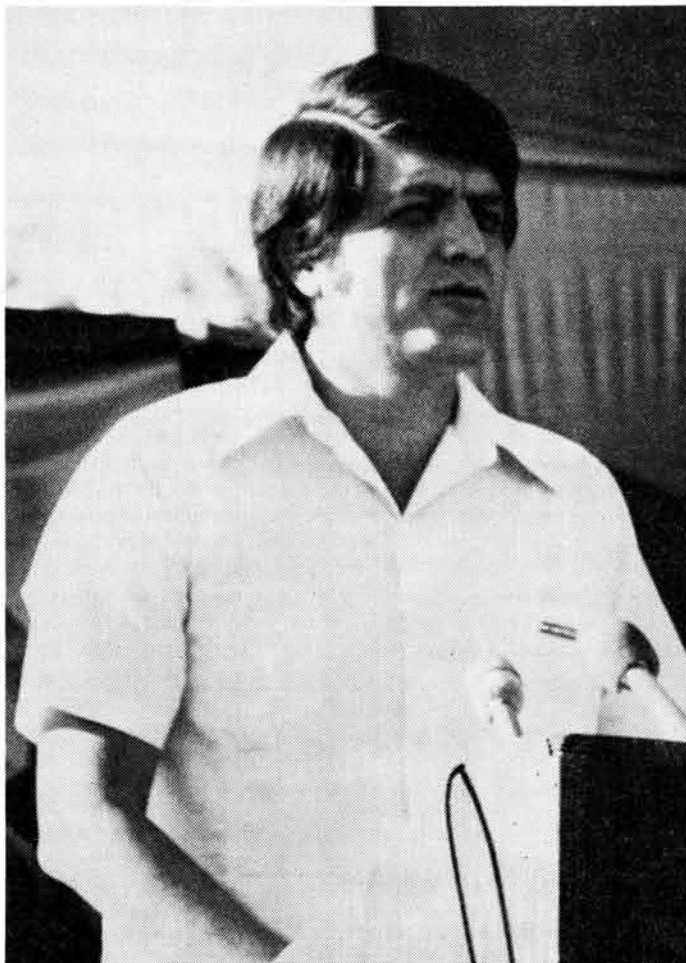
The National Security Council of the United States has approved a budget of \$19 million to finance a campaign of military, political and economic destabilization against Nicaragua. It has also approved an eight-point action plan for this destabilization which includes using military officers from countries of the Southern Cone, principally Argentina, training Somocista groups and infiltrating them into Nicaraguan territory as mercenaries.

One of the ringleaders in a plot to blow up our national cement factory

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confessed that they had received \$50,000 from members of the Argentine High Command and that an Argentine special commando was to have been located in Tegucigalpa to direct sabotage operations against Nicaragua.

Encouraged by all this fabric of terrorist activity, the Somocista groups of former National Guardsmen, in league with one Steadman Fagoth, one of Somoza's former security agents, began to organize, for the months of December 1981 and January 1982, an operation code named Red Christmas. Their intention was to ravage the indigenous communities along the Coco River and thus establish a beachhead in Nicaraguan territory. Before the revolutionary government took total control of the zone, Operation Red Christmas had already been responsible for the



SERGIO RAMÍREZ

Fred Murphy/IP

deaths of about 60 Nicaraguan border guards, members of the armed forces and state security, and civilians. Red Christmas forced considerable numbers of indigenous people to leave their communities for Honduras. Somocistas tortured and raped inhabitants of the communities and medical personnel.

The revolutionary government considered it necessary to move the inhabitants of the riverside communities to safer places within Nicaragua, where our Miskito brothers and sisters would for the first time have access to regular health care, education, decent housing, electricity, and land to grow their crops. Their relocation has sparked off one of the most vicious campaigns of calumny the CIA and the State Department have ever mounted against our Revolution.

The state security bodies of the Ministry of the Interior uncovered a conspiracy in Costa Rica, Honduras and the United States whose object was to blow up our national cement factory and our oil refinery, and for which purpose large quantities of explosives were brought into the country.

A passenger plane belonging to the national airline Aeronica was blown up in Mexico City airport. The real intention was to destroy the aircraft in midair and kill its 100 passengers.

A suitcase containing explosives blew up in the Sandino airport terminal in Managua, killing three baggage porters. It had been put on board a plane in Tegucigalpa. The aim of this terrorist action was to prevent the visit of the president of Mexico, José López Portillo. It was only by chance that the explosion did not kill many more people among the passengers waiting to collect their baggage.

It is obvious that the whole arsenal of terrorism, aggression and flagrant international propagandizing is being used against us. Bands of Somocistas drawn from the National Guard that murdered and mas-

sacred so many of our people are being used, are being armed and trained not only in the United States itself but in Honduras and Guatemala as well. Steadman Fagoth was used blatantly to appear in Washington before Congress and before human rights organizations, so that State Department spokesmen could immediately repeat the lies he told. Freedom House and the Religion and Freedom Institute, which are CIA agencies, are being used, as are *Figaro* magazine and the 15 de Septiembre radio station which broadcasts from Honduras; and all these lies and falsehoods are being fed to newspapers and radio stations in Central America and throughout the continent.

To this mounting aggression, to the imminent danger of a rapid escalation of the aggression, our Revolution has responded with maturity and calmness. We are a firm and determined people; we will not retreat before any threat; but we have indicated, and will continue to indicate, that we desire and seek a global understanding in favor of peace in Central America, an understanding that will make our region safe and stable. We stated this position at the last meeting of the Permanent Conference of Latin American Political Parties (COPPPAL) held recently in Managua and I want to reiterate it now, so that you can convey it and disseminate it and so that the world will understand that we are a worthy, free country with a clearly defined international policy:

1. Our nation reiterates its policy of nonalignment. This is a fundamental policy of ours and one that represents our genuine line of practice at the international level. We wish to maintain relations with all countries of the world without exception; this is a right our people has won through struggle.

2. We are ready to sign nonaggression and reciprocal security agreements with our neighboring countries based on the principle of nonintervention and mutual respect.

3. The Reagan administration has repeatedly accused Nicaragua of supplying and transporting arms to El Salvador. We have challenged U.S. representatives to prove these assertions and they have never been able to do so. Today we call once more for a delimitation of military borders and the establishment of joint systems of patrolling our border with Honduras — for we do not border on El Salvador — and also joint border patrols with Costa Rica. This would give a measure of territorial security and would help to counter the activities of disaffected elements from any of our three countries.

4. Once again we repeat our willingness to maintain steady, friendly relations with the government of the United States. We are ready to begin talks at any time, on any topic concerning us both, towards reaching a negotiated solution of any conflict and developing economic cooperation in the region.

No project for economic development in the region, no overall economic plan embracing Central America, can be implemented without the participation of Nicaragua. It is absurd to try to envisage Central America without Nicaragua. Nicaragua cannot be excluded from any regional economic strategy.

5. Our only requirement is absolute, unconditional respect for our

**We are a firm and determined people;
we will not retreat before any threat . . .**

sovereignty, no intervention in our internal affairs, no support or cover-up for counterrevolutionary activities, and no aggression or blockade.

We vehemently deny that the problems of Central America are the result of an East-West confrontation. Such a notion ignores the long history of poverty and injustice, of exploitation and plunder, that has led our peoples to rebel. Such poverty and injustice have been caused by ruthless exploitation by national oligarchies and plunder by the imperialists; but they are also due to the appalling inequality in the terms of trade, which is also a form of exploitation. Low prices and restricted markets, the price we have to pay for exporting our products, the burden of foreign debt, are all factors which it is up to the powerful countries to change, not to perpetuate.

We vehemently deny that our Revolutions and the establishment of truly democratic regimes pose a threat to United States territorial se-

curity. But we also refuse to accept that our territories be used to guarantee the United States that security.

The false propaganda spread about against our Revolution never mentions the efforts we have been making for nearly three years to consolidate a political system that has room for pluralism and a mixed economy. We are always accused of what we might try to do in the future, of totalitarianism in the future, of the abolition of political parties in the future, of the suppression of the freedom of the press in the future, of the total expropriation of private property in the future. The Sandinista process is a process which has the assent of the vast majority of our people and is validated by our dead, our heroes, our martyrs. It is a true revolution, it is a revolution deeply rooted in the people, a revolution that reaffirms its political pluralism and has demonstrated it. Our intention to hold national elections no later than 1985 is a decision of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and in no sense a concession.

Aggression against any one of the peoples of the Caribbean or Central America, an intervention in El Salvador, an attack on Nicaragua, could change the history of Latin America. Not long ago President José López Portillo said here in Managua that such a step on the part of the United States would be a huge historical error. The peoples of Latin America, in their search for a true democracy and a true system of social justice, have viewed the Nicaraguan Revolution as a beacon of hope, and we are sure they will be ready to defend that hope with fervent solidarity, mobilizing to prevent any aggression against our nation.

I want to speak also about the people of the United States. A few days ago I read in a cable statements from [U.S. ambassador to the UN Jeane] Kirkpatrick claiming that we have refused to change a line in our national anthem which calls the Yankees "enemies of humanity." In fact this line is not in our national anthem but in the anthem of the FSLN, and we certainly have no intention of changing it. The "Yankee" to whom the Sandinista anthem refers is that Yankee who has intervened in our country twice this century; he is the Yankee who drove our country into poverty, plundering our forests and mines; he is the filibuster*; he is the phalanx of adventurers who tried to take possession of Nicaragua in the 19th century. He is the Yankee who wanted to prevent Somoza's dictatorship from being overthrown, and he is the same Yankee who propped up that dictatorship for 50 years. He is the Yankee who today cannot accept the reality of our victorious Revolution and is arming, training and funding the Somocista ex-Guardsmen, the counterrevolutionary bands; who is supplying explosives to blow up our factories, to kill our simple working people.

When we speak of that Yankee we do not mean the working people of the United States, so often manipulated and cheated. We do not mean the humiliated and discriminated-against black people, the thousands of Spanish-speaking immigrants; we do not mean the ordinary U. S. citi-

Once again we repeat our willingness to maintain steady, friendly relations with the government of the United States . . .

zens, their academic communities, their students, their honest intellectuals, their trade union organizations which understand Latin America. Neither do we mean the members of religious orders, the priests and nuns who have shed their blood in Guatemala, in El Salvador, in the factories, in the countryside, in the universities. These are the people who can stop a Yankee intervention in Central America. It was that people who, together with the Vietnamese people, defeated the Yankee aggression in Vietnam. And now we are sure that that people will not forget the lessons of history; that they remember Vietnam and that they will oppose, with all their strength, a new imperial incursion into Central America. It is time for that people to decide whether there will be another Vietnam in its history or whether that second Vietnam can be avoided.

Plans are under way to hold a meeting of Central and North American

*A member of any of the bands of pro-slavery adventurers who organized expeditions from the United States between 1850 and 1860 for the purpose of colonizing and enslaving parts of Central America and the Spanish West Indies.

intellectuals for sovereignty in Mexico this coming September. It will be an excellent opportunity to decide on positions together with a view to establishing real unity between the people of the United States and our own. But we think September may be too late; our intellectuals should make contact with U.S. writers, scientists, artists and academics at once and urge them to protest against any kind of intervention in Central America or the Caribbean.

In 1927 a father in the United States, a man of the people, wrote to President Calvin Coolidge after his son, a marine, had died in the mountains of Las Segovias in Nicaragua fighting against the Defending Army

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of National Sovereignty, whose general was Sandino. In that letter he wrote that his son's death in Nicaragua was an injustice, that he had died fighting unjustly against a people which had never done the United States any harm at all, and — what was worse — fighting to defend interests which were not his own, but were those of Yankee bankers, hegemonic ambitions which were far removed from the interests of the U.S. people. And in January 1928 General Sandino said to the journalist Carleton Beals:

"If the people of the United States had not had their sense of justice and elementary human rights dulled, they would not so easily be able to forget their own past, when a handful of ragged soldiers marched through the snow, leaving bloody footprints behind them, to win their freedom and their independence. If their consciences had not been hardened by material riches, the Americans would not forget so easily that sooner or later, no matter how weak it may be, a nation obtains its freedom, and that every abuse of power hastens the downfall of those who wield it."

We know that the U.S. people's sense of justice has not been dulled, and that they cannot so easily forget their past. We are confident that they will stand beside the peoples of Latin America and the world, that they will form a bastion to hold back intervention in Central America.

Patria libre o morir! □



Arnold Weissberg/IF

Nicaraguan security officers display weapons captured from U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands.