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Reagan Provides Arms and Diplomatic Cover Israel's Murderous War Against Palestinian People



West Beirut. Israeli invasion has destroyed whole cities and created hundreds of thousands of new refugees.

U.S.-Backed Forces Poised for Invasion of Nicaragua

Imperialists Fear Spread of Revolution
Washington's New Hate-Iran Campaign

Washington's new escalation of the war in Central America

By Fred Murphy

A further escalation in the U.S. rulers' undeclared war against the peoples of Central America is under way.

- Nicaraguan defense officials have reported that large units of the CIA-backed counter-revolutionary exile army that operates from southern Honduras have crossed the border between the two countries (see box).

- The big-business press in the United States is building up the counterrevolutionary Nicaraguan traitor Edén Pastora, who is preparing to open a second front against the revolution from Costa Rica.

- In El Salvador, U.S. officials have floated trial balloons about the need to bring in more military advisers.

- The Honduran army has intervened directly in El Salvador's civil war, and a major boost in U.S. military aid to Honduras is being readied.

- The new president of Costa Rica has joined in the chorus of U.S. attacks on the Nicaraguan revolution, as Washington is prepar-

ing to provide "security assistance" to his regime.

According to the July 4 *Washington Post*, members of the U.S. military mission in El Salvador "now advocate increasing the number of U.S. military advisers" in that country. "The increase in the number of advisers is being sought to allow teams of advisers to be based at headquarters of Salvadoran Army brigades around the country."

This report came after major offensives by the Salvadoran army in Chalatenango and Morazán provinces failed to achieve their objectives. A "Western military source" in San Salvador quoted by the *Post* complained that the army's "coordination was abysmal" in the Morazán fighting and said the regional brigade headquarters were the "weakest link" in U.S. influence over the Salvadoran armed forces' performance.

Partly as a result of setbacks suffered by the Salvadoran government in recent fighting, troops from neighboring Honduras have openly entered the conflict for the first time. Ac-

ording to a report in the July 4 *New York Times*, Honduran units "have begun a joint military campaign with the Salvadoran Army, with a primary objective of crushing Salvadoran rebels in their mountainous strongholds in the eastern Salvadoran province of Morazán."

Citing a senior military officer in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, the *Times* said "some 3,000 Honduran soldiers have occupied a large area of territory" in northern Morazán since July 2.

Salvador Cayetano Carpio, a central leader of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), has pointed out what this intervention reveals about the weakness of the Salvadoran government's forces. "In spite of the training, the helicopters, the jets and everything else from the United States, they have to bring in large numbers of Honduran soldiers," Carpio was quoted as saying in the July 7 *New York Times*. "Soon they will have to bring in American soldiers."

Another FMLN commander, Eduardo Solórzano, warned in Mexico City July 3 that the Honduran intervention could oblige the FMLN "to act militarily in Honduran territory."

The Honduran officer who spoke to the *Times* asserted that no foreign advisers were participating in the operations inside El Salvador. *Times* correspondent Raymond Bonner noted, however, that "one of the primary missions of the between 50 and 60 American mil-

'The war has already begun'

MANAGUA — "The war has already begun," Nicaragua's Vice-minister of the Interior Luis Carrión announced here July 14.

"We cannot continue to speak about preparing ourselves for war, because the war has already started. The task before us is to defeat an invasion."

Carrión's statement, printed on the front page of the Sandinista daily *Barricada* July 15 under the banner headline "The war has already begun," was an alert that Washington has escalated its undeclared war against the country.

A new stage, Carrión said, has begun "with the invasion of our territory" by "large units organized in an almost regular military fashion, possessing the weapons of a full-scale army."

Minister of Defense Humberto Ortega announced later in the day that since July 4, 200 counterrevolutionaries were known to have crossed over the border into the northern part of Nicaragua's Zelaya Province.

"Sixty have already been killed," he said, "and the rest will be wiped out in a few days."

Ortega reported that a total of 40 Sandinista soldiers had been killed in action since the incursion started. This represents

the largest losses the Sandinistas have suffered since the escalation of Reagan's secret war earlier this year.

Soldiers of the Honduran army were openly involved in support actions for the invasion, Ortega said. He pointed to this as a clear attempt to provoke an armed conflict between the two governments.

Some 5,000 counterrevolutionaries have been based in camps just across the border with Honduras. Armed, trained, and paid by the U.S. government, they have sought to spread terror and destruction throughout northern Nicaragua. Now their tactics have changed dramatically.

Over the last 10 days, Carrión said, there have been a series of attacks on border posts along the northern frontier with Honduras, in one case as many as five attacks on the same post.

Unlike the scattered attacks of the past, these systematic raids have had the clear aim of serving as cover for the infiltration of large armed units.

"They are no longer just attacking from bases across the border," Carrión said, "but have begun a clandestine invasion."

In addition, he pointed out, a number of helicopter landing strips have recently been cleared on the Honduran side of the border.

"The plan," he said, "is to introduce large units with heavy artillery so as to create the impression of a civil war, when in reality it is a case of an invasion."

Other facts pointing to the new stage in the war are that the number of U.S. spy flights from Honduran bases has greatly increased, and that ships carrying large cargoes of arms from the United States have recently docked at the southern Honduran port of Lempira, less than 30 miles from Nicaragua. In addition, the U.S. spy ship *Trippe*, permanently stationed just off Nicaragua's Pacific Coast, has just been joined by another destroyer.

Summing up the new stage of Reagan's undeclared war, Commander Carrión concluded:

"This aggression is not just any counter-revolutionary aggression. It is the aggression of U.S. imperialism against Nicaragua. That is the only way we can explain the enormous supply of arms the invading units have, their tremendous facility of movement, the protection they are receiving from Honduras, and the full military character of the operation.

— Michael Baumann

itary advisers in Honduras is to assist the Hondurans in patrolling the borders."

A big boost in U.S. military aid to Honduras has been announced. On June 30, the U.S. Senate voted 93 to 1 to appropriate \$21 million for the upgrading of two airfields in Honduras for use by U.S. military planes. On July 14, Honduran President Roberto Suazo Córdova met with Reagan in Washington and was promised a total of more than \$60 million in military aid over the next two years. This is more than seven times the \$8.3 million provided over the last two years.

Honduran military commanders openly acknowledge their intent to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution. "We can't have a socialist government there," one senior officer told the *New York Times*. "It's them or us." The *Times* reported July 7 that Honduran officers who had advocated a less aggressive stance toward Nicaragua "have recently been exiled to diplomatic posts, thus increasing the power of the hard-liners."

The bulk of the counterrevolutionary Nicaraguans acting from southern Honduras are ex-National Guardsmen and other supporters of the late dictator Anastasio Somoza. But recently Washington's efforts to improve the image of its anti-Sandinista allies have received a boost from a traitor, ex-Sandinista Edén Pastora.

Pastora, who gained fame as "Commander Zero" during the war against the Somoza regime, broke publicly with the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the revolution in April, echoing all the slanders heaped on the Sandinistas by the Reagan administration.

After many weeks with barely a word on Nicaragua, the *New York Times* carried a front-page feature on Pastora July 2. Pointing to him as "the clear leader of an exile movement to topple the three-year-old Sandinist regime," correspondent Alan Riding claimed Pastora's defection had "dramatically changed the panorama of exiled opposition."

The *Times* followed up with another front-page blast at the revolution on July 7, in which Riding blamed the FSLN for Nicaragua's economic crisis and repeated charges by the country's big capitalists that "the Sandinists went back on their promise to expropriate only properties belonging to key members of the dictatorship."

On July 14, the *Times* continued its buildup of Pastora, publishing an article by the traitor in which he charged that "the Sandinist directorate has replaced the Somozas with a totalitarian tyranny." Nicaragua today, Pastora asserted, is dominated by "a subservient, state-controlled labor bureaucracy" and "a powerful secret-police apparatus."

Pastora said his goals included rebuilding Nicaragua "along genuinely democratic lines, with early elections"; restoring "confidence among our entrepreneurs"; and respecting "the legitimate security interests of the United States."

At the same time, the ex-Sandinista tried to

portray himself as a leftist. He asserted opposition to Somozaist terror and U.S. intervention in El Salvador, while accusing the FSLN of apologizing "for the suppression of the Afghan people and of the Polish workers and peasants."

Pastora's attacks are especially useful to Washington in that they help to erode support for the Nicaraguan revolution among liberals, social democrats, and petty-bourgeois radicals. He has recently toured West European capitals to urge governments there to cut off aid to Nicaragua, and, according to the July 2 *Times*, plans "to visit Washington for talks with liberal Congressmen later this year."

Despite Pastora's claims that he wants nothing to do with the openly right-wing enemies of the revolution, at least some of the latter take a different view of him. "Anti-Sandinistas in Managua believe Pastora is a sincere, if confused, patriot whose popularity must be utilized," right-wing U.S. columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak wrote May 31.

"These clandestine opposition leaders see formerly anti-Somoza and pro-Somoza forces coalescing into armed opposition that could generate a Central American war with immense consequences for the hemisphere." Evans and Novak cautioned that "a robust U.S.

role" is essential; otherwise, "the first communist foothold on the Latin American mainland could become welded in iron."

Pastora is reported to be preparing his own armed force. According to the June 3 *Christian Science Monitor*, he has established a number of small military camps in northern Costa Rica.

Citing Pastora aide Plutarco Hernández, the *Monitor* said the camps "usually house about 125 persons. They receive four to 10 weeks of training, depending on their previous military experience."

Newly elected Costa Rican President Luis Alberto Monge visited the White House on June 22. He received a pledge of stepped-up economic aid from Reagan, who termed Costa Rica "a natural partner of the United States." Monge chimed in with the U.S. administration's line, denouncing "a massive offensive on the part of totalitarian Marxism-Leninism in the area of Central America and the Caribbean."

The next day, Monge told the editors of the *Washington Post* that he had — according to the *Post's* summary — "asked for security-related assistance from the United States and other countries in the face of growing terrorism and military incursions along the border with Nicaragua." □

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Revolution faces hate campaign

New U.S. propaganda drive follows gains in war with Iraq

[The following front-page editorial appeared in the July 23 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

The U.S. government and mass media have opened up a new hate campaign against the Iranian revolution. The problem, they assert, is "Islamic fundamentalism" — which has become their code word for the growing nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment in Iran and throughout the Middle East.

The occasion for the outpouring of racist propaganda is the latest stage of the Iran-Iraq war. After fighting Iraq's invasion of their country for two years, the Iranians have finally turned the tables. Iranian troops have now moved into Iraq, where they are encircling Iraqi divisions near the border and aiming to put an end to the war for good.

Iraqi bombers have continued their attacks on Iran, hitting the cities of Khorramabad, Ilam, and Bakhtaran on July 14.

Washington had hoped the Iraqi invasion of Iran would bring down the government of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and roll back the Iranian revolution. With this prospect shattered, the new wave of anti-Iranian propaganda has begun.

Setting the tone was a feature article by Henry Tanner in the July 13 *New York Times*. Headlined "Shouting Is Never Over for Revolutionary Iran," Tanner's broadside against the revolution drips hatred for the Iranian workers and peasants.

Talking of a country whose wealth was looted for decades by U.S. business and by the U.S.-backed shah, Tanner complains about "the dreary, rundown aspects of the stores where the shelves are either empty or are filled with rows of identical cheap goods."

But what really repels Tanner is the Iranian people — "the shapeless nun-like appearance of the women and the seediness of most of the men."

Tanner can barely contain his racist hatred when he talks about the slogans that are chanted whenever a group of these "nun-like" women and "seedy" men gather.

"The chants always have the same beginning: 'Praise the Lord! God Is Great! Khomeini Is Great! Death to America!'"

Of his trip to the war front, Tanner wrote:

Our summer schedule

This is the last issue of *Intercontinental Press* before our summer break. The next issue of *IP* will be dated August 23.

"There was something eerie and awesome about the severely wounded soldiers, some with plasma being dripped into their veins from suspended plastic bottles, who raised heavily bandaged arms and shouted the slogans with all the power of their lungs, 'Allah Is Great! Death to America!'"

It is not surprising that the U.S. rulers hate and fear these hundreds of thousands of young soldiers, who have been inspired with the idea of getting rid of the system of imperialist oppression that has been imposed on the Middle East.

What the imperialist rulers hate so much is the mass movement of the Iranian workers and peasants. This is an *anti-imperialist movement* which has led to the Iranian government cutting off oil exports to Israel and South Africa. Today, the Iranian government calls on the Arab regimes to aid the Palestinian fighters in Lebanon. It is the only government in the Middle East that has responded to the Israeli invasion by sending volunteers to fight alongside the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The imperialists also hate the *internationalism* of the Iranian workers and peasants — their identification with the struggles of the oppressed around the world, from the Palestinians, to the rebel fighters in El Salvador, to U.S. Blacks.

Finally, the imperialists hate *Iranian nationalism*. This progressive nationalism, born out of the rejection of the U.S. domination of their country, has led the Iranian people to kick out the CIA torturers, the CIA's shah, and the U.S. bases and businesses that had previously littered their country. It is a nationalist movement that will have to be smashed before Washington can regain its control over Iran.

On July 12, White House, Pentagon, and State Department officials held a special briefing on the Iran-Iraq war for reporters from the big-business press.

According to the July 13 *New York Times*, the administration officials indicated that the fear in Washington "now is that the Iranians might try not only to overthrow the Iraqi Government, but to stir up trouble in the Persian Gulf as a whole."

During the next two days, major articles in the *Times* and *Washington Post* warned of the "threat" to "the stability of the Persian Gulf region" — meaning to the reactionary, pro-imperialist monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.

Ayatollah Khomeini has repeatedly urged the masses in these kingdoms to rise up and overthrow their rulers. Khomeini warned these regimes in May, "Do not do anything which will oblige us, under the tenets of the Koran, to treat you according to divine law."

In a radio broadcast to Iraqi citizens on July 14, Khomeini said, "Rise up and install the Islamic government that you want. Do not let the United States decide the destiny of your country."

The *Times* reported that U.S. officials are

Iranian masses take to streets

TEHRAN — Hundreds of thousands of Iranians demonstrated in the streets here on July 16 to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for Iran's war against counterrevolutionary attacks by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.

Similar demonstrations were held in cities across Iran. The occasion was "Jerusalem Day" — an event that has been observed in Iran each year since the revolution, on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

In addition to the massive numbers of Iranians who marched, there was a contingent of Iraqi prisoners of war who chanted slogans calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Hundreds of Iranian Jews also marched, and at an earlier rally at Tehran University a representative of the Iranian Jewish community read a statement denouncing the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Ayatollah Khomeini sent a message, read by his son, in which he also denounced the Israeli attacks, urged the Palestinian fighters in Beirut to continue their heroic resistance, and assured them that Iran would continue to give them support. Several thousand Iranian volunteers have been sent to Lebanon and Syria, but no more have been able to go in recent weeks owing to a prohibition on troop flights across Turkey by the military dictatorship in Ankara.

Iranian television broadcast coverage of a demonstration by Iranian volunteers in the Syrian capital of Damascus, expressing support for Iran's efforts in the war against Iraq.

On July 15 and 16 Iraqi jets launched bombing raids on residential areas in a number of western Iranian cities and towns. Seventy persons were reported killed in Hamedan when the Iraqi bombers struck the center of the city while the Jerusalem Day demonstration was taking place.

Workers in Tehran factories have welcomed the most recent operations by Iranian forces inside Iraq. These are seen as necessary due to the continued bombardment of Iranian cities from positions inside Iraq. A recent call by the Mobilization Corps of the Oppressed (Baseej) for additional volunteers to fight at the front has received a massive response.

"concerned about an increased threat to Israel if Iran were able to impose its will on Iraq."

"In such an event, they said, Israel might be confronted by an alliance of Iran, Iraq and Syria, which has also been aiding the Iranians out of opposition to [Iraq's] President Hussein."

On July 14, the *Washington Post* chimed in with an editorial admonishing that "the United States should not be practicing a discreet neutrality between aggressors and victims in a situation as clearcut and urgent as the one on the Gulf."

The daily papers and TV are portraying Iran as threatening its peaceful neighbors with "aggression."

But where was all the dismay two years ago when Iraqi troops began the war by marching into Iran? Where was the outrage six weeks ago when Israel launched its massive invasion of Lebanon?

The fact is that the Iranians are trying to end a war that has devastated their country for two years, leaving whole cities in ruins, creating some 1.5 million refugees, and causing tens of

thousands of casualties.

If the Iranians succeed in defeating the Iraqi regime and ending the war, it will be a blow to the entire imperialist system in the Middle East. It will inspire the Iranian masses to push forward with their revolution at home. It will encourage new struggles among the peoples of the Persian Gulf. And it will strengthen the cause of the Palestinian people, who are now standing almost alone in Lebanon.

For all these reasons, it is essential to repudiate Washington's hate-Iran campaign, and to defend Iran in the war with Iraq. □

Lebanon

Begin drives ahead with murderous war

Washington provides diplomatic cover for attack on Palestinians

By David Frankel

With the exception of the 1948 war that established the Israeli state, the fifth Arab-Israeli war now taking place in Lebanon has been the bloodiest so far. There are already more than 14,000 dead, compared to about 11,400 in 1973.

Some 120,000 Israeli troops are now in Lebanon, with some 30,000 surrounding West Beirut. At least 300 Israeli tanks and 500 to 600 armored personnel carriers are facing 5,000 to 6,000 Palestinian fighters in the Lebanese capital.

Against these overwhelming odds, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has put up a truly heroic fight. Israeli leaflets dropped on Beirut June 10 boasted that "in a short time we will capture the city." But five weeks later, that arrogant promise has yet to be fulfilled.

On July 11, Israeli forces launched their fiercest artillery attack of the war against West Beirut. "At times," Thomas Friedman reported in the July 12 *New York Times*, "Israeli rockets were landing at a rate of 30 a minute, setting off huge fires and sending clouds of smoke billowing out of buildings hit by incendiary devices."

Despite this intense shelling, *Washington Post* correspondent William Branigin reported in a July 14 article, "the guerrillas knocked out several Israeli tanks near the airport and destroyed six trucks in a rocket attack on an Israeli logistics base."

Israelis bomb hospitals

Meanwhile, however, hundreds of thousands of civilians are trapped in West Beirut. Casualties among them have been heavy. As Friedman reported, "Many Israeli shells landed outside Palestinian neighborhoods, including one that hit the Barbir Hospital, killing 5 patients and wounding 11 others, a hospital spokesman said."

In another dispatch, *Times* reporter William Farrell pointed out July 13 that "Most buildings in [the Palestinian area of] Burj al Brajneh have no shelters or even basements. During raids, people crouch in doorways."

While Farrell was there, "A young girl, her foot bandaged, limped by on crutches. 'A gift from America,' her escort said bitterly."

Testifying before a congressional subcommittee on July 13, Dr. Christopher Giannou, a Canadian surgeon who had been working in Lebanon, described how he saw two Palestinian prisoners beaten to death by Israeli soldiers in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon.

Giannou charged that the Zionist forces had dropped cluster bombs near the hospital where he had been working, and that he saw the "calcinated, carbonized bodies of the victims of phosphorus bombs, frozen in their position at the time of death."

Despite the fact that just two days earlier the *Times* had reported the use of "incendiary devices" by the Zionist forces besieging West Beirut, Israeli spokesperson Nachman Shai insisted, "We have not used phosphorus bombs at any time in this conflict."

With equal candor, Shai claimed that cluster bombs had only been used in unpopulated areas.

Deliberate attacks on civilians

Zionist propagandists pretend that the massive toll in civilian casualties is an unwanted side effect of the Israeli attack on Lebanon. But the truth is that just as in the case of Washington's use of napalm and cluster bombs in Vietnam, the blasting of civilian areas is a deliberate policy.

This savagery flows from the basic aim of the Israeli regime in this war, which is to destroy the PLO.

From the point of view of the Zionist rulers, the main threat posed by the PLO has always been *political*. By exposing the injustice that

the Israeli state is founded upon, by continually explaining that the Palestinian people were forcibly expelled from their homeland, and by refusing to give up the struggle for Palestinian rights, the PLO prevented Israel from getting the international legitimacy that it needs.

Israel remains politically isolated in most of the world. It cannot exploit the markets and raw materials of its Arab neighbors, which, with the exception of Egypt, still refuse to recognize it or trade with it. And the Zionist state also confronts an ongoing Palestinian national liberation struggle by 40 percent of the people under its sway.

It is this liberation struggle, both within Is-



Israeli artillery firing on West Beirut.

rael and in the surrounding countries, that the Israeli rulers must crush if they are to obtain their objectives. The PLO, which expresses the aspirations of the Palestinian people and the leadership of their struggle, is the most prominent target. But this is also a war against the Palestinian people as a whole.

'They must be kicked out'

The drive to scatter the Palestinians in Lebanon, to destroy them as a cohesive national body and to silence their political voice, is not just taking place in Beirut. At least six Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon, with a population of 150,000, were indiscriminately bombed by Israeli forces in the early days of the war, and then systematically destroyed by bulldozers.

"We don't want Palestinian camps within the 45 kilometers range of our border," a high Israeli official named Yisrael Gravinsky told *Washington Post* correspondent David Ottaway.

"In an interview at Army headquarters here," Ottaway reported in a July 15 article from Tel Aviv, "Gravinsky said the Israeli government is vehemently opposed not only to the continued existence of refugee camps in Lebanon but even to setting up tents on a temporary basis to house the Palestinians who have lost their homes in the fighting."

Gravinsky is from the ministry of the economy, which is supposed to be handling Israeli "relief" efforts in southern Lebanon.

But as Ottaway reported, there are "mounting pressures, not only from the Israelis but from numerous local and national Lebanese political leaders, to oust all of the more than 200,000 United Nations-registered refugees from Lebanon.

"The feeling from all the meetings we had with the Lebanese is that they must be kicked out," Gravinsky said.

When Gravinsky and other Israeli officials talk about "the Lebanese," the ones they mean are the rightist forces they are trying to install in power. The ultrarightist Phalangist Party, which has wiped out most of the opposition to it in Lebanon's Christian areas, has a grim record of massacres against Palestinians in Lebanon. It has frequently called for expulsion of the Palestinian population from the country.

The Israelis are pushing Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel's candidacy for president of Lebanon — a post reserved for Maronite Christians under the discriminatory system established by the French colonialists and backed by Israel.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army is paving roads, installing water pipes, putting up signs in Hebrew, and setting up bases throughout southern Lebanon in preparation for an extended stay.

Palestinian mayors ousted

In keeping with the perspective of silencing any independent Palestinian voice, Israeli occupation authorities ousted two more Palestinian mayors from office in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on July 6 and 9 and closed down the

Palestinian university at Bir Zeit.

"We're conducting a political war against the PLO," one Israeli official explained. "The army is conducting a military war. We're conducting a political war."

One thing that is understood throughout the Middle East is that Washington is working hand-in-glove with Israel in this war. Thus, on July 13, demonstrators in Damascus submitted a petition to the U.S. embassy there calling on the American people who "rejected the Vietnam massacre" to take a similar stand against Washington's policy in Lebanon.

A leader of the ruling Syrian Baath Party pointed to the "unlimited political support and huge quantities of sophisticated weaponry" being provided to Israel by the U.S. government.

While pressuring the PLO to surrender to Israeli demands, and even proposing the use of U.S. Marines to supervise this process, Washington is trying to avoid paying the full political price for its support to the Zionist regime. Thus, U.S. Secretary of State-designate George Shultz declared July 13 that "the legitimate needs and problems of the Palestinian people must be addressed and resolved."

But there is only one way to "resolve" this question, and that is through the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland. The struggle for this right led to the formation of the PLO in the first place. The Israeli regime is trying to smash the Palestinian struggle precisely because it is unwilling and unable to concede the rights of the Palestinians.

The idea that the imperialists in Tel Aviv or Washington will make concessions to the Palestinians if they are successful in breaking the PLO is akin to the idea that the bosses

smash unions in order to make concessions to the workers.

Imperialists pay a price

However, the imperialists have already paid a high political price for their attack on the PLO. Israel has never been so isolated internationally nor its society so divided at home.

In the United States itself, more and more people are beginning to realize that Israel is the aggressor in the Middle East. Finally, the Arab regimes that have stood by in silence during this war have paid a heavy price in political credibility among their own people.

All these factors have led U.S. policy makers to push hard for a negotiated withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut. Furthermore, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin knows that a frontal assault on West Beirut could cost his forces hundreds of casualties.

But as *New York Times* reporter David Shipper noted July 12, "The Begin Government cannot back down from its demand that the P.L.O. leave Beirut, for to do so would be to give the Palestinians an incalculable victory.

"The guerrilla organization would then be known as having held off mighty Israel. . . . It would be seen as a force to be reckoned with, to be negotiated with, to be recognized. Israel would have lost the war."

Clearly, the stakes in the fight that is now unfolding are very high. Whatever the outcome, the Palestinian fighters who have stood their ground against such ferocious odds deserve the respect and admiration of the oppressed of the world. Their struggle has exposed the real face of Zionism and its backers in Washington. □

Nicaraguan leaders go to Beirut

MANAGUA — To make clear before the world Nicaragua's solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, the Sandinista government has sent two of its most prominent members to besieged West Beirut.

Father Miguel D'Escoto, minister of foreign affairs, and Father Ernesto Cardenal, minister of culture, told reporters as they left Sandino Airport July 5, "We are going to demonstrate our clear, categorical, and total solidarity with our brothers, the Palestinian people, and their leadership, the PLO."

Blasting U.S. support for the Israeli invasion, D'Escoto said, "It's impossible to separate the United States, its policy, its government, and its president from what is being done to the people of Palestine."

Nicaragua itself "experienced the genocidal violence of Somoza, aided by Israeli arms and military assistance, only three years ago," D'Escoto added. "It is for this reason that our people particularly feel and understand what the Palestinian people are suffering."

Sergio Ramirez, another top figure in Nicaragua's government, also spoke.

"The world is living through some of the tensest moments of the century," Ramirez said.

"To the south, the Reagan administration has fanned the flames of war in the Malvinas against the will of the Latin American people. In the Middle East, it is carrying out one of the worst massacres of the 20th century through the Israeli Zionist army, which has murdered thousands of Palestinians and leveled entire cities. In Africa, from its base in South Africa, it is attacking the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola.

"Here in Central America," he continued, "Reagan's war policy has been escalated by the intervention of Honduran troops into El Salvador." Meanwhile, "increasingly better-armed and -equipped counterrevolutionaries continue to attack our people."

— Michael Baumann

Revolution enters its fourth year

Big gains have been made in economy, but bigger tasks remain

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — Three years ago the workers and farmers of Nicaragua rose up in an insurrection that culminated in victory on July 19, 1979. Under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) they completely smashed the armed forces of dictator Anastasio Somoza and established their own government — a workers and farmers government.

They began rebuilding their country on the basis of more rational economic principles.

Instead of allowing the rich to grow richer at the expense of the vast majority, Nicaragua's new government began to take economic and social measures to meet the needs of the exploited. Farms and factories of the ex-dictator and his supporters were confiscated. Schools and hospitals were built. Taxes from the rich were used to subsidize the price of food and to give working farmers the loans they needed. A massive literacy campaign was carried out.

These measures filled pressing needs. But immediate improvements in the lives of more than 2.5 million people were not the only things at stake. American imperialism was and is determined that there be no such successful examples to inspire workers and peasants elsewhere.

Surrounded by armed counterrevolutionary bands in Honduras to the north, an increasingly hostile government in Costa Rica to the south, and heavily armed U.S. warships off its Atlantic and Pacific coasts, Nicaragua must simultaneously defend itself and rebuild its economy — in the midst of the world's worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Furthermore, the country was hit at the end of May with the worst floods in its history. Damage is now estimated to total \$250 million, exactly half the country's annual earnings from exports.

Yet even in face of these obstacles, the people of Nicaragua have been able to make significant progress.

To grasp the scope of the challenge Nicaragua faces and the importance of what it has already achieved, it is worthwhile to take a look at the economic facts of life this three-year-old revolution confronts. A good place to start is what Nicaraguans were left to work with.

Somoza's legacy

At an international solidarity meeting here in January 1981, Commander Jaime Wheelock, minister of agricultural development and agrarian reform, sketched the main features of post-Somoza Nicaragua:

We must first take up the objective situation we found ourselves in when the revolution triumphed. First, a sparsely populated country with a little more than 2 million inhabitants concentrated in the area along the Pacific Coast. Fifty percent of the population lives in the countryside, and 50 percent in urban areas. With the exception of Managua and five or six cities with 30,000 or 40,000 inhabitants, the latter are practically all small peasant villages. So much of the 50 percent of the population called urban is actually a rural population as well.

There are some 800,000 workers incorporated into the economic activity of the country; of these, more than 60 percent were illiterate. So the labor force was a poorly skilled one, mainly engaged in handicrafts and peddling in the towns. In the countryside, tenant farmers cultivate basic grains on tiny plots, while the bulk of the agricultural labor force works picking cotton and coffee and cutting sugarcane.

We have had an economy in which development has been slight, where alongside a relatively small industrial sector we find a very broad range of handicrafts. In the countryside, export-oriented latifundia are complemented by a very extensive sector of small peasant production. . . .

We have a highly developed infrastructure in the Pacific zone, while in the central and Atlantic zones the conditions for production, transportation, and communications are almost totally lacking. The Atlantic Coast has more than 60,000 square kilometers but only 200,000 inhabitants. That is, an area three times as large as El Salvador but with a population 30 times smaller.

Somber as it is, this picture is not complete. It leaves out the final plunder and destruction carried out by Somoza before he was toppled. Wheelock continued:

And on July 19, in addition to terrible material destruction, we found a quite onerous foreign debt. At the same time, there were the aftereffects of a capital drain of more than \$800 million.

There was, of course, the basic economic and social conditions we found: backwardness, underdevelopment, poverty. We found a country that was totally bankrupt, with no foreign currency, no foreign savings; with a debt of \$1.6 billion, and destruction amounting to more than \$800 million, which affected more than 35 percent of the industrial production and more than 25 percent of agriculture.

Year one: up from the ashes

In the first year and a half, the new government concentrated on satisfying the basic needs of the population — employment and food.

Wheelock explained:

Our foremost job at the time was the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, and to this end we had to spend large sums of foreign currency. Our debts increased because we had to buy spare parts and equipment in order to return to relative normalcy.

In Nicaragua, normalcy has depended to a great

extent on foreign credit. If there is transportation, it is because we have used credit lines abroad. If the factories are running, it is because we have brought in a considerable number of spare parts, which has meant great expenditures in foreign currency or external loans. If we have worked successfully in economic reactivation, it has been at the expense of growing foreign indebtedness.

Immediately after the insurrection, all holdings of Somoza and his supporters were confiscated and turned over to production for the general benefit of the population. This gave the revolution direct control over a sizable economic base both in the countryside and cities — some 40 percent of all production and services.

The extent to which this economic base, harnessed to the beginning of overall economic planning and large amounts of borrowed capital, reactivated production can be gauged from the fact that unemployment dropped from 25.7 percent in 1979 to 17.5 percent in 1980.

Still, it was not a bed of roses, in either the city or countryside.

Wheelock described the situation:

Imagine all Somoza's agricultural enterprises and production centers — some 2,000 of them. When we took office at the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform we did not even know where they all were. We sent 9 or 10 compañeros out to locate them. All we knew was that there were 10 in one place, 20 in another; we did not know what they produced.

In early 1980 we were still counting cattle. There were no records; production indices were unknown, but people had to be fed. We had to produce milk and coffee, we had to raise cattle. Then the National Bank connected a pipeline to siphon money to the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform. Otherwise it would have been impossible.

One compañero we sent to Matagalpa reported 149 estates with 10,000 workers — we had to pay wages and back wages, and the land had to be tilled. At that time we had no accountants, we had to buy things and write invoices on scrap paper.

In those early days inefficiency was unavoidable.

The 2,000 agricultural units the state now controlled totaled some 1.5 million manzanas (1 manzana = 1.73 acres), more than one-quarter of all arable land. The takeovers also included the vast array of processing plants associated with the Somozaists' holdings, such as sugar mills, rice mills, cotton gins, coffee hulling plants, slaughterhouses, farm supply depots, and warehouse facilities. In all, the state now controlled about one-fifth of agricultural production.

In industry and commerce, the state assumed control over virtually all mines, three-quarters of the construction industry, one-fourth of commerce, and one-sixth of manufacturing and processing. By the end of 1980,

84 publicly owned manufacturing enterprises employed a quarter of the workforce in manufacturing and produced a quarter of the goods made in the country. This included a majority share in the following branches:

Food	54%
Garment and textiles	53%
Medicine	68%
Construction materials	88%

Banking, insurance, foreign trade, electrical power, and water passed 100 percent into the hands of the state, along with 60 percent of communications and transportation.

Nicaragua's 'mixed economy'

Nicaraguans often call their system a "mixed economy." This has been a source of confusion to some people in other countries who tend to identify the term with "mixed economies" of the type familiar in Western Europe — state responsibility for costly social services plus what are in effect state subsidies to economically troubled industrial branches.

Nicaraguans use the same term, but they mean something quite different. Here is how they explained it in laying out the 1980 economic plan:

The economic policy that will be applied in 1980-81 will be carried out in the framework of a mixed economy. That is, on the one hand an economy that is greatly influenced by world capitalism and the internal laws of the marketplace. But on the other hand, it is also an economy that contains the presence of the Government of National Reconstruction. The government controls 41 percent of the gross domestic product, and also has powerful fiscal, financial, and commercial instruments that will regulate the process of recovery and transition.

That isn't all. The state's significant and in some cases decisive presence in agriculture and industrial production leads us to conclude that the new state that is being built will become the *axis* of the process of recovery and transition toward the new economy our country needs. [1980 Programa de reactivación económica en beneficio del pueblo, Managua, 1980. p. 22]

Another source of misunderstanding is to overlook the fact that, especially in a small underdeveloped country like Nicaragua, the "private sector" is itself a complex and contradictory reality. It includes both big landowners and small farmers, capitalist industrial enterprises as well as the artisan's workshop and the small merchant.

Take agriculture, for example. In 1981 state-owned production units accounted for the following share of Nicaragua's crops:

Cotton	10%
Coffee	12%
Rice	35%
Sugar	40%

However, the 90,000 affiliates of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), the association of the country's working farmers, account for an additional:

Cotton	13%
Coffee	41%
Rice	39%
Corn	94%
Beans	91%

If you add it up, the government-owned farms together with the small farmers produce more than half of coffee, two-fifths of sugar, and one-quarter of the cotton — three of the country's main exports — in addition to the overwhelming majority of the country's basic food staples (rice, beans, and corn).

The ties between the revolutionary government and the independent producers in the countryside have been continually strengthened through guaranteed prices, heavily subsidized credit, stiff limits on land rents, road construction and repair, free technical assistance, adult education, and extension of electrification and running water.

Furthermore, the Government of National Reconstruction has begun to implement in practice the Sandinista pledge that "no campesino will be left without land."

More than 50,000 manzanas of confiscated land have been distributed to small farmers this year, and plans were announced at the end of June to speed up the process dramatically, with a goal of distributing 2.5 million manzanas in the next 10 years.

A very small portion of this land has gone to individual families, those who risked their lives to aid the FSLN during the deepest periods of reaction. The great bulk has gone to newly formed agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives, based on collective rather than individual labor, will become the basis of a transformation of relations of production in the countryside.

Rebuilding economy

Big strides were made in the first year and a half to rebuild the economy. The quickest progress was made in agriculture. In fact, Nicaraguans are proud that theirs is the first revolution to immediately increase agricultural production by a significant amount.

The year 1980 also saw a drop in inflation from 70 percent to 35 percent and the creation of 112,000 new jobs.

Like many things in the early days of the revolution, the creation of new jobs did not go exactly as planned. The reason why points to one of the serious underlying problems the Nicaraguan economy faces.

In the countryside, 45,000 new jobs were created in 1980. This was a significant gain but substantially less than the number of agricultural workers thrown out of work as a result of the decision by many large private growers to plant smaller crops.

Nearly half of the new jobs in rural areas were in fact "unsalaried," reflecting small farmers who, with state-provided loans and technical help, turned to the production of basic food grains.

In the cities, 68,000 new jobs were created. Most important for the economy, more than 7,000 were in industry and more than 5,000 in construction. The rest, however, more than 50,000 jobs, emerged in the nonproductive sectors of business and services (260 percent more than projected in the 1980 plan).

Some of the new jobs in the service sector

resulted from faster-than-planned growth in health, education, and public administration.

Some 21,000 of the new jobs were in business and commerce. Most of these actually represented an increase in the class of small shopkeepers — people who either set up stores in their homes or turned to vending food and other items in the streets.

"This situation," the 1981 plan stated, "throws into sharp relief one of the gravest structural problems of the Nicaraguan economy — the tendency toward gigantic growth in the tertiary sector, which cannot be reversed in the short term" (1981 Programa económica de austeridad y eficiencia, Managua, 1981, p. 87).

The scope of a second underlying problem also became clear during the course of 1980. Nicaragua's initial economic recovery required a major increase in the foreign debt.

Exports in 1980 totaled \$470 million but imports were nearly twice that amount — \$870 million. The deficit had to be made up by borrowing abroad, bringing Nicaragua's debt payments for 1981 to a staggering \$190 million — nearly two-fifths of projected exports.

More than two-thirds of the imports were goods and services absolutely essential for economic recovery and impossible to produce in Nicaragua — fuel, machinery and spare parts, chemical and petrochemical products. And while the prices of all these items were rising, the world market prices of Nicaragua's major exports dropped steadily.

Year two: impact of imperialist squeeze

The fundamental aim of the second year of economic planning was to build on the successes of the first year without relying so heavily on foreign borrowing.

The 1981 plan was based on six months of intensive discussions between state institutions and the various social and economic sectors of the society, in particular the unions and other mass organizations. It was also based on a much more concrete grasp of the country's economic reality — the product of a year and a half of experience.

The social goals were clearly defined:

- Raising, in terms of social services and incomes, the share of the country's wealth that goes to the poorest and most exploited layers.
- In state investment and development policy, bending the stick toward the countryside.
- Austerity in imports of nonessential consumer goods.

Sharpening military pressure from imperialism forced reductions in the first two goals. More resources than planned had to be allotted to defending the country.

U.S. loans were cut off as part of Washington's deliberate financial squeeze. Short-term funds available elsewhere carried interest rates as high as 20 percent. At the same time, the crisis in the international capitalist economy took its toll, further reducing the market for Nicaragua's exports.

In September 1981 a state of economic and social emergency was declared. Austerity

measures taken earlier in the year plus new ones dictated by the growing trade deficit lopped nearly \$100 million, some 10 percent, off the national budget.

For 1981 exports totaled \$500 million, \$180 million less than projected in the plan. Imports, at \$995 million, were about \$40 million higher than projected. This left a net deficit of nearly half a billion dollars that again had to be financed by increasing the foreign debt. It now totals \$2.5 billion.

But if 1981 turned out to be less than Nicaragua had hoped, by contrast with the rest of Central America it was an economic miracle. Nicaragua's gross domestic product rose by 8.7 percent in 1981. This was nearly 10 percentage points less than projected, but the significance of the actual increase can be gauged from the GDP figures for the other economies in the region:

Guatemala	+1.0%
Honduras	+0.5%
Costa Rica	-1.5%
El Salvador	-9.5%

Most of the increase came in agriculture, still overwhelmingly the motor force of Nicaragua's economy. In most important crops there was a rise in production not only with respect to the previous year's harvest but even to that of 1978, the last normal year of agricultural production under the dictatorship. Production for 1981, compared with 1978, showed the following changes:

Rice	+89%
Pork	+77%
Beans	+45%
Eggs	+30%
Chicken	+19%
Sugar	+19%
Tobacco	+15%
Bananas	+11%
Corn	+11%
Coffee	-9%
Cotton	-12%

Since rice, beans, corn, eggs, chicken, and pork are not exported but produced solely for domestic consumption, what these figures directly show is improvement in the average diet.

Coffee and cotton, the only two crops that declined, are still largely concentrated in the hands of large landowners. Their decline reflects continuing decapitalization by this sector.

The 1981 figures have not been made available for the different branches of industry. However, a frank discussion of the problems of underdevelopment that Nicaragua continues to suffer in this area was published in the Sandinista daily *Barricada* on May 10, in the form of an interview with Minister of Industry Emilio Baltodano.

Year three: growing pressure

"It is important not to expect a rise in industrial production this year," Baltodano said. "In fact what we need to determine is how much it is going to drop."

"The problem is that the industrial sector has



COMMANDER JAIME WHEELOCK

to be transformed, rationalized. This means that in some cases we will have to close factories."

What Nicaragua needs, Baltodano said, is an industrial sector oriented toward agriculture on the one hand, and basic consumer goods on the other — "food, medicine, clothing, shoes, and products like soap and detergent."

What it actually has is quite different — an industrial sector that was set up not with these needs in mind but around what the capitalists found most profitable.

The consequences are severe.

Nicaragua's industry, mostly light manufacturing, employs only about 90,000 workers. It suffers from a total lack of integration with other productive sectors — agriculture, cattle raising, fishing, mining, and forestry.

From the point of view of foreign currency reserves, the industrial sector functions as a net drain. More money must be spent for imported machinery, spare parts, and production materials than is gained back in exports.

"Our industry began to go through a grave crisis in the 1970s," Baltodano said, "Several branches, such as chemicals, plastics, and fabrication, were set up with the idea that they would be integrated into the Central American Common Market. But the other countries in the region, because of their own pressing internal needs, were unable to carry out what they agreed to."

There are other problems as well.

"We don't have statistics," Baltodano said, "but it is clear that labor productivity has fallen. There were years of struggle, of war, and their impact remains. But in addition we have not yet adjusted ourselves to new forms of labor organization that correspond to the revolutionary process."

This is the price every revolution pays, he continued, "as administrators and workers go through a phase of apprenticeship in seeking to achieve adequate solutions to the problems we face."

A return to "capitalist efficiency" is obviously not the answer, he said. "A regime of

terror may generate efficiency and high rates of profitability by paying miserable wages and using repression to maintain discipline, but this is not the course that is going to be followed by the Sandinista revolution. It is intolerable for the workers, who are the fundamental basis of this process."

Increasing participation of workers

The only lasting way to stimulate productivity, Baltodano pointed out, is to increase workers' participation in running the factories.

Following this candid discussion of the situation, several initiatives in increasing workers' participation were taken in conjunction with the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST).

In response to persistent requests by workers, eight major state-owned plants in Managua are establishing formal structures for worker participation in administrative and production decisions. According to CST leader Rubén Ulloa, "The aim of this pilot project is to enable the workers to discuss with the administrators . . . the entire program of production — how much, for whom, and where the raw materials will come from."

Efforts are also under way to amalgamate into one big union the 24,000 workers employed in 60 plants that make up the food processing industry. According to Alberto Alvarez, CST national secretary for production, steps toward forming this national union have encouraged long-needed discussions on "problems faced by the plants."

A campaign, also led by the CST, is under way to raise production by cutting absenteeism and lateness at work. Initiated June 14 at 32 factories in Managua, the campaign aims to use plantwide assemblies, political discussions, wall murals, bulletin boards, and public display of the weekly results to encourage participation.

An immediate gain of the campaign was public recognition of some of the concrete difficulties involved. Some workers who live in outlying neighborhoods because of the housing shortage in Managua pointed out that they could not possibly get to work on time regularly because of the distance they had to travel and the fact that bus service started too late.

Massive aid needed

These measures and others like them that will be taken by this revolutionary government and union leadership can help. But they cannot overcome, in just a few years' time, the scars left by centuries of exploitation, domination, and plunder.

Nicaragua is a small country that has undertaken a big task — to lead the way forward, along with Cuba and Grenada, to socialist revolution in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. To the extent possible in the current international context, it has already begun to transform relations of production and distribution. It is laying the basis for a new economic order, which the unions and other mass organizations now publicly define as socialism.

But Nicaragua cannot complete the task by

itself. Massive fraternal aid, along the lines of the example set by Cuba, is necessary.

In the imperialist centers, particularly in the

United States, pressure must be mounted to stop the secret war the Pentagon and CIA are waging against Nicaragua.

Left to its own resources, Nicaragua faces a

very difficult economic situation, aggravated by the extensive flood damage. It deserves the support of all who believe in a better future for humanity. □

Poland

Solidarity prepares for new battles

Workers reorganize, discuss next moves in fight against martial law

By Ernest Harsch

Commenting on a series of massive workers' demonstrations and strikes that swept Poland in May and June, the interior minister, Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, called it a "trial of strength" between the government and the Solidarity union movement. It was, he added, just one of "many which are yet to come."

Seven months since the imposition of martial law on Dec. 13, 1981, and two years after the massive July-August 1980 strike wave that gave rise to Solidarity, it is clear that Poland's governing bureaucracy has failed to achieve its basic goal: the destruction of the Polish workers movement, represented by the 10-million-member Solidarity.

Despite rosy claims that things are getting back to "normal," the governing Military Council of National Salvation (WRON) is now confronted by a growing — and increasingly better organized — movement against martial law.

Massive resistance

The scope of this active opposition is truly massive.

Large strikes and demonstrations have been held in virtually every part of the country. On May Day, for example, workers' marches and rallies in support of Solidarity and in opposition to the WRON were held in some 20 cities and towns, according to detailed reports in the union's news bulletins and periodicals. More than 100,000 turned out in Warsaw and Gdansk alone.

Clandestinely organized Solidarity committees now exist in most major factories and in many residential areas, especially in the large workers' housing projects. In some areas regional coordinating bodies have been set up to link the activities of these many individual committees. A national coordinating committee, composed of Solidarity leaders from four of the strongest regions, has also been set up to provide some countrywide coordination.

Altogether, there are now some 1,700 periodicals being published by union committees and groups of students, intellectuals, and political activists. Some, like *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, a weekly in the Warsaw (Mazowsze) region, are published in tens of thousands of copies and have elaborate distribution networks.

In mid-April, union militants launched their

first clandestine radio station in Warsaw, called Radio Solidarity. Although it was later forced to shut down because of arrests and police seizure of the main transmitter, several other stations were set up, including in Gdansk and Poznan.

Through the pages of the union's numerous bulletins, a lively discussion is now under way on the movement's strategy and tactics. This reflects the growing confidence of Solidarity activists; they are discussing not only how to survive under the difficult conditions of martial law, but how best to move forward to win their basic objectives.

Another sign of their confidence is the fact that preparations are now under way to organize a national general strike to force the regime to end martial law, free the thousands of imprisoned political and union activists, and lift the restrictions on Solidarity's activities.

A radicalized working class

The regime's basic problem is that it is confronted by a large, heavily industrialized working class that has just gone through a massive revolutionary upheaval.

The nearly one and a half years between the July-August 1980 strike wave and the December 1981 crackdown greatly radicalized Poland's working class, along with other social layers like the farmers, students, and intellectuals. As never before, they became united in a common struggle against the bureaucracy, which has used repressive methods against the working class to preserve its power and material privileges since the abolition of capitalism in Poland following World War II.

The authorities, seeking to justify their opposition to this massive workers movement, often branded the Solidarity leadership as "anti-socialist."

But as Lech Walesa, a central leader of the union, pointed out in the very first negotiations between the Lenin Shipyard strikers and the government in August 1980, "We are not against the socialist system. We do not want to upset the principle of the social ownership of the means of production — we think that our factories belong to the Polish people. But we demand that the people be the genuine managers of the factories and the country."

That is what Solidarity fought for in the following months. And that is the vision that inspired its 10 million members. During the

course of that revolutionary upsurge, Poland's working people got a taste of their real social power and became more conscious than ever before of the bureaucracy's essentially parasitic nature. They came to realize that only a democratically organized system, governed by the workers themselves, could move Polish society forward.

That consciousness was one of the biggest gains of Solidarity. And it was something the imposition of martial law could not erase.

"With bayonets one can spread fear, terror, and death and successfully strike blows against an unarmed people," prominent political activist Adam Michnik wrote in an essay smuggled out of his place of detention. But, "with bayonets one cannot eradicate 15 months of freedom from a people's memory" (published in the March 8 West German weekly *Der Spiegel*).

Round one for Jaruzelski

When Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law on December 13, Solidarity was taken off guard. As Michnik pointed out, "Almost no one believed that Polish soldiers could be successfully used to attack Polish workers."

This was not just the view of the Solidarity leadership, but of a large part of its membership as well. A Solidarity-conducted poll among union members in the Warsaw region just six weeks before the declaration of martial law found that some 68 percent expressed confidence in the army (compared to 7 percent for the ruling Polish United Workers Party).

Despite the unexpectedness of Jaruzelski's crackdown, workers throughout the country responded with spontaneous protest strikes. Because of the severing of most communications links, the extent of these strikes was not clear at the time. Later Solidarity documents estimated that some 80 percent of all enterprises were affected to one extent or another.

But with their leaders in prison, with no way to communicate with one another, and without any preparation to defend themselves, the workers were unable to prevent the authorities from breaking this strike wave.

The WRON, for the most part, hesitated to use regular army troops against the workers. Instead, it deployed large units of the 80,000-member paramilitary police, the ZOMO, who have a reputation for brutality. The ZOMO were concentrated against key factories, a few

at a time, and thus broke the strikes. In most cases the workers did not attempt to physically resist. But in a few, as in the Wujek coal mine in Silesia, they fought back with makeshift weapons. The government admits that 17 people were killed in the first weeks of martial law.

The fact that the authorities were afraid to unleash a massive bloodbath (as they did during the 1970 strikes) was an important factor in the speed with which the workers movement has subsequently been able to reorganize itself.

In an interview in the May 19 issue of the underground Solidarity weekly *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, Bogdan Lis, a key union leader in Gdansk, noted, "The ZOMO won this first battle. . . . But Polish society's backbone has not been broken. There were few shootings, not many deaths, and so — despite the psychological shock — the people survived and were able to recover."

The imposition of martial law was nevertheless a major setback for the workers movement. Many democratic rights were suspended, strikes were outlawed, Solidarity's activities were banned, and thousands of union militants — including the bulk of Solidarity's regional and national leaderships — were hauled off to detention centers. Today, some 3,000 remain in the internment camps, and another 2,000 have been tried by martial-law courts and sentenced to prison terms.

'Normalization' fails

On the basis of this blow against the workers movement, the bureaucracy attempted to stabilize its rule, an effort known in Poland as "normalization."

By and large, it has failed.

One factor in this has been the continued worsening of the country's severe economic crisis.

In the early 1970s, the government had embarked on a massive industrial expansion program, financed by huge loans from U.S. and West European banks and governments and relying on expanded trade with capitalist countries. The onset of the world capitalist economic crisis consequently had severe repercussions within Poland, which were worsened by the bureaucracy's gross economic mismanagement and its refusal to allow workers any say in the making of economic planning decisions.

With a staggering foreign debt of \$27 billion and mounting repayment obligations, Poland has been unable to import the raw materials and spare parts needed to keep industry going. In June, the Central Statistical Office reported that industrial production for the first five months of 1982 was 9 percent less than during the same period of 1981. Shortages of many basic consumer goods are still widespread.

Not only has the WRON been unable to give any real economic concessions to the workers in an attempt to win a degree of acquiescence to its rule, but circumstances impelled it to begin pushing through stringent austerity measures.

In February, the prices of many common food items were raised by 200 to 400 percent. While unemployment has begun to appear, the workweek has at the same time been extended to six days (one of the economic gains the workers had won last year was to have every other Saturday off). The activities of the nascent workers councils that had been set up in many large factories before the imposition of martial law have been suspended, enabling the managers to arbitrarily alter work rules.

Under these circumstances, the regime's initial attempts to set up a new "independent" trade union totally flopped. Because of the massive support for Solidarity on the shop floor, the authorities could not find one Solidarity leader of any significance who was willing to lend some credence to this scheme.

Frustrated in their efforts to split the union, the authorities have threatened to outlaw Solidarity outright. But so far they have hesitated to do so out of concern over the workers' reaction to such a move.

The WRON has, however, banned several other groups that were allied to Solidarity, including the Independent Student Association (NZS) and the Polish Journalists Association (SDP). Also outlawed were the National Federation of Self-management (KSF) and various regional bodies that had been set up in 1981 to coordinate the activities of the factory-based workers councils.

The gulf between the working population and the government (which still claims to speak in the name of the workers) has widened considerably. The political authority of the Polish United Workers Party has never been so low; many of its worker members have left in disgust, and in the factories the party is now represented largely by foremen and management personnel. At the same time, the illusions that people previously had in the military hierarchy have been shattered.

Expressions of the widespread hatred for the WRON are commonplace. Children sing rhymes about the nasty "crow" (the Polish word for crow is *wrona*). Antigovernment slogans frequently appear on walls overnight.

Despite the obviously different situations, martial law is often equated with the period of Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II, and the Jaruzelski regime is viewed as being little different from dictatorships in other parts of the world. "Let the rulers of this country know," Bogdan Lis wrote in one public appeal, "that someday their names will go down in the history books alongside those of Pol Pot, Pinochet, and Franco." One common nickname for Jaruzelski is General ZOMOza.

Solidarity reorganizes

It was not long after the December strikes were crushed that Solidarity activists in factories around the country began to reorganize themselves. This process started, first of all, in the large enterprises where the union had been the strongest, such as the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, the Ursus tractor factory near War-

saw, and the Nowa Huta steelworks in Krakow.

Initially, small committees were organized in cell structures to make it more difficult for the security police to break them. They existed both within the factories and in residential areas. The strict curfew that was in force in the early weeks of martial law tended to favor the emergence of committees in the large workers' housing projects.

The tasks of these early committees were limited: to collect union dues and money for victims of the repression and workers dismissed from their jobs, to organize passive resistance to various aspects of martial law, and to gather and circulate accurate information.

Those groups with the technical resources began publishing news sheets and bulletins. A survey of these underground publications in the April 6 *Tygodnik Mazowsze* noted that they were being published in every major city and in many smaller ones as well. There were several dozen in the Warsaw area alone. In the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, the bulletin *Solidarnosc* was being printed in editions of 60,000.

These publications range from mimeographed bulletins of a single page each to multiple newspapers printed on offset presses. Besides the hundreds of factory bulletins, several satirical journals are being published, as well as at least six bulletins produced by activists in the internment camps (unlike prisoners who have been tried and sentenced, the internees are allowed writing materials and are not confined to locked cells).

Workers take to streets

In Wroclaw, where the new workers committees were particularly well organized, Solidarity called its first large public protest action following the crushing of the December strikes. On January 29, workers in about 90 percent of the enterprises in the region downed their tools for a half-hour general strike to protest against martial law.

This marked the opening of a new stage in the development of opposition to martial law. From then on, strikes and street demonstrations were to become a regular occurrence.

The day after the Wroclaw strike, thousands of workers and students poured into the streets of Gdansk to protest martial law and higher food prices. On February 13, hundreds marched in Poznan, and on March 21 an estimated 50,000 people chanting Solidarity slogans turned out in Gdansk for the baptism of Lech Walesa's newly born daughter.

But the real turning point in the resurgence of the mass movement came in May. On May 1 and 3, large street demonstrations swept the country and on May 13 workers observed a national strike call. The size and scope of these actions rivaled many of the protest actions that were held in Poland prior to the imposition of martial law.

The May Day action in Warsaw was announced over Radio Solidarity, in direct opposition to the official May Day ceremonies

organized by the regime.

"We are broadcasting today on the eve of the working-class holiday, May 1," Zbigniew Romaszewski, a Solidarity leader in Warsaw, declared in the broadcast. "The society has been deprived of all its important symbols. They have all been taken by the regime. This is also true of May Day. We have decided to take back these symbols."

Noting that the eve of May Day was also the 31st anniversary of the death of Kazimierz Puzak, a Polish Socialist Party leader who died in prison following a Stalinist show trial in the late 1940s, Romaszewski continued:

"Every year, comrades faithful to Polish socialism put flowers on his grave and sing the old workers' song, *The Red Flag*. Let this tune be the theme song of our broadcast this May Day. Let it be a warning to all those who want to force the workers to their knees and terrorize the society. On their red flag, the one they will carry in their march tomorrow, is the blood of the workers of Poznan, of the Baltic Coast, the blood of those who have fallen in the war they declared on their own people."

The next day, some 50,000 people turned out for a large and enthusiastic march through the streets of Warsaw's Old Town. Solidarity banners were unfurled and demonstrators chanted "Our holiday! Our holiday!" "Lift martial law!" and "We want Solidarity!"

In Gdansk, up to 60,000 people demonstrated. They gathered outside the Lenin Shipyard at the monument to workers who were killed during the 1970 strikes and then marched several miles to the building that had housed Solidarity's regional headquarters before martial law.

In the northwestern port city of Szczecin, a large crowd gathered in the morning outside the gates of the Warski Shipyard. As the demonstrators marched from there through the center of the city, Solidarity banners were raised and protesters shouted to bystanders, "Come with us, not the enemy!" Many did. By the time the march reached the main cemetery, where people put flowers on the graves of workers killed in the 1970 strikes, the demonstrators numbered some 20,000.

Marches and rallies were reported in more than a dozen other cities as well.

Two days later, similar demonstrations were held throughout the country to mark May 3, known in Poland as Constitution Day after the country's 1791 republican constitution. While the police had refrained from interfering with the May Day demonstrations, on May 3 they attacked. In Warsaw, Gdansk, Szczecin, Lublin, Krakow, Lodz, and many other cities, scores of people were injured. The authorities admitted arresting 1,372 people for participating in the actions.

Because of these police attacks, Solidarity leaders counseled their supporters to avoid street demonstrations for the time being, although this advice has not always been heeded (as on June 13, when protest marches were staged in Krakow, Wroclaw, and Gdansk).

The May 1 and 3 actions paved the way for

a May 13 general strike, the first nationally coordinated action called by Solidarity. Although it lasted just 15 minutes, it showed the extent of the union's active support on the shop floor.

In the Warsaw region, some 80 to 90 percent of the factories were affected to one degree or another, according to union accounts. In some factories Solidarity banners were hoisted. Ten coal mines in Silesia stopped work. Parts of the large steelworks in Katowice and Krakow went on strike, as did the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk and many factories in Wroclaw, Elwro, Bialystok, Torun, Lodz, and other cities.

Although the authorities were aware of Solidarity's reorganization, they were taken aback by the size and scope of the May actions. Those opposed to bureaucratic domination, on the other hand, received a tremendous shot in the arm.

Government reprisals against the strikers were very severe, however. At the Swidnik helicopter factory near Lublin, for example, some 1,000 workers were dismissed from their jobs — about one-tenth of the entire workforce.

To avoid exposing workers to further reprisals like this, Solidarity leaders have called for a suspension of protest strikes and street demonstrations until the end of July, to allow time for the preparation of more effective forms of action.

Discussions and debates

Despite Solidarity's massive support among working people, it has not yet been able to force the regime into making any significant concessions. This has set off a wide-ranging discussion among leaders and activists over how best to move forward, a discussion that is still only in its initial stages.

Among Solidarity leaders, both those who are still at liberty and those in the internment camps, there is general agreement over the movement's immediate aims: to force the government into lifting martial law, freeing the political prisoners, and ending the restrictions on Solidarity's activities. These three demands feature prominently in the union's publications and appeals.

A number of figures in the movement have also argued that such concessions could be a starting point for a broader agreement between the authorities and Solidarity. In two essays smuggled out of the Bialoleka internment camp near Warsaw, Jacek Kuron, one of Poland's most prominent political activists, raised the possibility of reaching a "social compromise," in which Solidarity would agree to limit some of its demands if the government ends the repression.*

Writing in the April 28 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, Wladyslaw Hardek, a union leader in Krakow,

*See *Intercontinental Press*, April 19, pp. 334-35 for the text of Kuron's first essay, which was written in February. The second essay appeared in the May 12 issue of *Tygodnik Mazowsze*.

said that while an agreement with the authorities "would not involve any great love, it could be a marriage of convenience."

Romaszewski has stressed the transitory nature of such an agreement, stating that an initial compromise that restores Solidarity's rights "does not have to be a final one."

The sharpest differences, however, have emerged over organizational questions and methods of struggle.

Kuron, in his first essay in February, initiated a broad debate on these questions. He emphasized that the only way to force the authorities to agree to make concessions was to build a strong, well-organized movement with a centralized leadership. Since the regime would probably refuse to reach an agreement, he continued, "the leadership of the resistance movement must prepare society both for major concessions leading to a compromise with the government, and for liquidation of the occupation through an organized uprising of the whole population."

This, he argued, was the best hope for preventing an uncontrolled social explosion and a consequent Soviet invasion.

"Only two forces," Kuron wrote, "can guarantee peace: the regime, by concluding a compromise with society; or society, by overthrowing the regime."

Two influential Solidarity leaders in the Warsaw region, Zbigniew Bujak and Wiktor Kulerski, responded to Kuron in separate articles in the March 31 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*.

Bujak, one of the highest ranking Solidarity leaders to have escaped detention, rejected Kuron's call for the construction of a centralized movement that would be prepared to overthrow the regime. Emphasizing that such an undertaking was "unrealizable," he concluded that "it is necessary to start from the principle of avoiding direct confrontations with the government, because they would expose the country to too great a danger."

"I am for a strong, but decentralized, movement," Bujak said, "which will use many different forms of action. Only such a movement, undefined and many-sided, will be elusive and difficult to defeat."

Kulerski likewise opposed the consolidation of a centralized resistance movement, stating that it should be "informal, decentralized, comprised of mutually independent and loosely linked groups, committees, etc., with a large amount of independence and freedom of decision."

He rejected Kuron's "alternative of either revolution or compromise," and instead held out the possibility of a gradual evolution, "a lengthy rotting of the system and gradual changes leading to society regaining influence over its fate."

In a rejoinder to Bujak and Kulerski, published in the May 12 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, Kuron stated that he did not think a gradual evolution or a prolonged period of decentralized resistance was possible, largely because of the worsening economic situation and the regime's continual provocations. In this

context, he said, "a central leadership will lose its influence over the movement if it appears that it does not have a program for getting out of the present situation."

Kuron also pointed out that the authorities could not be expected to make any concessions unless they are forced to do so. "A program cannot be built on the hope that the generals and secretaries will willingly agree to a compromise. It has to be acknowledged that violence only retreats in face of violence; it has to be clearly stated that the movement itself will not refuse to use force."

'We have to fight together'

In the April 28 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, several other union leaders gave their own views on how to win concessions.

Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, a key leader in Wroclaw, argued, "The union cannot remain passive in such a catastrophic economic situation, when social tensions increase and repression does not diminish. The refusal to come to an agreement must be met, in my opinion, with a general strike." Solidarity, he added, should be built as "a flexible and consolidated organization."

Wladyslaw Hardek from Krakow likewise stressed, "We have to begin a struggle throughout the country, in a coordinated fashion, for a chance to win an agreement. No one will give us this chance; we have to win it ourselves."

Bogdan Lis, noting that "the workplaces are time bombs," stated that the authorities had to be presented with an ultimatum: "Agreement or struggle. We have no other alternative. . . . If the government does not have the good will [to reach an agreement], then it has to be forced into it."

This debate has not been limited to the union's top leaders. Shop floor activists and less well-known leaders have also contributed to it. *Tygodnik Mazowsze* has established a regular column for such contributions, entitled, "Program of action: voices from the discussion."

In one of four such contributions in the May 19 issue, for example, Kazimierz Podlaski wrote, "A mass protest and resistance movement cannot arise or develop without an ideological, informational, and tactical center."

In the April 24 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, an anonymous rank-and-file activist also argued, "We have to do everything we can to unite people, and not divide them up into isolated groups. Above all, we have to build up ties. Didn't Jaruzelski's blitzkrieg teach us anything? . . . Our weapon is our massive numbers; our weapon is a united resistance. . . . We have to fight together."

As a result of this kind of discussion, the views of some Solidarity leaders have shifted.

In April, just a few weeks after Bujak's reply to Kuron arguing against a more centralized movement, he joined with Lis, Hardek, and Frasnyniuk to form the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) of Solidarity. This body has since begun functioning as a national

leadership.

One of the first actions of the TKK was to call the 15-minute strike on May 13. The massive response to that call was a key test of the committee's authority among Solidarity members.

Appeals to soldiers

Another topic of discussion has been the need for the workers movement to seek active support within the ranks of the army. Unlike the highly privileged ZOMO, the army is based largely on conscript troops.

The need to carry out agitation among soldiers and police was one of the points stressed by Kuron.

In fact, such efforts have been made since shortly after the imposition of martial law. For example, in a New Year's appeal, Bujak called on "soldiers and officers of the Polish army, and policemen as well, to carefully listen to the voice of your conscience, and follow it rather than the orders you are given. Do not willingly let yourselves be forced to commit fratricide, even if you must pay the highest price."

The first broadcast of Radio Solidarity in Poznan on May 12 included a similar appeal to soldiers.

There have been some indications that Solidarity's message is getting through to the army barracks. The union bulletins have been publishing an increasing number of reports about what is happening in the army units, including the formation of informal soldiers' groups.

At the May Day demonstration in Szczecin, according to an account in the May 9-11 issue of the union bulletin *Z Dnia na Dzień* (From Day to Day), a soldier took off his helmet and attempted to join the workers' march, but was prevented from doing so by his officer.

In Lublin on May 3, a march of about 12,000 was blocked by army and ZOMO detachments. A young woman handed flowers to one of the soldiers, and the troops cleared the way for the march.

Preparations for general strike

Following the demonstrations and strikes of early May, the Regional Executive Committee (RKW) of Solidarity in the Warsaw region stated on May 27, "The lack of any show of goodwill on the part of the authorities . . . is leading unavoidably to a radicalization of workers' views and to a general strike. Several dozen large plants and factories of the Mazowsze region have asked the Regional Executive Committee to set its date."

Other regional bodies subsequently launched preparations for a general strike as well.

While many articles in the union press have expressed support for the idea of such a strike, there has also been some opposition, including concern that it could be crushed.

To find out how much active support there would be for a general strike — and what further preparations would be necessary — systematic surveys are being conducted by unionists in numerous workplaces and regions.



May 3, 1982, demonstration in Gdansk.

Plans are also being discussed to establish an effective communications network among the factories, including radio transmitters and receivers, to ensure that the authorities will not be able to isolate the factories from one another as they did during the December strikes.

Solidarity activists are also anticipating government attempts to break any general strike by force.

"In contrast to December 1981," Lis has pointed out, "we will have to defend the striking factories."

In an interview in the June 2 *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, Romaszewski stressed that the general strike had to be "a countrywide general strike, with active defense of the workplaces. In Warsaw, 20 to 30 large factories could launch occupation strikes, with the rest supporting them through stay-at-home strikes. In addition to this, demonstrations and marches can keep some of [the government's] forces occupied."

The response of the ranks of the army and police, Romaszewski pointed out, could be crucial to the success of the strike. "If the situation becomes very serious, the government will be unable — in my opinion — to rely either on the army or even on the police. When just one battalion refuses to shoot . . . That's what happened in February 1917 [in Russia], when a small unit of the Cossacks went over to the side of the demonstrators. And within a month there was no longer a tsar."

Many Solidarity leaders are not as optimistic as Romaszewski. But the ability of union activists to rebuild the movement so quickly — and on such a massive scale — has already surpassed the initial expectations of not only the government, but of many Solidarity activists themselves.

The discussions that are now unfolding in Poland's factories, steel mills, and shipyards will have a crucial influence over the future course of this workers' movement. □

Elections held amid deep crisis

Attacks on workers intensify

By Aníbal Yáñez

Millions of Mexicans went to the polls July 4 to elect a new president, senators, and deputies in the midst of a deep economic crisis. The prospect is one of continuing poverty and hunger for the majority of the country's 70 million inhabitants.

More than half of Mexico's workers do not have full-time jobs, and those who do cannot make ends meet with the miserable wages they earn. About 25 percent of all Mexicans go without meat, and almost 50 percent cannot afford milk. The country has an acute housing shortage, and 6.3 million of the existing homes have no sewage system.

Things have worsened as a result of the devaluation of the peso, the national currency, in March. This fueled inflation, which may top 65 percent this year. Although the government decreed wage adjustments, the bosses have limited these raises everywhere they can, and in general have simply not paid them to all those workers who receive minimum wage or are not unionized.

Social gains are also under attack. Cutbacks in public spending — like the devaluation of the peso — have been dictated by imperialist banks as a condition for recent loans to bail out the economy. A consortium of 75 banks has just loaned Mexico \$25 billion, the biggest loan in the country's history.

The new debt to the imperialist banks, however, will only deepen Mexico's problems. First of all, \$14 billion will be spent right away, just to pay interest on current short-term loans. Furthermore, interest on the new loan will take another massive chunk.

By the end of the year, Mexico's total debt is expected to reach \$85 billion, the highest in the Third World.

Unemployment increases daily with factory closings and cuts in the workforce. In June, the country's major capitalist conglomerate, Grupo Industrial Alfa, F.A., fired 10,500 of its 49,000 workers. In July, Ayotla Textil, a state-owned textile company, was shut down, leaving 2,800 workers without a job. Mexican labor unions calculate that more than a million workers will lose their jobs before the end of the year.

Mexican capitalists are using this situation to blackmail workers into accepting lower wages, to divide the working class in the scramble for jobs, and to more easily fire workers who are fighting back. Working conditions are under severe attack, with the implementation of speedup, increased work loads, and forced overtime, as well as a complete disregard for safety on the job.

A recent editorial in *Bandera Socialista*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Work-

ers Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, points out that the offensive launched by the Mexican bosses and their government "is not aimed merely against militant workers, against independent unions, or against those locals of the official trade unions that have won a measure of trade-union democracy. It is aimed against the entire labor movement, against its unions, contracts, its previous gains."

But Mexican workers are fighting back. In the first half of this year, there have been more strikes and work stoppages than in all of 1981.

On June 26, 45,000 textile workers shut down over 300 mills and factories across the country, demanding a 60 percent wage increase, barely enough to cover what they lost in the devaluation and to the ravages of inflation.

On July 1, some 12,000 workers went out on strike against Volkswagen de México, F.A., also demanding a 60 percent pay increase.

These workers' struggles are up against more than just the government's austerity offensive and the bosses' intransigence at the bargaining table. On the morning of June 17, some 300 state police, led by a squad of scabs and company goons, violently broke up a 157-day strike by workers at Acernex, a steel-fab-

ricating plant in an industrial suburb of Mexico City.

A bloody, strikebreaking attack against another group of workers in Mexico City took place on May 31. On that day, pickets at the gate of Refrescos Pascual (a soft-drink bottling company that employs some 3,000 workers) were brutally assaulted by more than 150 scabs, who arrived in several trucks and were led by the plant's owner-manager.

When the boss gave the order to charge, the trucks rammed the plant gates, crushing one striking worker. Scabs leapt from the trucks, wielding steel rods, pistols, machine guns, and even army-issue automatic weapons. They killed another worker and wounded more than a dozen.

The workers responded with a 2,000-strong march to the justice department demanding prosecution of the killers and the boss who led them, and by maintaining the strike and strengthening their picket lines at another bottling plant owned by the same company. They also sought and won broad solidarity in the labor movement.

On June 21, the Refrescos Pascual workers won a resounding victory when the bosses gave in to all of their demands and committed themselves to taking no reprisals against striking workers.

The Revolutionary Workers Party has urged the broadest unity of the working class in defense of its rights, the strengthening of class-struggle currents within the unions, and political independence of the working class from the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). These were the ideas that the PRT sought to popularize in its presidential campaign. □

Election results

According to the Mexican government, the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), whose candidate for president in the July 4 elections was Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, received 2 percent of the vote. Government returns gave the United Socialist Party (PSUM), which ran Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, 5.8 percent.

The figures are based on official returns from 73 percent of the polling places.

Under the electoral reform law enacted by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), some seats in the Chamber of Deputies are allotted by a system of proportional representation, guaranteeing both the PSUM and the PRT representation in the 400-member body.

The election law also provided government funding and free television time to all parties with ballot status. In addition to the air time, the PRT received some 30 million pesos (48 pesos = US\$1) for the campaign; and the PSUM, 68 million.

Under the law, 1.5 percent of the vote is needed to maintain legal status and receive representation in the legislature. In addition to the PSUM and the PRT, the Mexican Democratic Party (PD) and the Socialist Workers Party (PST) will receive seats, each being officially credited with 1.6 percent.

The right-wing National Action Party (PAN) was reported to have polled 14 percent.

The PRT is the Mexican section of the Fourth International. On the eve of the elections, it held a rally of 50,000 people in Mexico City. The PSUM, formed by the fusion of the Mexican Communist Party and several much smaller parties, held a pre-election rally of about 100,000 people.

Both the PRT and the PSUM have charged election fraud resulting in official figures significantly less than the numbers actually cast for their candidates.

Anti-imperialist fighters meet

Conference stresses solidarity with Palestinians

By Larry Seigle

[The following article appeared in the July 16 issue of the U.S. socialist weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

TRIPOLI, Libya — Anti-imperialist fighters from all over the world attended a four-day conference hosted here by the Libyan government at the end of June. The central goal of those present was the achievement of greater unity and aid to those in the colonial and semicolonial world who are struggling for the right to determine their own future free from imperialist oppression and exploitation.

Delegates and observers came from throughout the Arab world, from Iran, from Black Africa, from Asia, and from Latin America and the Caribbean. They came from governments, from mass parties, from solidarity committees, and from a wide range of left-wing and anti-imperialist groups.

The conference heard from representatives of governments and governing parties from various countries, such as Syria, Iran, the Seychelles, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nicaragua, Democratic Yemen, Cuba, Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and many more.

Delegates from liberation groups fighting arms in hand against imperialism also addressed the gathering. Among these were SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation); Polisario, the group fighting for the independence of the Western Sahara; the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador; the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG); and others as well.

Also participating were representatives of a wide range of political parties and groupings within the working-class movement. These came primarily from Latin America, and included several Communist parties, some social-democratic groups, parties considering themselves to be Marxist and Leninist, the Chilean MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), the M-19 Movement of Colombia, and many others.

Given the wide range of views brought together at the conference, there was no consensus on concrete steps to be taken, or on overall strategy in the fight against imperialism.

But there was unanimous agreement that the conference was a valuable opportunity for discussion, and helped bring about greater unity among all those who are battling against — in the words of the conference — "imperialism, Zionism, racism, and reaction."

Libya's Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi addressed the gathering, appealing to all those present to stand shoulder to shoulder in active support of "the victims of imperialist and racist aggression, from Palestine to South Africa."

Solidarity with Libya against the threats from Washington was a prominent feature of the proceedings. The anti-imperialist actions of the Libyan government have made this country a special target for Reagan's anti-Arab propaganda, as well as economic reprisals. Libya's aid and support for many liberation struggles, as well as its economic aid to countries being blackmailed by the U.S. government — such as Nicaragua and Grenada — have earned Washington's deep hostility. Conference participants made clear their appreciation for Libya's actions.

Solidarity with the Palestinian cause was a central theme of the entire gathering. As the conference convened, Israeli planes and artillery were reducing much of Lebanon to rubble, slaughtering thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese.

A delegate from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) told the several hundred participants that, whatever the immediate outcome of the fighting in Lebanon, "the Zionists will not succeed. They cannot prevail. Because to do so they would have to eliminate an entire people, my people." The Zionists have been trying to eliminate the people of Palestine since Israel was established, he said. "It cannot be done. We will not disappear. And as long as the Palestinian people exist on the face of the earth, the Israeli army will never 'break the back' of the PLO.

"So long as our land is occupied, we will fight with whatever means we can lay our hands on to regain our homeland."

Many of the speeches focused on the role of American imperialism — "the leader of international terrorism," in the words of the declaration of the conference. Speakers hit at Washington's direct intervention and threats of intervention in Central America, Indochina, and elsewhere. They also emphasized the role of U.S. imperialism as the ally, supplier, and ultimate defender of Israel and South Africa.

But the role of the imperialist powers of Western Europe was also emphasized.

Britain's war against Argentina over the Malvinas Islands was unanimously and forcefully condemned. Delegates understood full well that London's blows against Argentina were aimed equally at all the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who dare to stand up and fight to recover what has been stolen from them.

As the delegate from Ghana stressed, "I don't want anyone here to make the mistake of thinking the United States is the only imperialist power we must confront today. So many massacres have been committed on the African continent by the French, by the Belgians, and by the other European powers who are still

struggling to preserve and extend their exploitation of our peoples."

In addition to the formal conference proceedings, informal discussions and delegation meetings provided the opportunity for people from many countries and many different organizations to explore possibilities of common action in the fight against imperialist intervention in the colonial and semicolonial world.

The participants from Latin America, in particular, held a number of lengthy political discussions, both on the topics under debate in the conference itself and on strategic questions of special interest to Latin America. Those present covered a big part of the spectrum of the workers and peasants movements in the Americas.

As one delegate told the *Militant*, "This conference is one more instance of solidarity with the international fight against imperialism. What has been accomplished here is not only a deepening of understanding among peoples who are fighting battles separated by oceans, peoples who are divided by language and history. We have also learned more about what unites us: our common struggle against our common enemy.

"This is another concrete example of authentic international solidarity. It has been another step toward uniting us in the battles ahead." □

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Support for PLO stronger than ever

As Begin presses fight in Lebanon and West Bank

By M. Shajor

TEL AVIV — As the sixth week of the war in Lebanon draws to a close, Israel is reinforcing its troops around Beirut in preparation for the final showdown. Far from Israel eliminating the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 48 hours, as Prime Minister Menachem Begin had boasted, the Zionist regime is encountering increased Palestinian resistance in Beirut, in the occupied territories, and inside Israel itself.

The threat of intervention by the U.S. Sixth Fleet and of U.S. Marines landing in Beirut is a dangerous turn of events demonstrating that American imperialism and Zionism are bent on an all-out war to liquidate the PLO. Their readiness to risk a Vietnam-like involvement points to the stakes involved.

The existence of the PLO and its uncompromising struggle for Palestinian rights is incompatible with the plans that Washington and Tel Aviv have in store for the Middle East. These plans were codified in the memorandum of strategic understanding signed by Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger last year.

According to this strategy, the Americans will continue to massively arm Israel so as to ensure its qualitative military superiority over all the Arab countries combined. Israel, for its part, will undertake to fight "terrorism" and communism, as well as nationalist and radical regimes, throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

This memorandum is one more step along the line charted by the Camp David accords. The present war in Lebanon is no "mad general's dream," but the implementation of this policy. Its goals are:

- Replacement of the Syrian regime, the outer of Syrian forces from Lebanon, and forcing Syria to recognize the Israeli state and its hegemony in the area.

- The establishment of a proimperialist regime in Lebanon that will recognize Israel and in fact be dependent on it.

- Expulsion of the Palestinians from Lebanon, and possibly from the West Bank as well.

Achievement of these goals would force the other Arab countries, above all Saudi Arabia, to recognize Israel. This would put on the agenda a rightist coup in Iran to restore U.S. interests there.

West Bank

Forcing the Palestinian population in the West Bank to accept the autonomy plan, which provides cover for Israeli domination of the occupied territories and prepares their annexa-

tion, is a necessary part of the imperialist perspective.

Palestinian resistance to turning the occupied territories into an Israeli-dominated Bantustan was crucial in exposing the expansionist and belligerent nature of Zionism. This resistance established the legitimacy of the Palestinian demand for self-determination and won worldwide sympathy and recognition.

The "limited" goals of the war, on which all Zionist parties agreed, involved a policy of mass terror in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, the Israeli daily *Al Hamishmar* reported July 2 that the occupation authorities have prepared "a plan to liquidate PLO strongholds in the cities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip." One source was quoted as saying, "We can do whatever we want in the territories now."

The village leagues, consisting of thugs armed by the Israeli authorities, have stepped up their terror against the population. In Beit Kaher they murdered a teacher, Daoud Atawneh, on June 19 when he tried to talk them out of beating women and children protesting the linking of the village's electric system to the Israeli grid.

The municipal councils of Jenin and Dir Dibuan have been dissolved by the Israeli authorities, as have the councils of Anapta and Dura. On July 8, the mayor of Gaza, Rashad as-Shawa, who is considered a very moderate figure, was forced to resign because of his refusal to cooperate with the "civil administration" — the new name for the military occupation.

Meanwhile, the University of Bir Zeit was closed down for three months — the third time this year. Soldiers forced the students to perform military exercises at midnight, provoking protests that supplied the pretext for the closure. This followed a letter from Jewish settlers on the West Bank suggesting that Bir Zeit was a PLO center that should be fought against just like the PLO headquarters in Beirut.

Palestinian newspapers such as *Al Shaab* and *Al Fajr* have been prevented from circulating.

Growing Palestinian resistance

Yet in spite of the military blow dealt to the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, Begin is far from being able to impose his will. To the contrary, Palestinian determination and unity is growing.

Bassam al-Shaka, the mayor of Nablus, whose legs were amputated after his car was bombed by Israeli settlers, said in an interview in No. 112 of the *Al Fajr* English weekly: "What has happened in Lebanon and Beirut cannot put an end to the PLO but will deepen Palestinian feelings toward unity. It will also

show more and more the justice of the Palestinian [cause] and the fate of the Palestinian people."

All Palestinian mayors and representatives without exception have stood their ground and refused to recognize the civil administration, or any leadership other than the PLO. The trade unions of the West Bank have sent messages of support to the PLO as their only legitimate representative. A general strike of protest against the war was declared on July 4 and lasted three days. It was organized by the Organization of National Institutions, a new body that arose after the National Steering Committee was banned.

The Israeli media totally ignored this strike. Yet it is estimated that it was wider than the previous strike on March 30, the Day of the Land. In Ramallah, Nablus, and East Jerusalem the strike was total and huge demonstrations erupted. The military reacted brutally and murdered two young Palestinians. Students, villagers, and city residents demonstrated their confidence and militancy in numerous demonstrations throughout the week.

This spirit was not confined to the newly occupied territories. It swept the Palestinians living within the pre-1967 borders as well. In Tirah, the funeral of Naziyah Matar, a PLO activist who was murdered in Rome, turned into a militant demonstration against the war and in support of the PLO. Fifteen thousand people showed up in spite of police roadblocks. Many representatives from the West Bank came, expressing a growing sense of unity among the divided Palestinian people.

Matar's old mother stood in front of a row of youths from the village who chanted "we are all your sons, your son is not dead."

As the procession marched, people called, "Abu Amar [Yassir Arafat], we are with you, you are our own representative."

In Nazareth, some 3,000 Palestinians from Israel gathered for the most militant rally organized by the Communist Party (Rakah) in a long time. The central demands of the rally were: stop the war in Lebanon; unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon according to the UN Security Council resolution; withdrawal from all territories occupied in 1967; honor the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and its right to establish an independent state next to Israel; to the life and the secure future of the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples.

The militancy and spirited mood of the participants in that rally showed the growing identification with the PLO among Palestinians in-

side Israel, and their growing recognition of the PLO as their only representative.

Divisions inside the Israeli society

The Zionist strategy is based on naked force. It aims to "wipe out the PLO forever," to fight against the Arab world counting on its military superiority. Israeli society is totally militarized. It is built around a huge army that is disproportionate to Israel's economic strength and to the size of the population. But the tenacity and courage of the Palestinian fighters is seriously undermining illusions in Israel's military and moral superiority. It is forcing the government to lie about the real losses and difficulties the Israeli army is meeting, and to hide its barbaric crimes.

Four weeks after Yassir Arafat was supposed to be dead or defeated, he appears again and again on Israeli television, confident, explaining patiently that the Palestinian struggle cannot be defeated, that the Palestinians are human beings too, that like any other people they have the right to an independent state, and that this is the only road to peace.

The Labor Party gave its full support to war and supplied cover to the government moves even when the Israeli army was raiding Beirut. It shares with Begin the view that PLO influence in Lebanon and in the West Bank should be eliminated, and that a proimperialist government should be set up in Lebanon. In fact, Begin is implementing in Lebanon the plan that was prepared by Labor Party leaders Shimon Peres and Mordechai Gur when they were in power.

But when difficulties grew as the army met stronger resistance than expected, especially in Sidon and in the refugee camps, and as international pressure grew as the truth of the Israeli barbarities reached the world, the Labor Party and the Peace Now movement started voicing limited criticism. They explicitly refrained from doing so earlier in order "to keep the nation united" and "not to demoralize the army while it is still fighting."

They claim that military moves should stop, meaning that Israel should not enter Beirut, that a cease-fire should be maintained, and that the united efforts of the Zionist parties should concentrate on squeezing the maximum political gains from the military victory through negotiations.

The PLO leadership attaches great importance to this division inside the Israeli ruling class. The dispute, however, has a strong factional aspect. The Labor Party distrusts Begin's ability to lead Israel in the coming stormy period. It is trying to exploit the weaknesses of this government in order to replace it in the next elections. That is why the call for Sharon to resign is so prominent in the Peace Now demonstrations, yet the demand for unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon is lacking.

The Labor Party has no alternative policy. All it can offer is the arrogance of the rulers who established the Israeli state, ruled it for 30

years, and are bent on regaining power.

However, the maneuver of the Labor Party has enabled the uneasy feeling that many Israelis began sensing as the war lengthened, as the death toll rose, as no easy solution could be seen, to develop into a wide public discussion about the war and its aims. This discussion reveals the weaknesses of the Israeli war machine, sows confusion among the Zionist rulers, weakens their war drive. It buys time for the PLO to explain its struggle and win world public opinion.

Events around Beaufort Castle in southern Lebanon illuminate the growing sense of insecurity that the rulers feel.

The Beaufort became a symbol of Palestinian resistance as it withstood endless Israeli air raids. Thus, Begin tried to turn it into a symbol of Israeli invincibility. On the second day of the invasion, the morning news opened with its dramatic announcement that the Beaufort had been conquered without a single Israeli casualty.

But four weeks later, a group named Soldiers Against Silence protested opposite the government building and vowed to talk about "the silence of the dead bodies that remain in the armored cars [outside the Beaufort], and our leader's helicopter that came to raise the banner of lies and the banner of success."

So great is fear of the truth that the military issued orders to prevent wounded soldiers from telling their families what had happened. Family visits were greatly restricted and held only in the presence of officers.

The big lie about the war being for peace in the Galilee is also being shattered as soldiers are finding themselves preparing for the winter in Lebanon, laying the ground for permanent control of the 40-kilometer zone.

Political debate in the army became so widespread that Begin took time in parliament to answer a letter from a group of soldiers who participated in the 1977 raid on Uganda's Entebbe airport and who questioned the wisdom of continuing this war.

The working class

As of the sixth week of the war there is no organized voice in opposition to the war among Jewish workers. Deep opposition to the anti-labor offensive, especially the rejection of the Labor Party and its European tradition by Oriental Jews, was manifested in the June 1981 elections. But this and a developing antiwar sentiment during the 14-day war of July 1981 in the north was not enough to stop the warmongers in Jerusalem.

By and large, Jewish workers supported the war as a necessary evil for defending the inhabitants of the north. Although the Labor Party's limited opposition and the Peace Now demonstrations do open the way for a discussion, these Zionist prowar forces share Begin's racist and chauvinist view of the PLO. Their actions are basically viewed by the workers as factional maneuvers and not as genuine protest movements.

This is one reason why in the huge Peace Now demonstration July 3, one could not find even one Jewish worker. The uncompromising, heroic stance of the PLO (stories of the RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] youth are widespread) had a deep influence that will grow stronger as the failure of Israel to wipe out the PLO becomes clear.

Whatever the outcome of the war, the Zionists have failed to undermine the authority of the Palestinian struggle, or to silence its demands. This fact will be decisive for the Jewish workers as it becomes clear that economic crisis and more wars are waiting and that they must tear themselves from Zionism and join forces with the anti-imperialist, democratic movement of the Arab masses, headed by the PLO, in order to secure a life of peace.

PLO in center of world politics

The Lebanese war has not only uncovered the aggressive and expansionist nature of Zionism. It has brought the PLO, as the leadership of the Palestinian people fighting to return to their land, into the center of politics inside Israel, the Middle East, and the world.

This revolutionary democratic leadership is confronting the mightiest military power in the Middle East, a power backed by U.S. imperialism. It is doing this without geographic bases, and with political support from the Arab states that falls far short of its needs. And yet, it stands united, and it cannot be bought or bribed, nor will it surrender.

For the PLO, armed struggle signifies their understanding that nothing short of a revolutionary struggle will win them their rights. It highlights their right to fight back against the Zionist attempts to wipe them off the earth.

As Yassir Arafat explained in a dramatic televised interview he gave Uri Avneri, a left Zionist figure, in Beirut, the Zionist strategy of force cannot win in the long run. The confidence and unity of the PLO leadership in this most difficult situation flows from its correct political strategy.

During years of consistent and uncompromising struggle, the current PLO leadership has united all the political, religious, and social currents among the scattered Palestinians. It has aroused the most oppressed Palestinians, especially the refugees, to the struggle for liberation. It has allied itself to every progressive force in the world and educated the Palestinian people in the spirit of international solidarity.

The PLO's central demand today for an independent Palestinian state on any part of Palestine from which Israel withdraws has gained the support of all progressive humanity.

For the PLO, this is a conditional demand in their fight for the establishment of a united, democratic, secular Palestine where Muslims, Christians, and Jews can live in peace together. The war in Lebanon, the first one ever that Israel has openly waged against the PLO, "has shaken the dormant volcanoes of the area" as Yassir Arafat said to Uri Avneri. "An oppressed people that is ready to die for its freedom is bound to win." □

French colonialism in Polynesia

Radioactive fallout, economic exploitation, and cultural genocide

[The following article is based on an interview with Marie-Therese and Bengt Danielsson that was conducted in January by *Socialist Action*, the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Action League, the New Zealand section of the Fourth International.

[The Danielssons are well-known antinuclear campaigners from Tahiti. Bengt Danielsson was a member of the famous Kon-Tiki raft expedition. Marie-Therese Danielsson is president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in French Polynesia. They are coauthors of the book *Moruroa Mon Amour*, an account of the French government's atomic tests at Moruroa atoll.

[The article appeared in the June 4 issue of *Socialist Action*.]

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Much has been said and written about the effects of the French nuclear tests on the health of the people of French Polynesia. The effects of radioactive fallout are, of course, very serious. But the French testing programme over the past 16 years has also resulted in other sorts of fallout — economic and social fallout.

The first thing that happened was that the French needed a lot of workers to build harbours, airfields, observation towers, barracks and so on. They preferred to hire Polynesians because it was cheaper for them. So, in the early 1960s, workmen began to come from all over French Polynesia to the new construction sites at Moruroa and Tahiti, and they brought their families with them.

A migration started from the outer islands towards Tahiti's capital, Papeete. But nothing was prepared for receiving these people.

Very rapidly these poor people became a class of proletarians [wage-workers], which there had never been before.

The men received what they considered a good salary, but what was really a pittance — about \$300 a month. Because they couldn't go fishing any more, they had to buy food, and they had to pay rent for houses.

Working class slums

For years these people lived in tents. Then, they were offered plots of land on the hillsides. But what sort of houses could they build there? Just shacks! And so a whole area of slums came into existence all around Papeete.

When the workers first arrived they might have only two or three children. But now they have eight, ten or even twelve, born since then in the slum areas. And as the children grow older, they need their own houses. So the slums have become enormous.

Even so, these families are smaller than be-

fore because they have had to leave behind on their home islands many elders, uncles, aunts, etc. Now there are just parents and children.

Often both parents work, and so the children have grown up left to their own devices, many not even going to school.

Today the situation has become worse — not only because of the natural increase in population, but because the army doesn't need these workers any longer. The construction was completed a long time ago and the workers laid off.

The French attitude was that the Polynesian workers would go back to their islands. But they don't want to go back. They've become city people.

Today, there may be as many as 20,000 such working class Polynesians in Papeete. The total population of Tahiti is only 100,000, so it's a huge number.

French colonisation

There has been another big social change during this period. French people have come out to Tahiti in large numbers for the first time — not just soldiers, but settlers.

Tahiti had never really been colonised before. It used to be virtually impossible for a Frenchman to make a living. But when the army took over Moruroa, it created new job opportunities for French civilians as well. They could now come here and make money.

Since 1964, about 1,200 French settlers

have arrived every year. That makes more than 20,000 today, and it is a problem in many ways.

In the first place they buy land. Land is very scarce, and so the prices go up.

Secondly, because as a rule they are more qualified, they get to fill the job vacancies and the Polynesians lose out.

Thirdly, they bring money. They expect nice, European-type houses, cars, TVs, nice clothes, and plenty of strong liquors and wines.

During the years when there were jobs, Polynesians too had money to spend on these things. They acquired new needs and habits. Now the French want to tell them: "There's no more money. Go back to your taro patches."

Also, France has spent money in devious ways. They've increased the number of people working for the government and extended social welfare benefits. They want to make the people economically dependent on France.

Education and culture

In the field of education and culture, there has been a very deliberate policy to transform the Polynesians into Frenchmen.

Children begin school at the age of three. The quality of education has been improved, but what is taught is the same as in France — French language, literature, history, culture, geography and so on. Nothing about Polynesia and its culture. Nothing about the islands around them.

Proindependence forces gain in election

More than 80,000 people in French Polynesia voted on May 23 to elect a new Territorial Assembly. A total of 398 candidates, representing 20 different parties, stood for 30 seats.

The Territorial Assembly, the local parliament, has only limited authority in the French colony. Decisive power rests with the French government and its appointed representatives.

However, even the limited form of self-rule which does exist was only won in 1977, following many years of struggle by the Polynesian people.

The local elections are regarded as a test of strength for the viewpoints of the different political parties, particularly on the question of independence.

The outgoing government of Francis Sanford was a coalition government of

three parties. It had been pledged to gaining eventual independence through the gradual extension of self-government, in collaboration with France.

In the elections the coalition suffered a big setback. Sanford's party, Ea Api, gained only one seat — his own.

No party won an outright majority. The right-wing, pro-French party, Tahoaaraa Huiraaatira, won 13 seats. Its leader, businessman Gaston Flosse, is to form a new coalition government with one or more of the other minor parties.

The new pro-independence socialist party, Ia Mana Te Nunaa (Power to the People) gained six seats. This is the first time the party has won seats in an election, and it is a big step forward for Tahitians who want total independence from France and an end to French tests.

This is a deliberate policy on the part of the French government. They hope that if all Tahitians can be made to speak French, they will begin to feel French and no longer ask for independence. Unfortunately, they are having some success. Today, you sometimes find children who speak nothing but French and their parents nothing but Tahitian [Maohi].

The mass media too is thoroughly controlled by the French government. They use the radio and TV for propaganda.

People are not very interested in the newspapers because they are very expensive and written in French. So the people rely on the radio and TV. The radio can reach all the outer islands.

Opponents of French rule and the French nuclear tests are never allowed a say. Only the French viewpoint is put across on the TV and radio.

Influence elections

Politically, in French Polynesia, everyone is a French citizen. That means that the French who come to Tahiti can vote there as soon as they step off the plane. Most of the 20,000 newcomers are adults, so they can vote, and that influences the outcome of elections.

It's a deliberate policy of the French government to encourage and assist immigration to its Pacific colonies, in order to hold on to them. And so, the French keep coming.

The island where it really matters is Tahiti. There are 100,000 people in Tahiti out of a total population of 150,000 in French Polynesia as a whole. Of this 100,000, between 20,000 and 25,000 are French. There are 10,000 Chinese, and there are also part-Europeans — no one knows how many.

If you add up all these people, and if they vote for the same candidates — which usually they do — you are talking about 40-45 percent of the population.

There is a great danger for the Tahitians that, like the Melanesians [Kanak] in New Caledonia, they will become a minority in their own country.

Atomic tests

The main reason for France hanging on to these islands is, of course, the bomb. Economically these colonies were not of much value in the past. But now the French government and the French army are determined to carry on with the tests at Moruroa and Fangataufa. They have made public statements to that effect.

In recent times they have exploded 10-12 bombs each year. Now they want to double that number, and to do that the islands must be politically safe. If the people were to win independence, they would throw out the French army and stop the tests.

There has always been a strong movement in Tahiti for self-government. All the major parties have called for the sort of internal self-government that the Cook Islands has in relation to New Zealand.

After ten years of long fights and hard battles, the local parliament was occupied for ten

months back in 1976-77. As a result, the French government made a few concessions. But the form of self-government that was finally introduced was very watered down. It gives only very limited powers to the local people, while the French still run the show.

Independence

In the time since then, more and more young Tahitians have grown impatient and have formed their own parties to demand full independence. Of course, they are also against the tests. The two things go together.

One such party has been formed by Charlie Ching, the nephew of the famous independence leader [Pouvanaa a Oopa]. Like his uncle, he was imprisoned in France, but is back

Guatemalan regime's new wave of terror

The Guatemalan regime of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt — to which the Reagan administration is seeking to restore U.S. military aid — declared a state of siege throughout the country on July 1.

Under the state of siege, civil liberties have been suspended, the press has been banned from publishing any information about "subversive groups," and special courts are to be established to impose the death penalty on those whom a Reuters news agency dispatch from Guatemala termed "insurgents found guilty of murder, sabotage, terrorism or treason."

"It is time to do what God orders," General Ríos Montt declared in announcing the state of siege. "The Communists have offered the red paradise, but all they have brought is a race of death."

In fact, the decree only codified the regime's policy of terror against the Indian peasants of the northwestern highlands of Guatemala. This policy has been applied with growing ruthlessness since Ríos Montt came to power in a March 23 coup.

As presented in much of the big-business news media, the aim of the young officers who carried out the coup was to curtail widespread human-rights violations and put an end to official corruption. But these cosmetic moves were directed mainly at gaining middle-class support in the cities and improving the country's international image. While kidnappings and murders by paramilitary death squads in the cities declined sharply, official terror in the countryside was actually stepped up.

The army's tactics were detailed in the May 7 issue of the London newsletter *Latin America Weekly Report*:

"The army strategy is to clear the population out of the guerrillas' support areas. Troops and militias move into the villages, shoot, burn or behead the inhabitants they catch; the survivors are machine-gunned from helicopters as they flee. Any survivors are later rounded up and taken to special camps where Church and aid agencies cope as best they can.

now and is a candidate in the May 23 elections.

By far the most successful of these young parties is the new socialist party. They have a Tahitian name, *Ia Mana Te Nunaa* — Power to the People. They have existed for five years and their membership has grown from year to year. In last year's election [for the French National Assembly] they got over 15 percent of the vote.

The test case for independence will be New Caledonia, because it is now moving in that direction. If France loses New Caledonia that only leaves French Polynesia and the islands of Wallace and Futuna. But if one colony goes, the rest are likely to want to follow. That is what we hope will happen very soon in Tahiti. □

"Between 24 and 29 April alone, opposition sources say, there have been massacres in five villages, with at least 150 men, women and children killed. There have been 17 such raids since mid-March."

One aim of the state of siege decree is to prevent news of such army killings from reaching the public in Guatemala and internationally. The rulers want to prevent the publication of editorials such as that which appeared in the May 17 issue of *El Gráfico*, a leading Guatemala City daily.

"The assassination of defenseless children and pregnant women is stupid, bestial," the paper's publisher, Jorge Carpio Nicolle, wrote. "It seems incredible, but this new outbreak of mass assassinations demonstrates that Guatemala is far from peace or, at least, from the diminution of violence. The world will again close its doors because we really are not worthy of any aid while this continues."

But the Reagan administration does indeed consider the bloody Guatemalan regime "worthy of aid." It has requested that Congress appropriate \$50,000 for military training of Guatemalan troops in the current fiscal year, and an additional \$250,000 for fiscal 1983. This is just the thin end of the wedge. Plans are also being made to boost economic aid to \$50 million and to provide the armed forces with helicopters. The sale of \$4 million in helicopter spare parts is also in the works.

A key aim of the March coup was to improve the regime's image abroad and pave the way for such a restoration of U.S. aid, which had been rejected by Guatemalan rulers since 1977 owing to State Department criticisms of human rights violations.

Not only have the revelations of continued massacres complicated Reagan's plans, but on June 9 General Ríos Montt dropped previously announced plans for elections, dumped the other two members of the junta, and declared himself president. He announced June 20 that there would be no elections in Guatemala for at least two and a half years. □

Fifth Congress of Communist Party

A time for self-criticism

By Pierre Rousset

[The following article appeared in the May 31, 1982, issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly magazine published in Paris.]

* * *

The Fourth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), December 14 to 20, 1976, was the congress of victory. The Fifth Congress, March 27 to 31, 1982, was the congress of self-criticism.

Le Duan, the general-secretary of the Central Committee, gave the general political report and announced very officially that "the Central Committee comes before this congress with a harsh self-criticism." He added that "following the congress, we propose to move to deepen criticism and self-criticism in the party, in state bodies at all levels, and to devise effective means to correct these very grave shortcomings and errors."¹

Like Le Duan, Pham Van Dong (the chairman of the council of ministers) included a highly critical assessment of the current situation and of the implementation of the line of the Fourth Congress in his report on social and economic problems. Le Duc Tho, who heads the organization bureau, did likewise in his report on "party-building work."

Pham Van Dong presented the self-criticism of the council of ministers in these terms:

The shortcomings and errors that have shown up in economic and social leadership and management over the last five years are serious. Following the harsh self-criticism of the party central committee presented in the political report by the general-secretary, Comrade Le Duan, I feel I must emphasize the direct responsibility for these shortcomings and errors — especially in the elaboration and implementation of the plan — that belongs mainly to the Council of Ministers.²

Naturally, the reporters to the congress went over the enormous objective problems the country had to face after the April 1975 victory: the terrible poverty and backwardness of the economy, the fearsome wounds inflicted by three decades of war, Vietnam's isolation mainly as a result of the vengeful policy of American imperialism, and the magnitude of the new conflict between Vietnam and China.

According to Le Duan:

1. Le Duan: "Rapport politique du Comité central," *Ve Congrès national du Parti communiste vietnamien*, Hanoi, March 1982, mimeographed, p. 18.

2. Pham Van Dong: "Les orientations, tâches et objectifs essentiels du développement économique et social pour 1981-1985 et la décennie 1980," *Ve Congrès national du Parti communiste vietnamien*, Hanoi, March 1982, mimeographed, pp. 8-9.

The underlying cause of the problems of our economy and everyday life is the fact that on the whole we still have an economy of small-scale production that has suffered the devastating impact of long wars and colonialism. For nearly three of the last five years we had to wage a war of national defense [in Kampuchea and on the Chinese border]. We had barely finished bandaging our old war wounds when new ones opened. To this was added continual and severe bad weather, and the ceaseless attempts of the enemy to undermine our work in many fields. The result was that our economy had to respond simultaneously to three basic and urgent problems: defending the homeland, stabilizing our people's living conditions, and gradually building the material and technical base for socialism. Under the circumstances, problems and imbalances are unavoidable.³

But Le Duan did not hide the seriousness and scope of the VCP's errors over the last five years. In fact his report noted that "the problems have also stemmed from shortcomings and errors of the party and state bodies, from the national down to grassroots level, in the field of economic and social leadership and management. In some fields, the shortcomings and errors in leadership and management have been the main cause of the onset and sharpness of the economic and social problems of the last few years. The resolutions of several Central Committee plenums have already pointed out these shortcomings and errors."⁴

Nature of the self-criticism

This is not the first time the Vietnamese leadership has drawn attention to the party's "shortcomings." But the nature and harshness of the assessment presented to the Fifth Congress supports the judgment of the editor of *Doàn Kêt*, the bimonthly of the General Union of Vietnamese in France, who writes that "without venturing into risky comparisons we can state that this is the second time in its fifty-year existence that the VCP's leadership has made such a solemn and harsh self-criticism — the other being the self-criticism it made in September 1956 on the errors committed in the course of the land reforms."⁵

Reading Le Duan's and Pham Van Dong's reports (Le Duc Tho's is not yet available in translation), one gets the impression that the main reason the congress was held was to present this self-criticism, recast the leadership bodies (especially the Central Committee), and adopt some measures concerning the relation-

ship between the party and the state. The fact is that the reports said very little on several controversial questions (such as the exact scope of the economic liberalization measures). The presentation of the third five-year plan (1981-1985) was also very general, although theoretically this plan is already being implemented.

The self-criticism did not encompass all questions. On the whole, the regional and international policy followed by the VCP since 1975 was defended in Le Duan's official report, especially the alliance with the USSR, the decision to join Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), the intervention in Kampuchea, and the need to preserve the "special relationship" with Kampuchea and Laos.

As far as these issues were concerned, the purpose of the congress may have been to implicitly condemn VCP members who may be critical of the leadership's international orientations. It is also worth noting that the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976, signalling the completion of the reunification of the country into one state, was given a vigorous endorsement:

*Our party and our people achieved a resounding success in having rapidly unified the country on the state level and having established the dictatorship of the proletariat over its whole territory*⁶ [emphasis in original].

Finally, the general analytical framework of the social and economic transition to socialism defined by the Fourth National Congress was upheld.

The balance sheet's criticism focused mainly on the judgment right after the victory concerning the problems to be expected and the goals to be realized by 1980, on the party's ability to concretely implement the orientations adopted at that time, the policy for consolidating the party and renewing cadres, and the evolution of relations between the party and state on the one hand and between the masses, the state, and the party on the other. This took place against the somber backdrop of the country's economic and social situation and of the VCP's ideological level.

Acute problems on economic front

Concerning the economic situation, after referring to some positive achievements (especially the first steps toward socialization in the South), Le Duan noted that:

over the last five years, besides successes and achievements, there have been a great many prob-

6. Le Duan, p. 2.

3. Le Duan, p. 14.

4. Le Duan, pp. 14-15.

5. *Doàn Kêt*, Paris, May 8, 1982, p. 5.

lems, and on the economic front, our country is now being confronted with many acute problems. The results of the implementation of the 1976-1980 five-year plan have not reduced the serious imbalances in our national economy. Production rises slowly while the population increases rapidly. National income does not yet meet the needs of social consumption; part of social consumption must rely on loans and aid. The economy is not yet in a position to allow for a process of accumulation.

There are shortages of food, fabric, and other essential consumer goods. The supply of energy and materials is posing a very acute problem. The same is true for the problem of transportation and communications. Many factories are operating below capacity. . . . Trade and prices are not stabilized. The number of unemployed workers is still high. Workers are still confronted with numerous hardships in their daily life. . . . [I]n some respects, capitalist and nonsocialist factors have encroached on socialist ground.⁷

Pham Van Dong reendorsed the orientation of the Fourth Congress. For the *whole* transitional period to socialism, he stated that the key question is industrialization and large-scale socialist production, with heavy industry remaining the priority. But in the *initial phase* of the transitional period, the concrete priority must be agriculture and consumer-goods industries whose development is indispensable both for raising the standard of living of the masses and for serving as a base for the development of heavy industry.

But he recognized that the Vietnamese leadership has "not yet clearly defined the strategy for the initial stage of socialist industrialization, which could serve as the scientific foundation upon which the state plan for 1976-1980 could be drawn up."⁸

More specifically, he said the concrete conditions of a newly reunited Vietnam were not taken sufficiently into account:

We did not fully perceive the problems and complexities that would arise in many fields during the whole historical stage in which we advance toward socialism on the basis of an economy where small-scale production still predominates. We did not appreciate the full magnitude of the economic and social upheavals of the postwar period and the grave effects of neocolonialism. We did not predict, as we should have, the problems that the hostile policy of the Chinese expansionists would create. . . . We did not fully realize the extent of the problems and complexities we would encounter in trying to overcome the weaknesses of our economic and social management, or the problems that unfavorable changes in some areas of the world situation would cause. At the same time we did not perceive all the real potential that would permit us to meet the requirements of the initial stage of socialist industrialization.

Our inadequate and inaccurate assessment of the situation caused us on the one hand to display subjectivism and impatience by setting the tasks and goals of the plan too high. . . ., which led to a considerable waste of labor power and goods. On the other hand we showed a great deal of conservatism

and slowness in implementing the line. . . ., in appreciating and exploiting our opportunities in many fields.⁹

Problem of bureaucratism

Le Duan also denounced "subjectivism and impatience, conservatism and slowness."¹⁰ He attacked the following evils: "bureaucratism, unrealism, lack of receptivity toward the realities of life. . . ., irresponsibility."¹¹ He continued that it was necessary to put an end to "bureaucratic management in administration"¹² and "a cumbersome apparatus that is excessively hierarchical . . . and run by a very large but not very effective staff."¹³ The criticism, in short, focused on the party itself, its relations with the masses and the state, and the activity of the state.

Of course, Le Duan began by stating that the important victories achieved since 1975 were "due to the steady leadership of our party, a party founded and steered by President Ho Chi Minh and unwaveringly faithful to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, to the nation's destiny and the people's cause."¹⁴ Nevertheless, despite these successes, "in recent years the mass movement has undergone an uneven development and in many cases, its effectiveness is low." And he added that "the level of consciousness is very uneven even among workers and youth."¹⁵

"The reason for these shortcomings," Le Duan stated, "is that the full impact of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not yet felt in the mobilization and education of the masses. . . ."

Many party organizations and party committees still do not try to understand the life and feelings of the different layers of the population. They still attach little importance to the task of making full use of the role and function of the mass organizations, and are negligent in their work of leading the revolutionary movement of the masses.

No small number of state bodies still act in bureaucratic, authoritarian, and arbitrary ways, and infringe on the people's rights to collective mastery. The activities of the mass organizations have also been bureaucratized; they have been slow to be improved, and no longer correspond to the new requirements of the masses. A number of party members and cadres who have been morally corrupted abuse their power, harass and insult the masses, and break the law, thereby undermining the prestige of the party and the state, and adversely affecting the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses.

In such a situation, Le Duan states, "our party must . . . find remedies to shortcomings in mass mobilization work, eliminate bureaucratization

tism in party institutions, state bodies, and mass organizations, and urgently launch a *truly powerful and broad mass movement*"¹⁶ [emphasis in the original].

Le Duan is particularly worried by the "manifestations of a decline in the revolutionary fiber, will to fight, and sense of responsibility among some party members and cadres, including responsible cadres at various levels, in various sectors," which has "adversely affected the party's prestige among the masses."¹⁷

Change since Fourth Congress

There is quite a contrast between the triumphant euphoria of the Fourth Congress in late 1976 and the severe and alarming picture presented to the Fifth Congress. Leaving aside the different contexts of the two congresses this contrast raises a fundamental political question.

The Fifth Congress was above all a time of official criticisms, namely that the party was unable to resolve the difficult problems of the postvictory period and these still had not been satisfactorily resolved. By contrast, the Fourth Congress was a time for presenting the lessons drawn from several decades of struggle for national liberation and social struggles. While at the Fifth Congress the VCP showed its political limitations, at the Fourth Congress it had shown the richness of the lessons that could be drawn from its experience, at least on several key questions.

This applies first of all to the question of the trajectory of the Vietnamese revolution. In the political report of the Central Committee given at the Fourth Congress in 1976, Le Duan had noted:

In the present period in which national independence and socialism are indissolubly linked, and at a time when in our country the working class plays a leading role in the revolution, the victory of the people's national democratic revolution also marks the beginning of the socialist revolution, the beginning of the period of transition to socialism, the beginning of the period in which the historical tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat are accomplished. This historic turning point took place in the North over 20 years ago [in 1954] and on a national scale after April 30 of last year [1975].¹⁸

Not only did Le Duan emphasize the link that exists in the colonial revolution between national liberation struggles, democratic struggles, and socialist struggles, but he also specified that the decisive transition of the revolutionary struggle from the democratic popular stage to the socialist stage takes place when state power is seized, at the moment of victory. In this, his statement is consistent with the fun-

7. Le Duan, pp. 13-14.

8. Pham Van Dong, p. 6.

9. Pham Van Dong, p. 9.

10. Le Duan, p. 16.

11. Le Duan, p. 17.

12. Le Duan, p. 16.

13. Le Duan, p. 89.

14. Le Duan, p. 11.

15. Le Duan, pp. 98-99.

16. Le Duan, pp. 99-100.

17. Le Duan, p. 132.

18. Le Duan: "Rapport politique du Comité central," *IVe Congrès national du Parti communiste vietnamien*, Foreign Language Publishers, Hanoi, 1977, p. 27.

damental conclusions of the theory of permanent revolution.

We should also note that the national bourgeoisie was no longer mentioned in Le Duan's description of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front (NLF). The NLF, "led by our party," was a "patriotic front encompassing organizations of workers, peasants, youth, women, students, intellectuals, religious organizations, and those representing various ethnic groups."¹⁹

Le Duan's 1976 report also analyzed the significance and depth of U.S. imperialism's involvement in the Second Indochina War and therefore also the impact of the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. "For American imperialism," said Le Duan, "it is the greatest defeat in the history of the United States. While the victory of the August revolution [1945] and of the resistance against the French aggressors signaled the beginning of the collapse of old-style colonialism, the victory of the resistance against the American imperialists showed the entire world that the demise of neocolonialism was inevitable."²⁰

In his report to the Fourth Congress in late 1976, Le Duan summarized the main features of the Vietnamese political-military theory. Because of their highly dialectical and political nature, the Vietnamese analyses represent a substantial advance over the Maoist concept of "surrounding the cities from the countryside."

Finally, we should recognize that the overall economic policy proposed at the Fourth Congress for the transition to socialism drew the lessons of the difficulties and successes experienced between 1954 and 1965 (and even after) in the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam. It avoided the pitfalls of forced collectivization, of absolute priority on heavy industry in the Stalinist fashion, and ultraleft Maoist voluntarism.

Nevertheless, on two occasions (in 1956 and in 1982) the Vietnamese Communist Party — which was able to confront the immense difficulties of the struggle for power and assimilated many lessons during its long fight, a party that had been put to the test a thousand times — was plunged into a severe crisis a few years after taking power. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh had sounded the alarm against the "bureaucratism" of a party in government. The Fourth Congress in turn had called for a struggle against bureaucratism. Yet the bureaucracy is now encroaching more than ever in Vietnam. What accounts for this failure for a party that has so many impressive successes to its credit?

The problems of the transition to socialism and of a party in power are not of the same type as those of the revolutionary struggle and of a combat party. Moreover, the mold in which the party was shaped — the long and difficult military struggle for national liberation — can become an obstacle once the problem at hand is economic planning and the democratic or-

ganization of the new society.

The postvictory period constitutes a new test, which raises a new question, as the Vietnamese historian Le Than Koi notes. He asked: "In this struggle against bureaucratism, which represents . . . one of the major obstacles to democracy as well as economic, social, and cultural development, will the Vietnamese party be able to display that creativity it so brilliantly demonstrated in the political and military field?"²¹ We are compelled to recognize that as of now the answer is no.

Signs of an internal crisis

Of course, as is the custom, the Fifth Congress appeared unanimous, and the new leadership appeared united. Six former Political Bureau members, including Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, were not reelected to that body, but they remained well-placed inside the Central Committee. For some years now, General Giap has no longer held a key position and the various traditional "sensitivities" existing within the Vietnamese leadership seem to be still represented in the leading bodies with Le Duan, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, Le Duc Tho, etc. One could go so far as to think that the departure of six former members of the Political Bureau corresponds to a willingness to progressively renew the central leadership (the Political Bureau and Central Committee Secretariat).

It is not the same at the Central Committee level. The Central Committee has grown from 133 members (including 32 alternates) to 152 (of whom there are 36 alternates). There are 68 people elected for the first time (32 of whom are full members), which represents 45 percent of the members of the new Central Committee.

Thirty-nine members of the previous Central Committee — many of whom held key posts — were not reelected. Furthermore, for a long time sectors of the party have been asking for sanctions to be taken against cadres — including those at the top — who are worthless or corrupt.

This demand had been formulated by the intellectual Nguyen Khac Vien, editor of *Vietnamese Studies and Vietnam Courier*. In a letter to the National Assembly he drew an alarming picture of the situation, arguing that "it cannot go on like this and requires important changes on all fronts." Vien denounced the policy of building up the apparatus, "a policy of promoting people with mediocre politics to key positions," which passes over creative militants in favor of "intellectuals who specialize in opportunism and crudely flatter the leadership."²²

Nguyen Khac Vien demanded that guilty or incompetent cadres no longer be protected by the apparatus. The same demand was expressed in the regional congresses in prepara-

tion for the National Congress, to such an extent that the government radio had to give it an airing.²³

One meeting of the Central Committee was all that was needed to directly prepare the Fourth Congress in 1976. The political report had been published in the press several weeks before that congress in order to allow a public discussion. This time, on the other hand, it was necessary to have three sessions of Central Committee meetings in four months (including a marathon session of 25 days in October-November 1981) and to put back the date of the Fifth Congress several times. The fact that there was no public discussion of the report beforehand is a sign of the conflicts that have emerged.

On December 31, 1981, the VCP had 1,727,784 members. In five years, 370,000 new members had been recruited — 86 percent of them from the Young Communists. In light of previous membership figures, this confirms that more than 100,000 VCP members were placed outside the ranks of the party when membership cards were up for renewal during the last two years. These members were dropped "for lack of competence, opportunism, illicit trafficking, speculation, embezzlement, extortion, or insulting behavior towards the masses."²⁴

Despite this massive purge, Le Duan notes in his report to the Fifth Congress that "there are people who, from all evidence, do not deserve to be party members but still have not been expelled."²⁵

Finally, it is clear that on many questions regarding national or international political line there is far from political unanimity today inside the VCP. It is certain that a number of the expelled party members were expelled for being "soft" on the Chinese leadership. Furthermore, in his report to the Fifth Congress, Le Duc Tho sharply criticized "certain Maoist elements who have betrayed the party and have put themselves on the payroll of the enemy" and "opportunist elements who have tried to sow division in the party."²⁶

But it must also be noted that the ambassador to Moscow (Nguyen Huu Mai), his predecessor in that post (Nguyen Huu Khieu), and the president of the Soviet-Vietnamese Friend-

23. Cf. Nayan Chanda, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 16, 1982, p. 15: "There were also open calls by provincial council delegates for the purge of leaders who made mistakes or were thought to have degenerated. A Hanoi Radio report in February said that the Ha Bac provincial congress 'suggested that the central committee promptly take measures to expel from the party those who have degenerated, including those holding key posts, because they are obstacles that wreck internal solidarity and decrease the confidence of the masses.'" In this article there is a listing of the main leaders dropped from the Central Committee at the Fifth Congress. Chanda puts the number of party members expelled at 200,000.

24. *Doàn Kêt*, Paris, April 14, 1982, p. 3.

25. Le Duan, 1982, p. 145.

26. Quoted by Nayan Chanda, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 16, 1982, p. 17.

19. Le Duan, 1977, p. 24.

20. Le Duan, 1977, p. 21.

21. Le Than Khoi, *Socialisme et Développement au Vietnam*. IEDS Tiers-Monde, Paris, 1978, p. 51.

22. Paul Quinn-Judge presented large extracts from this letter by Nguyen Khac Vien in the February 26, 1982, *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

ship Association (Xuan Thuy) were not re-elected to the Central Committee — which seems to confirm the existence of serious tensions between Hanoi and Moscow.

One-party system and bureaucracy

The Vietnamese leadership has called for a moral and ideological rearming of the party. The door must be shut on the opportunists. The leading role of the party must be maintained but at the same time the masses' "right to collective mastery" must be defended. The party organizations have to be separated more sharply from those of the state in order to allow the state to fully play its administrative role and to avoid the frequent accumulation of posts by the same person.

According to the May 8, 1982, *Doàn Kêt* this was one of the main proposals contained in Le Duc Tho's report and, later, the Council of Ministers was reshuffled so as to considerably reduce the weight of Political Bureau members within it.

On the economic level Pham Van Dong recommended the adoption of "a dynamic mechanism of management, capable of eliminating bureaucratic centralism" and able to "develop a spirit of initiative in local, regional, and sectoral structures, and at the same time permit the central structures to take in hand the concerns and links that have to be administered."²⁷

More generally, it is necessary to "stimulate the revolutionary mass movement" and initiate a vast "emulation campaign." "The working people exercise their right of collective mastery through the state under the leadership of the party." The people "act in the first place through the National Assembly and the people's councils at different levels." He stated that it is important therefore to fight against the "formal character" of certain of these "elected bodies" so that they really accomplish the "functions, tasks, and duties bestowed on them by the Constitution."²⁸

The reports given to the Fifth Congress touch on real problems. But the regime's general conception of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and especially of the role of the party in society, remains unchanged. This general conception contributes to aggravating the sociopolitical problems that the Vietnamese leadership declares it wants to fight against.

How, for example, do you block the path of "opportunists" who infiltrate the party? During a revolutionary struggle for power, joining the Communist party means running a considerable risk, means accepting severe sacrifices. Opportunists do not knock down the door to join. But once victory is achieved, all the careerists flood the party with applications for membership. This inevitable tendency is strengthened and fed by the role the CP has in Vietnam, as in other socialist countries.

In practice, Vietnam has a one-party system. Furthermore the major debates on politi-

cal line are restricted to the top leadership — they do not teach the people's committees or even the party rank-and-file. Party members do not therefore gain experience or test themselves in the framework of a free debate among the masses. The party, which holds a monopoly on political power, is generally protected and therefore cut off from living society. Except when there is very strong tension, everything is sorted out among peers, in secret, at



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various levels of the apparatus. The hierarchy of wages and advantages (legal or otherwise) is patterned after the party's political hierarchy. To join the party and to hold a post in it is still one of the most effective ways of climbing the social ladder, of having privileges. How then does one block the path of the careerists?

How to ensure rule of masses?

The question is how to ensure the right of the masses to be the "collective masters." Le Duan notes that the special arena for the action of the masses is the state (the National Assembly and the people's committees).

However the role of leadership is assigned to the party, while the state only "administers." Furthermore, in the constitution itself, the power of the single party is institutionalized and the state is subordinated to the party. Doesn't this mean that the masses not only are deprived in practice of the right to real discussion of the major political options, but further that they see themselves formally subordinated on the institutional level to the party? How then can they benefit from this inviolate right to be the "collective masters"? How then can the arbitrary power of the cadres and administrators be broken, how can bureaucratic developments be stemmed?

There are deepgoing objective causes for the development of a bureaucracy in Vietnam, and

they cannot be simply swept aside: the country's extreme backwardness and great economic poverty, imperialist pressures, dependency on Soviet aid, and the like.

But the Fifth Congress of the VCP nevertheless recognized that subjective factors (particularly the action of the party and state) also play a very important and occasionally decisive role in the growth of the bureaucracy in Vietnam and in the demobilization of the masses. The reports at the congress very much centered on the relationship between the party, the state, and the people, and this is indeed one of the key problems of the transition to socialism.

But they did not question either the party leadership's monopoly of debate, nor the single-party system, nor the subordination of the state to the party, nor the National Assembly being cut off from the people's committees, nor the hierarchy of salaries and advantages that go with high posts for cadres. However on these questions as well, there seem to be differences even inside the Vietnamese Communist Party apparatus.

More generally, the Vietnamese leadership presents a very restricted analysis of the roots of the bureaucratic phenomenon. They see it as a legacy of the past and of the weight of small-scale commodity production in society and of people's state of mind (which is not so very different from the first analyses made by the Soviet Left Opposition).

Therefore the response they hope to mount to the danger of bureaucracy rests above all in an ideological rearmament, an organizational purge, better leadership of mass work and, in the long term, the development of large-scale socialist production.

However, the experience of the USSR, China, and the "people's democracies" shows that the bureaucratic phenomenon also has its roots in the very contradictions of the society in transition to socialism — which of course are exacerbated in the existing workers states by the economic and social backwardness, poverty, and relative international isolation caused by the failure of revolutions in the main imperialist centers.

It is true that economically and socially, in the long term, industrialization is indispensable for the stabilization of a real system of socialist democracy. But the example of the USSR proves that progress in industrialization does not necessarily result in pushing back the bureaucratization process. For a whole period, the bureaucracy is perfectly capable of drawing advantage from any economic development.

It is the specific contradictions of a society in transition to socialism that bestows such importance on the form of the political regime and on the political content of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The regime in Vietnam as outlined in the constitution facilitates rather than opposes the steady strengthening of the bureaucracy's power. But this fundamentally important discussion was not tackled in the reports to the Fifth National Congress of the VCP. □

27. Pham Van Dong, 1982, p. 67.

28. Le Duan, 1982, pp. 87-88.

Prospects for the revolution

Advances in war open new opportunities in class struggle

By Babak Zahraie

[The following article was written in May.]

* * *

TEHRAN — More than three years since the victory of the February 1979 insurrection, the Iranian revolution remains at the center of politics in the Middle East.

The Iranian workers and toilers — who overthrew the Pahlavi monarchy in such a powerful and united way, thus handing back to U.S. imperialism the last remains of that 2,500-year-old savagery; and who so successfully backed up the occupation of the “den of spies,” thus signaling the will of the entire Muslim world to put an end to imperialist rule — are now on the verge of delivering the final defeat to imperialist-backed aggression 20 months after the full-scale invasion launched by Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

The days of Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship are numbered. The entire Middle East is witnessing the entry of the broad masses of oppressed and exploited onto the arena of anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist struggle.

The position of the homeless, deprived, and superexploited Palestinians has been strengthened in the face of Israeli warmongering. Now, the “Iranian syndrome” — mass demonstrations and strikes, the powerful weapons of the struggling proletarian and nonproletarian masses — is being utilized in the anti-Zionist struggle. Sustained waves of street demonstrations and strikes of unprecedented scope have erupted throughout the occupied territories of the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. This movement enjoys powerful international support, in addition to support from the Arab and Muslim countries.

In the Arab and Muslim countries ruled by repressive right-wing regimes, from the Sudan and Egypt to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the grave-like stillness has been broken. The Iranian revolution has proven that the oppressed can stand up to and even defeat the oppressor. This fact brings new awakening and political consciousness throughout the Middle East.

The fate of Saddam Hussein has placed a question mark over the heads of all the regimes that have for so long collaborated with imperialism. Anti-Zionist demagoguery no longer provides adequate cover for safeguarding imperialist interests and duping the broad masses of the oppressed.

Even inside Israel a movement of solidarity with the Palestinians of the occupied territories has emerged. Discontent with Begin’s war policies has risen among the population of the border towns affected by Palestinian retaliation.

Never before in the period since the old Ottoman Empire broke up and colonial ministates were created, opening the way to rampant imperialist penetration and domination over the oil-rich Middle East, has such an explosive situation existed.

The imperialist diplomacy of holding entire peoples at gunpoint, robbing them through the signing of treaties with kings, sheiks, emirs, khans, and of course presidents, is now being challenged by something more powerful. Now, the diplomacy of workers striking, of oppressed masses demonstrating in the streets, of armed fighters doing battle to the death in trenches to overthrow imperialist rule and its misery, racism, exploitation, repression, brutality, and poverty, is the ascendant diplomacy.

Neither Camp David, nor the Rapid Deployment Force, nor the sales of Phantom jets and AWACS planes are a match for the rising anti-imperialist mass activity of oppressed peoples numbering in the millions.

Rulers in a blind alley

The monstrous horrors of the Israeli war machine against the Palestinian and Arab peoples, along with the suffering caused by high living costs, unbearable housing, lack of health care and social assistance, chronic unemployment, repression, and the growing gap between rich and poor, everywhere engender a revolutionary mood. Meanwhile, the ruling classes of the oppressed countries of the Middle East — the bourgeoisie and their hirelings in the governments — cling to their imperialist masters for help. More and more, they are all heading down a blind alley from which they will never extricate themselves without tremendous upheavals.

The counterrevolutionary Camp David accords have been joined by no new partners. The daily newspapers of Saudi Arabia are running editorial after editorial saying that the real threat in the Middle East is the Islamic Revolution of Iran and that the question of Israel is secondary. They are calling for new counterrevolutionary alliances to block the expanding Iranian revolution.

But such attempts to quickly form alliances among the Gulf countries — Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and the Saudis — led by U.S. imperialism have come to nothing, as has all the talk about regional alliances and the security of the Gulf. The last emergency meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which took up the situation in which Saddam Hussein was losing the war, had to disband after failing to reach any decisions. Meanwhile, their money and massive

aid to Hussein have not rescued him from his impending fate.

This indicates the overall situation of difficulty facing Zionist Israel, the United States, and its allies in the region. The Fahd Plan,¹ initiated to meet the requirements of Camp David by way of the back door, is already in shambles. It remains as impossible as ever to defuse the Palestinian question through diplomatic maneuvers.

Nor has the international racist smear campaign by U.S. imperialism against Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi yielded the desired results, despite the saber-rattling over the downing of Libyan jets and the economic measures taken by the oil monopolies.

Contradictions facing imperialists

In southern Lebanon, the experience of last summer’s unsuccessful 14-day Israeli invasion is still alive. Despite the huge military buildup that has taken place for months, the Zionist plan for an all-out invasion against the Palestinian liberation movement has been stalled. The Zionists know full well that the entire world will view them as the aggressor. The United States knows that such an undertaking would deliver major blows to the strategic counterrevolutionary alliances that must involve the Arab regimes as well.

The objective contradictions of the whole of imperialist interests in the Middle East — based both on a more and more isolated and weakened colonial-settler state of Israel and on a network of semicolonies — are coming to the fore. To mend the situation for the time being, the imperialist planners are beating their drums in the Arab world for Egypt and Hosni Mubarak. Given the deepening anti-imperialist sentiment in all the Arab countries, this move too has no more value than a momentary stunt.

This is the situation in the Middle East, where in just three years’ time the powerful Iranian revolution has confirmed its right to exist and is approaching complete victory over Saddam Hussein. The imperialists and their allies live from one day to the next while mass anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist movements are growing before their eyes. While Hussein’s defeat unfolds, no strong axis of counterrevolution is emerging. The relationship of class forces between revolution and counterrevolution throughout the region is shifting further to the detriment of the imperialists, Israel, and

¹ The Fahd Plan was proposed by Saudi Crown Prince Fahd in August 1981. It called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state in return for Arab recognition of Israel.

their allies. Alongside the weakening position of the imperialists, their alternative channel for preserving the status quo, the collaboration of the Soviet bureaucracy, has also narrowed.

International context

In the context of the world political situation — the extension of broad anti-imperialist struggles in Central America; the revolutionary anti-imperialist alliance forged between Nicaragua, Cuba, Grenada, and the Salvadoran rebels; the untenable position in which the U.S. imperialists find themselves with regard to opposition to their war efforts at home and internationally — these fundamental changes in the Middle East stand out.

The imperialist war drive against Argentina

War and the development of the Iranian revolution

The objective circumstance of approaching victory against the Hussein/imperialist invasion makes it certain that the Iranian revolution will not be limited to the stages it has gone through up to now, and that the revolution in the Middle East will not be limited to Iran.

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The roots of the war that for 20 months has dominated every aspect of life in Iran lie in the victory of the February insurrection.

With the overthrow of the Iranian monarchy, a period of confrontation between imperialism and the armed people was opened. The fact that the imperialists could not intervene militarily, given the context of their defeat in Vietnam, gave the unfolding class struggle an opportunity to avert violence and bloodshed. A period of patient propaganda, agitation, and organization of the masses opened up. Given the scope and depth of the revolutionary upheaval — especially in the regions of the oppressed nationalities — and given the ultraleft, confrontationist policies of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships (although the now-weakened Iranian bourgeoisie was helped by the resort to armed conflict in Kurdistan and Turkman Sahra), the imperialists' inability to intervene limited the scope of bourgeois violence in the revolutionary process.

The oppressed and exploited of Iran could now, for the first time in their history, organize to break the yoke of imperialism and achieve genuine independence. They could organize militarily for the defense of the revolution, and organize to reconstruct their plundered and ravaged country.

Imperialist domination and more than 50 years of Pahlavi autocracy; the experience of the defeat of two revolutions — the first through violence and suppression by the tsar's military might, the second through the 1953 CIA coup, the way for which was paved by the betrayals by the National Front and the Tudeh Party — and the break in the continuity of the Iranian Marxist movement for half a century: these elements all combined to create the situation in which the dispossessed of Iran, despite

over the Malvinas Islands likewise shows how fragile counterrevolutionary alliances with semicolonial dictatorships can become.

In the Middle East, despite the deep crisis of proletarian leadership, anti-imperialist alliances are being forged that have the upper hand over imperialist alliances. When Syria, Libya, and Algeria declare that the entry of Iranian military forces into Iraqi territory would be directed only against Saddam Hussein and would not harm the Arab cause, the superior gravitational pull of the revolutionary process becomes clear.

On the basis of this general framework of the changes in the Middle East, a correct evaluation of the present conjuncture and prospects of the Iranian revolution can be made.

the force of their heroism and struggles, their revolutionary strikes, their demonstrations by the millions, and their mass insurrection that toppled the monarchy, nevertheless lacked a leadership that could put at their disposal the whole arsenal of experience accumulated in the anti-imperialist struggles of earlier generations.

What was lacking was a national, anti-imperialist, conscious leadership aware of the contradictory roles of the bourgeois and landlord class forces on the one hand and of the broad proletarian and semiproletarian masses on the other in the struggle against imperialism. Hence the victorious February insurrection left the bourgeois forces in the ascendancy in the political arena and ushered in the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan.

Rise of a republican leadership

A new element was present in the third Iranian revolution. In the first two revolutions, the Iranian bourgeoisie — born out of the penetration of Western capitalism and nurtured under the tutelage of the monarchy — had never produced a republican current. With the approach of the February insurrection, however, a republican leadership represented by Imam Khomeini rose to prominence over all the existing bourgeois forces.

Uncompromising opposition to the shah or to his replacement by the crown prince, a political stand against the whole of the Pahlavi monarchy, gave this leadership its sway over all the old tendencies of the Iranian bourgeois democracy. This tendency later became known as the Islamic Republican current. Thus the coalition that took power was led by the Imam and included all the remains of the Iran Freedom Movement (Bazargan), the National Front,² and a host of other bourgeois parties and clerical groupings. This coalition based itself on the remains of the old state structure and moved to safeguard the bourgeois social order against the historic flood of mass activity.

2. National Front — a bourgeois-nationalist grouping that arose out of the struggle for constitutional

This opened the period of the Bazargan government, with its policy of collaboration with U.S. imperialism to control and contain the revolutionary masses and to reconstruct the severely damaged state bureaucracy belonging to the bourgeoisie, the landlords, and the khans.

In this context obstacles were placed in the way of workers' self-organization into *shoras* (committees), the movement of the oppressed nationalities for their rights, the peasants' demands for land, the demands of women for equality, and the extension of democratic rights. The weakness of revolutionary anti-imperialist leadership was exacerbated by the considerable and misleading influence of the ultraleft petty-bourgeois groupings, the Fedayan and the Mujahedeen.

Fall of Bazargan

However great this government's offensive against the independent mobilization and organization of the broad masses, important gains were still achieved. Iran's alliance with Israel and South Africa was broken. All the banks and the majority of industries and imperialist enterprises were nationalized. This is not to mention the deep blows suffered by the bourgeoisie and its organs of class rule — the top military brass, the factory managements, the local governments, and so on.

Eleven months passed before the new ruling coalition suffered its first major rift. The masses in their millions were demanding action in the direction of deepening the anti-imperialist struggle. Workers in the factories were demanding control over the management. The newly born mass formations such as the Jihad-e Sazandegi (Crusade for Reconstruction) and the Sepah-e Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) and the *shoras* were experiencing the offensive of a government whose state bureaucracy had been turned against them.

Parallel to this, the Bazargan government had aligned itself with the imperialist propaganda against the Islamic Republicans. Continuation of this government meant acceptance of secondary status by the Islamic Republican current in the ruling coalition. The action by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line [i.e., the occupation of the U.S. embassy] triggered the resurgence of mass anti-imperialist activity. The Bazargan government fell.

The seizure of the U.S. embassy was backed by mobilizations throughout the country. The confrontation with imperialism deepened. A threat of imminent U.S. military intervention loomed over the country. Mass mobilizations and organizations went through fresh development and extension. There began a sharp de-

rule and nationalization of the oil industry in the early 1950s. Its most prominent figure, Mohammed Mosadegh, carried through the oil nationalization as prime minister in 1951. He was toppled in the CIA-organized coup of 1953, that restored the shah to his throne. Afterwards, some of the elements of the National Front that held an Islamic outlook formed the Iran Freedom Movement.

cline in the influence of the ultraleft petty-bourgeois groups — the Fedayan and Mujahedeen — within the mass anti-imperialist movement. Now the Islamic Republican current supported the seizure of the embassy, the better to control the mass movement.

Workers gain ground

The fall of Bazargan's government did not mean his exclusion from the Council of the Revolution. This council now acted as the main government, and its composition evolved toward Islamic Republican dominance. Both the Freedom Movement and the National Front — the two oldest, most experienced, and cunning promonarchy bourgeois-nationalist forces — suffered severe blows. In fact, the National Front was shipwrecked.

The workers shoras were greatly extended. All major and minor Iranian industries were now witnessing sharp conflicts between the workers and the managements over the creation of shoras and workers control. Successive marches of workers took place in Tehran in solidarity with the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line. The Fedayan and Mujahedeen — whose ultraleft policies counterposed confrontationalist actions and a campaign for formal democracy to the ongoing anti-imperialist mobilizations — were pushed to the sidelines in the factories. Following the February insurrection, these two tendencies had been the dominant political groups in the factories, but now their influence was rapidly on the wane. These two tendencies never recovered after the seizure of the U.S. embassy.

Working-class struggles were being led by Islamic currents. In the main industries, such as oil in the south, the shoras were led by Islamic militant currents that had gained their authority in the struggle to overthrow the shah. They spearheaded the general mobilization of workers in solidarity with the seizure of the U.S. embassy. In Isfahan, one of the main industrial cities of Iran, shoras gained dominance in all industries — steel, huge textile mills, and also smaller factories.

In Gilan Province, the process of unification of factory shoras took place at the provincial level. More than 50 factory shoras held several conferences for unification. In Tehran, the two main workers organizations — the shoras with headquarters at the Polytechnic University and the shoras with headquarters at Workers House — came under the sway of Islamic currents.

Life in Iranian factories was filled with the initiatives of workers organizing themselves and producing many essential goods that could no longer be imported. Actions in solidarity with the seizure of the embassy simultaneously heightened the awareness of workers as to the need to fight the imperialists' economic boycott.

Demand for land

The demand for land now swept the countryside. Peasant marches in solidarity with the seizure of the U.S. embassy began to take place. The Jihad was emerging as a national

network of militant youth and students from the cities to aid the countryside. The Council of the Revolution had to come up with decrees on land distribution. Despite the strict provisions of these decrees, land was parcelled out in many areas. The activists of the Jihad and the deepening class struggle of the poor and landless peasants in the countryside broke through the blockage of Section C of the land-reform law and land was distributed.

In the period before the seizure of the embassy, the bourgeoisie had sought to sharpen its instruments of class violence through military conflicts in the regions of the oppressed nationalities. Now the armed conflicts in Kurdistan were replaced with a truce and negotiations.

The central threat of imperialist military intervention and the mass pressure for preparation, organization, and action to counter this threat found expression in the struggle to create the Army of 20 Million, proposed by the Imam. The Pasdaran was expanded, but the military mobilizations at the factory, neighborhood, and village level did not go beyond scattered and limited military training.

The society was now gripped with the need for a second revolution. Mass agitation focused on the task of uprooting U.S. imperialism from the country. The Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line proposed that the Labor Ministry be put under the control of workers shoras; that the Agriculture, Highways and Transport, and the Social Welfare ministries be put under the control of the Jihad; and that the military resources of the country (that is, the armed forces) be put at the disposal of the Pasdaran for the creation of the Army of 20 Million.

The theme that the capitalists aid the imperialists, that counterrevolutionaries had taken cover in the state bureaucracy, was the focus of agitation. The workers in the bazaar set up a conference to organize a system for exposing hoarding and sabotage by the superrich in the bazaar. The leaders of the Islamic Republican current moved fast and held a counter-conference of the bazaar capitalists to assure them their rights and prerogatives would not be tampered with.

Bani-Sadr's presidency

Given the scope and the demands of the mass anti-imperialist upsurge, and the vehement hostility of the bourgeoisie to the seizure of the U.S. embassy and to the mass struggles that ensued, the mechanism of elections was utilized to block the independent mass mobilizations and the threat that these mobilizations might get out of control. A new government would buy the bourgeoisie enough time to prepare the counterrevolution with the help of imperialism. Elections for the presidency and for the Islamic Majlis (parliament) were held.

Out of this election, in order to piece together the ruins of the Bazargan government, the attempt to create an authoritative and centralized regime through the Bani-Sadr presidency took shape. Abolhassan Bani-Sadr had spear-

headed the campaign against Bazargan, basing himself on the Islamic currents in the revolutionary institutions. He led the campaign against the miserable politics of the centrists [Fedayan and Mujahedeen], calling for discussions to bring them back from their "deviated" path. He gave a speech at the bazaar to the effect that the capitalists must heed the demands of the masses. And he dodged the question of the hostages with slick maneuvers and propaganda to the effect that holding hostages would not solve Iran's economic problems. In this way, Bani-Sadr sealed his presidency. At the same time, the Islamic Republicans won a majority of seats in parliament.

No sooner had the elections ended than a united offensive by the ruling coalition began against the development of shoras and workers' struggles. The leaders of the oil workers shoras of Abadan — who had successfully defied the rule of one government-appointed management after another on the question of workers control — were arrested and transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran. The arrest of these Islamic workers' leaders was combined with a series of arrests of members of the centrist groupings in the factories. The latter had already been outflanked by the workers' struggles.

Bani-Sadr's presidency was to be used to deepen the offensive against the centrists and eventually to crush these already weakened tendencies in the mass movement. The blocking of labor's road to independent political action was thereby facilitated.

Counterrevolutionary attempts fail

The imperialists' military action at Tabas³ was aimed at defusing the hostage question in such a way as to emphasize the imperialists' counterrevolutionary might. But the failure of this action in a desert fiasco meant that a show-down over the hostage question and their release would be required for a successful offensive against the organization and mobilization of the working class and the mass movement.

The crumbling of the Nojeh coup d'état⁴ followed the failure at Tabas. This confirmed that the counterrevolutionary planning and alliances of the U.S. imperialists, the Iranian capitalists, and their supporters in the armed forces command and the state bureaucracy were in total disarray.

Under the pressure of the deep anti-imperialist mobilizations across the country that had even cracked the military barracks, the plan for the Nojeh counterrevolutionary coup disintegrated even before it was exposed and crushed. The result of the failure of the counterrevolutionary attempts of the imperialists and the Iranian bourgeoisie was clear: a major test of strength between the imperialists and the

3. The abortive April 1980 military raid on Iran launched by the Carter administration.

4. In July 1980 the Iranian government broke up a large-scale U.S.-backed attempt at a military takeover by army officers and followers of the shah's last prime minister, Shahpur Bakhtiar.

masses was not in the offing. Fresh major factional disputes erupted within the ruling coalition, which by now was composed mainly of petty-bourgeois representatives of Iranian capitalism.

The ultraleft policies of the centrists were by now causing a shift in their base of support to the middle class.

The blows suffered by the imperialists and the Iranian bourgeoisie meant that the petty-bourgeois leaders in charge of the government had to bear the weight of the test of strength with the mass movement over the hostage question. But the deep support that existed among the toiling masses for the Students Following the Imam's Line meant that even the transfer of the hostages to the control of Sadegh Ghotbzadeh's Foreign Ministry proved impossible. In this context, a decree by the Imam postponed any solution of the hostage problem pending a decision by the parliament.

Objectively, the working class and its allies found themselves in a favorable position for winning further concessions and strengthening their organizations. Big strides forward were possible in all arenas of the class struggle: military defense of the revolution, extension of shoras, workers control of production, land distribution, the rights of the oppressed nationalities, democratic rights. But the acute crisis of proletarian leadership and the deepening ultraleft policies of the centrists meant that more time and experience in anti-imperialist struggle would be required before the working class could exploit this extraordinary situation and demonstrate its independent role and power by taking the helm of the anti-imperialist movement.

Instead, the political scene was dominated by the new faction fight within the ruling group along the lines of the Islamic Republican current against all the other bourgeois trends. All the petty-bourgeois centrist groupings were sucked into taking sides in this factional dispute. The possibility of forging an independent pole of mass action was further forfeited. Several important incidents underscored the fact that without a tested, skilled, and resolute class-struggle working-class leadership, progress cannot be guaranteed even in a favorable context of developing mass struggles. Moreover, misleadership can produce the opposite result.

Developments in Kurdistan

In Kurdistan, the stalemate produced through negotiations was broken by the Komaleh's⁵ plan to seize power in the city of Sanandaj. Such an insurrection, prepared by an ultraleft militarist organization, produced the opposite outcome. The Komaleh tendency was shipwrecked. The lack of a clear anti-imperialist strategy for achieving the rights of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination was confirmed.

5. Komaleh — Revolutionary Organization of the Working People of Kurdistan, a group with Maoist origins.

The strength and solidarity the Kurdish masses had gained through struggle would now be replaced by division, confusion, and even demoralization. The weak position of the Iranian bourgeoisie with regard to the Kurdish struggle was altered overnight. A few days of resistance by the army barracks in Kurdistan to the insurrectionary attacks of the Komaleh was enough. Military forces of the central government, which had been confined to barracks, resumed their movement. In the ensuing conflicts, the government forces gained the upper hand.

Failing to heed the exigencies of the all-Iran confrontation with imperialism, infected by the propaganda of the ultraleft centrist tendencies claiming that the revolution's confrontation with imperialism was fake, not seeking alliances with the anti-imperialist mobilizations of the working and toiling masses throughout Iran, lacking a bold program for mobilizing the peasant population for its social demands, and reducing the strategy and tactics of mass struggle to questions of military firepower and planning — in this way, the Komaleh leadership invited its own tragic failure.

A similar situation, though on a smaller scale, unfolded in Turkman Sahra. There, the military planners of the Fedayan had based themselves on the Turkmeni middle peasants. The Baluchi agricultural laborers were shoved aside. The demands of the poor and landless Turkmeni peasants were ignored. Instead, the Fedayan organization spent an entire year building concrete bunkers and making military preparations.

Here again, the lack of anti-imperialist revolutionary leadership — this time the failure of the Fedayan — produced negative results for the Turkmeni masses. The bourgeois politicians reaped the most benefit. Bani-Sadr moved in as the champion of democracy. He sponsored a live four-hour television debate between the Fedayan on one side and the Pasdaran and the army on the other. Before the whole nation the Fedayan concluded that in building their concrete bunkers they had not foreseen a possible attack with 120mm cannon; they complained this was not "fair." After the adventurist tragedy in Turkman Sahra, it did not take long for the Fedayan to split along lines supporting different factions of the ruling group.

Closing of universities

A third incident — more important because it happened in all the urban centers where the

proletarian masses reside — occurred around the question of the cultural revolution. A secret plan was drawn up by the Islamic University Societies for taking over all the universities, removing the administrations, and bringing fundamental changes in curriculum tied to the needs of economic reconstruction, agriculture, and health care.

The Islamic University Societies had expanded and had organized solidarity with the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line. They had close ties to the Jihad. No sooner had the initial actions for the realization of their plan been put to the test than the whole spectrum of centrist groupings started countermobilizations under the slogan, "Save the universities — the last bastion of freedom."

The centrists, who enjoyed more organizational cohesion, began physical attacks on the students of the Islamic Societies. Within two days thousands of high-school youth from south Tehran rushed to the aid of these societies. Their numbers grew and soon 30,000 high-school students had the Teachers University surrounded, with the Mujahedeen barricaded within. Intense physical fighting with stones, rocks, and sticks ensued; a few died and many were injured.

The results were disastrous. President Bani-Sadr moved in as the champion of peace and the universities were ordered shut down. All agitation for placing the Labor Ministry in the hands of the shoras, and so on, ceased. With the closing of the universities the membership of the Islamic Societies — which made up the bulk of the student population at the universities — poured into the Jihad. The question of cultural revolution was relegated to a government-appointed commission.

Iraqi invasion

On the heels of all these developments — the successive failures of the plans of the counterrevolution; the government's weakness in the test of strength with the masses over the hostage question; the standstill after an initial extension of the shoras at the time of the seizure of the U.S. embassy; successful selective repression against working-class militants; the centrist ultraleft groupings' shooting off at tangents away from an anti-imperialist working-class orientation; whole sections of the middle classes turning away from defense of the revolution; and factional disputes within the ruling group dominating political life in Iran — the biggest, best organized, most sustained and thoroughgoing counterrevolutionary plan to overthrow the Islamic Republic and crush the Iranian revolution was put into action.

In September 1980 — 19 months after the February insurrection and some 11 months after the seizure of the U.S. embassy — 12 army divisions of the Iraqi dictatorship, armed with the most sophisticated and varied modern weaponry, invaded Iran across the 600 kilometer western and southwestern border between the two countries. Now, the murderous machine of military invasion awakened the Iran-

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ian masses to take the steps for which their own bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships had failed to warn and prepare them in

From counterrevolutionary surprise-attack to the approaching war victory

On the eve of the imperialist-backed invasion, the Iranian revolution had stood up to U.S. imperialism. The hostages had not been released, and the offensive of the Iranian masses was proceeding. The Iranian government was gripped with factional disputes. In this framework, the invasion proceeded. The fundamental axis of the confrontation on the battlefield was clear from the outset — Iran's resistance in war flowed from the channels of a deepening revolution. The Iraqi invasion represented a decaying dictatorship and had to rely on a weakened counterrevolutionary alliance throughout the region.

Within two weeks, the Iraqi forces bogged down. But Khorramshahr (renamed Khuninshahr — "city of blood") had been lost and so had Qasr-e Shirin. Considerable Iranian territory and hundreds of smaller towns and villages were seized by the invading forces. The Iraqis dug deep, relying on their arsenal of armor and hoping for the contradictions on the Iranian side to consume the revolution.

War is horrible and destructive. It destroys the accumulated material wealth of many generations. Thousands died in the initial period of the war. The number of Iranian war refugees approached a million and a half and then surpassed that figure. But war posed the reality of imperialist domination ever more clearly and concretely to the Iranian people.

No sooner had Khuninshahr been lost than the truth about the internal betrayals began to spread. The population of the border cities who had sought to defend their homes witnessed the pullout of the army forces stationed on the border. A few Pasdaran units and a mass of volunteers who could not find weapons to fight with were the primary force of Iranian resistance that the Iraqis had broken through. The most technically advanced sections of the Iranian army, in which the most anti-imperialist sentiment prevailed — that is, the air force, the airborne divisions, and the navy — soon proved their superiority over the enemy.

New rise of mass movement

As the brutalities and atrocities of the invading army were recounted by refugees; as the main cities in the south such as Abadan, Ahwaz, and Dezful were repeatedly shelled and rocketed; and as the destruction of homes, hospitals, and schools in the ravaged cities was displayed on national television, the mass movement flared up at the level of the factory shoras, neighborhoods, villages, Jihad, Pasdaran, and Baseej-e Mustazafin (Mobilization Corps of the Oppressed).

"Death to Saddam" and "Death to America," the entire population cried. The factional disputes in the government halted momentarily, but only to revisit the ruling coalition with a

time. The potential threat of head-on confrontation with counterrevolutionary violence was now realized in full.

ferocity none could have dreamed of.

The Pasdaran, Jihad, and Baseej rushed to the front, only to find that the army command would not provide them with the necessary arms and ammunition. Initially they were not even allowed residence in the barracks.

Stories of heroism and self-sacrifice filled the reports of the fighting. A 13-year-old boy died under an Iraqi tank with a handmade grenade, destroying the tank and himself. Four or five volunteers would attack the enemy with a single gun.

Soldiers on leave told of the inaction and even outright betrayal by this or that commander. New draftees would be sent to military barracks in the most remote parts of the country, practicing marching for weeks on end. The bulk of Iranian actions would be carried out by small desert guerrilla bands striking by surprise. Pasdaran acted on their own, sometimes taking army soldiers along. The army was basically stationed in the barracks or in support positions. The Pasdaran's mobilizations for direct participation in the war were limited by the small material resources available to them.

Fortunately, time was on the side of Iran. Military training and mobilizations led by the Islamic *anjomans* (societies) in the factories began to spread. At this point the managers confined this to a small percentage of workers. The vacuum created by the inactivity of the army's corps of engineers provided an arena for the Jihad which soon gained access to a few rooms at army barracks. Islamic *anjomans* of army personnel provided a counterweight to the restrictions of the commanders. The general mobilization for the war was basically confined to a recall of the former draftees of the year 1977-1978.

Divisions within government

With the battlefield stalemated, the high command soon initiated a campaign claiming that the war could be ended through direct negotiations. The Iraqis, they said, were too strong, too well dug in, too well equipped; they could not be defeated.

Soon the factional disputes within the ruling coalition resurfaced. Bani-Sadr maintained the public profile of a commander constantly busy at the front. The leaders of the Islamic Republican current began intensive visits to the front as well. Enough credentials of participation at the front accumulated that the factional disputes erupted among the government leaders. Again, this was an expression of the petty-bourgeois representatives of Iranian capitalism avoiding a bold anti-imperialist program of military mobilization and social measures demanded by the workers and the oppressed.

From the naming of the prime minister and the composition of the cabinet, to the selection of the head of the Central Bank and other government agencies, the factional dispute was out in the open. Each step toward putting together a government would consume weeks, with articles and rebuttals in the press organs of the contenders. Mass rallies and anniversary occasions were consumed with the rhetoric of the factions in dispute.

The conflict went so deep that each side began trying to muster popular support. Bani-Sadr's populist demagoguery, wrapped sweetly in fine words about democracy, was addressed to the middle classes, the Mujahedeen, state functionaries, professionals, and factory managements. Let us use all our talents for the benefit of the revolution, he said.

Bani-Sadr forged a front with the remnants of the National Front and tightened his alliance with the Freedom Movement. He argued that the Pasdaran and the volunteers were getting in the way of the war, which was not for amateurs but for the trained army command. The Jihad activist is the activist of a new totalitarianism, Bani-Sadr declared. He sought to reestablish collaboration with the imperialists at the governmental level, and thus screamed against those who were isolating Iran from the rest of the world. He sought to reverse the evolution of the ruling group's composition, which was now turning in favor of the Islamic Republicans.

The gist of Bani-Sadr's argument was, instead of relying on mass mobilizations for standing up to imperialism, why not rely on imperialism for standing up to the masses? After the presidential elections in the United States, when concessions by the U.S. imperialists resulted in the release of the hostages, Bani-Sadr — the original opponent of the embassy seizure — cried that the country had been sold out.

Every event provided fresh material for continuing the faction fight that had degenerated before the eyes of the population. The question of the war and even news about it was overshadowed by factional disputes. At the beginning of the fight, Bani-Sadr took the posture that he would settle with his rivals after settling the war. Now, the fate of everything hinged on settling the faction fight.

Ouster of Bani-Sadr

The working and toiling masses finally began to turn away from the animosity exchanged at the top as the initial attraction of the hot rhetoric faded. Why aren't they discussing the war, people asked. Why aren't they discussing capitalist sabotage of production and the hoarding of consumer goods? Why aren't they discussing rising prices, the housing shortage, health care, and so on? These became the topics of workers' discussions on the job.

The faction dispute became uncontrollable just at a time when the majority of the working and toiling populace was becoming more and more convinced not to take sides. On March 5, 1981, the war of words turned into a physical

conflict of vast proportions. At Tehran University, Bani-Sadr commanded from the speakers' platform an already organized contingent of Mujahedeen to charge a section of the crowd that was chanting slogans against him. He said that he would no longer propose democracy, but instead would seek to establish and enforce it. The crowd of *hezbollahi* (partisans of god) was severely beaten. This whole episode took place before a nationwide television audience. The factional dispute had reached the point of open split in the ruling coalition.

Bani-Sadr had the clear support of the imperialists and the Iranian bourgeoisie. The stage was set for the Iranian capitalists to live up to their promise after the fall of Bazargan's regime — that they would never allow it to happen again. March 5 was a dress rehearsal for the insurrection against tyranny that Bani-Sadr called for after being ousted as commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces. As for the Mujahedeen, they started preparations for the biggest actions of their ultraleft history — armed struggle against the Islamic Republic.

The pledge of the Iranian bourgeoisie to never allow it to "happen again" was accurate in the sense that all the forces backing Bani-Sadr had prepared themselves for the moment. Bani-Sadr's declaration for insurrection without obvious prospects for success inside the country, as well as the Mujahedeen's plan for armed struggle, well served the aims of the international imperialist propaganda machine against the Iranian revolution. Moreover, the openings were provided for the most intensive imperialist program of terror-bombings and assassinations.

Masses respond to terror

The latter imperialist intervention was highlighted by the criminal June 28, 1981, explosion at the headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP), in which 72 top leaders of the IRP were killed. This brought to an end the neutral attitude of the majority of the population toward the factional dispute. Millions of workers and toilers — with wisdom and consciousness far exceeding that of their leaders — recognized the imperialists behind the bombings and took to the streets. The leaders of the IRP themselves were shocked by the mass response. The period of large-scale executions demonstrated the inability of the petty-bourgeois rulers to learn from the action of the masses. The vicious spiral of bombings-executions dominated the political life of Iran.

Nonetheless, after the August 30 bombing and murder of the newly elected president and his prime minister, working-class contingents formed the spearhead of the march against imperialist terror. From factory after factory, the workers poured into the streets immediately after the news broadcast of the explosion and death toll. At a pharmaceutical factory of 600 workers, when the workers returned from the march, one told a shora leader it was too bad they had not had their own banner for the march. "We will have it ready next time,"

came the reply.

Imperialist terror aimed at confusing and demoralizing the working masses was yielding readiness and alertness instead. Recognition of the imperialist role in the terror-bombings was so widespread that the editorials of all the major dailies declared in bold letters that America was responsible. The closed circle of terror and execution was broken. The counterrevolutionary role of the Mujahedeen in helping the imperialist murderers was correctly appraised by the masses. The fact that the country was not witnessing a civil war meant that the imperialist propaganda was not confusing the Iranian masses. Instead, workers became more alert to the role of the imperialist agents and promonarchy forces. The question of defending the factories and production equipment against sabotage was posed in the factories. Factory guards were reinforced.

Blows to democratic rights

The combination of imperialist terror and the cover provided to it by the Mujahedeen and similar fringe groups resulted in severe blows being dealt to democratic rights — an important gain of the revolution. The prisons started to overflow with the members and supporters of such political groups. And this imprisonment was extended to anti-imperialist working-class tendencies as well. In this period, the Council of Guardians for the first time ruled working-class parties ineligible to present candidates in the elections. This decision clearly violated the constitutional statutes.

The damage incurred was not soon to be mended, given that only the revolutionary socialist movement with its small forces waged a campaign against the unconstitutional restrictions, and that the Tudeh Party and the Fedayan (Majority) kept total silence over the executions and undemocratic practices.

The imprisonments were extended to include revolutionary socialist workers. A new wave of firings of militant workers, including both socialists and Muslims, also began. The number fired from their jobs in Tehran alone began to run into the hundreds. Later, the imprisonments also affected prominent Iranian intellectuals — figures such as Reza Baraheni, Mostafa Rahimi, Mehdi Parham, and Abolhasan al-Rassul. Defense campaigns that focused specifically on the imprisonment of socialist workers and individual intellectuals resulted in the release of prisoners in almost all the latter cases. Again, the Iranian Stalinists kept total silence; they even tried to sabotage these defense efforts.

With the decline of terror-bombing and the growing mass consciousness, the question of the prisoners and the actions of the Islamic Revolutionary Courts became topics of attention. Widespread opposition to executions resulted in their being halted. The treatment of prisoners, the fact that they numbered in the thousands, and the violation of the prisoners' rights became subjects of widespread criticism and discussion among the people. As a result the question of amnesty for prisoners was

raised by the Imam in many of his speeches and in his message on the Iranian New Year (March 21, 1982). He urged the authorities to speed up the amnesty, release the prisoners, and act leniently.

Change in relationship of class forces

The attacks and changes with regard to democratic rights are determined by deeper and more fundamental developments in the country: the advances and victories on the war front; military mobilizations extending to the tens of thousands of urban youth, workers, peasants, and tribespeople; the working-class struggles in the factories; and the unfolding struggles by peasants and other allies of the proletariat.

The June 1981 downfall of Bani-Sadr brought to a close the lengthy debate inside the Iranian ruling group over the legitimacy, existence, and development of the various revolutionary institutions known collectively as *nahads* — that is, the Pasdaran, the Jihad, the Baseej, and so on. Gone were the days of Bazargan's opposition to the Jihad and the Pasdaran; gone were the days of Bani-Sadr's obstruction of the nahads. Pasdaran and Jihad activists provided the backbone of support to the Islamic Republican current's ouster of Bani-Sadr. Despite the many restrictions placed upon their activities at the front, these two nahads gained a presence in all areas of the front.

With Bani-Sadr's ouster and the shakeup that the terror-bombings imposed on the ruling group, the Pasdaran and Jihad grew by leaps and bounds. Bani-Sadr's ouster also was a blow to the factory managements, and thus the workers' Baseej was extended. Neighborhood youth also began to mobilize in the Baseej.

In one of his last statements Bani-Sadr predicted that his fall would lead to the Iraqi army capturing all of Khuzestan Province. Instead, his removal silenced all talk of the war being directed by "experts." The initial wave of military mobilization, numbering a few thousand young trainees, was used to break the siege of Abadan in September 1981. This first important victory put an end to a long stalemate in the war.

Victories in war

Two months later a major offensive by the Iranian forces at Bostan split the Iraqi front in two. Some 20,000 troops were involved in this operation, crossing the desert on foot and taking Iraqi trenches one by one. The engineering tasks for this — providing roads for armored vehicles, digging trenches, and so on — were all carried out by the Jihad.

At New Year (March 1982), Operation Undeniable Victory brought the conquest in just five days of the main concentration of Iraqi troops at Shush, site of their central command headquarters. Of the 100,000 troops involved, 80 percent were provided by the Baseej. Nearly 20,000 Iraqi soldiers were captured. Saddam Hussein's defeat at Shush made it absolutely clear that a total victory by the Iranian

forces is only a matter of time.

In the current offensive, Operation Jerusalem, the Iraqi forces have suffered a string of rapid defeats that have forced the withdrawal of a large portion of their forces from the area north of Khuninshahr. More than 5,000 Iraqi soldiers and commanders have been taken prisoner. The concentration of Iranian forces on the southern front stands at approximately 300,000 troops. It is this force and the successful drives to regain occupied territory that have sealed the fate of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Fear has been struck in the hearts of all the right-wing dictatorships in the Middle East.

The fighters at the front are imbued with determination to carry through the military offensive until the fall of Hussein's dictatorship. The working and toiling masses of Iran share this perspective. The prospect of victory in the war threatens to further weaken the Iranian bourgeoisie and its organs of class rule. Finally, the will of the workers and toilers is prevailing over the most fundamental obstacle on the road of the Iranian revolution, that is, the Iraqi invasion. The invasion that was to overthrow the Islamic Republic and crush the Iranian revolution has now been transformed into the detonator that could set off an explosion of the oppressed of the entire Middle East against Israel and U.S. imperialism. The oppressed of the Middle East need victories to further their struggles and create the necessary solidarity against imperialism. The victory over Saddam Hussein is providing such a grand occasion.

Workers gain confidence

The coming victory over Hussein foreshadows fresh crises for the ruling coalition in Iran. The blows suffered by the capitalist class are felt by its political representatives.

After long struggles and experiences in the revolutionary process, and without having suffered any major blows, the Iranian working class has its forces intact. The war has brought new international consciousness. Today the workers discuss not only the details of military operations but also the Palestinian strikes, the struggles of the Egyptian masses, and so on.

Two examples of recent factory-level struggles illustrate the general situation and the solidarity among the workers. The question of working on Thursdays (normally a day off in Iran) was proposed by the management of the automobile industry. This evoked widespread opposition among the workers. The majority of auto workers wanted both Thursdays and Fridays off.

At the General Motors plant, the workers assembled on April 21 to learn management's final decision on this question. The management refused to meet with them and told them to disperse. The workers stood their ground and pressed for a meeting. In less than half an hour a few cars carrying armed men in plain clothes pulled into the factory. The gunmen got out and began firing their machine guns into the air. Sixty-five workers were arrested. But within a week they were released and a week

after that the management was replaced. At the Leyland plant, the workers conducted slowdowns on two consecutive Thursdays. As a result, Thursday work was canceled by the management.

A more recent example involves the steelworkers of Isfahan. The management planned to lay off 2,000 of the 40,000 employees at the plant. The clever plan involved setting up cooperatives for the 2,000 laid-off workers. Management was to guarantee that these cooperatives would receive government contracts. But the workers wanted to know where the money and equipment was to come from, a problem the management plan called for the workers themselves to solve.

A similar plan was carried out a month earlier with a section of the Ahwaz steelworkers. The Isfahan workers protested, so management called a general assembly on May 14 to discuss its plan for "cooperatives." Clergymen and management representatives were on the platform. It was not long before their speeches were drowned out by the uproar of the protesting workers. As the situation got hotter the workers moved toward the platform, while the Pasdaran present laughed approvingly. The management and clergy had to flee to safety. As the workers boarded buses to go home, a workers representative was standing at each bus stop to tell everyone to return to work on Saturday, that there would be no layoffs.

Changing consciousness

When the revelations of ex-Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh's planned coup d'état appeared in the news media, workers pointed to their managers as "Ghotbzadehs." The involvement in this plot of Grand Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari pierced through the sanctity of the highest level of the Shi'ite clergy. In a move unprecedented in Islamic tradition, Shariatmadari was deposed as a *marja-e taqlid* ("source of imitation" — special status for a Shi'ite clergyman who has supporters who follow his religious interpretations; there are just six such personalities in Shi'a Islam, Imam Khomeini being one).

Documents from the government agencies and the U.S. embassy proved Shariatmadari's collusion with the shah and U.S. imperialism. Bazargan had obtained Shariatmadari's written permission before accepting the prime minister's post at the time of the insurrection. It is common knowledge that the other grand ayatollahs likewise do not share the perspective of confronting imperialism. Considering the damage done to the ruling group by the revelations about Ghotbzadeh's plot to assassinate the Imam, and especially the blows this dealt to the Freedom Movement — which had survived with the protection of the Islamic Republican current — the revelations abruptly ceased in the news media. The masses expect more details to come out if and when a trial is held in this case.

The period of the terror-bombings ended the role of the ultraleft political groupings in the mass movement and the working class. Facto-

ry life is now characterized by the lack of hegemony of any political tendency over the mass of workers. The focus of workers' attention is the shoras. The temporary suspension of some shoras by the government has only made them more attractive in the workers' eyes.

The workers view anything less than workers control over production and reorganization of industry according to a plan as failing to meet the needs of reconstruction. The workers are confident that they will soon deal with the managers.

Long experience in the revolution, in the conditions of the absence of a consistent national anti-imperialist leadership and a series of big political twists and turns have taught the workers the rudiments of class politics. They are cautiously preparing themselves.

The most advanced elements, based on their own experiences, see the connection between the manager, the government, and the capitalist class. In this context many questions are being raised and answers demanded from the leaders.

In a recent interview in the Pasdaran's organ, parliament Speaker Hashemi Rajsanjani responded to a question by saying, "We face a contradiction in the revolution, in that if we want to move more on the basis of the *mustazafin* [dispossessed], by reducing the elbow room of the *mustakbarin* [high and mighty], then the latter will resort to sabotage, hoarding, and similar measures to gain leverage. As a result, the *mustazafin* will suffer. Therefore we must act carefully so as not to cause the stagnation, unemployment, hoarding, and sabotage that they know the people will suffer from."

But the working masses are discussing every day how to fight the managers and the capitalists who create their suffering, and how to do this successfully.

Discussion among workers and peasants

The workers have been provided with important political lessons on the effects of fostering class collaboration through their experience with the Islamic anjomans in the workplaces. These arose in the aftermath of the seizure of the U.S. embassy by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line. They evolved under the pressure placed on them to accept the positions of the Islamic Republican current. The anjomans are now without exception facing a decline in membership and workers' support. Obviously, the workers do not view them as an organization of the management. At the same time, experience has shown that the anjomans have neither the will nor the unity nor the program necessary for fighting management. As a result, a broad discussion has begun in the ranks of the anjomans themselves.

The process is reflected in many ways. For example, the labor committee of the Pasdaran has taken the position that factory shoras must have representation in management and determine the process of production. The government's policy has consistently aimed to organ-

ize and back up the management in enforcing its policies on the workers. In many televised debates between management and anjoman representatives, clear demands for shoras, for workers control, and for reorganization of production have been raised.

"Let us first win the war and then we will deal with all the other problems" — so goes the class-collaborationist justification of the country's petty-bourgeois leaders. With victory in sight, expectations run high in the ranks of the working class. In addition, this working class is not the same one that emerged from 25 years of repression the day after the insurrection.

In the countryside, what distinguishes the movement today is the desire of the peasants to give it the form of shoras. The villages have achieved many gains in the course of the revolution. Many villages now have access to electricity, running water, roads, bathhouses, and schools. Units of the Jihad exist in many villages. Such gains have caused the villages to send volunteers to the war front.

Despite scant activity by the literacy campaign, wherever there is access to it peasants both male and female, young, middle-aged, and old, are learning to read and write. As the basic requisites of life have been constructed in the villages, their populations are growing. Many regional conferences of peasants to demand shoras, land, and technical aid have taken place. Close ties have sprung up between urban workers and the peasants in the course of the war. The approaching victory has already signaled an extension of peasant struggles against the landlords and khans.

Participation of women

Women's participation in the Iranian revolution — both in the struggle against the shah and in today's mobilizations — has been unique in the history of the Middle East. While the government's basic campaign aimed at women centers around the *hejab*, or Islamic dress code, more and more women are raising their own demands. These center on attaining equal status with men in society.

Questions raised in women's literature today include the need for female government ministers (all of whom are now male); the right to participate in military action, to receive equal wages, and to be trained in all professions; equality in the family laws and guardianship of children; and the need for childcare centers and public laundries.

During the shah's time, death of the husband automatically meant the husband's father or eldest brother would receive guardianship over the children. But the parliament has recently passed a bill giving guardianship to the mother in the event the husband should be killed in war ("martyred"). This immediately resulted in many women claiming their husbands had been martyred.

At a time when the minister of education is proposing separate school textbooks for male and female students, the official weekly periodicals published for women are raising demands for complete equality in a resolute tone.

The few women representatives in parliament have repeatedly taken the floor to express this demand. Radio and television programs have been aired in which this question is also taken up. These have portrayed women workers as one of the most class-conscious sectors of the Iranian working class.

Situation of oppressed nationalities

After the initial experiences of the oppressed nationalities before the war, the development of the revolution has brought about a revival of the mass movement. The Arab nationality, which was most directly affected by the Iraqi invasion, sided with the Islamic Republic. Many of the war-torn villages and smaller cities of Khuzestan Province occupied by the Iraqis had a population totally or majority Arab. Khuninshahr itself was predominantly Arab. Many Arab youth became involved in the Pasdaran and the Baseej; their knowledge of the region gave them clear advantages in the military operations. Arabs also make up a sizable percentage of Iranian war refugees.

In Kurdistan, many Kurds joined the war effort, especially around Ilam. The process of unity between the followers of Shi'a and Sunni Islam was made necessary by the war. This meant unity with some sections of the native religious hierarchies of the oppressed nationalities. Concessions regarding the national rights of the oppressed flowed from this. Radio and television programs in Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic are broadcast in the regions occupied by these nationalities. Water and electricity projects have been undertaken in Kurdistan and Baluchistan. The Jihad reports that 80 percent of the land in Baluchistan has still not been distributed.

Based on the experiences of Jihad activists, discussions have appeared in the organization's publication calling for separate Jihads to be established composed of the nationalities in their own regions.

The deepening revolutionary process has brought further erosion of the chauvinist prejudices fostered by imperialism and the Pahlavi monarchy against the oppressed nationalities. Demands for education in the native languages, for land, for preferential development plans, and so on, are key planks for an action program to achieve full self-determination for the oppressed nationalities.

The fact that in Azerbaijan — the most important, developed, and urbanized oppressed nationality in Iran — mass prayers are held in Turkish is but one indication of the possibilities that exist for the mobilization and organization of the nationalities for their demands. On April 14, 1982 — the international day of solidarity with Palestine — huge demonstrations took place in the main Kurdish cities. The experience of the revolution has further emphasized the need for an anti-imperialist strategy for achieving the rights of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination.

Victory is being achieved in the war despite the ruling group's lack of a program of bold anti-imperialist, anticapitalist social measures.

When the ruling group refused to tax the bourgeoisie to pay the cost of the war, the Pasdaran and Jihad paid visits to the capitalists and the wealthy and forced them to contribute, despite the officials. Now the victory will tax the whole bourgeois order.

Legislators are proposing the fusion of the Pasdaran and the Jihad with the state bureaucracy. While such fusion could easily be mandated by a parliamentary bill, it would surely prove more difficult in life. The state bureaucracies are organs of the capitalists and landlords and defend their class interests. But the mass formations have the tendency to turn in an anti-imperialist, anticapitalist direction under the pressure of the masses. They are made up of militant, anti-imperialist youth whose loyalty to the mass formations supersedes their political affiliations.

The role of the Iranian working class will be at the heart of the coming struggles. For it is the power and strength of the independent struggles of the working class that can provide the leverage for the struggles of its allies, and for the mass formations to break politically with the capitalists.

Given the disintegration of the ultraleft petty-bourgeois groupings in the course of the war, the working class will face class-collaborationist obstacles. But given the weakness of imperialism and the Iranian bourgeoisie, and the prospects for the extension of the revolution in the Middle East, the Iranian working class has every chance to break the power of the bourgeoisie in the government and establish the first workers and peasants government in the Middle East.

On the basis of the past gains and progress of the Iranian revolutionary socialist movement, the fact that it has implanted itself in the working class, that it has narrowed the gap in competition with the Stalinists, that it has become known nationally among the working class and the militant Muslim fighters, and despite the repressive measures directed against the leaders and members of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE)⁶, Iranian revolutionary Marxists look to the perspective of the creation of a resolute anti-imperialist leadership that can lead the workers and toilers of Iran to final victory over imperialism.

May 1982

6. The HKE is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International — *IP*

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Black miners rebel

Eleven killed in brutal police crackdown

By Ernest Harsch

Eleven Black gold miners were killed, hundreds arrested, and thousands fired from their jobs in early July in one of the most brutal police crackdowns against strikers in South Africa in recent years.

On July 3, when the death toll stood at eight, company officials admitted that six of the miners were killed by police called in to break their strike.

The immediate issues behind the miners' revolt were job safety and wages. Several days earlier, six miners had been killed in an accident at the mine in Grootvlei. Around the same time, Black workers at mines owned by the Gencor and Gold Fields companies were offered a paltry pay hike of 11 percent for Black surface workers and 12 percent for underground workers, which is below the annual inflation rate of 16 percent. It was also less than wage increases granted to Black miners in the nearby mines owned by the Anglo American Corp.

On July 1, thousands of Black gold miners demonstrated at the West Driefontein and Bufelsfontein mines, some 40 miles southwest of Johannesburg. The next day the strikes and protests spread to the Stilfontein and Grootvlei mines.

The South African authorities, who have always reacted sharply to labor unrest in the gold mines, which are a key sector of the South African economy, responded with brutal force. Large numbers of police swarmed into the mining areas, using helicopters, tear gas, and gunfire to try to put down the protests.

In addition to the miners who were killed, suspected strike leaders were arrested and hundreds fired from their jobs.

Despite this crackdown, the protests continued. On July 5, some 12,000 miners at the Kloof mine — who had been locked up in their dormitories by security guards — broke out. When several hundred marched to the gates of the mine, they were attacked by police and security guards who broke up the demonstration with tear gas.

At least four other mines were swept by labor protests as well.

By July 7, the mining companies announced that "everything was quiet." But this was the "quiet" of massive repression. In addition to the eleven miners who had been killed, some 150 were wounded and more than 5,000 fired from their jobs and sent to desolate rural reserves known as Bantustans.

The South African press — like the big-business press in the United States — called these protests "riots," as a justification for the murderous police attacks against the workers.

In fact, labor protests in the mines often take

the form of spontaneous outbursts, largely because most Black miners are denied any right to form trade unions or declare legal strikes. (Despite the fact that Black miners' unions are illegal, there are at least some clandestine union activists in the mines.)

Also as justification for the crackdown, mining officials claimed that the unrest was the result of "tribal" conflicts.

But one miner, quoted in the July 9 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, laid the blame for the unrest on South Africa's racist system of apartheid, under which Black workers are superexploited and denied most basic rights.

"After all," he said, "our white colleagues earn an average of six times more than we do, and the mining companies offer them, for paltry rents, large houses in which they can live in comfort with their families. . . . They have a strong union and are well-organized. Every year they have the right to negotiate directly with the bosses, and if they don't get as much as they want, they go on strike. They have the right, but we don't. So when we decide to go on strike as we have now done, it is 'illegal.' "

On top of this kind of discrimination, Black miners often have to contend with mining officials who spout the crudest racist invective. *Le Monde*, for example, quoted one public-relations official for the Gold Fields mining group as saying, "Who cares about a bunch of savages dancing around a fire?"

The gold miners, like other Black workers

in South Africa, obviously have plenty of reason to rebel.

One reason for the ferocity of the police crackdown against the miners is that the strikes come in the midst of a general upsurge among Black workers throughout South Africa. The racist authorities wanted to set an example to other workers as well.

Over the past couple of years, tens of thousands of Black workers have flocked to join new militant Black trade unions, in defiance of the government's restrictive labor laws. In 1981, South African industry was hit by more strikes than ever before.

This year as well, strikes by Black workers — usually for higher wages or union recognition — have swept most major cities. In the weeks preceding the miners' revolt, there were strikes by metalworkers in Germiston, textile workers in Hammarsdale, dairy workers in Parow, gold miners in Evander, and some 5,000 autoworkers in Uitenhage, among others.

In Pinetown, striking Black municipal workers won the backing of their white coworkers. While examples of such solidarity by white workers are still rare, they have been increasing with the growth of the Black labor movement.

Because of South Africa's racist system of apartheid, which is designed to keep Black workers oppressed and superexploited, strikes by Black workers pose a direct challenge to the white minority government.

An editorial in the April 22 issue of the *Sowetan*, a Black-run newspaper in the Johannesburg area, pointed out:

"The spotlight is now on the workers. There have never been so many strikes or retrenchments [layoffs] in such a short time as now. There is a massive movement among labor and agitation all over the country. . . . It must all be a serious threat to the government." □

Dutch soldiers arrested

In an attempt to intimidate soldiers in the Netherlands who are involved in the movement against nuclear weapons, the military authorities have arrested four activists of the Dutch Soldiers Trade Union (VVDM). They have been accused of "endangering the security of the state."

The action comes in the wake of increased protests among active-duty soldiers and reservists against the stationing of NATO nuclear missiles in the Netherlands.

For example, during a massive antimissile demonstration of more than 400,000 people in Amsterdam on Nov. 21, 1981, the Soldiers Against Nuclear Weapons Committee (KSTK) organized a contingent of 120 active-duty soldiers, who marched in uniform.

The arrests of the soldier activists began on June 17. Those who were picked up were:

- Steef Boot, a leader of the Breda branch of the VVDM;
- Peter van Wijk, a member of the national leadership of the VVDM, who was later grant-

ed provisional release;

- Oskar van Rijswijk, also a member of the national leadership of the VVDM, as well as an activist of the KSTK and a member of the International Communist League (IKB), Dutch section of the Fourth International; and

- Frans Maas, a member of both the VVDM and the KSTK.

As part of the frame-up campaign against them, they have been accused of "stealing military secrets" and "stealing military classified material on atomic weapons." The authorities have refused to give any details on these charges.

If brought to trial, they risk prison sentences of up to 15 years.

Messages and telegrams of protest against the arrests should be sent to: Minister of Defense Hans van Mierlo, Plein 4, The Hague, Netherlands; with copies to the VVDM, Hojelkazerne, Croeselaan 39, Utrecht, Netherlands. □