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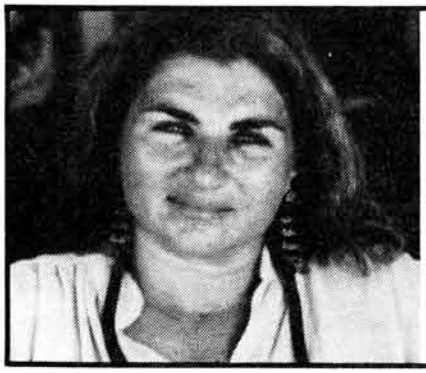
Cuba Urges International Protest to Halt War Against Argentina

Demonstrators in Buenos Aires protest British aggression. Banner reads: "Neither Yankee Nor British. Long live Argentina."



Exclusive Interview With Margaret Randall

Women's Liberation and the Nicaraguan Revolution

A Reply to Jonathan Schell

Nuclear Arms and the Fight Against War

Cuba urges international protest to halt war against Argentina

By Fred Murphy

The outbreak of war between imperialist Britain — backed by Washington — and semicolonial Argentina has spurred anti-imperialist sentiment throughout Latin America.

Cuba's revolutionary leadership has sought to give voice to, focus, and mobilize this rising hatred for the two imperialist powers that have long dominated the region.

The peoples of Latin America, though divided into nearly two dozen nation-states, share a common language, a common culture, and — most importantly — a common history of oppression. These nations threw off Spanish colonial rule in the 19th century. But they soon faced exploitation and, in some cases, outright military occupation by U.S. imperialism. British capital played a special role in the oppression of the peoples of Argentina and Uruguay.

This imperialist domination continues today. Hence working people throughout Latin America recognize the U.S.-British attack on Argentina as a threat to themselves as well.

Heavy price paid by Washington

Proimperialist bourgeois regimes throughout Latin America have found it necessary to declare their support for Argentina. As a result, Washington is paying a heavy price for its open support to British aggression.

"The Reagan administration's 16-month effort to build a broad anti-Communist alliance in the region has been suddenly overshadowed by powerful sentiments of Latin American solidarity and even anti-Americanism," *New York Times* Mexico City correspondent Alan Riding said in a May 15 dispatch. Riding continued:

> Argentina had been Washington's main ally in its campaign to isolate Nicaragua's revolutionary regime and to fight leftist guerrillas elsewhere in Central America. Because of the Falkland crisis, however, Buenos Aires has reportedly decided to withdraw most of its military advisers from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and to suspend its informal cooperation with Washington in the region.

In an effort to further this change in the relationship of forces, which has resulted in new obstacles for the imperialist aggression in Central America, the Cuban government declared in a May Day statement that "this is the hour of Latin American solidarity."

"It is necessary to halt the aggression and impose justice," the Cuban statement concluded. "The countries of Latin America have the duty to support Argentina with all necessary means. Cuba is ready, together with the peoples of Latin America, to comply with this duty."

Nicaragua: step up solidarity

The Nicaraguan government has expressed its support for Argentina in similar terms. A May 6 commentary in the Managua daily *Barricada*, the official newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), pointed to the need to concretize and broaden the developing solidarity with Argentina:

> Latin America has given an excellent demonstration of the meaning of continental solidarity. With the exception of a couple of discordant and obsequious voices, our countries have moved beyond disagreements with the Argentine government and placed themselves at the side of a fraternal people that is under attack. . . .
>
> Latin American anger at the devious and essentially imperialist position of the United States must not remain at the level of momentary condemnations. Rather, it calls for concrete action to bring about the necessary overhaul of the inter-American system, making it respond not to the needs of the United States alone but to those of all Americans.

Barricada pointed out that the Organization of American States (OAS) and similar institutions were set up to guarantee U.S. imperialism's "economic and political domination of the region."

"But times have changed," *Barricada* said. "Washington's economic warfare against our peoples, and the wars of extermination it is trying to start in Nicaragua and already has under way in El Salvador and Guatemala, have heightened the awareness of Latin Americans. Washington's position on the Malvinas is only a more concrete expression of the overall contempt in which Reagan holds all our peoples."

Nicaragua has not been alone in questioning the role of the U.S.-imposed system of political and military alliances in Latin America. The Peruvian parliament voted May 5 to urge calling a continental summit conference to set up a Latin American Community of Nations, from which Washington would be excluded. Argentine, Venezuelan, Mexican, and Costa Rican officials have also pointed to the need to reconsider the role of the OAS in light of Reagan's support for extracontinental aggression by Britain.

As the British attack on Argentina has continued, representatives of some Latin American governments have even declared their readiness to aid Buenos Aires militarily. "If any British aggression touches [Argentina's] continental territory," Venezuelan Defense Minister Gen. Bernardo Leal Puchi declared May 8, "there should be no hesitations whatsoever" in aiding Argentina.

"All the countries of Latin America must be ready to intervene from the moment the first British soldier sets foot on American soil," Peruvian War Minister Gen. Luis Cisneros said the same day.

Argentina's battle to uphold its territorial integrity against Britain also evokes sympathy among the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa, a majority of whom suffered under the yoke of British colonialism until only a few decades ago. The news that British gunboats are off the coast of Argentina, or that a regiment of Gurkhas — the Nepalese tribesmen who have long served as cannon fodder in Britain's colonial wars — are on their way to the South Atlantic, undoubtedly calls up unpleasant memories among the peoples of former British colonies like India, Malaysia, and Kenya.

Here too the Cuban leadership has sought to foster solidarity with Argentina. In his capacity as chairman of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, Fidel Castro on May 10 called on member nations to help halt "imminent Anglo-American aggression" against Argentina. A May 10 Radio Havana broadcast summarized Castro's message, in part, as follows:

> The message . . . stresses that a colonial war is about to reach its most grievous and criminal stage, which by its nature and evolution the imperialist powers are trying to turn into a lesson for all countries of the Third World that, regardless of their political or social regime, defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity.
>
> The document adds that, in the interest of defending the rights of every one of our countries, and above all in the interest of humanitarian solidarity with the Argentine people and with the British soldiers hurled into combat, we strongly condemn the continued hostilities and call for a negotiated political solution which respects the sovereign rights of Argentina.

Thatcher steps up aggression

Despite the growing international repudiation of British aggression, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has reiterated her determination to restore colonial rule over the Malvinas Islands. With the political, economic, and military backing of the Reagan administration, Thatcher continues to threaten an invasion to retake the Malvinas by force.

The Argentine government called May 5 for negotiations under United Nations auspices. As these talks proceeded, Buenos Aires indicated that it would accept a cease-fire, mutual withdrawal of military forces from the area, and negotiations on the future of the islands without prior British recognition of Argentine sovereignty.

But these concessions were not enough for Thatcher. On May 14 she recalled her diplomats to London, suspending the talks. At the same time, British jets carried out further bombing raids and a commando attack was launched against Argentine positions on the Malvinas.

The Pentagon is already providing logistical and intelligence support for London's war. The Reagan administration has also warned that direct U.S. intervention on the side of Britain is a possibility.

Washington claims to be concerned that the Soviet Union might provide Argentina with advanced missiles and thus "put the British armada in extreme danger," *New York Times*

Washington correspondent James Reston reported May 9. "Officials here agree that the United States would have to intervene militarily, if necessary, to avoid the destruction of the British navy," Reston added.

What led to crisis?

What has led to this deepening crisis in the South Atlantic, in which two of the world's most powerful imperialist powers are allied in a war against a semicolonial regime that until quite recently was one of their most pliable tools for enforcing the exploitation of Latin American workers and peasants?

The imperialists have a series of interests at stake in the Malvinas Islands. They view the remote site as a strategic outpost near the shipping lanes of the South Atlantic, and as a potential military base for use against revolutionary upheavals in Latin America. They covet the rich petroleum deposits that lie beneath the continental shelf in the region. They want to preserve the opportunity to reap profits from the mineral wealth of the Antarctic.

But beyond these economic and military concerns, the imperialist rulers are not willing to tolerate a semicolonial country forcefully asserting its rights. London and Washington have seized on the Malvinas conflict to try to deal a lesson to all the peoples of the world who are oppressed by imperialism. And they want to show working people and youth of the United States, Britain, and Western Europe that imperialist military power will be used abroad whenever the rulers feel that it is necessary to protect their interests.

If there is one thing the Malvinas crisis has demonstrated, it is that imperialism cannot rely only on subordinate regimes in the semicolonial world to defend its interests. The crisis has brought to light the underlying weakness of even the most iron-fisted dictatorships in these countries.

Six years of some of the most brutal repression Latin America had ever seen — including the murder and "disappearance" of thousands of working-class militants — failed to break the Argentine proletariat. When in late March this powerful social force threatened to regain the offensive against the employers and their army, the generals were not strong enough for a head-on confrontation.

Junta caught in middle

The junta thought it might avoid making political and economic concessions by acting on one of the longstanding anti-imperialist demands of the Argentine people — restoration of sovereignty over the Malvinas. But the effect of this was to infuse confidence in the workers and open the door for mass mobilizations. In face of imperialist intransigence that it had not anticipated, the regime has had little choice but to tolerate antidictatorial street demonstrations, release some political prisoners and allow some exiles to return, recognize the existence of trade unions it had sought to crush, and retreat from a scheme to turn nationalized enterprises over to private capitalists.

Because the junta is incapable of alleviating the deep economic crisis of Argentine capitalism, and because of the new political situation created by the war with Britain, a new period of instability and upheaval is opening in Argentine politics. The regime has few options, while the workers movement has big opportunities (see page 446).

The junta cannot meet the demands of the imperialists without redoubling the hatred the Argentine people feel toward the dictatorship. Surrendering to London and Washington now, in face of the aroused anti-imperialist sentiments of the Argentine workers, would mean for the junta signing its own death warrant. Effectively resisting the imperialist threats, on the other hand, would require still greater concessions to the mass movement and even the mobilization and arming of the workers in a popular anti-imperialist war.

The junta's dilemma points up who the real protagonists in this clash are — the workers and farmers of Argentina on one side, and the imperialist ruling classes on the other. The generals who occupy the Casa Rosada have gotten themselves uncomfortably wedged between these two big social forces.

The Argentine people's struggle to defend their national rights against imperialist aggression has already changed the relationship of class forces inside that country in favor of the workers and farmers. The effect has been the same in Latin America as a whole, where the position of U.S. imperialism has been weakened and that of revolutionary Cuba and Nicaragua strengthened. A victory for the Argentine nation in this war will be a victory for working people everywhere. □

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Soldiers protest treatment of Palestinians

Denounce racist oppression in occupied territories

By Will Reissner

Six Israeli army officers who have served in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip held a news conference in Jerusalem on May 10 to denounce the brutality of the Begin government's policies against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

The officers charged that Arabs are being arrested and punished randomly and collectively and are being victimized by Zionist settlers, who go unpunished for acts of violence in the territories.

Rami Avni, an artillery lieutenant quoted by David Shipler in the May 11 *New York Times*, charged that Israeli troops in the occupied territories "swoop down on demonstrators like animals tearing at prey."

A tank officer, Maj. Yuval Neryah, pointed out that when youths protesting the occupation throw rocks, "we go into the approximate area from which the rocks were thrown — and it's very difficult to pinpoint from exactly where — and act against civilians, local residents, part of whom, maybe even most of them, don't even know what happened."

Another tank officer, Lieut. Shuki Cohen, added that in such incidents, "we come across the elderly, the women, the small children, and they are punished. It's unbelievable. That's the policy."

Settlers 'think they can do anything'

Cohen also blasted the racist actions of the Jewish settlers in the West Bank. He condemned "their way of relating to the local Arabs in a debasing way, calling them 'dirty Arabs' and so forth, and this includes even the smallest children."

Cohen added that the settlers "think they can do anything they wish, and they act as they see fit. They run around armed — more than once they have shot out of buses when stones were thrown at them, without any relation to what was happening."

The officers told the press that they had tried to set up a private meeting with Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to discuss the situation in the occupied territories, but he had refused.

The repression of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories — which has claimed the lives of at least 15 Palestinians, many of them schoolchildren, since mid-March, and has left some 200 more wounded — is not an aberration.

Despite the outrage felt by many Israeli soldiers over their role in the occupied territories, the fierce repression is a key element of Prime Minister Menachem Begin's plan for Israeli annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

On December 14, 1981, the Zionist state annexed the Golan Heights, which was seized from Syria in 1967. Right after the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula on April 25, when the territory was returned to Egyptian control for the first time since 1967, Begin told his cabinet: "This is the last time we hand over to the Arabs any land that we hold."

And in a May 3 speech to the Israeli parliament, Begin — referring to the West Bank by the Biblical names Judea and Samaria — stated that "at the end of the transition period set by the Camp David Accords, Israel will raise its demands for its sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district."

He added that "in future negotiations for the signing of a peace treaty between Israel and its neighbors, any proposal for the removal or evacuation of Jewish settlements would be rejected." There are now well over 100 settlements in the occupied territories.

The Israeli parliament later passed a resolution supporting Begin's statements.

Calls for expulsion of Palestinians

Today nearly 2 million Palestinians live under Israeli rule. Because of the Palestinian population's higher birthrate and the fact that Jewish emigration from Israel now far exceeds immigration, within two decades the Palestinian population of what Begin calls "Eretz Israel" — the Land of Israel — will be larger than the Jewish population. This would turn Israel into a "Jewish" state with a Palestinian majority.

Many Zionist leaders readily acknowledge that they can only achieve their goals by expelling large numbers of Palestinians. Reserve Gen. Shlomo Gazit, formerly head of Israeli military intelligence and now president of Ben Gurion University, explicitly outlined the goals of Zionist policy in a speech printed in the January 15 edition of the Israeli daily *Yediot Aharonot*.

Gen. Gazit argued in favor of three objectives. The first goal, he said, was to make sure that "historic Eretz Israel" is never partitioned, that is, that the occupied territories remain forever under Israeli rule.

"The second objective," General Gazit stated, "is to ensure that historic Eretz Israel will remain entirely under Jewish control and, moreover, that it will remain a basically Jewish state."

This then leads to the third objective, "a full solution to the problems of the Arabs of historic Eretz Israel." But Gazit argued that "the solution for them must be found *outside historic Eretz Israel*."

The same point is expressed more crudely by many Zionist settlers in the occupied territories. One woman living in Alon Shevut, a settlement south of Jerusalem, told Dan Goodgame of the *Miami Herald*: "I think Israel should annex the West Bank, but only after we have busloaded the Arabs over the Jordan River." Having provocatively settled in the midst of the Arab population on the West Bank, the woman calmly explained to Goodgame, "I don't like being surrounded by Arabs."

Expansion of settlements

Israeli settlements and army facilities have already taken one-third of the land on the West Bank. But the Israeli government hopes to increase the number of Israeli settlers from about 20,000 now to over 100,000 by the end of the decade.

Just since the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai on April 25, some 11 new settlements have been opened in the occupied territories. All have a paramilitary character. The residents are members of Nahal, a paramilitary unit of regular army recruits who complete their military service in the settlements.

The steady expansion of the settlements brings with it constant moves against the lands of the Palestinian farmers in the occupied territories. Through forced sales of land under duress, and through government seizure, the Palestinian population is being stripped of its means of economic survival.

To facilitate the removal of the Palestinians, the Israeli government is applying a two-pronged policy: trying to destroy the Palestinian leadership — inside the occupied territories and outside; and imposing a reign of terror against the population.

Moves to destroy Palestinian leadership

In November 1981, as a first step toward annexation of the occupied territories, the Israeli government replaced the existing military occupation with a "civilian administration" headed up by Menachem Milson.

K. Amnon, writing in the March 22 edition of the Israeli newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, reported that "the Ministry of Defence and the civilian administration in the West Bank are determined to follow to the letter the government's policy aimed at getting rid of the existing leadership in the territories, it was learned by our reporter."

Amnon adds that "the plan is to 'cleanse the area' of the leaders identified with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] and to leave local people without any leaders, as happened to the Arabs of Israel immediately after 1948."

Police in Ramallah arrest Palestinian youth — one of the lucky ones who wasn't shot.

It should be added that the founding of the Israeli state in 1948 was made possible by the deliberate expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians.

The process of trying to destroy the Palestinian leadership, described by Amnon, is well under way. On March 11 the occupation authorities banned the Committee of National Guidance, an association of elected West Bank mayors. One week later, on March 18, Israeli "civilian administrator" Menachem Milson suspended the Palestinian municipal government of Al Bira and ousted its mayor.

The Palestinian population responded with protest strikes throughout the occupied territories. But Milson was undeterred. On March 25, the Israeli occupiers ousted two more elected mayors, and on April 30, a fourth mayor was removed from office by Milson's troops.

The dismissed mayors are also banned from traveling between towns or meeting with one another. The Israeli government has also decreed that they cannot be interviewed on television or radio.

At the same time, Milson is trying to build up a puppet leadership from the so-called Village Leagues. These puppets have no support among the population, which sees them as collaborators with the occupation forces.

But Milson has given the Village Leagues wide powers. The leagues control the issuance of vital permits and licenses. They receive Israeli funding. They control family reunification permits and have patronage over many jobs. Milson hopes that the Palestinians will eventually be forced to deal with the Village League simply to be able to function on a daily basis.

Threat against Lebanon

The Begin government recognizes, however, that it is not enough to destroy the Palestinian leadership inside the occupied territories. It also hopes to militarily crush the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon.

For months the Begin government has been seeking a pretext to launch an invasion of Lebanon. On May 14 the Israeli army acknowledged that two armored infantry divisions had been massed on the Lebanese border. Army Chief of Staff Rafael Eytan stated that in the Israeli government's view, there was no longer any cease-fire on the northern border.

The Palestinian masses, however, have not taken these attacks lying down. Ever since the removal from office of the first mayor, the Palestinians in the occupied territories have been engaged in continual protests, which have been met with brute force by the Israeli occupation troops.

Their struggle in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights has inspired the Palestinians within the pre-1967 borders of Israel to join the struggle. The March 30 Day of the Land demonstration was the largest Palestinian mobilization in Israel since 1948.

At the same time, the iron-fisted repression in the occupied territories is causing a wave of revulsion in significant segments of the Jewish population, as evidenced by the May 10 press conference of the six Israeli officers.

The Begin government is trying to contain this reaction by restricting news coverage of the situation. Even before the present wave of protests began in mid-March, increased restrictions were placed on the activities of journalists in the occupied territories.

Suppression of news

Rovik Rosenthal wrote in the February 19 issue of *Hotam*, the weekend supplement to *Al Hamishmar*, that television crews were being denied access to the occupied territories. They "are declared a closed area in the case of almost every political event, and both the Israeli and the international public therefore receive a distorted and partial picture of the real situation."

Rafiq Halabi, a Palestinian Druze who serves as a reserve officer in the Israeli army, is a leading reporter for Israeli television. Halabi now admits that "it is impossible to cover the West Bank properly. Whenever there is what is called by the army 'an operation,' we are prevented from filming. During 90 per cent of the serious demonstrations in the West Bank we are simply absent."

As a result of these and other comments, Halabi has been warned by Israeli authorities that his job is in jeopardy.

An editorial in the March 15 issue of the daily *Ha'aretz* pointed out that the Israeli army had placed the Golan Heights "out of bounds for journalists" during the general strike against Israeli annexation because "the army obviously has something to hide there."

Despite the restrictions on press coverage of the Palestinian struggle, many Israelis can see for themselves what is happening.

The May 5 issue of *Al Hamishmar* reported the comments of Reserve Gen. Matti Peled, a well-known Zionist dove who is a member of the Israeli parliament. "In Yamit [the main Zionist settlement in the Sinai], he said, the Israeli army had proved it could overcome thousands of violent rioters without using firearms. Even on the Ramot road in Jerusalem [where Orthodox Jews regularly stone cars moving on the Sabbath], no weapons had been used against the stone throwers." The newspaper added that "General Peled accused the Defense Minister of actively encouraging Israeli soldiers serving in the West Bank and Gaza to fire at civilians on the assumption that Arab blood could be spilled freely."

In a letter to the *Jerusalem Post*, Charles Solomon, an immigrant from South Africa, wrote that "on March 28, a small article apeared on page two of your paper stating that ultra-orthodox people had thrown rocks at passing cars." Solomon asked "how come Arabs who do the same are met by a hail of bullets from police, army and, worse, civilians? How come the law does not treat the same offense in the same manner? Is this the 'democracy' I've come to after escaping the 'democracy' of South Africa?"

A similar point was made in a letter to the same newspaper by Dr. Michael Shalev, who noted that when he was on army duty he saw that officers encourage brutality among Israeli troops in the occupied territories. Shalev concluded: "The army, of course, takes its lead from the political authorities, whose double standard toward nationalistic sentiment and violent protest has been rendered only too obvious by the handling of events in Yamit."

Growing opposition

On March 27, the growing Israeli opposition to the brutal repression in the occupied territories was dramatically reflected in a demonstration of tens of thousands of Israelis in Tel Aviv.

There have also been a number of cases of Israeli soldiers refusing to do their reserve duty in the occupied territories. According to the May 5 *Al Hamishmar*, two reservists were recently sentenced to 28 days in a military prison for refusing orders, on grounds of conscience, to go to the occupied territories.

The Begin government's drive to annex the occupied territories has run up against the united opposition of the Palestinian people, who have shown time and again that they will fight for their national rights, no matter how much force is used against them.

But the repression of the Palestinians is also giving rise to a growing movement against the occupation among Israelis. Already that movement has helped to rip away the blanket of lies covering Begin's racist policy in the occupied territories. □

Reagan, the man of peace?

Proposal for arms talks with USSR a mask for war moves

By Ernest Harsch

When President Reagan got up behind a podium at Eureka College, in Illinois, on May 9, he tried to present his administration's policy as one of peace, proposing that Washington and Moscow begin negotiations on reducing the number of their nuclear weapons.

But Reagan's speech had nothing to do with peace. It was a conscious attempt to cover up the White House's very real war policies.

At the very moment he was giving his speech, some 45,000 U.S. troops were carrying out war maneuvers in the Caribbean. The troops were part of a force of 60 warships and 350 planes involved in the massive "Ocean Venture '82" maneuvers, a three-week operation staged from U.S. bases in Florida, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guantánamo in Cuba.

The government claims that these are just exercises, but the mock combat situation created for them makes it clear what the troops are training for.

According to the May 9 *Miami Herald*, the troops carried out a practice invasion of the island of Vieques, in Puerto Rico, two days earlier. According to the *Herald*:

"Vieques represented a mythical country known as 'Brown.' The United States, committed to protecting the vital, but precarious sea lanes in the Caribbean, was at war with Brown, which had interfered in the region and shipped arms to Central America. Brown's forces at Vieques — numbering about 1,000 — were outfitted in brown uniforms and helmets similar to those worn by Soviet Union soldiers."

The Pentagon could hardly have made it more obvious that the maneuver was a dry run for an attack on Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, or El Salvador.

For months, the White House has been seeking to justify U.S. military intervention in the region on the grounds that Cuba and Nicaragua were shipping arms to the Salvadoran guerrillas.

For months as well, Washington has been carrying out an actual war against Nicaragua, openly training and arming counterrevolutionary forces in neighboring Honduras. These have been conducting regular raids into Nicaragua, murdering scores of people and sabotaging vital installations.

Siding with Britain

Also at the same time as Reagan was giving his speech, his administration was getting more deeply involved in the shooting war in the South Atlantic, directly backing the British imperialist drive to retake the Malvinas Islands, which belong to Argentina.

In fact, on May 10, the day after the speech, Washington disclosed that the British air force had requested the loan of a U.S. long-range aerial tanker to refuel British bombers and reconnaissance planes operating from the U.S. military base at Ascension Island.

As with its intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, the Reagan administration sought to cover up the aggressive nature of this move by warning of a Soviet "threat" to the British fleet.

New York Times correspondent James Reston reported from Washington May 9 that U.S. officials were asserting their concern that Moscow might provide Argentina with missiles so modern as to "put the British armada in extreme danger."

"Officials here agree," Reston said, "that the United States would have to intervene militarily, if necessary, to avoid the destruction of the British navy."

Reagan: talks peace while pressing undeclared war in Central America and aiding British aggression against Argentina.

$60 million for Salvadoran butchers

On May 12, in another step toward deeper U.S. intervention against the struggle of the Salvadoran workers and peasants, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved Reagan's proposal for $60 million in military aid to the bloody regime in that country.

Meanwhile, the Senate is moving toward approval of the administration's massive $180 billion military "modernization" plan. Funds would be used for the B-1 bomber, new aircraft carriers, and new Trident submarine missiles.

These most recent war moves come on top of many months of preparations for U.S. military intervention around the globe.

The Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) is being strengthened to enable Washington to conduct quick airborne assaults in distant countries.

In April, the biggest RDF exercise ever was staged in the Mojave Desert of southern California, involving some 40,000 military personnel from all branches of the armed forces.

"This terrain," Col. Russell Davis told a correspondent, "is high desert, not unlike what we might find in places in the Persian Gulf where contingencies might arise."

As a marine helicopter assault was underway, another officer explained that it "could be a move to occupy the oilfields."

As part of these intervention plans, the Pentagon is also seeking to establish new military base facilities in the Indian Ocean and Caribbean. One of the proposed sites in the Caribbean is San Andrés Island, a Nicaraguan island occupied by Colombia that is only some 100 miles off the Nicaraguan Coast.

Blanket of silence

Yet all these U.S. concrete war moves have received very little coverage in the big-business press in the United States. No Democratic or Republican politicians have spoken out against them — including those who are seeking to run as "peace" candidates in the 1982 congressional elections.

But Reagan's speech got massive press coverage.

The full text of it was published in both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Long

articles were devoted to analyzing its implications for future arms negotiations between Washington and Moscow.

An editorial in the May 10 *Washington Post*, noting Reagan's "often heedless manner of nuclear speech," declared that his proposal in Eureka "has made it possible for a more balanced dialogue [with Moscow] to resume."

A major analytical article by Bernard Gwertzman in the May 10 *New York Times* was headlined, "Major Shift by Reagan: Speech Indicates the President Has Moved Far From His Past Confrontational Attitude."

In fact, a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union has never been Reagan's goal. The continuing U.S. nuclear buildup is designed to ward off any Soviet interference with U.S. military interventions against semicolonial countries. Successive U.S. administrations have used such nuclear blackmail to facilitate their aggression against Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

The speech and the publicity given to it were thus intended as a smokescreen to divert attention from Washington's ongoing military aggression in Central America, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world.

A cut in nuclear arsenals?

Even taken at face value as an arms control proposal, Reagan's program is a cynical fraud. Reagan claimed that his plan would lead to a cut of one-third in existing arsenals of ballistic missile nuclear warheads. But left out of the proposal was any mention of nuclear weapons carried by bombers, and of Cruise missiles. Washington is far ahead of the Soviet Union in both these areas.

The Reagan plan calls for scrapping some 1,500 Soviet missiles compared to 750 U.S. ones. Moreover, Reagan insisted that "no more than half of those warheads [remaining] be land-based." Since Washington has a clear edge over the Soviet Union in submarine technology, this would also be to its advantage.

When Reagan cries out, "Why can't we reduce the number of horrendous weapons?" it is best to take his concern with a grain of salt.

The timing of Reagan's speech was carefully chosen to try to dampen involvement in the massive antiwar and antinuclear actions that have been planned for New York City on June 12 and in Britain, West Germany, France, and elsewhere in Western Europe to coincide with Reagan's visit there in early June.

But as Washington's actions show, the peace image that Reagan is trying to cultivate has nothing to do with reality. It is more necessary than ever that a massive turnout for the demonstrations in New York and Western Europe protest the imperialist war drive. □

St. Lucia

U.S. pleased with election result

Openly proimperialist party wins

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada — The electoral victory of the right-wing United Workers Party in nearby St. Lucia on May 3 was good news for Washington.

The UWP won 14 of 17 parliamentary seats. The St. Lucia Labor Party (SLP) won two and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) took one.

John Compton, head of the UWP and now the new prime minister, claimed the election results proved that "sanity has been restored." Compton and his UWP had run the country from 1964 to 1979, when he was swept from office by the SLP.

Interest in the elections was high on the island and in the region. Of 120,000 people in St. Lucia, a record 75,000 people registered for this election — some 7,000 more than in the 1979 elections. But only 46,000 persons voted on May 3. UWP candidates won more than 25,000 votes; PLP and SLP candidates took more than 20,000 votes.

An armed camp

The low turnout was a direct result of the climate of intimidation the UWP created prior to the election and on voting day itself.

Police, in full battle gear, positioned themselves outside polling places on election day and barricaded police headquarters. This was done in anticipation, the police said, of a coup attempt by PLP supporters. A similar rumor was spread by Compton's party.

In the days prior to May 3, Compton — who during the campaign made trips to the United States to consult with officials in Washington — made radio appeals for calm and urged people to avoid bloodshed.

On several occasions police burst into homes of PLP supporters to intimidate them. During one such attack a key PLP figure was beaten and hospitalized.

Compton also spread stories about a "communist takeover" if George Odlum's PLP was victorious. He falsely charged in radio statements that the PLP is a socialist party and that its election literature was coming from Cuba through Grenada. Compton tried to isolate the SLP by pointing to its record of corruption and by charging that it had Guyanese and Libyan support.

In the days just prior to May 3, Compton referred to a photograph that was circulating which contained a superimposed head shot of George Odlum on the body of a Cuban farmer standing next to Cuban President Fidel Castro.

This fear campaign was fueled by shooting and stoning incidents at rallies and motorcades of the three parties.

On election day itself there were some reports of voting irregularities and one arrest.

Social and economic problems

While Compton's fear campaign kept some votes from the SLP and PLP, the mounting economic problems on the island no doubt also swayed votes Compton's way.

Along with his slanders against the PLP, Compton pointed out the corruption and mismanagement of the SLP during its time in office from 1979 to January 1982. In opposition to this he offered his solutions of increased aid to local business and increased dependence on imperialism.

But even Compton himself admitted that his job "is an immense one" to "get the economy moving again."

Banana production has fallen to below 1979 levels and there are fears that it could decline even further. Copra production has fallen, and tourism reportedly declined this past season due to uncertainties over the government's future.

Besides this, the entire raft of social problems in Caribbean countries — from unemployment to inadequate health, housing, and education facilities — has weighed heavily on St. Lucia, part of the price of its dependence on imperialism.

Adding to fears in St. Lucia, the giant U.S.-owned Hess Oil operation threatened to close down if it did not approve the outcome of the elections. This was read to mean unless Compton's party was returned to power.

Reagan visit

The imperialists and local capitalists made no secret of their support for Compton's UWP.

When U.S. President Ronald Reagan visited the Caribbean in April, although he met with several other Caribbean heads of state, he declined to meet with then-St. Lucian Prime Minister Michael Pilgrim.

Reagan offered the excuse that Pilgrim was only an interim prime minister until the May 3 elections. But actually Reagan felt that meeting with Pilgrim, who is a PLP member, would be interpreted as implied endorsement of him — and confused with the actual U.S. endorsement of Compton.

The brutal police behavior prior to and on election day, coupled with Hess Oil's arrogant threats, are further examples of the tools imperialism used to obtain compliance.

But St. Lucians and others in the Caribbean are growing more dissatisfied with enforced conditions of poverty brought about by decades of imperialist plunder. Like their neighbors here in Grenada, they want to be the ones to determine their future. The victory of the right-wing UWP will not stop that quest. □

Soviet Union pledges new aid

As Sandinista leaders seek international support

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — "The imperialists can continue encouraging aggression and making threats, they can even try to destroy Nicaragua, turn our farmland to ashes, but they must know that we will never be conquered."

With these words, spoken in Moscow May 4, Daniel Ortega summed up the message that leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution are transmitting to capitals around the world.

Beginning in late April, Nicaragua has been carrying out a unique diplomatic offensive to counter mounting U.S. economic and military pressure.

Five teams of Nicaraguan leaders fanned out around the globe, from Western Europe to Vietnam, to nearby Costa Rica and Venezuela, to the Soviet Union.

They have been explaining the humanitarian aims of the Nicaraguan revolution and seeking support and solidarity against U.S. efforts to turn back the pages of history in Central America.

Ortega's trip to Moscow

From the standpoint of world politics, the six-day visit to the Soviet Union was by far the most important.

Conducted in the midst of a broad educational campaign at home explaining that both the Nicaraguan and Russian revolutions face the same imperialist enemy, it was a reflection on the international scene of Nicaragua's openly proclaimed goal of moving toward a socialist society. The trip's concrete results were a Soviet commitment to step up political and economic solidarity in face of the growing U.S. campaign to destabilize Nicaragua.

When Ortega returned to Managua May 10, he held a news conference to announce details of the agreement that had been reached. The Coordinator of the Junta of National Reconstruction (JGRN) cited the following in particular:

- The signing of a joint Soviet-Nicaraguan communiqué demanding "a halt to U.S. threats against Nicaragua, Cuba, and other states in Central America and the Caribbean," denouncing "American interference in El Salvador," and announcing that Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev had accepted an invitation to visit Nicaragua.
- An agreement to provide loans for the purchase of $100 million in Soviet agricultural, mining, and commercial fishing equipment.

The loans are at a 4 percent rate of interest, with initial payments postponed until 1985.

- A $50 million loan, at 3 percent, to facilitate general economic and technical cooperation.
- Agreement to aid Nicaragua in the construction of two giant hydroelectric projects, thereby helping the country reduce substantially the amount of oil it must import.
- A geological survey covering 4,000 square kilometers of mineral-bearing territory to see if possibilities for new mining projects exist.
- Establishment of an experimental cotton-growing station to determine the extent to which yields can be increased by irrigation.
- Establishment of two technical schools to train 200 graduate specialists a year in mining and fishing.
- Technical assistance in linking Nicaragua into the Soviet satellite network to improve international communications, and help in organizing a network of radio broadcasts to the remote northeastern part of the country.
- A 400-bed hospital and clinic, plus 20 Soviet doctors to staff it for three years.

"This represents substantial aid for the problems that face our country," Orgeta said. "And although it won't solve everything, we'll try to use it prudently to establish a base for new forms of development and new forms of production, to improve our situation."

Educational campaign

In a country where only three years ago the Somoza government stamped every passport with a notice prohibiting travel to any Communist country — citing them by name with the Soviet Union at the top of the list — it is natural that reactionaries would take the trip to Moscow as a pretext to try to fan residual anti-communism.

They are having a hard time, however, explaining why the Soviet "tyrant" is providing hundreds of millions of dollars in badly needed aid, while the U.S. "benefactor" is doing everything it can to bleed the country dry.

Educational efforts along these lines have been a continuing feature in *Barricada*. During the first two weeks in May, the Sandinista daily featured some 40 articles on the importance of the Ortega visit, the Russian revolution, and life in the Soviet Union today.

Particularly stressed are the social, economic, and cultural gains made possible by the overthrow of capitalism in Russia, and the Soviet peoples' heroic struggle against fascism during World War II.

Delegations in 12 other countries

While Ortega was in the Soviet Union, JGRN member Sergio Ramírez headed a delegation that visited the governments of Spain, Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland, Austria, and Greece to discuss economic aid and to gain support for Nicaragua's request for negotiations with the United States.

Meanwhile, another diplomatic team headed by Minister of Education Carlos Tunnermann visited the Vatican to discuss with the Pope improving relations between the Catholic Church and the revolutionary government.

In particular, Tunnermann invited the Vatican to send its own fact-finding mission to examine the Miskitu resettlement camps and the state of religious freedom in Nicaragua.

A team headed by JGRN member Rafael Córdova Rivas visited Costa Rica to greet newly elected president Alberto Monge, and visited Venezuela to discuss oil imports and renegotiation of Nicaragua's debt.

Finally, a team headed by Commander Víctor Tirado visited Vietnam and Poland. "Not so much to seek aid," he pointed out, "but to learn from their experiences, advances, and difficulties." □

Michael Baumann/IP

Part of shipment of 600 Soviet tractors in Managua.

'Our revolution is irreversible'

May Day in the first free territory of the Americas

By George Johnson and Mary-Alice Waters

HAVANA — A "human avalanche of Havana's workers," as the newspaper *Juventud Rebelde* (Rebel Youth) described it, poured into the Plaza of the Revolution here on May Day, International Workers Day.

Anything but a ritual May Day, it was a March of the Fighting People, as Cuba continues its mass mobilizations against the threats of U.S. imperialism.

Like the marches in 1980 and 1981, this year's March of the Fighting People was a massive response by the Cuban people to growing U.S. involvement in the wars in the Caribbean and Central America, and the escalating political, economic, and military moves directed against Cuba by the U.S. government.

There is no official estimate of the demonstration's size, but around a million marched here — about the same as last year. The streets of Havana, other than those around the Plaza of the Revolution, were virtually deserted.

Clearly, the majority of Havana's 1.9 million population had responded to the posters we had seen everywhere on the city's walls: "Everyone to the Plaza on May 1."

Massive demonstrations in other cities took place in the preceding week, building toward this mobilization: Santiago de Cuba, Las Tunas, Guama, Ciego de Avila, Cienfuegos, Matanzas, Boyeros, Arroyo Naranjo, Holguín.

In Santa Clara, 70,000 marched; in Holguín, more than 100,000. In Las Tunas, a check for 764,000 pesos (1 peso = US$1.18) for the Territorial Troop Militia (MTT) was donated by the people; in Villa Clara, 1.01 million pesos.

'Pitch, Fidel' — the march begins

In the capital, the march began promptly on schedule at 9 a.m., as Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, the heads of the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), and other leaders of the revolution filed into the plaza, followed by a contingent of exemplary sugar cane cutters. The crowd chanted, "Pitch, Fidel — Reagan can't hit!"

Fidel opened the meeting and introduced the only speaker of the day: Roberto Veiga, general secretary of the CTC.

"Today we are stronger and firmer; our revolution is irreversible," Veiga said. "This is a day of combat, of revolutionary reaffirmation, of commitment to our two basic tasks: production and defense."

Veiga called the international situation tense, and placed the blame for this on the U.S. administration, which "with its irresponsible policies, has taken the most reactionary positions on all world problems, and has created incalculable dangers for humanity."

"The Yankee imperialists' hateful and ferocious obsession with the victorious advances of the Cuban revolution and the growing and inextinguishable power of its example, create additional dangers for our country."

He recalled the continuing series of aggressive U.S. acts against the Cuban revolution and their 24-year history: the blockade; military attacks; maneuvers, including practice invasions on Cuban soil at Guantánamo; a war of slander and lies; and more.

But these aggressions, threats, provocations, and shows of force have been more than met by the courage of the Cuban people, he said.

In spite of economic difficulties, he went on, Cuban workers will continue to sacrifice in order to further advance the construction of socialism.

Veiga's speech was an internationalist salute to the workers of the world. He thanked the workers of the Soviet Union for their sacrifices and aid to the Cuban revolution, and paid tribute to those everywhere "who are fighting fascism, colonialism, neocolonialism, Zionism, racism, and apartheid; those struggling for a better world, for liberty, for peace, and for the progress of their peoples."

Singled out for special mention were Nicaragua and Grenada, whose people, he said, were resisting imperialist threats and aggression with valor.

He offered unqualified support to the people of El Salvador and Guatemala, "who are heroically fighting for genuine and permanent independence against genocidal governments supported by U.S. imperialism."

Solidarity with Argentina

And he extended "on this occasion in particular, solidarity to Argentine fellow workers in this difficult moment of aggression by English imperialism backed by the repugnant form of U.S. imperialism."

Veiga spoke for 20 minutes. After he finished, the masses of Havana poured past the reviewing stand where Fidel, Raúl, and other Cuban leaders watched from 50 yards away.

Also on the reviewing stand were CTC leaders, delegations of model workers elected by their co-workers, and trade unionists from around the world. A special guest was Mohamed Abdelaziz, general secretary of the Polisario Front, which is fighting for the independence of Western Sahara.

The crowd had been massing since early morning. By 7 a.m., streets leading to the plaza were already filled for blocks in every direction we could see. With extraordinary patience and discipline, Havana's workers waited for the march to begin.

They talked and joked with the police and cheered a helicopter from the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) as it flew over.

The demonstration was organized into contingents from the 14 municipalities of Havana by the block Committees for Defense of the Revolution (CDR).

A group of socialists who were in Cuba on a two-week political tour organized by the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant* and its sister Spanish-language publication, *Perspectiva Mundial*, marched behind posters from the San Miguel district.

Marching Cubans who talked with the U.S.

Granma

May Day spirit in Havana was festive and militant.

revolutionaries asked about the U.S. government's new ban on travel to Cuba, which goes into effect May 15. The Cubans saw the travel ban as one more attempt to keep Americans from knowing the truth about Cuba, including the unified response of its people to U.S. imperialist moves as evidenced in the May Day demonstration.

T-shirts, placards, pins, flags

There were few banners — they are difficult to hold in such a dense crowd; but we saw many homemade placards and political T-shirts that indicated Veiga's speech had expressed the opinions of his massive audience.

Virtually everyone wore a Cuban pin, carried a flag, or wore a T-shirt to show their backing for their government's resistance to U.S. imperialism's threats.

"We will never surrender our principles." "I am a free man." "Cuba si — Yanqui no." Or simply "Cuba."

There were placards supporting the revolutionary struggles in Guatemala and El Salvador; denouncing the aggression of British imperialism against Argentina; and solidarizing with revolutionary Nicaragua and Grenada.

A good number of people carried portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Che Guevara, José Martí, and other revolutionary leaders.

As the crowd marched into the plaza, Cubans spotted TV crews with U.S. media logos. Everyone waved and chanted "Fidel, Fidel," to emphasize their support for the Cuban government's policies.

As they passed the reviewing stand, the marchers waved and doubled their chants: "Fidel, for sure, hit the Yankees hard."

The last civilian marchers passed the stand at noon. Behind them stepped out a half-dozen select contingents of the FAR and MTT — from the infantry and artillery schools, air force troops, marines, sailors, men and women.

Popular militia

Earlier, Veiga had talked about the increased readiness of the FAR and the development of the MTT, a mass voluntary popular militia that provides military organization and training for every single adult Cuban. The MTT was formed two years ago in response to the escalating threats by U.S. imperialism.

Since its formation, Veiga announced, Cubans have pledged 33 million pesos through donations to the MTT. It has been entirely financed by such contributions.

Support for the MTT was registered in enthusiastic cheers as they marched past smartly.

When the troops had passed, a 2,000-voice workers' chorus sang the "International," the anthem of the workers of the world. It was a fitting end to the celebration of May Day in the first free territory of the Americas. □

Grenada

Flax Hermes/IP

Thousands celebrate May Day

Bishop blasts U.S. naval maneuvers

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S — Thousands of Grenadian workers and farmers, clad in bright T-shirts of their various unions, marched and rallied here May 1 in the annual commemoration of International Workers Day.

Arriving from each of the six island parishes by car, bus, and truck, the demonstrators assembled outside Otway House and marched to the rally site in Queen's Park. Otway House is the headquarters of the Seamen's and Waterfront Workers Union (SWWU) and is named after George Otway, a founding member of the Grenada Trade Union Council (TUC).

The Bank and General Workers Union copped the prime minister's trophy this year by pulling out the largest percentage of its membership.

Other contingents came from the Commercial and Industrial Workers Union, the Public Workers Union, the Technical and Allied Workers Union, the Grenada Union of Teachers, the Agricultural and General Workers Union, the Taxi Owners and Drivers Association, and the SWWU. All of these unions are affiliates of the TUC.

Contingents also came from the Productive Farmers Union, which is the organization of small- and medium-sized farmers, and from the Cuban construction workers, doctors, and other Cuban personnel here helping in the building of the revolutionary process.

Present at the rally were numerous heads of labor and political organizations from around the Caribbean.

Jeanette Du Bois, the recently-elected president of the TUC, saluted the growth in unionization since the May 13, 1979, revolution.

It is estimated that 80 percent of workers are now unionized, compared to 30 percent prior to the revolution.

In the feature address Prime Minister Maurice Bishop blasted U.S. military maneuvers taking place in the Caribbean. Helicopters and planes from ships some forty miles from here may be seen flying near Grenada, Bishop warned. But if they start any shooting or other fighting, he promised, "we gon' bust they backsides."

The prime minister also announced the recent passage of three pieces of legislation to benefit workers. These include a new Workmen's Compensation Act, which will increase insurance coverage to workers injured on the job; a law upping the amount of coverage victims of bus accidents receive; and a new Rent Restriction Act.

The new rent law requires all rents to be approved by a board elected of workers and representatives from the mass organizations. Under the provision, renters may be eligible for a rent rollback and are protected against eviction. It also requires landlords to maintain upkeep on properties or have the cost of such upkeep deducted from renters' costs. □

'The Fate of the Earth'

Nuclear weapons and the fight against war

By David Frankel

Since atomic bombs were first used by the United States in August 1945, the world has lived under the shadow of these fiendish weapons. Yet, Jonathan Schell observes in *The Fate of the Earth*, "Only very recently have there been signs, in Europe and in the United States, that public opinion has been stirring awake, and that ordinary people may be beginning to ask themselves how they should respond to the nuclear peril."

Why is it that masses of people have suddenly been aroused to the nuclear danger?

Schell does not attempt to answer this question, but it is crucial to the issues he raises in his book.

Working people around the world sense that the Reagan administration is set on a course toward war. Washington is already waging an undeclared war against the workers and peasants of Central America, and it has repeatedly announced its readiness to fight in the Middle East.

The Fate of the Earth, by Jonathan Schell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. 244 pp. $11.95.

Meanwhile, British imperialism has launched a war in the South Atlantic with U.S. support, and British Foreign Secretary Francis Pym has already threatened Argentina with the possible use of "tactical" nuclear weapons.

The development of a new generation of nuclear weapons such as the Cruise missile and the neutron bomb has aroused millions because it comes as part of the imperialist drive toward actual wars in which these weapons are most likely to be used.

It is within this context that Schell's book appears.

Focus on weapons themselves

Schell's focus is on nuclear weapons and the possibility of human extinction that their existence poses. As he puts it on the very first page of the book, "These bombs were built as 'weapons' for 'war,' but their significance greatly transcends war and all its causes and outcomes. They grew out of history, yet they threaten to end history. They were made by men, yet they threaten to annihilate men."

"A Republic of Insects and Grass," the first of Schell's three essays, takes its title from the fact that these forms of life are most resistant to nuclear radiation. It succeeds in presenting the threat of extinction hanging over humanity in the starkest terms.

Having described this dire and ever-present threat, however, Schell draws back from discussing its specific origins and what to do about it. Quotations from Kant, Hegel, Kafka, Hannah Arendt, and Bertrand Russell explore the philosophical implications of the annihilation of humanity, while submerging and obscuring the urgent political task of what is to be done.

Nuclear weapons do threaten the extinction of the human race. Because of this, Schell argues that their significance "transcends war and all its causes and outcomes." He says that the extinction of humanity would rob all past and present human life of its meaning.

But if such extinction comes about, it will be precisely because of "war and all its causes." We cannot turn our backs on war and its causes, any more than we can turn our backs on the lessons of history — even though, as Schell says, nuclear weapons "threaten to end history." Yet it is these issues that Schell refuses to address.

His concern is with the weapons themselves, which he sees as having escaped human control. As he puts it at one point, "strategic theory seems to have taken on a weird life of its own, in which the weapons are pictured as having their own quarrel to settle, irrespective of mere human purposes."

He raises the possibility that the world may "simply blunder into extinction by mistake."

Role of social relations

It is hardly surprising that Schell should express such an idea. The irrationality of capitalist society has always encouraged the idea that our lives are controlled by anarchic social forces that are beyond human influence. The growth of productive forces results in economic crisis. New advances in science are turned into the means of our destruction.

Karl Marx pointed to this characteristic of capitalist society in a speech he delivered in 1856:

"There is one great fact, characteristic of this our 19th century, a fact which no party dares deny. On the one hand, there have started into life industrial and scientific forces, which no epoch of the former human history had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors recorded of the later times of the Roman Empire. In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. . . . At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy. Even the pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance. All our invention and progress seem to result in endowing material forces with intellectual life, and in stultifying human life into a material force. This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be controverted."

It is the social relations — the existence of a society divided into classes — that Schell ignores. As a result, he cannot explain the origin and real character of the nuclear threat. The problem is not that the weapons are out of control; it is that they are under the control of an imperialist ruling class whose interests and objectives conflict with those of working people everywhere.

Nuclear war has been threatened many times, as will be seen below. But the threats have not come about due to accident or blunders.

Origin of nuclear peril

For Schell, "the fundamental origin of the peril of human extinction by nuclear arms lies not in any particular social or political circumstances of our time but in the attainment by mankind as a whole, after millenia of scientific progress, of a certain level of knowledge of the physical universe."

He insists that the origins of "the nuclear predicament . . . lie in scientific knowledge rather than in social circumstances."

And later on, he repeats that "the origin of the nuclear peril lies, on the one hand, in our nature as rational and inquisitive beings and, on the other, in the nature of matter."

This specious argument takes the political problem of war and mass destruction in today's world and turns it into an existential dilemma, removed from any specific historical context, from the actual play of events and from the clash of contending class forces.

After all, it was not "our nature as rational and inquisitive beings" that resulted in the production of the atomic bomb. Scientific knowledge was necessary, but so were certain social circumstances — specifically, World War II and the mobilization of scientific and material resources in the Manhattan Project.

Furthermore, *why was the bomb used* — not once, but twice — when Japan was already on the verge of surrender? Did this have nothing to do with "particular social or political circumstances" — specifically, the explosion of the colonial revolution in Asia toward the end of World War II, and the determination of U.S. imperialism to confront these revolutions, and with them the Soviet Union?

A 'race' with one runner

We frequently hear reference to the nuclear arms race. The image is of two contestants crouched at the starting line, then racing neck-

U.S. troops during Korean War. Washington threatened to use nuclear weapons in 1950 and 1953, and probably would have if USSR had not obtained its own atomic weapons.

and-neck. But the reality was different.

As Daniel Ellsberg notes in his introduction to *Protest and Survive* (a collection of essays on the issue of nuclear arms, edited by E.P. Thompson), "the U.S. Strategic Air Command was established in early 1946 with the function of delivering nuclear attacks upon Russia when so directed, at a time when it was publicly proclaimed by the president and high military that the Soviet Union was not expected to possess operational nuclear weapons systems for a decade or longer."

So much for the myth of "deterrence."

Schell does not admit U.S. responsibility for the nuclear threat. He tries to avoid this issue by taking the existence of nuclear weapons and the current level of nuclear armament as his starting point. The potential for the extinction of humanity, he says, makes all political ideologies fade into irrelevance.

But as soon as we turn from the destructive power of nuclear weapons in the abstract to the actual instances in which their use has been threatened, we run into the problem of "war and its causes," and specifically the role of U.S. imperialism, once again.

U.S. nuclear threats

In the essay quoted above, Daniel Ellsberg refers to 12 instances in which the U.S. government is known to have directly threatened the use of nuclear weapons. There is no instance of the Soviet government ever having made such a threat.

Of the 12 instances listed by Ellsberg, 10 grew directly out of Washington's efforts to defeat revolutionary struggles in Asia and Latin America. These were:

- Iran in 1946, when Truman demanded that the Soviets halt their support for nationalist regimes that had been set up in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan as a result of the revolutionary upheaval that had erupted in Iran.
- Korea in 1950, and again in 1953. In both cases the threat was against the Chinese revolution as well as the Korean revolution.
- Vietnam in 1954, when Washington secretly offered the French three tactical nuclear weapons to relieve the colonial troops besieged at Dienbienphu.
- The Middle East in 1958, when Eisenhower authorized the use of nuclear weapons if these were deemed necessary to prevent the extension of the Iraqi revolution of that year.
- Also in 1958, Eisenhower directed the Pentagon to use nuclear weapons to defend the Chiang Kaishek dictatorship's military outpost on the island of Quemoy, a few miles off the Chinese mainland.
- In 1962 there was the Cuban missile crisis — a confrontation that grew out of Washington's attempts to crush the Cuban revolution.
- The Vietnamese revolution was again threatened by nuclear weapons in 1968, when thousands of U.S. Marines were surrounded at Khe Sanh. The Vietnamese never did make a final assault on the Marines trapped at Khe Sanh, and during the 1969-1972 period, they were repeatedly threatened with a massive escalation of the war, including the use of nuclear weapons.
- The latest U.S. nuclear threat came in the context of the Iranian revolution. It was first enunciated in January 1980, after President Carter staked out the Persian Gulf region as U.S. turf. After taking office a year later, Reagan reaffirmed Washington's determination to use nuclear weapons if necessary to hold onto Middle Eastern oil.

In addition to these explicit threats to use nuclear weapons, there have been numerous actions such as the worldwide alert of U.S. forces during the October 1973 Mideast war.

The scramble for profits by giant corporations, the struggles of the colonial peoples for independence, revolution, imperialist war — all this is missing from Schell's sanitized version of the nuclear threat. Although his book is newly published, it never once mentions the criminal U.S. intervention in Central America, where Washington is preparing the next Vietnam.

Far from blaming the warmakers in Washington and helping to show the way toward disarming them, Schell blames working people. "The world's political leaders," he says, are not the enemy because, "though they now menace the earth with nuclear weapons, [they] do so only with our permission, and even at our bidding. At least, this is true for the democracies."

Schell speaks of "our role as both the victims and the perpetrators of mass murder." But working people never voted to build the atomic bomb, nor to drop it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. U.S. workers and farmers first found out about those decisions in the newspapers.

Nor did working people vote in favor of any of the acts of nuclear blackmail or any of the imperialist interventions that Washington has carried out since World War II. On the contrary, only years of massive opposition at home finally forced the imperialists to get out of Vietnam.

Disarmament is Schell's solution for the nuclear threat — "what everyone is now called on to do is to sink all the ships, and also ground all the planes, and fill in all the missile silos, and dismantle all the warheads."

As he makes clear a few pages later, his actual political perspectives do not go beyond the

measures already proposed by various figures in the U.S. ruling class. Schell suggests that "at a minimum, a freeze on the further deployment of nuclear weapons, participated in both by countries that now have them and countries that do not yet have them, is called for. Even better would be a reduction in nuclear arms — for example, by cutting the arsenals of the superpowers in half, as George Kennan suggested recently."

Who should be disarmed?

Socialists are fighting for a society in which war and the weapons of war would be abolished. But the question is how to get there, and who the demand of disarmament should be aimed at today.

There is a war going on right now in southern Africa. The racist South African regime, armed with nuclear weapons, is occupying Namibia and southern Angola, and carrying out repeated massacres of the civilian population there. Working people around the world would like to see the South African imperialists disarmed, but to raise that demand against Angola would be a betrayal. We should support the right of Angola and the freedom fighters in Namibia to have *more* ships, *more* planes, *more* missiles.

The same is true in Central America. The butchers in El Salvador, the U.S.-backed death squads in Guatemala, and above all, the imperialists in Washington who are ultimately responsible for the survival of every reactionary dictatorship in the region, should be disarmed. At the same time, we should support the right of Cuba, of Nicaragua, of Grenada, and of the liberation fighters in El Salvador to obtain whatever weapons they need to defend themselves against imperialist aggression. And that includes nuclear weapons.

It should be recalled that if it were not for the fact that the Soviet Union obtained the atomic bomb in 1949, the likelihood is that U.S. atom bombs would have been dropped in Korea the following year. The weapons themselves are not the threat. U.S. imperialism is.

Like E.P. Thompson, a leader of the antinuclear movement in Britain, Schell seeks to *substitute* the fight against nuclear weapons and for disarmament in the abstract for the fight against the actual wars going on today and their source. The only way to finally end the nuclear peril is to disarm the imperialist warmakers.

Two different approaches

The difference in the two approaches can be seen quite clearly in the mass movement that has grown up inside the United States. Many of the participants within that movement are in favor of a bilateral nuclear freeze. They sincerely see this as a step that will help to lessen the danger of war.

At the same time, prowar forces such as former CIA head William Colby have also come out for a bilateral nuclear freeze. Colby — and there are many others like him — supports the counterrevolutionary war that Washington is currently waging in Central America. His advocacy of a nuclear freeze is intended to disorient and derail the nascent antiwar movement.

Forces within the mass movement who look to the ruling class, or who are swayed and confused by its ideological pressures, are opposed to including demands against the U.S. war in Central Ameica and the British-U.S. war against Argentina in the June 12 demonstration at the United Nations. The demand for disarmament in the abstract is thus counterposed to the fight against war in the real world.

Lou Howort/Militant

An effective fight against war in general and the peril of nuclear annihilation must begin with the fight against the actual wars being waged by the imperialist rulers.

There is nothing new about the idea of disarmament in the abstract being counterposed to the actual fight against imperialism and imperialist war. Lenin explained in 1916, "The main defect in the demand for disarmament is its evasion of all the concrete questions of revolution. . . .

"'Disarmament' means simply running away from unpleasant reality and not fighting against it."

Disarmament in the abstract was also in vogue on the eve of World War II. Leon Trotsky pointed out in 1935, "For Marxists the struggle against war coincides with the struggle against imperialism. The means for this struggle is not 'general disarmament' but the arming of the proletariat for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a workers' state."

It is through the workers and farmers taking governmental power, and using that power to reshape society in the interests of the toilers, that real disarmament can finally come about. As long as society is divided between oppressed and oppressing classes and ruled by a minority that subordinates everything to its search for profits, there can be no end to war.

What we have accomplished

Within this context, it is worth noting one of Schell's statements. "As a species," he says, "we have as yet done nothing to save ourselves" from the threat of nuclear extinction.

Not true.

As a species, we have been struggling to overthrow an unjust, outmoded, and life-threatening social system, and to replace it with a higher form of human society.

The Russian revolution of October 1917 was the first giant step in that process. The Chinese revolution, the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, the Grenadian revolution, the Nicaraguan revolution — every one of these events has been a blow to imperialism and a step forward for humanity on the road to a better world.

It is this process of social transformation that is essential for ending the threat of nuclear extinction.

That is another reason why the context in which Schell's book appears is so important. Under the impact of the world economic crisis and the imperialist war drive, big changes are taking place inside the labor movement in the United States and other imperialist countries. Working people more and more feel that the capitalist system cannot guarantee them a better life, and even threatens life itself.

The struggle for a workers and farmers government in the United States is becoming less and less of an abstraction. The need for such a government is increasingly posed by events in the class struggle. And that includes the rise of the peace movement.

Ultimately, the working people of America will have the decisive say in whether the human race is to survive. Those are the real stakes in the fight for a workers and farmers government in the United States. □

The workers movement and the war

CGT calls for confiscation of British holdings

By Marcelo Zugadi

SÃO PAULO, Brazil — A wave of anti-imperialist sentiment swept Argentina after the April 2 recovery of the Malvinas.

It began as a burst of joy, when it became known that a slogan learned since childhood by every Argentine had been converted into reality. It quickly turned into hatred when Margaret Thatcher's government dispatched the British fleet. And when word arrived of the bombing of the islands and the sinking of Argentine ships, the hatred was again transformed into a spirit of combat.

While the general reaction was one of condemnation of imperialism and of recognizing Thatcher and Reagan as the same enemy, the society has responded to the war in different ways. Hatred of imperialist arrogance is unanimous, but the will to face the threat and defend sovereignty over the Malvinas without concessions is not.

Distrust of regime

The outbreak of war — not known to Argentines in this century — and brought on hesitation and moments of confusion and doubt.

Doubts arise because the average Argentine, suffering under the economic crisis, knows that the imperialist enemy now trying to retake the Malvinas has been represented inside the country by those who are today conducting the fight against the British fleet in the South Atlantic. Readiness to fight the aggressor, then, is mixed up with the certainty that the military dictatorship cannot carry an anti-imperialist war to victory.

The mood is different in areas where the war is not seen as something far away. The city of Bahía Blanca on the Atlantic coast, for example, is directly threatened because the Puerto Belgrano naval base is located there. Tense waiting has given way to feelings of solidarity forgotten in recent years — a time of repression, fear, and misery.

The threat of foreign attack — and the faint intuition that by struggling against the British one can also fight the other evils that beset the country — has generated a firm will to resist among the immense majority of the population.

Workers and the war

Such anti-imperialist sentiment is to be found above all among the youth. In all the actions and demonstrations, the majority has invariably been made up of young people — university students, high-school students, workers, unemployed youth. The workers movement, on the other hand, while clearly sharing the demand for recovering the Malvinas and hatred for the invader, has scarcely begun to mobilize. Its massive and organized force has still not made its presence felt in the confused situation in Argentina during the past five weeks.

For six years the workers have had to confront a brutal dictatorship, which utilized civil-war methods against the workers movement. Resistance to this began the day after the March 1976 military coup and continued without interruption. It has prevented the bourgeoisie from putting the economy and the political scene back in order, and it is what lies beneath this war.

The war cannot resolve the problems the proletariat has faced for the past six years. On the contrary — it aggravates them. There cannot therefore be any doubt that the current moment of reflection precedes the eruption of the workers into the new national situation created since April 2.

Failure of repression

The various sectors of the trade-union bureaucracy reflect this situation and the dynamic of the ranks of the workers. On March 30 — three days before the recovery of the Malvinas — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) called a demonstration outside the Casa Rosada (presidential palace) to repudiate the dictatorship.

The government launched an intense campaign of intimidation, threatening those who dared to disregard the state of siege and defy the dictatorship.

The CGT leadership, as it has done invariably in recent years, scheduled and cancelled the demonstration several times, sowing confusion and disorganization among the union ranks. Nonetheless, between 15,000 and 20,000 workers formed columns to march toward the government buildings. An extraordinary display of force was launched against the demonstrators, touching off a street battle in the center of Buenos Aires. The population spontaneously joined the workers.

The day's events were like a plebiscite in which everyone repudiated the dictatorship. The 2,000 arrests and hundreds of injured provoked protests throughout the country by all the political parties, by the press, and even from certain business sectors.

The workers movement had won a decisive battle.

The dictatorship was now more isolated than ever. An unmistakable conclusion drove the military rulers to desperation — fear and violence were no longer sufficient for controlling the masses.

The day after the demonstration, the National Labor Commission (CNT)[1] — the other faction of the Argentine union bureaucracy, which for years had collaborated with the government and boycotted the CGT's calls for struggle — announced that it was calling a general strike to protest the repression against the CGT.

A social explosion was imminent.

Release of CGT leaders

This was the situation in which the landing on the Malvinas was carried through.

Let us leave aside the military rulers' intentions. These are just as obvious as the fact that their desperate move brought on a cataclysm they can neither control nor comprehend. What is important here is to outline the attitude of the workers movement and the trade-union bureaucracy.

On April 3, the government ordered the release of the CGT leaders who had been detained during the demonstrations and accused as "subversives" by the minister of labor.

Thousands of persons gathered outside the Casa Rosada to hail the recovery of the Malvinas.

The CGT leaders emerged from jail and went directly to the union federation's offices. A crowd was waiting to greet them.

One sector of the CGT leadership, headed by metalworkers' chief Lorenzo Miguel, proposed marching to the Casa Rosada to congratulate the armed forces for their action on the islands. There was a difference of opinion, and after a heated discussion a rally was held at the union offices.

The incident reflected well the contradictory situation and the limits the union bureaucrats would encounter.

When Britain and the United States found themselves forced to punish a junior partner who had broken the rules of the game by landing 5,000 troops on the Malvinas, the dictatorship lost its only base of support. The British fleet set sail for the South Atlantic, and Galtieri had no other alternative but to seek support from the parties and trade unions.

But the workers movement was not impressed by the dictatorship's rhetoric. The

1. The trade-union bureaucracy split into various factions following the 1976 military coup. The disputes were mainly over what degree of collaboration to offer to the dictatorship. The main national reflection of these disputes was the formation of the CGT and the CNT. In recent months, a process of reunification has been under way, exemplified by the healing of the CGT-CNT split in the main industrial union, the Metalworkers Union (UOM).

CGT declared that its support to the armed forces regarding the Malvinas did not negate its opposition to the government.

The CGT reiterated its economic demands, called for an end to the regime's intervention[2] of the trade unions, and insisted on the need for elections.

The CGT took its distance from Galtieri precisely at the moment when everything seemed to be pointing in the direction of "national unity" behind the general.

The military called for a demonstration outside the Casa Rosada on April 10. Some 100,000 persons (the federal police said 300,000) gathered in the Plaza de Mayo. But again the CGT leadership emerged as the big winner.

When Galtieri addressed the crowd saying, "I, as the representative of all the Argentine people . . ." an immense cry drowned him out. The chant of "Malvinas Argentinas" was immediately replaced with "*Se va a acabar, la dictadura militar!*" (The military dictatorship is going to be finished off!)

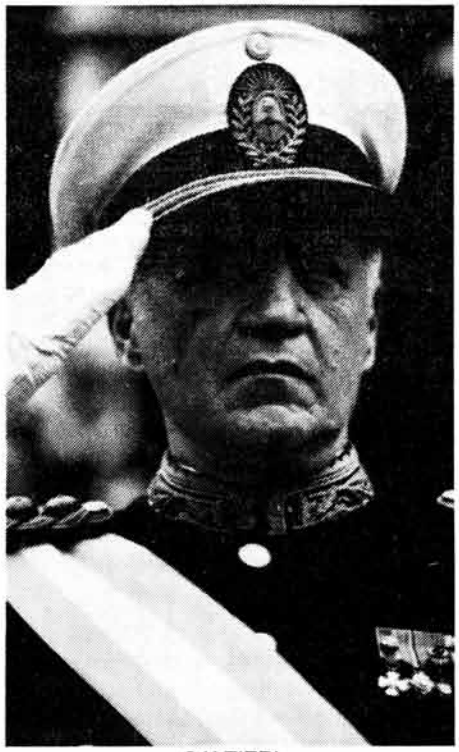
The union leaders and the politicians took careful note of this response. The following week, the Radical and Justicialist parties[3] proposed to Galtieri the formation of a coalition government. The CGT insisted on total independence from the government when its leaders decided to travel abroad to seek solidarity from other union organizations. The CNT took the same approach, although with less enthusiasm and clarity.

Rally against dictatorship

The CGT's position took on a defiant tone when the minister of the interior — who had termed CGT General Secretary Saúl Ubaldini a "subversive" — invited the union leaders to go to the Malvinas for the installation of the new Argentine governor, Gen. Mario Benjamín Menéndez (who, by the way, was one of the most notorious and bloody chiefs of the secret detention camps where thousands of Argentines were tortured and murdered).

The CGT declared that "it is public and notorious that the military government has repeatedly declared that the CGT is not a legal organization and hence does not exist. Therefore, we cannot seriously consider being your guest on this occasion." The statement concluded:

"Taking into acount the fact that the soldiers on the liberated territory of our country are all sons of workers, the CGT has resolved to designate its general secretary to convey our solidarity to the Argentines who have restored our sovereignty over the Malvinas."



GALTIERI

Three weeks later on April 26, after the British invasion of the South Georgia Islands, the CGT and CNT jointly called a demonstration outside the Casa Rosada. But despite the impact of the British attack, only 5,000 persons heeded the call. A high proportion, probably more than half of the demonstrators, were from leftist organizations. The rally became an antidictatorial demonstration in which Galtieri was ridiculed.

The rally had been planned with the support of the minister of labor, Brig. Gen. Julio Porcile. It was part of a plan aimed at making public a military–trade union alliance. On May 1, at a united rally to celebrate International Workers Day, Porcile was to speak to the nation, accompanied by the leaders of the CGT and CNT.

The April 26 action, however, dealt a death blow to this plan. The CGT denounced Porcile's proposals and publicly warned the CNT that "it would be a flagrant violation of the principles of the workers movement" to carry out a joint rally with the government on International Workers Day.

The Argentine trade-union bureaucracy has never been known for citing "principles," not even on May Day. So the CGT statement showed the crossroads where the leaders find themselves — despite support for the recovery of the Malvinas, the workers will not tolerate any deals with the military dictatorship.

Growing pressure from ranks

The workers' distrust of the bureaucrats' maneuvering was further borne out a few days later. To celebrate May Day, the CGT called for a demonstration near its old headquarters, closed by the government since the 1976 coup. But only about 1,000 persons responded.

Meanwhile, the threat of war became a reality. The workers, while taking advantage of the political space opened by the new situation, suspended their economic struggles. But the economic crisis followed its course. The big enterprises continued laying off thousands of persons.

In response to growing pressure from the ranks, the CGT put forward a slogan once included in radical union platforms of the past: expropriation of all British holdings in Argentina.

Pressure for a plan of struggle is especially strong from the local CGT leaderships. The Greater Buenos Aires CGT has told the national bureaucrats to either resume mobilizations against the regime or face the establishment of a new and more militant union federation.

Dictatorship against the wall

The dictatorship's margin of maneuver in this context is extremely narrow. It has lost its base of support and reason for existence — international finance capital. But so far it has found no other base of support.

The government that is conducting the war against Britain is still bound to the policies of Economy Minister Roberto Alemann, a direct agent of imperialism. The war crisis has brought on still deeper recession. The labor minister's efforts to prevent further layoffs has come to naught. Every day the press reports more enterprises being closed, banks failing, and thousands of workers thrown into the street. The government can offer nothing at the economic level, and to offer something politically the dictatorship will have to commit suicide.

At present, the military junta is reportedly considering a plan that includes the following:

- Rescinding the law that bans the CGT;
- Ending intervention of the trade unions;
- Restoring union control over medical and social-insurance funds;
- Restoring the "parity commissions" — the traditional negotiating method whereby annual meetings are held between the employers and the unions to discuss wages and working conditions.

At the same time, the government would seek to impose a war economy, banning strikes and even militarizing labor.

Conquest of the four points listed above would be a big victory for the workers movement. Such a step would confirm what is already obvious in any case: the brutal military dictatorship has failed in its overriding aim — to smash the Argentine workers movement.

As for the attempt to ban strikes and militarize the labor force, it seems impossible that the union bureaucracy would be in a position to support this. If the rulers should try to implement such a plan without the acquiescence of the bureaucracy, it would set off the powder keg on which the dictatorship is now sitting. □

2. The majority of Argentine trade unions — including the national confederation, the CGT — were placed under military intervention after the 1976 coup. This meant the appointment of military officers as union administrators, the confiscation of property belonging to the unions, and the closing down of union headquarters.

3. The Radical Civic Union (UCR) is a liberal capitalist party. The Justicialist Party is one of the factions of the bourgeois-nationalist Peronist movement.

Women and revolution

An interview with Margaret Randall

By Jane Harris

MANAGUA—*Sandino's Daughters** is one of the few book-length accounts of the Nicaraguan revolution available in English. It tells the story of the revolution and what has happened since through the words of the women who helped to make that history.

Margaret Randall — author, poet, editor, photographer, and friend of revolutions everywhere — was invited to Nicaragua by Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal to do the series of interviews with Nicaraguan women that was published as *Sandino's Daughters*. After three months of field work, she returned to Havana — her home for more than a decade — to get the book in order. She then packed her bags, buying a one-way ticket to Managua.

Randall, who has had close relations with the Sandinistas for years, says modestly that although her skills are not those of a doctor or a technician, but "as meager as those of a poet," she felt that perhaps she could make more of a contribution to the Nicaraguan revolution, now that the Cuban revolution has 23 strong years behind it.

"A lot of people ask me, 'Well, why *did* you leave Cuba?' with a tone that implies that I left Cuba out of some kind of need to distance myself. I just want to say that I feel as close to the Cuban revolution as I ever have — perhaps even closer — especially with my three oldest children still living there," Randall told *Intercontinental Press*.

Randall left New York City in 1961. As a single parent she was having a hard time making ends meet and took her son to Mexico City, hoping it would be easier.

Prior to that time she said she'd had only a very superficial involvement in revolutionary politics. But she said, "My heart was in the right place. I was for the civil rights movement in the South. I was against the bomb shelters. I was against the Bay of Pigs invasion. And I was *for* the Cuban revolution. But I wasn't organized at that point in my life and I thought of myself primarily as a writer."

All that changed in Mexico City. Almost immediately she banded together with a group of radical and talented poets, among them Ernesto Cardenal, Philip Lamantía, Raquel Jodorowsky, Homero Aridjis, Juan Bañuelos, Harvey Wolin, Ray Bremser, and Sergio Mondragón.

They got together and put out a bilingual quarterly magazine, *El Corno Emplumando* (*The Plumed Horn*), which got out all over the world. "Specifically, it was important," Randall reflected, "in terms of pushing a whole series of people like myself, who considered themselves literary people or poets or intellectuals or artists and had some kind of manipulated notion, absolutely put on us by the enemy — although we weren't aware of it at the time — that one can be an intellectual beyond politics or beyond struggle."

"All of us started out with a certain kind of conception, about the world, about the sort of immunity of art, art beyond politics, art beyond ideology. All of us learned our lessons the hard way, and we all learned it together."

Following the crackdown on the Mexican student movement in 1968, the magazine halted publication. But Randall said that through the eight-year period of editing the magazine she grew a lot politically. In addition, the experience of being a midwife in the slums of Mexico City was quite an eye-opener for her.

Randall moved to Cuba in 1969. Already having written about women while in Mexico City, she was "curious to see how women's problems would be solved in a socialist situation." Curiosity and hard work led to the publication of two important contributions, *Cuban Women Now* and *Women in Cuba: Twenty Years Later*.

During the 12 years she lived in Cuba, she traveled to Vietnam, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Canada, and the United States. A number of important books came out of those experiences.

Currently very busy doing media work to further the interests of the Nicaraguan revolution, and deeply involved in her Sandinista Defense Committee, she made time to give *IP* the following interview.

* * *

Question. What do you think some of the biggest accomplishments of Cuban and Nicaraguan women have been? Were independent women's organizations important in this process?

Answer. I think the most striking accomplishment of Cuban and Nicaraguan women has been making the revolution and their exceedingly important roles in both cases. It seems much more striking to us in the case of Nicaragua and maybe it is. But you have to remember that 20 years have gone by and it's a different historical moment.

That's the most striking accomplishment and the others follow — not necessarily automatically but they are embedded in the fact that a revolution exists in which women, in which people, have an authentic voice.

In both countries, a lot of progress has been made. In Cuba, of course, much more. Women are totally incorporated into the labor force and there's no salary differences to speak of. Most of the problems Cuban women have are around persistent sexism, which was attacked very solidly in 1974. On the legal and labor side, things look quite good. But the representation in terms of the power structure is still quite low.

In Nicaragua, labor and legal accomplishments are much less and will be for a long time. It's a completely different situation. Unemployment in general is quite high. There's not much of a chance that the Nicaraguans are going to be able to undertake the kind of programs for maids, for daycare, that the Cubans were able to in the very first years.

I think there are problems with sexism here. But I think that the way women waged their struggle in Nicaragua brought them to a place from which there's no return.

In terms of independent women's organizations: there are no independent women's organizations.

AMNLAE (Nicaraguan Women's Association — Luisa Amanda Espinosa) is not an independent women's organization. It's a women's organization led by a vanguard party — it's a Leninist principle. The same is true in Cuba. In Cuba the FMC (Federation of Cuban Women) is a mass organization for women under the auspices of the Cuban Communist Party.

Margaret Randall

Zulema Baltodano's nine children all became revolutionaries. She lost her 16-year-old daughter in a bombing. She cared for another daughter whose hands were severed while making contact bombs. She told Randall that at times the activities of another daughter, Commander Monica Baltodano, frightened her. But after Monica was imprisoned, "I didn't care if the whole world knew I was a revolutionary."

*New Star Books, $6.95. Available from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

Margaret Randall

In Nicaragua, AMNLAE is not a mass organization, but a political movement under the auspices of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front). So they're not really independent women's organizations. They're women's organizations in that they're for women.

It's important to make the distinction because there are people who believe that an independent women's organization is needed in this process. I don't agree.

In the sense that they exist as a separate body, an organization of and about and for women — I think it's extremely important in a revolutionary process. Women have very specific problems. There is a specificity to women's problems that is never going to be covered by your labor organizations and your youth organizations and your religious organizations and your Council of State. Pressure can be brought to bear in an organization that's got a correct line for solving some of these problems.

Q. From your studies of Cuban and Nicaraguan women, what do you think some of the important lessons have been in terms of fighting for women's demands?

A. I think the most important lesson is that women must fight for the problems that are most important to them. And I think in a real revolutionary situation, the revolution is the most important thing. I think there's a tendency to dichotomize. Women must struggle for what is most important to them, but women must understand that what is most important to them is the revolution. That sounds like a play on words, but if you really follow it through, that's the way it is.

Q. Do you think there are things that women in Cuba and Nicaragua could learn from the women's movement in the advanced capitalist countries and vice versa?

A. I do think there are things, and again, there's this incredible misconception that the enemy is making goddamn sure we have — about how feminism is supposed to be reactionary. In a lot of the more orthodox parties and among a lot of political women, they have a tendency to put down feminism. When they say feminism, they're thinking — they're meaning — bourgeois feminism. And they totally disregard a Clara Zetkin, a Flora Tristan, a Crystal Eastman — all our feminist heritage which is a revolutionary heritage.

And vice versa. Women in some of the advanced capitalist countries think that because Cuban women put their hair up in curlers or any other number of superficial cultural things, or because Nicaraguan women aren't waging the battle for abortion rights right this minute, they are not working to be free.

I think feminism and socialism need each other. I think a lot of misconceptions have to be brought around on both sides. I think that each time and each place has its own struggle and its own priority.

First of all, I think that women in the capitalist countries have the most to learn from women here in struggle — there's no question about that. On the other hand, women in the underdeveloped countries have a lot to learn from Lucretia Mott, Emma Goldman, Mother Jones, and Angela Davis.

I used to think in a very passive way about feminism and I don't anymore. As revolutionary feminists we've got to be heard around a whole series of issues.

Q. In the United States, the issue of whether or not women should be drafted became an enormous debate and eventually went to the Supreme Court. What is your view of this question?

A. I think the only way to look at this question is to look at the difference between a revolutionary army and a capitalist army. The United States army defends the interests of the United States government, which are certainly not our interests and are not people's interests, and they're not in the interests of men or women in the United States. So I would say in the United States, to be for women being drafted just because you want equal rights for women is ridiculous. In a country like the United States one could only be against the draft for *men and women*.

In a country like Nicaragua it's totally different. Many women are in the militia. Many women are in the reserve battalions and in the regular army. Women as well as men played a big role in the revolution and it's not a question of being drafted. In a people's army there's no need for a draft. There are enough people who are willing and eager to defend the country.

It's an interesting sidelight considering we're being accused of being militarists, to sit back and think that we're in a country where there is no need of draft. Think how unmilitarist Nicaragua is!

Q. What are some ways that readers might be able to demonstrate their support for women in Cuba and Nicaragua?

A. I think that the most important way that people in the United States and readers all over the world could support women in Nicaragua and Cuba is by supporting *people*, by supporting life in Cuba and Nicaragua.

The most important way is to create and sustain and consolidate the strongest possible solidarity movement — undivided, unwrought by contradictions which are 99 percent of the time pushed by the enemy. We've got to get together and stop this absolute madness against a handful of countries which could fit into a couple of U.S. states and are not posing any kind of threat by the wildest stretch of any madman's imagination. You have to be mad to think that El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada — a country with 110,000 people — and Cuba really pose a military threat to U.S. imperialism.

These are countries that have lived through and are living through huge liberation wars which are costing them huge chunks of their populations and all they ask, *all they ask*, is to be left alone to liberate themselves and to reconstruct, rebuild their countries, and to have the kind of government which pertains to the cultural and historical needs of their people.

At this moment, I think there's very few things that North Americans could be doing

Margaret Randall

that are more important than solidarity work with Central America and the Caribbean.

Why?

Because this area is *the point* of tension in the world at this moment.

Because what happens here is not only of crucial importance for us, for Nicaraguans, for Salvadorans, for Panamanians, and Cubans. It might be a hell of a lot more important than a lot of people in the United States — who have sat back all their lives and thought, "Well, that's far away and it's not touching me" — it could very soon be much more important to their lives than they ever thought. □

Big gains in agriculture

Why peasants, farm workers defend revolution

By Beverly Bernardo

MANAGUA — "Our call continues to be 'More production and defense of the revolution,'" Jaime Wheelock explained in an interview in the March 1982 issue of the Nicaraguan magazine *Patria Libre* (Free Homeland).

In Nicaragua, more production means above all more production in the countryside. Wheelock is minister of agricultural development and agrarian reform (MIDINRA).

The country needs to increase its production of export crops such as coffee, cotton, and sugar, in order to buy the goods it needs from other countries. Like most semicolonial countries oppressed by imperialism, Nicaragua is exploited by the world capitalist market.

For example, the rising price of oil has caused Nicaragua considerable difficulty. In 1977, 100 pounds of Nicaraguan coffee purchased 12.8 barrels of oil; in 1980, 4.9 barrels; and in 1981, 2.6 barrels. The country is in the midst of a big effort to conserve energy.

The government has also set a goal of making Nicaragua self-sufficient in producing food. The staples of the Nicaraguan diet are corn, rice, and beans. But Nicaraguans have been consuming more eggs, milk, and meat since the revolution. The Sandinistas stress that ensuring that the population — including the soldiers in the army and militias — has enough to eat is a vital part of defending the country against aggression.

Wages of rural workers double

Despite the pressures of the world market and the mounting imperialist attacks on the revolution, big advances have been made in the countryside. The changes have benefited the landless agricultural workers and the peasants.

Before the revolution, agricultural workers suffered the lowest wages and the worst living conditions in Nicaragua. The Rural Workers Association (ATC), which had only 5,000 members in 1979, has grown to 100,000 members today. Within a year after the revolution the wages of agricultural workers had doubled.

In addition, the Government of National Reconstruction has built 1,200 individual dwellings and 700 to 800 collective dwellings for rural workers. Schools, hospitals, clinics, and child-care centers have been built in rural Nicaragua for the first time. Roads are also being built to break down the isolation of rural areas from the city.

Key to these successes has been the establishment of state farms, part of the People's Property Sector (APP).

Within days of the triumph against Somoza, the new government kept its promise that the lands of the ex-dictator and his associates — some 2.5 million acres — would be nationalized. Much of this land was converted into state farms, which have guaranteed some 45,000 rural workers steady jobs for the first time in their lives.

Production increases

Agricultural production was in a bad state in July 1979. Much of the crop had been destroyed by the war, and the crops for 1980 had not been planted. But the increasing efficiency of the state farms, which involve the ATC in planning production, has resulted in some big steps forward:

- Current deliveries of milk are up 40 percent from what they were in 1980.
- APP livestock herds now have 343,000 head, as against 200,00 in 1980.
- Coffee production in 1979 was 152,000 *quintales* (1 quintal = 100 pounds). In 1980 it reached 167,000 quintales, and in 1981 the figure was 220,000 quintales.
- Sugar production in the first year of the revolution was 1,260,000 quintales. This year Nicaraguans expect to produce more than 2 million quintales.
- In the first year 1,500 *manzanas* (1 manzana = 1.73 acres) of cotton were planted on nationalized lands. The following year, 22,000 were planted; the third year, 27,000 manzanas, and this year they aspire to reach 30,000.

Peasants gain through cooperatives

The other cornerstone of the Sandinista government's agriculture program has been the support given to farm cooperatives and individual small farmers. This sector of agricultural producers still accounts for the bulk of the country's basic foodstuffs: beans, corn, fruit, and vegetables.

The farm cooperatives have succeeded in organizing some 2,500 associated groups involving some 80,000 peasants — a very important percentage. By ending the isolation of these producers and providing technical assistance, the cooperatives are helping to increase efficiency.

The FSLN has also encouraged small farmers — whether members of cooperatives or not — to organize. In April 1981, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) was formed. In March of this year, UNAG issued a statement explaining its support to the Sandinista government:

". . . for the first time in history, and thanks only to the revolution, [the land is] in the hands of those who work it."

The farmers vowed to supply the soldiers and the Nicaraguan people with food as their part in defending the country.

Michael Baumann/IP

April 24, 1982: 400 peasant families receive title to confiscated land.

But the truth is a powerful weapon on the side of the Sandinistas. Before the revolution, more than 100,000 peasants (95 percent of the total agricultural producers) worked just 3 percent of the land. Somoza alone held one-quarter of Nicaragua's arable land. With the ongoing confiscation of big idle holdings and the turning over of these to farm cooperatives and to individual small farmers, such lopsided figures are being turned around.

Moreover, the Sandinistas are making it plain that they guarantee the right of the small farmers to keep their land, and are vigorously countering the slanders of the right wing. Ceremonies at which land titles are presented to cooperative members and small farmers are held continually in the Nicaraguan countryside.

Concrete financial and technical aid is also being provided. Since July 1979, credit to small farmers has increased by 600 percent. Preferential interest rates have been set for such loans.

Counterrevolutionary bands financed by the CIA have been trying to disrupt the agrarian reform. Sandinistas working to bring these reforms to isolated areas of Nicaragua have been assassinated.

In the interview quoted earlier, Wheelock also noted that the counterrevolution has launched an ideological campaign to confuse people. They tell the people that MIDINRA is going to expropriate all privately owned land and turn Nicaragua into one giant state farm.

These measures and the support they have gained from the workers and peasants show that Jaime Wheelock is right when he says that "Reagan fears the liberating character of our revolution."

For farmers in the imperialist countries thrown off their land or in fear of losing it to the banks, and for underpaid migrant agricultural laborers, Nicaragua shows the road forward. □

FEATURES

USA — outlaw of the sea

Imperialists demand monopoly on mineral wealth

By Will Reissner

When Cuban President Fidel Castro spoke before the United Nations in October 1979 as head of the Nonaligned Movement, one of the demands he stated concerned the mineral resources in the world's oceans.

"The existing imbalance in the exploitation of the resources of the sea is abusive. It must be abolished!" Fidel declared.

After more than eight years of negotiations, a comprehensive UN-sponsored Law of the Sea Treaty was adopted on April 30. Out of more than 150 countries that participated in the process of working out the treaty, only four voted against its passage. Washington led the opposition.

The Reagan administration's objections to the new maritime law focused on regulations governing the mining of an estimated 1.5 trillion tons of manganese, cobalt, nickel, and copper scattered on the seabed in potato-sized nuggets. Most of these deposits are located in the Pacific Ocean.

At present, four U.S.-based consortia and a French enterprise have a virtual monopoly on the technology needed to mine these deposits. The Reagan administration's vote to reject the sea law was a vote to preserve that monopoly.

The process of writing an international law of the sea began in 1970, when the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the concept that all resources on the seabed lying outside national limits are the "common heritage of mankind."

Based on that concept, the conference initially decided that seabed mining would be regulated by an International Seabed Authority (ISA), which could require mining companies to sell it the technology needed to exploit the deposits.

In 1980, a compromise version of the treaty was worked out, based on a formula proposed by Henry Kissinger in 1975-1976. Under the Kissinger plan, the four U.S. consortia and the French company would be allowed to mine half the seabed sites, and would sell technology to the ISA to allow it to mine the other half. Acceptance of this plan was already a step back from the original view that minerals on the seabed were the "common heritage of mankind."

But in March 1981, the Reagan administration decided it would not settle for half a loaf. It moved to scuttle the treaty in order to preserve the existing imperialist monopoly.

In response to the Reagan administration's objections, the semicolonial countries, represented by the Group of 77, (which now numbers 120 member countries), made further concessions that would give the existing U.S. and French consortia a virtual monopoly on all mining for at least 20 years, and perhaps several decades longer.

The Reagan administration, however, was not satisfied. U.S. negotiator James Malone explained that Washington's vote against the treaty was based on three objections: the treaty guaranteed the interests of the four existing U.S. consortia, but did not guarantee that other U.S. corporations would also have access to mining sites; the United States and its imperialist allies would not have veto power over the decisions of the 36-member ISA governing council; and the Reagan administration opposes any mandatory transfers of technology.

Despite the U.S. "no" vote, the treaty will go into effect as soon as 60 countries have ratified it. A signing ceremony has already been scheduled for December in Caracas, Venezuela.

The Reagan administration hopes to get around the treaty's provisions on ocean mining by signing separate treaties with Britain, France, and West Germany. These would establish rules for seabed mining by the imperialists and prevent claim-jumping among the signers. Britain and West Germany both abstained in the vote on the Law of the Sea treaty.

But even if the U.S. government cannot get these other countries to go along with such agreements, and even if the United States never signs the Law of the Sea treaty, U.S. corporations could still monopolize the exploitation of these minerals for the stipulated two decades by operating under "flags of convenience."

The U.S. corporations participating in the existing consortia — Kennecott Copper, United States Steel, Sedco Inc., Standard Oil of Indiana, and Lockheed Systems Co. — could set up "foreign subsidiaries" in one of the signatory countries, and the "subsidiaries" could still take advantage of the monopoly accorded them under the treaty.

Although the Law of the Sea treaty is composed of 320 articles and 7 appendices, the Reagan administration's objections all focused on the mining provisions.

There was no dispute over provisions fixing maritime territorial limits at 12 miles; guarantees of unrestricted maritime passage through some 100 straits around the world; provisions granting every coastal country an exclusive fishing zone extending 200 miles from its shores; and giving each country exclusive rights to oil, gas, and other resources for 350 miles from its coast. □

Rebuilding a devastated country

Social progress despite South African attacks

By Ernest Harsch

Angola is a nation at war. More than six years after the country threw off Portuguese colonial rule, its 7 million people are still fighting for their independence.

Much of southern Angola is a battlefield. South African jets streak through the skies, bombing and strafing villages, schools, hospitals, factories, bridges, power stations, and refugee camps. South African troops are dropped by helicopter or cross into Angola in tanks and armored cars, burning down anything that stands, shooting down anything that moves. They strip villages and towns of everything of value. They poison wells and kill cattle. They leave behind massive destruction and death.

This is the first of three articles on Angola since the civil war. The next two parts will examine the growth of the mass organizations and their relationship with the government and MPLA, as well as the imperialists' continued war of aggression against Angola.

In 1981 alone, South African forces carried out 150 aerial bombardments and strafings, 53 troop landings by helicopter and 4 by parachute, 34 ground attacks, and 1,617 spy flights.

Thousands of Angolans have been killed in these attacks and hundreds of thousands have been forced to flee their homes. Many Namibian refugees — who have fled into Angola as a result of the South African reign of terror in neighboring Namibia — have perished as well.

U.S. complicity

The war in southern Angola is also felt far from the front lines. Because of regular South African-initiated sabotage actions, curfews are in effect in many major towns and cities. The disruption of food production and transport in southern and central Angola has led to empty shelves around the country. Massive resources have to be earmarked for military defense.

"We are subject to 24-hour aggression," stated Angolan leader Lúcio Lára. "Hundreds of trucks that should be used for health work, agriculture, and education are being diverted for the war effort and our best youth is being conscripted to fight."

Rather than condemning this blatant South African aggression, the U.S. government is encouraging it through the establishment of increasingly close ties with the apartheid regime. As a result, the South African racists have been emboldened to strike ever more deeply into Angola.

The people of Angola today face a greater threat to their independence than at any time since the massive 1975-76 South Africa invasion.

But they are also in a stronger position than ever before to fight back. Their anti-imperialist consciousness and their readiness to mobilize in massive numbers have been vital in defending Angola from the imperialist attacks.

A long struggle

This spirit of combativity did not develop overnight. It is the fruit of decades of struggle against imperialist domination and exploitation.

The fight for Angola's national independence has been virtually continuous since the early 1960s, when the first modern nationalist movements arose to challenge Portuguese colonial rule. It was the gains of these struggles in the early 1970s that helped undermine the Marcelo Caetano dictatorship in Portugal, leading to its downfall in 1974 and the subsequent collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire.

Like Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, the Cape Verde Islands, and São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola won its formal independence, which came on Nov. 11, 1975.

But several months earlier, the country was plunged into a bitter civil war, pitting the three main Angolan nationalist organizations against each other: the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA), and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

The latter two groups, in the interests of their factional war against the MPLA, allied themselves with American and South African imperialism — two of the deadliest foes of Angolan independence.

South African invasion

In late 1975, thousands of South African troops — supported by the FNLA and UNITA — invaded Angola and rapidly drove northward toward the capital, Luanda, which was held by the MPLA. The apartheid regime was supported by Washington, which also sent arms, money, and mercenaries to bolster the FNLA and UNITA forces. The aim of this invasion was to prevent the MPLA from coming to power and to install a servile proimperialist regime in its place.

But the offensive failed. Revolutionary Cuba responded to a request for assistance from the MPLA by quickly dispatching thousands of Cuban volunteers to Angola. The combined MPLA-Cuban forces were able to halt the South African drive and then push it back. By March 1976, the South African troops had been expelled from the country, and the FNLA and UNITA were in full retreat.

This was an enormous victory for Angolan working people. By throwing back the immediate threat of direct South African domination, they were left in a much stronger position to advance their interests.

The South African defeat also resounded throughout the region. Freedom fighters in Zimbabwe and Namibia were emboldened by the Angolan victory. Black youths in South Africa itself — many of whom had identified with the MPLA — poured into the streets of Soweto and other Black townships throughout the second half of 1976 in the most massive and sustained uprising against white supremacy the country had ever seen.

The expulsion of the South Africans from Angola — like the earlier fight against Portuguese colonialism — was a significant experience for the masses of Angolan workers and peasants. They emerged from the war greatly radicalized, with renewed confidence in their own abilities — and with the expectation that their victory would also bring major social changes.

In face of such widespread sentiment, the new MPLA-led government adopted a militantly nationalist and anti-imperialist course. It enacted numerous measures to improve social conditions for the masses of Angolans and to lessen Angola's dependence on foreign capital. To help counter continued imperialist pressures and threats, it also allowed working people some opportunities to organize and mobilize.

Legacy of Portuguese rule

The objective problems facing Angola in the wake of the 1975-76 war were enormous.

Like other newly independent African countries, Angola was burdened with the debilitating legacy of colonialism. The Portuguese authorities had been concerned solely with exploiting the country's natural wealth and labor power. Over the decades, tens of thousands of Angolans, particularly in the northern areas, had been driven off their land and conscripted for forced labor on the large coffee plantations, which were run by Portuguese settlers.

Other natural resources had been auctioned off to various imperialist interests. The large oil fields in Cabinda were monopolized by the U.S. Gulf Oil Co. The iron ore mines in Cassinga were controlled by the West German Krupp enterprise, and the diamond fields in the

MPLA supporters in Luanda celebrate independence in November 1975.

northeast by the South African De Beers giant and various Portuguese, Belgian, British, and U.S. interests. The key Benguela railway was owned by a British company. And South African firms were seeking to harness southern Angola's extensive hydroelectric potential to supply power to their mining interests in Namibia.

All this was touted as "progress" by the Portuguese colonialists and their partners. For the Angolan masses, however, it meant widespread misery.

Colonial slavery

The vast bulk of the Angolan people were denied any education whatsoever, or at most received one or two years in village schools. Peasants in some areas were obliged to grow cash crops for sale in Portugal, a practice that often led to local food shortages. While a small class of urban African workers arose, they were generally relegated to the lowest paying and hardest jobs, the more skilled positions being monopolized by Portuguese settlers (of whom there were several hundred thousand).

All African political organizations were prohibited, and attempts to organize were met with imprisonment, torture, and death.

In addition, the colonial authorities sought to foster divisions among Angolans. Artificial social categories were established: *mestiços*, those of mixed ancestry; *assimilados*, those few better-off and educated Blacks whom the authorities deemed "civilized"; and the masses of *indigenas*, the "natives." Mestiços and assimilados were given more rights than the indigenas. Likewise, friction was encouraged among the various peoples of Angola, particularly the three largest, the Mbundu, Bakongo, and Ovimbundu.

These divisions played a role in the civil war, in which the Mbundu, mestiços, and assimilados tended to side with the MPLA, while the Bakongo backed the FNLA and the Ovimbundu supported the UNITA. They have also made more difficult the efforts to build a broader national unity since then.

On top of this colonial legacy, much of Angola's economy had been devastated by the 1975-76 war.

Many bridges, factories, and buildings were destroyed, some in battle, some by retreating South African troops. The sudden departure of 350,000 Portuguese settlers deprived the country of most of its skilled labor. Businesses and plantations were abandoned, while the fleeing settlers took with them many trucks and cars. The Cassinga iron mines were partially destroyed in the fighting. Hundreds of thousands of Angolans had been uprooted by the war. As a result of all this, some 60 percent of Angola's enterprises were no longer functioning by the time the war ended.

Reconstruction and nationalizations

In face of this devastation, the Angolan government launched a major reconstruction drive, to rebuild what had been destroyed and to revive economic life.

Construction teams were sent around the country to rebuild some 200 destroyed bridges, repair damaged factories and equipment, and restore road and rail links. The 3,500 Cuban civilian volunteers in Angola played a major role in this and other efforts. Most of the new construction, in fact, was supervised by Cubans.

The Angolan authorities responded to the flight of the settlers by seizing their assets, along with the property of those who had collaborated with the South Africans and their allies.

About 1,500 Portuguese farms were nationalized, as was much of Angola's industry. This included all of the sugar, timber, textile, plywood, manganese, and steel industries, and most of the coffee, cotton, sisal, and tobacco plantations.

Steps were also taken to bring wholesale trade under state control, with the establishment of state-run trading networks for certain products. Transport is now dominated by state enterprises.

By 1979, some 71 percent of all industrial concerns had been nationalized, and another 7 percent were partially nationalized. Only a handful of large commercial farms remained in private hands.

The next year, the Angolan government increased its shareholding in the diamond mining company Diamang to 77 percent, although the management of the enterprise remained under imperialist control, including that of the South African De Beers interests.

Continued imperialist role

In 1976, after the wave of nationalizations began, an MPLA Political Bureau statement pointed out that while state concerns were projected to play a leading role in the economy, "this does not mean that capitalist private property is finished, nor is an immediate end being put to the development of capitalist production."

The most prominent example of this has been the oil industry — the biggest in the country — which remains largely under imperialist ownership. The exports from Gulf Oil's Cabinda fields account for about 75-80 percent of the value of all Angolan exports, bringing some $500 million into the country each year.

The Angolan government has talked about eventually nationalizing oil as well, but points to its lack of financing and trained personnel as the reasons for not doing so now.

Nevertheless, various state controls have been established. Other foreign companies seeking to prospect for oil or exploit it must set up joint ventures with Angola's state oil concern, Sonangol, which will hold a majority interest. Sonangol is already marketing 51 percent of the oil produced by Gulf. Investors must also provide for the training of Angolan technicians, and all imported equipment becomes state property.

Since the end of the 1975-76 war, a number of U.S. and European oil concerns have accepted these conditions and have begun new operations in Angola, including Texaco, Mobil, Marathon, and Cities Service of the United States; Total and Elf-Aquitaine of France; Agip of Italy; and Petrofina of Belgium.

'Unfavorable conditions'

Angolan leaders have acknowledged that the presence of such imperialist economic interests in Angola threatens the country's national interests. Angola's first president, Agostinho Neto, declared in a speech to a trade union conference in Luanda in October 1977:

> Can we say we are completely independent while

Cabinda Gulf Oil exploits the petroleum of Cabinda? Obviously not. We have achieved genuine political independence, but not yet genuine economic independence: that will be achieved only when from Cabinda to Cunene there is in Angola not a single foreign monopoly exploiting our riches. . . .

These are unfavourable conditions for our people. But we cannot escape from them without creating new difficulties. . . . If we were to stop the production of petroleum we should impose unnecessary hardships on our people. But is Gulf Oil going to exploit our riches for ever? No. We are not going to compromise our future. We are making a temporary short-term agreement. . . . We do not want to deceive foreign capitalist monopolies by concealing the fact that we intend to follow the road of socializing our means of production, of finance, of trade, of services, of everything that can be socialized, and that we intend to do this as rapidly as possible.

In light of the MPLA's socialist terminology and its anti-imperialist stands on numerous foreign policy questions, imperialist economic concerns have remained highly suspicious of the government of Luanda. Except for oil — where the promise of significant short- and medium-term gains outweighed suspicions — few imperialist companies sought to invest in Angola.

In an effort to counter this hesitancy, the government adopted a new foreign investment code in late 1979. It allows investors to repatriate up to 25 percent of their income, have access to local financing, have the right to compensation in case of nationalization, and in some cases gives them exemptions from the usual taxes and duties.

Some companies were sufficiently tempted, among them an Austrian firm that went into partnership with the Angolan government to reopen the Cassinga iron ore mines. But in general, they have continued to stay away.

Among American companies, one important factor in this has been Washington's open hostility toward Angola and its pressures against U.S. firms seeking to operate there. The U.S. stance has also made it more difficult for Angola to secure loans or assistance from international financial institutions that are heavily U.S.-influenced.

Moreover, the fall of the world prices of Angola's main exports — oil, diamonds, coffee — has seriously eroded its income and forced the government to cut back on much-needed imports.

Reviving the economy

Despite these serious obstacles, the authorities have had some success in reactivating the economy.

A major textile manufacturing complex has been built in Benguela, and motorcycle, prefabricated housing, and other plants are opening up around the country.

Diamond exports are expected to rise to 2 million carats by 1983, compared to 2.4 million carats before independence, but significantly higher than immediately after the war.

Road transportation has been greatly improved, and construction of a north-south railway line is also being planned to improve transport between the different regions of the country. (The only lines the Portuguese built ran east and west, between the interior and the main ports, to facilitate their colonial plunder.)

In November 1981, the Angolan government unveiled a five-year plan to boost industrial production. It emphasized the building of new textile plants, but also envisaged stepping up production of wood products, leather goods, tobacco, chemicals, and other manufactures.

Two months later, in January 1982, Angola signed a major economic cooperation agreement with the Soviet Union, which is slated to involve $2 billion in loans, trade, and other assistance by 1990. It was the most important such agreement Angola has signed since independence. It includes long-term Soviet loans at favorable rates, assistance in the construction of a second oil refinery, and help in a number of infrastructural projects. Among these are the building of a dam on the Kwanza River, which will provide irrigation for some 400,000 hectares of land.

Agricultural production

At the MPLA's first congress, held in December 1977, it placed considerable emphasis on reviving farm production. Noting that no country could develop economically with a backward agriculture, it stated that if "industry is the decisive factor in our development, agriculture is its base."

Some 85 percent of all Angolans live in the countryside. The overwhelming majority of them are engaged in individual farming. Many others are employed as wage workers on the large tobacco, coffee, and cotton estates that were abandoned by the Portuguese settlers and are now state-owned.

The Angolan government's policy has been to encourage increased production of food for the domestic market and coffee, sisal, and other commercial crops for export.

Individual peasants have been urged to join together in associations, unions, and cooperatives to help maximize production. While the MPLA has projected collectivization of agriculture as one of its aims, it has stressed that this is a long-range goal and that joining the cooperatives is totally voluntary. To encourage peasants to grow more and to organize, the government is providing the cooperatives and peasants' organizations with state assistance, including loans, machinery, fertilizer, irrigation, and technical advice. The country's grave economic difficulties, however, mean that such resources are very limited.

These same problems have plagued the large state farms. Coffee production, for example, is only a fraction of what it was before independence. A contributing factor has been the sharp drop in the number of farm workers in the coffee-growing areas. Under Portuguese rule, many had worked there under conditions of virtual forced labor. When independence came and the owners fled, many of these workers simply returned to their home villages. In an effort to draw them back, the government has taken numerous measures to improve working conditions on the farms.

Despite some important steps forward since the end of the war, Angola's economy — both in urban and rural areas — is still functioning below its preindependence levels. The world economic crisis, the distortions produced by imperialist domination, and the massive South African devastation of the south have made economic recovery an uphill battle.

Health care for the masses

The overall economic indicators only tell part of the story. Side by side with the country's continued poverty, there have been significant improvements in living conditions for the masses of Angolans, especially in such social services as health care and education. For working people, who were most oppressed and neglected under colonial rule, this has far surpassed anything they had previously known.

Under Portuguese rule, impoverished shantytowns, known as *musseques*, sprang up around Luanda and most other major cities. These areas, where most working people lived, had no sanitation, water, electricity, or other basic services.

The government embarked on a major campaign to transform the musseques. Electricity was provided, water pipes were laid, and sanitation was organized. Day-care centers, health clinics, schools, and other facilities were also built in the shantytowns.

Before independence, the vast majority of the doctors in Angola (almost all of whom were Portuguese) were concentrated in the main cities. Angolans living in the countryside rarely saw a doctor, and many of those in the cities could not afford doctors' fees and medicines.

After the Portuguese settlers fled, only 30 doctors were left in the entire country, and many pharmacies and clinics had shut down. The authorities estimated at the time that there were 200,000 cases of tuberculosis, 600,000 cases of malaria, and 20,000 cases of leprosy in the country, not to mention polio, venereal disease, and parasitic infections.

Cuban volunteers quickly filled the gap left by the fleeing Portuguese. More than 400 Cuban doctors, nurses, and medical technicians went to Angola, and the Cuban government pledged to set up medical clinics in all 17 of Angola's provinces. By 1980, the Cubans had treated more than 1 million patients, conducted 16,000 operations, and delivered 6,000 babies.

Medical care was declared free of charge. New clinics were built, and medical personnel visited some of the remotest towns and villages. In 1977, the government launched a series of mass vaccinations for polio, tuberculosis, typhus, and tetanus. More than 1 million children were vaccinated for polio alone.

By the end of that same year, 17 schools for training health-care workers had been established, compared to 4 under Portuguese rule.

The advances in education have been just as dramatic.

Since the vast majority of Angolans were denied education under colonial rule, Angola's illiteracy rate at the time of independence was a staggering 85 percent. In rural areas it was almost universal.

On Nov. 11, 1976, the first anniversary of Angola's independence, President Neto declared a National Literacy Campaign. It was launched under the slogan, "Teaching is a revolutionary duty."

Cuban educators helped organize the campaign and also trained thousands of Angolan volunteer teachers. The volunteers were mostly young men and women, many of them high-school students or members of the MPLA or the country's various mass organizations. Organized into hundreds of literacy brigades, they went out to factories, villages, and farms around the country.

Within four years, some 339,000 adult Angolans had been taught how to read and write, bringing the total illiteracy rate down to about 70 percent.

According to a 1981 report by the National Literacy Center, out of the 1,687,000 Angolans who still could not read and write, 759,000 were attending classes.

Nearly 2,000 special centers were also set up in factories, farms, and army barracks to continue the education of those who had completed the literacy courses. As of 1981, some 276,000 Angolans were attending these post-literacy courses.

Expansion of school system

The regular school system was vastly expanded as well. Education was made compulsory and free for all children. Hundreds of schools were built. By 1980, some 2.4 million Angolans were enrolled in elementary school, virtually the entire school-age population.

This rapid expansion of the educational system has highlighted one key problem: the lack of enough trained teachers. Here, too, the Cubans are helping out. By 1979 there were some 700 Cuban teachers in Angola, teaching mainly at the secondary level or above. In addition, hundreds of Cuban high-school students went to Angola to teach at the primary levels (out of some 6,000 in Cuba who had volunteered to go). At the same time, the Angolan authorities have launched a crash program to train Angolan teachers.

One of the more significant features of the Angolan educational system is the use of six of Angola's national languages, in addition to Portuguese. This has been especially important in the literacy campaign, since many rural Angolans only had a rudimentary knowledge — if any — of spoken Portuguese.

The National Language Institute was established in 1978 to conduct research on and to help promote use of the country's various languages. So far, it has completed pilot projects on Kikongo, Kimbundu, Chokwe, Umbundu, Mbunda, and Kwanyama.

The attention given to these languages is a reflection of the government's campaign to draw *everyone* into the educational system,

AGOSTINHO NETO

and will also help preserve and develop the country's rich cultural and linguistic life. At the same time, Portuguese will continue to be used as the main language on the national level, to facilitate communications between Angolans of different backgrounds.

This approach is quite different from that followed in most African states, where teaching is conducted only in the language of the former colonial power, and the languages spoken by the majority of their populations are ignored. In practice, that has made schooling much more difficult for children from rural areas or working-class families, who have had little contact with the colonial language before entering the classroom.

The Angolan government's measures to improve health care, education, and other social services — despite the limitations imposed by the country's material situation — has won it considerable popular support, including in areas where the MPLA's rivals, the FNLA and UNITA, had been strongly entrenched during the war.

These modest material gains have also strengthened the population's self-confidence. They have encouraged working people to organize and mobilize to try to advance their interests. And they place Angola in a stronger position to fight off the continued imperialist attacks.

[Next: *Masses mobilize to defend gains.*]

South African freedom fighters sentenced to death for 'treason'

By Ernest Harsch

Three members of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa face imminent execution by the apartheid regime, following the Supreme Court's April 7 rejection of an appeal against their death sentences.

In response, an emergency international campaign has been launched to save the lives of these three young freedom fighters.

They are Johnson Lubisi, Petrus Mashigo, and Naphtali Manana.

As part of this international campaign, the United Nations Security Council on April 9 unanimously adopted a resolution demanding that the South African regime commute the death sentences, and calling on all governments and organizations to act "to save the lives of these three men."

Within South Africa, a campaign has also been launched to save the three from hanging, as well as three other ANC members who are likewise on death row: Anthony Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabangu, and David Moise.

Lubisi, Mashigo, and Manana were sentenced to death on Nov. 26, 1980, by the Transvaal Division of the Supreme Court in Pretoria, following their conviction on charges of "high treason." They were accused of attacking the Soekmerkaar police station in Soweto, a large Black township just outside Johannesburg. No one was killed during the attack.

During their trial, evidence surfaced that the defendants in the trial had been tortured while in detention.

A statement by the ANC pointed out that the three had been sentenced to death for their active opposition to the racist system of apartheid.

"In South Africa," it said, "it is treason to fight for basic democratic rights which most of the rest of mankind take for granted. These three young South Africans are patriots who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to achieve freedom for their people. . . .

"It is vital that no effort is spared, even at this late stage, to stop the execution of these three young freedom fighters."

The apartheid regime is brutal, but it is also vulnerable to international pressures. Condemned political prisoners have been saved in the past by the launching of concerted campaigns in their defense.

The same must be done now. □

'The consumer comes first'

How revolutionary government controls prices

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada — Prices are on everybody's mind, especially working people's. Spiralling inflation and the resultant decline in buying power is a prime misery affecting workers all over the world. But the revolutionary government here, by enforcing a price-control system and by asserting its control over areas of marketing and importing, has helped remove much of the sting Grenadians face.

"This government is consumer-oriented," says Algernon Antoine, who is controller of supplies in the Ministry of Trade. "The consumer comes first."

Evidence of this can be seen by anyone walking into one of the supermarkets around the island. On the wall is a large poster, a government price schedule.

This schedule lists prices for certain foodstuffs, dry goods, garments, drugs, hardware, and other merchandise. Merchants are not allowed to charge more than the price listed. Violators face a fine and/or imprisonment.

New government gets results

Price controls existed here prior to the March 13, 1979, revolution that ousted U.S.-backed despot Eric Gairy. "But the government was very lax then," said Antoine, who has worked in the ministry since Gairy days.

"Now, the government is very serious," he told *Intercontinental Press*.

The New Jewel government has trebled the fines violators pay, and doubled the length of jail terms they face. As a result, according to Antoine, "there have not been too many violators."

Government price-control inspectors monitor businesses to ensure they comply with the regulations. These inspectors are assigned to 10 districts around the island. They are rotated systematically to nip any cozy relations businessmen may try to develop with them.

Antoine explained that there is also a "direct relationship between the people and the price-control system." Consumers sometimes blow the whistle on profiteers.

On the sister island of Carriacou there is also a resident price-control inspector. Prior to March 13, 1979, there was none.

The printed price schedule generally comes out monthly and there are periodic radio releases alerting the public to a schedule change.

Merchants who cry that their import costs require a price increase must prove this to ministry officials, who check this thoroughly — including with sources in the exporting country — before any change is made.

Some merchants here have been grumbling that the government is exerting too much control over importing and the marketing process.

The Ministry of Trade recently issued a directive requiring licenses for imported items. This will increase the government's knowledge of what items are brought in, at what price, and so forth. Previously, merchants could import almost anything they wanted, and put virtually any price tag on it without being accountable to the government.

Cuthbert Nixon is the imports manager in the Marketing and National Importing Board (MNIB), a state enterprise. He explained in an interview how the government has been able to keep prices low on certain import items by purchasing on yearly contracts and by eliminating the take of middlemen.

All cement, rice, and raw sugar on the island is imported by the government through the MNIB. The board also imports some fertilizer and plans to expand its operations to include pickled meat, milk, and agricultural implements, among other things.

Cement, rice, and sugar are presently imported from Cuba, Surinam, and Guyana.

Nixon explained that after the government stepped into the importing field and eliminated fictitious invoicing, contrived shortages, and other tricks of the trade merchants employ, "the cost of living on this island dropped a hell of a lot."

December 1981 figures show that a 94-pound bag of cement sold in St. Lucia for $14.30; in St. Kitts for $18.97; in Dominica for $22.50; and in Montserrat for $19.50. In Grenada, a 110-pound bag sold for $14.30. (All prices are in Eastern Caribbean currency. One EC dollar equals US$0.38.)

Figures for rice and sugar show equally that, as Nixon described it, Grenada is "way down on the list."

Shortages eliminated

Nixon explained how the government's role in importing has now eliminated shortages through planning. "One or two persons can no longer mess up the whole market," he said, as was possible when the importation of cement, rice, and sugar was in private hands.

The MNIB also has a produce division that buys fruits and vegetables from farmers. This produce is exported or sold in St. George's at prices sometimes one-half or one-third of those found in the privately operated outdoor vegetable stalls and food stores.

Plans are in the works to set up MNIB retail outlets in other parts of the island to sell produce.

The MNIB obtains produce from state and private farms, and cooperatives. Its largest overseas market is Britain.

Although it would be desirable, the MNIB cannot presently handle all the produce farmers grow. But in the meantime it has been advising them about what crops to plant and how much the board can take from them. □