

# INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

combined  
with **inprecor**

Vol. 20, No. 31

October 4, 1982

USA \$1.25

UK 50p

MILLIONS IN BRITAIN  
PROTEST TORY ATTACKS

## **U.S. Shares Israeli Guilt**

# Massacre in Beirut Shows True Face of Imperialism



Palestinians flee refugee camp following rumor that rightist killers were returning.

# The massacre in West Beirut — the real face of imperialism

By David Frankel

Unarmed civilians gunned down in their homes, women and children rounded up and driven away in cattle trucks, wounded patients murdered in their hospital beds — the entire world has reacted with shock and anger at the appalling images of the massacre in West Beirut.

Denying "any blame whatsoever" for the massacre, the Israeli government said that those charging it with complicity in the deed were leveling "a blood libel."

But the Israeli cabinet formally approved the entry of the rightist forces into the Palestinian refugee camps. Israeli troops escorted the killers to the place of their crime, backed them up with tanks, and lighted their way with flares. Israeli cabinet ministers knew of the murderous rampage at least 24 hours before it ended.

President Reagan said he was "horrified" by the massacre. But the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was fully supported by Washington from the very beginning. U.S. officials were told of the invasion plans in advance when Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon visited Washington at the end of May — less than two weeks before the invasion.

The Israeli phosphorous bombs, cluster bombs, and high explosive shells that had caused nearly 50,000 casualties in Lebanon even before the latest massacre were all made in the USA.

Again and again, in votes at the United Nations, the U.S. and Israeli delegates stood alone in defense of the invasion. Reagan officially welcomed the election of Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon — the terrorist president who was responsible for planning the massacre before his assassination.

And the U.S. Marines who supervised the withdrawal of Palestinian forces from Beirut, along with French and Italian troops, were responsible for helping to set the stage for the massacre. Now they have returned to help back up the new Phalangist president of Lebanon, Amin Gemayel. This imperialist force has nothing to do with defending the Palestinian population in West Beirut — it should be withdrawn at once.

## Why the slaughter?

The massacre in West Beirut has stripped away the covering of lies that obscures the real role of U.S. imperialism and its Israeli junior partner in the Middle East.

The slaughter of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon stems from the same fundamental source as U.S.-backed death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala; and U.S.-backed dictatorships in Chile, the Philippines, South Ko-

rea, and other countries. It is of the same cloth as the massacres carried out by racist South African forces in Angola, Namibia, and against the Black population of South Africa itself. It is one in a series of savage colonial wars, such as the U.S. intervention in Indochina.

Atrocities like these are the real face of imperialism.

A handful of the most powerful capitalist ruling classes, headed by the one headquartered on Wall Street, dominate the world economy. Their corporations own the gold and diamonds of southern Africa, Bolivian tin, Chilean copper, Jamaican bauxite — and Middle Eastern oil.

The scramble by the imperialists for control of the oil-rich and militarily strategic Middle East has been going on for more than a century. Britain added Egypt to its colonial possessions in the 1880s, and as a result of World War I the British grabbed control of Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine, while the French took over Lebanon and Syria.

Using the traditional method of divide-and-rule, the French played off the Christians against the Muslims in Lebanon, while the British promoted Jewish immigration to Palestine to build a counterforce to the bitterly oppressed Arab majority.

## Wall Street moves in

Since the end of World War II, U.S. corporations have replaced British and French big business as the dominant force in the Middle East. Direct colonial rule over the Arab world as a whole is no longer feasible, so Washington exercises its control by indirect means. But the result is the same. Billions in profits for the oil barons, a few crumbs from the table for co-operative Arab regimes, and misery for the peoples of the region.

In order to maintain their monopoly on the riches of the earth, the imperialists must be constantly ready to crush movements for progressive social change among the peoples of the countries they exploit. Such movements inevitably demand that the wealth of these countries be used to better the lot of the people at home, not to line the pockets of huge corporations in London, New York, and Paris.

That is why Washington supports reactionary regimes such as the monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan, and — until the overthrow of the shah three years ago — Iran. That is why Reagan hailed the establishment of an ultrarightist Phalangist government in Lebanon.

But as the experience of Iran showed so vividly, foreign domination and superexploitation by imperialism undermines the stability of even the most brutal and dictatorial semicolon-

ial regime. The oppression they are subjected to constantly provokes new struggles among the workers and peasants.

Where they can, the imperialist powers respond to such liberation battles with military force, and that is where Israel fits in. The Israeli military, armed to the teeth with the most modern U.S. weapons, plays a key role in maintaining the imperialist domination of the Middle East.

## Foot soldiers for imperialism

When the Jews of Europe tried to flee after Hitler took over in Germany, they found the doors of the United States and Britain barred. Even after the extermination of the Jews and the end of World War II, the imperialist powers refused to accept the survivors. But the imperialists were perfectly willing to dump the survivors of Hitler's concentration camps in Palestine and to use them as foot soldiers against the Arab masses.

Almost one-quarter of all U.S. foreign aid goes to Israel every year — an indication of how useful the U.S. rulers find the Zionist state. Israel provides Washington with a counterrevolutionary army of 400,000 troops in the heart of the Middle East. In fact, Israel has been subsidized to the point where it has been able to build up a sophisticated industrial base and develop into an imperialist power in its own right.

In the wake of the Beirut bloodbath, liberal supporters of Israel here and elsewhere are trying to limit responsibility to Begin and his military chiefs. But Israel's current colonial war in Lebanon is no aberration. It fits into a pattern going back to its 1956 invasion of Egypt, an attack carried out in conjunction with Britain and France following the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal.

In June 1967, the Zionist regime launched a savage sneak attack on neighboring Arab countries. Backed by Washington, it hoped to bring down the governments in Egypt and Syria and replace them with ones that would be more responsive to imperialist demands.

In September 1970, when the Jordanian monarchy was threatened by a massive rebellion, Israeli forces mobilized and were ready to invade to back King Hussein.

Over the years there have been repeated bloody commando attacks and air bombardments against Palestinian refugee communities and Arab cities.

Most of these imperialist adventures were undertaken before Menachem Begin ever came to power.

## Alliance with world reaction

The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine could only come about through the denial of the rights of the Palestinian majority. But the expulsion of some 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland in 1948 did not end the matter. Continued resistance by the Palestinians has led Israel into an escalating conflict with the entire Arab world.

Already Israel has annexed Syrian territory

and bombed a nuclear research center in Iraq, and now the Zionist rulers are determined to dictate political events in Lebanon.

Even further afield, Israeli agents collaborated with the CIA in training the shah of Iran's secret police, and are currently helping to arm and train the soldiers of the Guatemalan dictatorship.

Israel's alliance with the most reactionary forces in the world — including the apartheid regime in South Africa — is the course that is dictated by the needs of the Zionist state. It is becoming clearer and clearer that the maintenance of such a state is in complete contradiction with the interests of the Israeli working class, and of Jews throughout the world.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, which is slandered by the Zionists as terrorist, has been fighting since its birth for a democratic, secular Palestine — a country where both Arabs and Jews could live in peace and equality.

The Palestinians demand the right of the dispersed refugees to return to their homeland, compensation for a people whose land and homes were stolen, and the right to build a united Palestinian state that is again a part of the Arab world. In short, they demand the reversal of 34 years of Zionist oppression.

In keeping with this perspective, the Palestinians also demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon; Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967; and the establishment of a Palestinian state in any part of Palestine that the Zionists are forced to give up.

#### A program for peace

Such a program for national liberation is anti-Zionist, but it's not aimed against the Jewish people. As PLO leader Yassir Arafat said September 20, "The real Jews are those who refuse to be associated with the attempt to annihilate the Palestinian people. To all of them, to all of the Israeli or Jewish pacifists and democrats, I address the esteem and gratitude of the Palestinian people who will never forget their solidarity at the time of trial."

Peace in the Middle East and an end to atrocities such as the Beirut massacre will be won through a victorious struggle against the imperialist oppression of the Arab world — a struggle that must include as one of its goals the dismantling of the Zionist settler state and the creation of a democratic, secular Palestine.

In the United States and Western Europe, a growing number of working people have begun to understand something of the real character of the Israeli state as a result of the grim events in Lebanon. There is a growing realization among working people that they have been the victims of a stupendous big-lie campaign.

This changing consciousness means that there is a greater need and opportunity for protest actions, teach-ins, public meetings, and other educational activities about the true role of imperialism and Zionism, and about the profoundly progressive role of the liberation

struggle being carried out by the Palestinian people. Such actions must demand that aid to Israel be halted and that imperialist troops get

out of the Middle East. That is the best way to pay meaningful tribute to the martyrs in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. □

## IN THIS ISSUE

Closing News Date: September 26, 1982

ISRAEL	732	400,000 demonstrate in Tel Aviv
	734	A history of Zionist massacres — by David Frankel
LEBANON	733	Imperialist 'peacekeeping' force no protection for Palestinians
	735	A massacre made in Israel and USA — by Ernest Harsch
USA	736	Congress takes aim at Cuba — by Will Reissner
	737	U.S. diplomat blasts Reagan's policy on Cuba — by David Frankel
	745	Bosses wield bludgeon against labor — by George Johnson
BRITAIN	738	Workers resist Tory attacks — by Brian Grogan
GUATEMALA	740	Regime executes four opponents — by Jane Harris
GHANA	741	Class polarization sharpens — by Ernest Harsch
SOUTH AFRICA	743	Speech by ANC representative David Ndaba
HONDURAS	752	Guerrillas challenge dictatorship
DOCUMENTS	747	New stage in the Iran-Iraq war — Statement by HVK
	748	The entry of Iranian forces into Iraq — Resolution of HKE
NEWS ANALYSIS	730	The massacre in West Beirut: the real face of imperialism — by David Frankel

Intercontinental Press (ISSN 0162-5594).  
Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New  
York, N.Y. 10014. Published in New York every  
other Monday except the first in January and the  
third and fourth in August. Second-class postage  
paid at New York, N.Y.

**Editor:** Steve Clark.

**Contributing Editors:** Pierre Frank, Livio  
Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.

**Managing Editor:** David Frankel.

**Editorial Staff:** Sue Hagen, Ernest Harsch,  
Fred Murphy, Will Reissner.

**Business Manager:** Sandi Sherman.

Intercontinental Press specializes in political  
analysis and interpretation of events of particular  
interest to the labor, socialist, colonial indepen-  
dence, Black, and women's liberation move-  
ments.

Signed articles represent the views of the au-  
thors, which may not necessarily coincide with  
those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it re-  
flects editorial opinion, unsigned material stands  
on the program of the Fourth International.

**To Subscribe:** For one-year subscriptions in  
the U.S. or Canada send US\$25.00. Subscrip-  
tion correspondence should be addressed to:  
Intercontinental Press, 410 West Street, New  
York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 929-6933.

For airmail subscriptions to Britain, Ireland,  
and continental Europe send US\$35.00 for one  
year; US\$17.50 for six months. Write for sub-  
scription rates to all other countries.

For air-speeded subscriptions to Australia:  
Write to Pathfinder Press, P.O. Box K208,  
Haymarket 2000. In New Zealand: Write to  
Socialist Books, P.O. Box 8852, Auckland.

We prefer payment in bank drafts or postal  
checks payable in U.S. dollars because of the  
charges involved in clearing personal checks  
drawn on other currencies. However, personal  
checks will be accepted, with an additional 5 per-  
cent added for clearing charges.

Please allow five weeks for change of ad-  
dress. Include your old address, and, if possible,  
an address label from a recent issue.

Intercontinental Press is published by the 408  
Printing and Publishing Corporation, 408 West  
Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Offices at 408  
West Street, New York, N.Y.



# 400,000 demonstrate in Tel Aviv

## Outrage over Beirut massacre threatens Begin regime

The wave of shock, revulsion, and outrage that swept Israel in the wake of the Israeli-backed massacre of Palestinian refugees in West Beirut culminated on September 25 with the largest demonstration in the country's history. Some 400,000 people poured into the streets of Tel Aviv to demand the ouster of the Israeli government. For a country with a population of some 4 million, this was truly mammoth.

Details of this and other demonstrations in Israel were provided to *Intercontinental Press* by revolutionary socialists in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, members of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the Israeli section of the Fourth International.

The rally in Tel Aviv was called by the parliamentary opposition Labor Party, along with the Peace Now movement and all the Zionist parties opposed to Prime Minister Menachem Begin's ruling Likud coalition.

"Four hundred thousand people began gathering in the central square in the early afternoon," M. Shajor told *IP*. "The square was covered with giant banners calling on Begin and [Defense Minister Ariel] Sharon to resign and for the establishment of a committee of inquiry to investigate the events in Beirut."

One of the banners proclaimed, "Children's blood is the same everywhere."

Shajor reported that many of the demonstrators were soldiers who were not in uniform. According to the Reuters news agency, several soldiers who participated in uniform were arrested.

### Militant mood

Shimon Peres, a member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) and the head of the Labor Party, which governed Israel before Begin's Likud came to power, was the main speaker.

"The people who took this miserable decision must not have the authority to take decisions in the future," Peres told the crowd. "This war must end immediately. The IDF [Israel Defense Force] must leave Beirut."

Peres's call for the resignation of the Likud government — which was a central theme of all the speeches — got considerable applause from the crowd.

Tzali Reshef, a leader of Peace Now, specifically linked the call for the government's resignation not only to the massacre but also to the decision to invade Lebanon. He told Begin and Sharon, "you carried out a war without a national consensus. You turned us all into accomplices in this massacre. Resign. Go home. Go."

Although the official slogans of the rally did

not call for immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from all of Lebanon, this demand was supported by many in the crowd, according to Lea Tsemel, an RCL leader from Jerusalem.

Revolutionary socialists were able to participate in the action. They sold pamphlets containing an interview with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yassir Arafat and stickers declaring "Remember Beirut."

"The mood of the crowd was very militant," Tsemel told *IP*. "Many people came out into the streets for the first time in their lives." She noted that the demonstration reflected a "real polarization inside the Jewish population of Israel."

According to Shajor, "This demonstration came during an intensification of the political atmosphere inside Israel, which is at an unprecedented level. The international isolation of Israel, the outrage and condemnation of all the world over what Israel has done in Lebanon, has shocked Israeli society to its core. This is why we have for the first time the opposition party calling for such a huge demonstration in

the streets."

### 'We don't want to be occupiers!'

Several hours before the Labor Party-called action, another demonstration was held in Tel Aviv, called by the Committee Against the War in Lebanon. Some 7,000 Jews and Arabs marched to protest the massacre and to demand an immediate Israeli withdrawal from all of Lebanon.

In a leaflet distributed by the committee at the action, the organizers pointed out that those responsible for the massacre also included the Labor Party, which headed the previous government. "It is not only the [present] Israeli government that was responsible for the massacre," it said. "Those who trained the bloody Phalangists in the IDF bases since 1976 and who fostered the gangs of [Maj. Saad] Haddad also participated in preparing this crime."

The leaflet continued, "Whereas Begin and Sharon are continuing to foster cruel racism and the Israeli police shoot demonstrators not only in the West Bank but also in Nazareth, we

## Palestinians protest in village of Tira

TIRA, Israel — Entering this Arab village near Tel Aviv September 22, we were confronted with three roadblocks of burning tires and a deathly silence, an expression of the deep mourning the villagers felt in the wake of the barbaric massacre in Beirut.

The inhabitants of the village were in the cemetery, where a memorial meeting was being held for the victims. From them, we learned that the silence was the silence after the storm. Just two hours earlier, the police had attacked the villagers.

According to one of the municipal government employees, the police had agreed not to show up in the village during the march that was planned to commemorate the victims of Beirut.

"Then suddenly," he said, "between 10 and 15 command cars, with some 100 policemen inside, showed up. They jumped out with their clubs and started to beat people indiscriminately, from children to old people to women."

Another inhabitant said that the police fired tear-gas canisters into the municipal government building, where several hundred demonstrators had sought refuge from the beatings. When the police left, they took 20 people with them under arrest.

While we were listening to this account, the fourth march since that morning was proceeding toward us. The marchers waved Palestinian flags and black flags. They shouted, "Begin out! Palestine will be free!" and "With our spirit and blood we will liberate Palestine!"

To the people of Tira, there is no doubt who is responsible for the massacre in Beirut. "The operation was of the IDF," one said. "They lit the camps with flares, they took them [the Phalangists] in with them, they guarded the roofs for them. Without Israel, they couldn't have done it."

"We will tell our children and grandchildren who did it. We'll never let ourselves forget."

Despite the feelings of deep mourning and grief, there is a high spirit in Tira, because today there is the strength to fight against the crimes of Israel.

Stressing this point, one of the inhabitants of Tira told us, "This is not Deir Yassin," referring to the Israeli massacre of Palestinians in the village of Deir Yassin in 1948. "Today, the whole world is shouting. And we are getting more courageous from day to day."

—Kati Shur

raise the banner of the common Jewish-Arab struggle."

About half the participants in the action were Palestinians, reported Rachel Dassa.

Among the chants in Hebrew were, "We don't want to die in Beirut!" and "We don't want to be occupiers in Lebanon or the occupied territories!"

The slogans in Arabic included, "No representative for the Palestinian people other than the PLO," and "You martyrs rest in peace, we will continue to fight!"

#### Week of actions

The demonstrations on September 25 followed a week of militant protests by both Jews and Arabs throughout Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

One of the first came on September 19, shortly after the news of the massacre became known, as up to 1,000 people turned out for a demonstration in Jerusalem outside Begin's home. Demonstrators chanted, "Begin — murderer!" "Begin — terrorist!" and "Begin, Sharon — war criminals!"

Many demonstrators demanded the resignation of Begin, Sharon, and Army Commander in Chief Gen. Rafael Eytan. "Out of Lebanon!" they also chanted.

According to RCL leader Michel Warschawski, the police brutally attacked the peaceful demonstration with tear gas and clubs. A number of demonstrators had brought their babies with them, and the babies were sprayed with tear gas as well, one requiring hospitalization.

Three other demonstrations were held that same day. Some 300 protesters joined a march called by the Committee Against the War in Lebanon in Tel Aviv, another 400 Peace Now supporters demonstrated in the northern border town of Rosh Hanikra, and some 500 members of the Ga'ash and Yakun kibbutzim blocked the main road between Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Angered by the cold-blooded murder of their brothers and sisters in West Beirut, Palestinians throughout Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip also took to the streets.

Demonstrations were held in virtually every town in the occupied territories. Workers stayed away from their jobs and merchants closed their shops in a general strike, paralyzing Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, East Jerusalem, and other cities.

Marches and rallies also swept the Arab towns and villages within Israel. A committee of local Arab municipal governments called a general strike on September 22 to protest the massacre.

The strike was the most massive and widely followed ever among Palestinians living within Israel's borders. The remotest villages struck, including villages that had never been involved in political activity before. Benyamin Gur-Arye, Begin's Arab affairs adviser, admitted that 90 percent of the 600,000 Palestinians living inside Israel participated in the action.

Many Palestinians in Israel, as well as in the

West Bank, have relatives in the Sabra and Shatila camps.

Kati Shur of the RCL told *IP*, "The atmosphere was very radical in the Arab villages and towns in Israel. For the first time Palestinian flags and pictures of Yassir Arafat were held high in the demonstrations and parades. Youths attacked police stations, as symbols of the government's long harassment of the Arab population. Main roads were blocked by burning tires."

Police attacked a number of the demonstrations very brutally. In Nazareth, where some 1,000 police attacked the demonstration, 49 protesters were injured, 17 requiring hospitalization. The police surrounded the strike headquarters in Nazareth in an attempt to isolate the leaders, and shot at people in the streets. Some of the police declared to the protesters, "We will bring the Phalangists to Nazareth."

But other sectors of the Jewish population

## Imperialist 'peacekeeping' force no protection for Palestinians

[The following joint statement was issued September 21 by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International; the Revolutionary Communist Groups (GCR), Italian section of the Fourth International; and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.]

\* \* \*

It would appear that the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in West Beirut had to take place before U.S. President Reagan, French President Mitterrand, and Italian President Pertini "discovered" that the Palestinians were threatened with real genocide by Begin and his Lebanese fascist friends.

In the name of a hypocritical peace undertaking that they jointly worked out, together with the plan of U.S. envoy Philip Habib, they have decided to send their contingents to Lebanon as part of a so-called disengagement force.

We internationalist militants in the United States, France, and Italy denounce this new dispatch of imperialist troops to the Middle East under the pretext of guaranteeing the security of the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese population.

What good was the United Nations force that was stationed for months in southern Lebanon? When the Israeli invasion took place on June 6, it was content to let the Zionist armored vehicles go past on their way to Beirut.

What good was the disengagement force sent to Lebanon in late August under the Habib plan? It organized the departure of the units of Palestinian fighters, legitimizing the Zionist military presence in Lebanon. By its presence it guaranteed the election of the Phalangist

have reacted differently, as the huge turnout at the Tel Aviv demonstration shows. Commenting on the militancy and determination displayed by the Palestinian population, Shur pointed out, "For the Jewish workers this was a manifestation of Palestinian strength and national pride. It made them think again about the suffering of the Palestinians and about their demands for national independence."

The fact that the Labor Party was forced to call the September 25 demonstration does not reflect any change in the character of this reactionary capitalist party. But the demonstration itself, and the massive antiwar sentiment that was expressed in that protest, represents a giant step forward for the class struggle inside Israel. It is an indication of the pressures that are beginning to crack open the political situation there and that will eventually lead decisive sections of the Israeli working class into an alliance with the Palestinians fighting for their self-determination. □

murderer Bashir Gemayel to the Lebanese presidency by a rump parliament that met in a barracks under the guard of Israeli bayonets. It dismantled the Palestinian defense lines in West Beirut.

In early September, the U.S., French, and Italian disengagement force withdrew from the area, leaving behind a Palestinian population that was defenseless against the Zionist army, the Phalangist militias, and the butcher Maj. Saad Haddad's mercenaries.

Whatever the exact identity of the murderers in Sabra and Shatila, they could not have carried out their horrible task without the de facto agreement of the Israeli high command. The American, French, and Italian governments knew perfectly well that by withdrawing their troops this tragedy was probable.

The new mission of the disengagement force will not serve the interests of the Palestinian and Lebanese people any better.

Who would believe that the U.S. troops — the instrument of imperialist massacres yesterday in Vietnam and today in Central America — could defend the oppressed in Lebanon? Who could believe that the French paratroopers — French imperialism's favorite gendarmes in Africa and in the colonies of the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific — could act in Lebanon against the interests of that imperialism and its Zionist beachhead?

Their presence will only serve to rebuild a Lebanese state around the Phalangist militias of Amin Gemayel, the ally of Zionism, building up new dangers and new perils for the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese National Movement.

The real demands of the hour are:

- Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist occupation army from Lebanon;

- Break diplomatic relations with the criminal regime of Begin and Sharon;
- International recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people;
- Total support to the Palestinian movement

for the recovery of their legitimate national rights;

- Active solidarity with the Palestinian mass movement in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and with the antiwar movement in the state of Israel. □

## Israel

# A history of Zionist massacres

*From Deir Yassin to West Beirut*

**By David Frankel**

Why did the grisly massacre of Palestinian civilians in West Beirut happen? The explanations in the big-business media do not give an honest answer to this question.

In the *New York Times*, for example, right-wing columnist William Safire chalked the whole thing up to "a blunder," arguing that "this episode no more reflects Israeli policy than Mylai reflected American policy [in Vietnam]."

Safire picks a telling comparison. The U.S. army massacre of hundreds of Vietnamese in the village of Mylai in 1968 had a profound effect on Americans precisely *because* of what it said about U.S. policy during that war.

In the case of West Beirut, the rightist forces that are armed and encouraged by the Israeli regime carried out on the ground what Israeli bombers have been doing for years from the air.

Unlike Safire, many liberals have been willing to concede the criminal character of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. But as defenders of the Zionist state, these liberals try to pin the blame solely on the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

Nobody can deny the reactionary character of the policies followed by Begin and Sharon. But the fact is that the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 and its history since then have been studded with such massacres against the Palestinian people. That has been the Zionist response to the resistance by the Palestinians against being forced off their land and out of their country.

Begin himself achieved an international reputation in this regard through the activities of his Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization), one of the most prominent Zionist terrorist organizations active in Palestine during the 1940s. The Irgun slaughtered more than 250 Arabs in the village of Deir Yassin on April 9, 1948.

But Begin had no monopoly on such actions. Under Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, for instance, regular Israeli soldiers murdered 53 men, women, and children in the Jordanian border village of Qibya in October 1953 in retaliation for a guerrilla raid in which three Israelis died.

Another massacre was carried out by the Israeli army in the village of Kafr Kassem, about 15 miles from Tel Aviv, on the eve of Israel's October 1956 invasion of Egypt. The villagers were gunned down in cold blood as they returned home from the fields and from their jobs, unaware that a curfew had been imposed.

An Israeli military court that later investigated the events at Kafr Kassem — after a cover-up failed — reported: "The first to be shot at the western entrance to the village were four quarrymen returning on bicycles from the places where they worked near Petah Tiqva and Ras al Ayin." These, the court reported, "were shot from behind at close range or from the left."

Three more persons accompanying a mule cart were next to be shot, then a shepherd and his 12-year-old son, and later the occupants of a truck carrying four men and 14 women between the ages of 12 and 66.

So it went until a total of 49 persons had been butchered. Eventually, eight of the participants in the massacre were found guilty. The last of these were freed by the beginning of 1960 — about three and a half years after the killings. And in September 1960 the city of Ramle engaged Gabriel Dahan, convicted of killing 43 Arabs in a single hour, as officer for Arab affairs.

The reason for such massacres is not hard to understand. When the state of Israel was established in 1948, Palestine was an Arab country. There were more than twice as many Arabs as Jews living in the country, and about half of the entire Jewish population was concentrated just in the Tel Aviv area. The establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine could only come about through the expulsion of the Palestinian majority, and that is what was done.

More than 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes during the period between April and December 1948. Their land was taken over by Zionist settlers, and these Palestinian refugees have never been allowed to return to the country of their birth.

Following the 1967 Mideast War, hundreds of thousands of new Palestinian refugees were driven out of the territories taken over by Israel. The Zionist regime has been rapidly expropriating the land of the Palestinians who remained in these occupied territories.



Atrocities such as those in Deir Yassin, Qibya, Kafr Kassem, and West Beirut have taken place because the Israeli rulers are attempting to suppress the struggle of an entire people for its rights.

And this leads us to the second factor behind the massacre in West Beirut — the actions of U.S. imperialism in attempting to maintain its domination and exploitation of the Middle East.

Israel has been able to carry out repeated attacks on its Arab neighbors only because of the constantly increasing military and economic aid provided by Washington. The U.S. ruling class provides this massive aid to the Zionist regime for the same reason that it supports the racist regime in South Africa — if the oppressed peoples are not periodically beaten down, they will advance in their struggle to throw off the yoke of imperialist domination.

In the final analysis, the system of imperialist exploitation rests on naked force, and Israel plays a key role in exerting that force in the Middle East. We have just seen one more example of that in West Beirut. □

*Intercontinental Press. Subscribe Today.*

YES! I want to subscribe. Enclosed is ☐ \$25 for a one-year subscription; ☐ \$12.50 for six months; ☐ \$6.25 for a three-month introductory subscription.

Name

Address

City/State/Postal Zone

See business information inside front cover for overseas rates.

*Intercontinental Press*  
410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014



# A massacre made in Israel, and USA

## Slaughter of Palestinians carefully planned

By Ernest Harsch

"Nobody dreamed this would happen," an Israeli official told United Press International, referring to the September 16-18 massacre of hundreds of men, women, and children in the Palestinian refugee camps of Shatila and Sabra in West Beirut.

But in reality, not only did the Zionists imagine it, they planned it, organized it, and brought in the rightist Lebanese militia forces who carried it out.

Following the massacre, the Israeli regime's response was to turn over the heavy weapons it captured from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to the very forces who had carried out the mass killings. (*Washington Post*, September 23).

The two rightist Lebanese militia forces that actually conducted the massacre were the Phalangist militia of the late Bashir Gemayel, who was assassinated on September 14, and the militia of Maj. Saad Haddad, based in southern Lebanon.

As the largest of the rightist Christian Maronite forces, they have long been bitterly hostile to the Palestinians and to Lebanon's predominantly Muslim working population. They became particularly notorious during the Lebanese civil war of 1975-76 for their massacres of Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims. Gemayel himself directed a massacre of thousands of Palestinians at the Tel Zaatar refugee camp in East Beirut in 1976—a massacre in which Israeli forces have now been implicated by Sharon himself (see box).

### Carefully laid plans

The September 19 *New York Times* reported from Jerusalem that "as early as the second week of the war last June, Israeli officials were speaking privately of a plan, being considered by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, to allow the Phalangists to go into West Beirut and the camps against the Palestine Liberation Organization. The calculation was that the Phalangists, with old scores to settle and detailed information on the Palestinian fighters, would be more ruthless than the Israelis and probably more effective."

Despite U.S. and Israeli guarantees to the PLO that Israeli forces would not enter West Beirut, as early as September 3 a group of Israeli troops pushed into West Beirut, into the neighborhood of Bir Hassan, to clear mines from the route leading to the Shatila and Sabra camps.

In coordination with these Israeli preparations, the Phalangists were getting ready to enter the Palestinian camps. The September 20 *New York Times* reported, "According to well-

placed Israeli officials, the military operation in the camps was planned by President-elect Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Phalangists, before his assassination last Tuesday."

Seizing on Gemayel's assassination as a justification, thousands of Israeli troops, tanks, and armored cars poured into West Beirut September 15. The Israeli government claimed that this was to maintain "law and order" in the wake of the assassination.

But Israeli Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eytan spelled out the real goal. He told the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* September 17, "Now what has to be destroyed will be destroyed. And who has to be arrested will be arrested."

Scores were killed in the fighting in West Beirut, as the Israeli units overran the checkpoints and headquarters held by the various Muslim and leftist militia groups that were defending the city. Hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinians were arrested by the Israeli forces. The Shatila and Sabra camps were surrounded by Israeli troops, as was the Burj al Brajneh camp.

Once the Israeli troops had occupied the city and disarmed the Muslim and leftist militia groups, the population was left without any

organized defense whatsoever.

In his Knesset speech, Sharon admitted that on September 15, at 3:30 p.m., "a meeting was carried out with the Phalangist command in which the Chief of Staff and northern commander participated, and during which we discussed the operations of the Phalangists and the entry of the I.D.F. [Israel Defense Force] into the western part of the city."

According to an Israeli army radio report—which was later confirmed by a government spokesman—the Israeli cabinet was presented with this plan the next day to allow the Phalangists to enter Shatila and Sabra. It adopted a resolution approving the action.

Following the plans drawn up with the Israeli authorities, the Lebanese rightists gathered September 16 at the Beirut International Airport, which is controlled by Israeli troops.

From the airport, they followed a series of roads marked out with the Phalangist symbol leading to the two refugee camps. They went through the Israeli lines surrounding Shatila and Sabra. Israeli tanks stationed on a hilltop provided cover in case the rightists ran into resistance in the camps.

The Israeli-backed butchers then went systematically about their work.

Entire families were gunned down in their homes. Hundreds of people were rounded up and driven away in cattle trucks, past the watchful eyes of Israeli troops just outside the camp gates.

Several thousand Palestinians gathered at the Gaza Hospital for refuge, but had to flee from there when the rightists entered and dragged away the hospital staff. The foreign doctors were handed over to the Israeli army, while the Palestinians were taken away or shot on the spot. Some patients were killed as well.

Witnesses described seeing bulldozers being driven by, their scoops filled with bodies. Palestinian officials put the number killed at some 1,800. Camille Geagea, the Lebanese prosecutor general, said that as of September 24, at least 597 bodies had been found, and more than 2,000 people were still missing.

### 'Happy New Year'

Although the Israeli authorities still claim that they were not immediately aware the massacre was taking place, and that they attempted to stop it when they learned of the killings, all the evidence points toward direct knowledge and collusion throughout the time the Phalangists and Haddad's forces were carrying out their bloodbath.

During the night, the Israelis provided light

### Israeli role in Tel Zaatar

In an angry reply to criticism from parliamentary opposition leader Shimon Peres, Sharon blurted out September 22, "When you were Defense Minister, there was an affair in Tel Zaatar. When you were Defense Minister. I will not go into details here. How come your conscience does not bother you? Thousands of people were slaughtered. And Parliament Member Peres, where were the officers of the I.D.F. on that day, and that was an affair that occurred with foreknowledge."

Several days later, Brig. Gen. Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, who was the Israeli officer in charge of liaison with the Phalangists in 1976, acknowledged that he and two other Israelis were in Lebanon clandestinely at the end of July 1976, during the siege of Tel Zaatar, although he denied that they were there when the camp fell and the Phalangists went in several weeks later.

In a television interview September 24, Sharon softened his earlier statement, saying that no Israeli soldiers were in Tel Zaatar. But he added that "the relationship, the network of relations [with the Phalangists] existed at that time and also continue now."

by firing flares over the refugee camps, so that the killers could see what they were doing.

Sharon admitted this in his speech. "On the night of the 16th of September," he said, "a force of the Phalangists entered Shatila camp. As per their request they got at a certain time flares fired from 81 millimeter mortars and flares from planes. On the 17th of September 1982, the Phalangists concentrated a force of infantry, artillery and medical personnel in order to continue the mopping-up in the camps."

Hirsh Goodman, a military correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post*, later reported that at 11:00 p.m. on the night of September 16, he had been shown a cable from the head of the Phalangist units in Shatila, saying, "To this time we have killed 300 civilians and terrorists."

Another Israeli newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, quoted an Israeli soldier as saying that "toward evening on Thursday [September 16], when it began to get dark, Palestinian women from the Shatila camp came to our post and told in hysterics how the Phalangists were shooting at their children and were taking the men from the camp in trucks. I reported this to my commanders, but they only told me, 'It's all right, don't worry.' The instruction that I received was to tell the women to go back home."

The soldier said that he repeated his report over and over, and each time was told, "It's O.K."

The killings went on. The next day, according to a report in the *Washington Post*, some of the rightists left the Shatila camp for a "bit of rest," in the words of a militia officer. "Israeli soldiers were lounging all about them," the *Post* reported, "some reading calmly despite the rattle of gunfire in the camp. The gunfire was in short bursts, in roughly one place, and did not indicate that there was any return fire. The Christian militiamen were being fed and given water by the Israeli army."

An unnamed Israeli colonel told a Reuters correspondent that the area was being "purified."

Ron Ben-Yishai, military correspondent of Israel Television, later reported that he had called Sharon that night — the eve of the Jewish new year — and told him that the massacres were taking place. Sharon replied, "Happy New Year."

#### Reagan's setup

Because of the worldwide outcry against this Israeli-backed butchery, the Reagan administration has tried to take a bit of distance from the Zionist regime — at the same time that it has seized on the massacre as an excuse for sending U.S. troops back into Lebanon.

Yet the blood of the victims of Shatila and Sabra is as much on Washington's hands as on those who rule in Israel.

In the September 21 *Christian Science Monitor*, columnist Joseph Harsch pointed to one element of this responsibility.

Israel's military power is based on the best and latest American weapons, sometimes supplied to Is-

rael even before being issued to US forces. Israel's superior armed forces are built on an economy heavily subsidized by American taxpayers. Israel is today the most subsidized client of the US.

In other words, this atrocity was made possible because American taxpayers have made Israel the dominant military power in the Middle East.

But the U.S. role in the massacre is also more direct. A key aspect of the setup for the killings was Washington's part in getting the PLO out of West Beirut.

According to PLO officials, the PLO had agreed to evacuate Beirut only after receiving written guarantees from Washington that Israeli forces would not enter West Beirut and that the civilian population of the camps would

be protected.

They said that the guarantees had come directly from U.S. negotiator Philip Habib and had been transmitted to them by the prime minister of Lebanon.

The guarantees proved worthless. The marines went to Beirut for the single purpose of ensuring the departure of the PLO. That accomplished, they were abruptly pulled out. The stage for the massacre was set.

Yassir Arafat, the chairman of the PLO, has pointed to this U.S. complicity.

He declared, "The terrible massacre was planned and organized by Israel, the Israeli army, and — I'm sorry to say — covered completely by the American administration." □

## United States

# Congress takes aim at Cuba

## Symms Amendment gives Reagan license to kill

By Will Reissner

When President Reagan vetoed a \$14 billion supplemental spending bill on August 28, his veto also affected an amendment to the bill that was near and dear to Reagan's heart — the Symms amendment, giving the White House a blank check to combat the Cuban revolution "by whatever means may be necessary, including the use of arms."

But Congress overrode Reagan's veto in September, thereby reinstating the amendment — sponsored by Sen. Steven Symms, an Idaho Republican.

Under the U.S. War Powers Act, the president has the power to send U.S. troops into action abroad for up to 60 days before requesting congressional approval. In essence, the Symms amendment urges Reagan to use that power to combat what it terms "aggressive or subversive activities" by Cuba.

The debate in the Senate had been hot and heavy. Pounding his desk and shouting "it's time America starts acting like America again," Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina urged passage of the amendment, assuring his Senate colleagues that Secretary of State George Shultz wanted the measure passed.

South Carolina's Sen. Strom Thurmond — claiming that Cuba was aiding rebels in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala — pleaded: "Let's do what the President wants, let's do what the secretary of state wants."

#### Text of amendment

The Symms amendment is a virtual word-for-word repetition of a congressional resolution against Cuba passed in 1962 during the Kennedy administration. It states that "the United States is determined:

"(a) to prevent by whatever means may be necessary, including the use of arms, the Marxist-Leninist regime in Cuba from extending

by force or the threat of force its aggressive or subversive activities to any part of this hemisphere;

"(b) to prevent in Cuba the creation or use of an externally supported military capability endangering the security of the United States; and,

"(c) to work with the Organization of American States and with freedom-loving Cubans to support the aspirations of the Cuban people for self-determination."

The Organization for the Liberation of Cuba, a right-wing terrorist group that operates a paramilitary training camp in the Florida Everglades, hailed the passage of the Symms amendment. It "is going to allow us to work a little bit more freely than before," said Ramón Sánchez, the group's leader. He vowed that "there will be a definite step up of activity, definitely."





# U.S. diplomat blasts Reagan's policy on Cuba

A second senior official has resigned from the U.S. diplomatic corps to protest the Reagan administration's war drive in Central America.

Wayne Smith, who headed the State Department's Office of Cuban Affairs in 1977-79, and who was the chief of the U.S. interests section in Havana in 1979-82, published his criticisms of Reagan's confrontationist course in the fall issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine. Smith's resignation from the State Department follows a similar action by Robert White, the former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, who left the Foreign Service in 1981.

As the senior U.S. diplomat in Cuba, Smith was in a position to know in detail how Washington conducted its policy. He recalls that the administration's "initial position was that the United States would not even talk to the Cubans until they ceased all interventionist activities in Latin America and withdrew their troops from Africa. If they refused to do so, Washington would exclude no option, including a U.S. blockade or invasion of Cuba."

To back up Reagan's belligerent stance, the State Department issued a white paper in February 1981 claiming that the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador was "a textbook case of indirect armed aggression by Communist powers through Cuba."

Smith points out that the white paper "became a source of acute embarrassment to the administration" and that "some of the

supporting documents turned out to be forgeries." He adds that "if the guerrillas had received all the arms reported by U.S. intelligence, the Salvadoran army would be outgunned 20 to 1."

Despite repeated attempts by the Cubans to initiate negotiations, Washington rejected this course. According to Smith, "A senior policy maker explained in July 1981 that the new administration was convinced its predecessors had not fully explored the possibilities of exerting pressure on Castro. It was determined that all options should be tried. My reply to this, in a letter dated that same month, was that Castro had seen it all before. Neither harsh words nor harsh measures had ever succeeded."

But Reagan pushed ahead. "Between January and November 1981, Washington strongly threatened military measures; the Cubans said they were willing to open discussions but would never knuckle under to intimidation. To emphasize the point, Castro organized a People's Militia, which he claimed would put 500,000 Cubans under arms."

"In late October the situation took on a new dimension. . . . First, on October 19 syndicated columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novack claimed without supportable evidence that a 500-600 man Cuban special force was infiltrating El Salvador from Nicaragua. The column alone would not have concerned Havana, but a senior State Department official raised the matter

with the Soviets as something Washington took most seriously, implying that it might feel forced to respond. Second, U.S. naval maneuvers were to be held near Cuban waters. Third, and most important, on October 29 Haig said the review of U.S. policy options regarding Cuba was almost ready to be sent to the president. Claiming the review contained evidence of Cuban intervention in Central America, he said the United States planned to take action.

"The Cubans took Haig at his word, concluding an invasion was imminent. Castro mobilized Cubans to defend their island to the last man and defied the United States to do its worst. . . ."

"As the full implications of Castro's mobilization sank in, reaction in Washington became more somber. Clearly, if Castro was willing to defy what he had seen as an imminent invasion, then the U.S. campaign of escalating threats was doomed to failure. Castro had carried the game to its last move and refused to back down."

Unfortunately, as the Symms amendment and Smith's own resignation make clear, the November 1981 confrontation between Washington and Havana was far from Reagan's "last move." It is becoming increasingly apparent that Washington's counterrevolutionary campaign in Central America is one of escalating actions as well as threats.

— David Frankel

"We are euphoric," said Antonio de Varona. De Varona said his Cuban Patriotic Junta would now be able to step up terrorist actions against Cuba "without being persecuted" by U.S. authorities.

Leaders of the terrorist Alpha 66 gang also hailed the Symms amendment as an invitation to commit new crimes such as the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner, in which 73 people died.

## Condemnation in Latin America

The Symms amendment charge of Cuban "subversive activities" in the hemisphere is a cover for Reagan's own plans to deepen military intervention against Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other countries. Thus reaction to the amendment in Latin America was quick in coming, and sharply critical.

The Standing Commission of the Mexican Congress passed a resolution stating that the amendment will aggravate tensions in the Caribbean and Central America."

Venezuela's foreign minister stressed his government's opposition to the measure.

Venezuelan President Luis Herrera Campíns told journalists "we feel that the era of armed intervention should be a closed chapter in the unfortunate history of intervention in Latin America."

Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, coordinator of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua blasted the resolution as an attempt to pave the way for a U.S. intervention in Central America.

Former Colombian Foreign Minister Alfredo Vázquez Carrizosa wrote in the Bogotá daily *El Espectador* that the Symms amendment turned the clock back 150 years, reviving the Monroe Doctrine, under which the United States gave itself the right to intervene militarily anywhere in the Western Hemisphere.

## Cubans denounce U.S. aggression

The Cuban government, which is the special target of the Symms amendment, was scathing in its reaction. *Granma Weekly Review*, an English-language newspaper published in Havana, editorialized: "It is simply disgraceful that the United States should shamelessly 'legalize' a possible intervention on Latin American soil,

particularly in Central America and the Caribbean, where the Reagan administration has shown that it favors armed aggression in spite of the fact that large sectors of people in the United States oppose such a decision."

Responding to the charge that Cuba is responsible for the revolutionary upheavals in Central America, the editorial declared that the source of these liberation struggles is "not to be found in Havana but rather in the subhuman political and socioeconomic conditions prevailing in the region. . . ."

*Granma* warned that "anyone in Washington who is toying with the idea of a U.S. military intervention in Central America and who wants to take advantage of this incredible manifestation of stupidity displayed by certain U.S. senators should be reminded of the lesson taught to the U.S. troops in Vietnam and the crushing defeat dealt imperialism there."

The editorial added: "We are confident that the people of the United States and their other, more dignified, representatives will not easily forget the many families who lost relatives in that unjust war, which some people are now trying to repeat on Central American soil." □

# Workers resist Tory attacks

*Combativity remains high despite effects of Malvinas war*

By Brian Grogan

LONDON, August 31 — Just two months after the Tory victory in the Malvinas War, the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is threatened with a one-day general strike on September 22 in solidarity with the health workers' pay campaign. This shows the limits of the "Falkland factor" in British politics — the attempt by the Tories to consolidate support through whipping up chauvinist hysteria during Thatcher's aggression against Argentina. It also gives a clue to the underlying relationship of forces between the workers and the Tory government.

The health workers have been involved in a four-month battle for a 12 percent increase in basic pay. The government has offered 7.5 percent for nurses — with less for other grades. The derisive character of the offer was indicated by its 2-to-1 rejection by the Royal College of Nurses in a ballot. The RCN considers itself a professional body, is not associated with the Trades Union Congress (TUC), and has a "no-strike" constitution.

The plight of the health workers has struck a responsive chord in the labor movement. A

series of "days of action" have mobilized workers well beyond the health service. In an unprecedented development in recent times, industrial workers from nearly all sectors have followed the lead of the miners in striking on these days. Yet under the terms of the recently enacted Tory antiunion laws, such solidarity strikes are illegal.

## Courts called in

This challenge to the Tories came to a head in early August during a "week of action" by the health service unions. The breadth of support was greater than ever — and so the bosses moved.

The printers' unions threatened to close down the national press for a day as their contribution to the week of action. In response, the press barons went to the courts to seek protection from the Tory antiunion laws.

In face of this challenge by the bosses, right-wing leaders of the health workers unions called on the printers' unions to desist. But the electricians alone refused to comply. Their power is such that their action closed down Fleet Street. Sean Geraghty, the rank-and-file

leader of the electricians was, as a result, arraigned in court.

The national leader of the electricians union, Frank Chapple, disowned Geraghty. Other leading bureaucrats took their distance. But the reaction of the rank and file was immediate and widespread. It became obvious that if Geraghty was imprisoned, the government would be faced with a generalized strike movement.

Ironically, these events occurred precisely on the 10th anniversary of the famous freeing of the "Pentonville 5" in 1972. The struggle for the release of the five dockers imprisoned as a result of antiunion laws passed by the Tories was a key incident in the mass movement that eventually brought down the previous Tory administration, led by Edward Heath.

Confronted with such rank-and-file action once again, the Tories and courts backed off. Geraghty was fined a mere £350 (1 British pound = US\$1.71) — although he and his union local had been liable under the terms of the laws for £2.5 million (losses claimed as a result of the strike action).

But Tory caution on this issue has not led to any softening in their resistance to the health workers' demands. So September 22 has been set as the next day of action by the health union's subcommittee of the TUC. One-hour stoppages on that day have also been recommended to the rest of the trade-union movement.

This, of course, is a sop to the rising militancy and anger among the ranks at the slow progress in winning the dispute. But pressure is mounting on the TUC to turn this into a one-day general strike. They are fully aware that many groups of workers will be taking such action in any event. A conference of shop stewards from all major industries in Scotland has been called for September 11 to prepare such a one-day strike in Scotland.

## Bureaucrats give Thatcher a hand

Willingness to fight in solidarity with the health workers is not an isolated case. Without the help of the TUC tops, Thatcher's government would have been sent into a spin long ago. In the present wage round, it has only been through the active sabotage and betrayal of the union leaderships that Thatcher has been able to force her unofficial pay limit down workers' throats. The most recent victims have been the rail workers.

The main issue in the rail industry is the determined management effort to increase the intensity of work by the introduction of so-called flexible rostering. This proposal allows



Demonstration by health workers. Their struggle has won broad support within labor movement.

John Harris/Socialist Challenge



the railway management to vary the length of the working day to fit in with train schedules. This obviously plays havoc with rail workers' social lives; it involves substantial losses in the wage packet; and it signals the end of the eight-hour day — a right won in 1919.

The leader of the largest rail union, the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), which organizes all the grades except the bulk of drivers, undemocratically accepted this new scheme — provoking bitter resistance from its own ranks, who refused to implement the deal locally. However, the drivers' union refused to accept the deal and successfully fought off one management attempt to impose the new rosters unilaterally, through a series of three-day strikes earlier this year. This provoked unprecedented solidarity from the ranks of the NUR, which had not taken national strike action since 1955.

A second management attempt to impose the flexible rosters early in the summer provoked an all-out strike by the drivers. Despite unprecedented press hysteria, the strike was solid. After two weeks, the TUC leadership stepped in and forced the drivers to accept

management terms on pain of exclusion from the TUC, and therefore the threat of active scabbing from other trade unions. The train drivers were forced to go back. But they remained unbowed.

One significance of the extent of solidarity action with the health workers is the limited impact that it shows such a betrayal — as with the others — has had on the combativity and confidence of the movement as a whole.

#### Witch-hunt in Labour Party

Nonetheless, the sustained undermining of the momentum of the resistance to Tory attack has given the right-wing Labour bureaucracy a breathing space. And, in an outrageous inversion, it has attempted to put the responsibility for its failures on the backs of the left wing. Accordingly, in an attempt to cover their own role, they have opened a witch-hunt inside the Labour Party aimed at decapitating the newly emerging rank-and-file leadership and at preparing the ground to reverse the democratic gains made inside the Labour Party in the last three years.

In the aftermath of the defeat of the last

Labour government in the 1979 elections — a defeat that was partly the result of the developing strike movement against the Labour government's attacks on the working class — a movement arose that became focused on reforming the Labour Party so that the leadership would be more accountable to the rank and file. For the first time since the 1920s, rank-and-file leaders in the factories began using their trade-union links with the Labour Party to support the left-wing activists. The right wing proved incapable of stemming this development head-on. The witch-hunt is their way of beginning a counterattack.

The focus is an attack on supporters of the *Militant* newspaper — sponsored by an ex-Trotskyist grouping led by Ted Grant. The aim, through the compilation of a restrictive "register" of permitted Labour Party groupings, is to outlaw *Militant* supporters. This despite the fact that Grant made common cause with the right wing of the Labour Party in opposing any action against Thatcher's Malvinas War. Quite clearly, however, the attack on the *Militant* group is a maneuver aimed at hitting

## Millions take part in Day of Action

LONDON — Millions of workers responded to the Day of Action called by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) on September 22. In so doing, they flagrantly defied the government's antiunion laws, whose centerpiece is a ban on such solidarity actions.

Tory ministers asserted that 90 percent

of Britain worked normally. Other bosses' leaders claimed that it was simply an action by those in the public and nationalized industries. But these claims were only face-saving lies. The government has been struck a body-blow.

In reality, there was a massive response to the TUC's call for a stoppage of "one hour or more." It was not a call for a 24-hour strike, despite the campaign of the revolutionary socialist newspaper *Socialist Challenge* and others. Three-quarters of a million took action in Scotland alone, and nearly half a million in Wales.

More than 300,000 people took to the streets in a half dozen major cities. These included 120,000 in London; 100,000 in various Scottish cities; 25,000 in Liverpool; and 30,000 in Sheffield. In addition, there were demonstrations in nearly every town. There was even a 300-strong demonstration in Shetland, in the north of Scotland.

The claim that workers in private industry failed to respond is a total concoction. To be sure, the character of the response varied depending on the lead given. In general, the farther north, the more solid the action. Moreover, what the Engineering Employers Federation failed to mention when they claimed that only 100 engineering firms had been struck was that large sections of the engineering industry were on a week's holiday. This strongly affected the West Midlands and parts of South Yorkshire.

Nonetheless, engineering was badly hit

in Scotland, Wales, South Yorkshire, and the Northwest.

It is true, of course, that the nationalized industries and the public sector responded most massively. Health workers were near-unanimous in taking a full day's action. More than 80 percent of miners struck for the day. Docks were completely closed. Shipyards were badly affected.

There was a strong response from the civil service and local governments. And the combination of the action of teachers and caretaking staffs closed many schools, including more than half those in London. In Manchester, Liverpool, and Bolton, the Post Office was severely affected. Most bus workers took action, many for the whole day. It is true that rail worked normally, despite this being contested by many militants. It was, however, done in response to an appeal by the health workers unions for them to ferry workers to demonstrations and other actions.

There was no chink in the action of newspaper workers, who in the last Day of Action had been taken to court by the Newspaper Proprietors Association (NPA). No national newspapers appeared at all. Symbolically, the NPA did nothing this time.

What is clear is that given a strong lead, we could not only force a humiliating retreat on Thatcher in regard to the health workers' claim. We could bring this government down.

— Brian Grogan



Nurses demonstrating in London on September 22.



the rank-and-file leadership as a whole.

The "register" will come up for vote at the upcoming Labour Party conference. It will only be ratified after a bitter fight. A defense conference sponsored by the *Militant* group to be held just prior to the Labour Party conference has gained wide support — including miners' leaders, train drivers, shop stewards' committees, and a number of left Labour Party members of Parliament, including Tony Benn.

Clearly, the present witch-hunt will not solve any of the bureaucracy's problems. The real obstacle for them is the same as Thatcher's: the underlying strength of the trade unions — especially the shop steward organizations in industry. To be sure, the workers have suffered deep shocks. But despite the setbacks, the betrayals and witch-hunts have to some degree also begun to clarify for the new rank-and-file leaders the need to extend their fight for accountability into the unions themselves.

This rank-and-file leadership is in a process of renewal. The older militants, who were educated in the period of capitalist boom, are being replaced by new leaders who understand the need to extend their concerns beyond the factories, toward a government that can defend their interests. So, aside from intervening in the Labour Party, these new leaders are more sensitive to national and international political issues, as well as to the problems of the oppressed.

#### More unemployment ahead

The Tories' failure so far to break the back of the working class resistance, despite the enormous unemployment, is undermining Thatcher's strategy.

In August, unemployment reached the largest total ever at 3.3 million, according to official figures (which underestimate the true figure by about 1 million). This is 350,000 higher than a year ago. Although as many strike days (nearly 4 million) have already been lost in the first six months of this year as in all of 1981, the level is still way below that before the Tories took office in 1979.

The dilemma facing the Tories, however, is that while this level of unemployment has deterred many individual factory and plant struggles — and has been a big burden even when a whole industrial branch is involved — it has not done the full job. The willingness to struggle and confidence in victory among the workers is still there. The train drivers' strike, which prompted class-wide solidarity, and now the health workers' dispute confirm this.

Accordingly, Thatcher is afraid to reflate the economy in the present situation because of the fear that the working class will be put in a better position to fight back. So unemployment is likely to get worse as the economy takes another dip.

Given this situation, the bosses are proving very resistant to investing in British industry. Gigantic sums are being sent abroad.

The latest economic forecast by the Confederation of British Industry (the main employ-

ers' association) shows that the economy will barely grow next year, as the hoped-for investment boom all but evaporates. Industrial production is back to the levels of the 1975 slump. And for the first time in history, Britain last month had a deficit in manufacturing trade. Manufacturing production is 11 percent below the 1975 slump levels.

To be sure, big increases in productivity have been registered. Last year, these averaged 9 percent, higher than in Japan. In some sectors like British steel, productivity gains of 30 percent or more have been registered. But rates of profit remain low. Net return on capital rose this year to 3.75 percent, compared with the 2.25 percent last year. Yet this is a far cry from the 10 percent of the boom years.

The problem is that the previous size of the gap between Britain and its major competitors means that these gains for the bosses only scratch the surface. They need further, and much bigger, wage cuts and more massive speedups.

#### Support for Labour grows

This situation is therefore rapidly dissipating the "Falkland factor." The latest Marplan opinion poll, which at the time of Thatcher's victory registered a 20-point lead for the Tories over Labour, shows this to have narrowed to a mere 4 percent. The Tories now have 41 percent support and the Labour Party, 37 percent.

It is unlikely that right-wing Labour leaders will take advantage of this situation, more con-

cerned as they are with pursuing the civil war against the left in the Labour Party. Accordingly, individual membership of the Labour Party continues to decline. Last year individual membership (as opposed to membership through affiliation of the unions) appears to have declined by 20 percent — it is difficult to give an accurate figure because of changes in the way membership is counted.

Membership from the trade unions, however, is only marginally down, at 6,273,292 — a drop of just over 133,000 despite the loss of half a million in overall trade-union membership due to unemployment.

Such a development is of no help to the right wing, since the decline in constituency membership is more than matched by the increased involvement of the trade-union activists in Labour Party affairs — through the myriad of links that exist between the unions and the Labour Party. More ominous for the right wing in this regard is the fact that most of the union conferences held over the early summer have shown further shifts to the left. This has been led by the miners' union and their militant new leader, Arthur Scargill — a keen supporter of Tony Benn. If this trade-union base can be mobilized, then the right wing will have no chance of reversing the left advances.

This is the potential that is opened by September 22, and after that by the threatened action of the miners against proposed pit closures and for a massive wage increase. □

## Guatemala: regime executes 4 opponents

By Jane Harris

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — After one month's detention and torture, four opponents of the Guatemalan military dictatorship were gunned down by a 20-man firing squad at dawn September 17 in Guatemala City.

The four — Jaime de la Rosa Rodríguez, Julio Hernández Perdomo, Marcelino Marroquín, and Julio César Vásquez Juárez — ranged in age from 18 to 27. They were charged with being members of the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), one of the four guerrilla groups that form the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG).

While these are the first "legal" executions to be held since 1936 in Guatemala, the dictatorship of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt has carried out over 100 massacres throughout the country since taking power in a coup March 23. The Geneva-based Catholic organization Pax Christi reported at the end of August that more than 1,500 people are killed each month in Guatemala.

The executions, which were held inside the general cemetery of Guatemala City, were clearly intended as a stroke of terror. The death sentences were handed down by a secret military tribunal, from which there is no appeal.

The Ríos Montt dictatorship at first said it would allow the national and international press to observe the executions. In the end,

however, only half a dozen journalists — all identified with the government — were permitted to attend. No photographs were permitted.

In the March elections, 60 percent of Guatemala's voters responded to the URNG's call to boycott the elections, even though failure to vote is illegal and can result in losing one's job. An additional 30,000 cast blank ballots as a means of avoiding victimization while registering their protest.

The URNG has attracted increasing support, particularly among the country's large Indian population. This has been a source of concern for the Reagan administration, which is currently seeking to restore open military aid to the dictatorship. □

**This Publication  
is available in Microform.**

**University Microfilms  
International**

300 North Zeeb Road, Dept. P.R., Ann Arbor MI 48106

# Class polarization sharpens

*Workers confront counterrevolutionary attacks*

By Ernest Harsch

After nine months of the deepest revolutionary upheaval in Ghana's history, the class struggle in that West African country is continuing to sharpen.

While businessmen, traders, and middle-class elements are stepping up their efforts to overturn the new government headed by Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings, working people throughout Ghana have been mobilizing in large numbers to combat these counterrevolutionary attacks and to push the revolutionary process forward.

More and more demands are being raised for the establishment of popular militias, the strengthening of the various mass organizations, and the adoption of firm measures to counter Ghana's domination by imperialist interests.

One indication of the level of popular combativity came on July 31, when mass workers' rallies were held in Takoradi, Koforidua, and Accra, the capital, in support of the revolution. Estimates of the number of demonstrators in Accra alone ranged as high as 100,000.

Since then, there have been many other rallies in cities and villages from one end of Ghana to the other, drawing in workers, farmers, students, unemployed youth, women, rank-and-file soldiers, and others.

## Economic sabotage, assassinations

For the first few months after Rawlings and a group of his supporters within the military overthrew the corrupt and repressive regime of Hilla Limann on Dec. 31, 1981, the reaction of Ghana's propertied classes was rather muted. The massive outpourings of popular support for Rawlings and the ruling Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) initially put them on the defensive.

But by mid-year, when it became clear that the revolutionary process set off by the overthrow of Limann was deepening, counterrevolutionary attacks on the government and supporters of the revolution began to noticeably step up.

Opponents of the revolution within the military and the state administration sabotaged economic projects and diverted food and scarce consumer goods to the still-prevalent black market. Merchants defied strict government price controls by hoarding goods. The privately owned press sowed rumors and sought to distort the aims of the government's policies.

Others moved toward more direct action. Terrorist groups bombed the Tono irrigation project in the north and attacked other vital installations. Elements within the military —



JERRY RAWLINGS

or sometimes counterrevolutionaries dressed in military uniforms — attacked civilians in an effort to discredit the PNDC. Some members of the neighborhood and factory defense organizations — called the People's Defence Committees (PDCs) and Workers Defence Committees (WDCs) — have been assassinated.

In July, hundreds of PDC members in Tema and Ashaiman demonstrated to protest the murder of the chairman of the Ashaiman PDC.

Such counterrevolutionary actions have been encouraged and complemented by imperialist pressures against the country. Taking advantage of Ghana's desperate economic situation, imperialist governments and banks have been holding back on much-needed financial assistance. In August, the Ghanaian government announced that foreign creditors had seized some \$22 million that had been transferred abroad to pay for imports.

The largest foreign company in Ghana — the Volta Aluminum Co. (Valco), a subsidiary of Kaiser Aluminum — announced in June that it was cutting back production by 20 percent.

## 'Down with imperialism'

Massive workers demonstrations were held in Tema and Accra to condemn this move. "Down with imperialism!" and "Kaiser is a big international cheat!" read some of the pla-

cards. A resolution passed by the workers called the move a "naked political challenge to the PNDC and the people of Ghana, given that Valco is the most profitable unit in the Kaiser empire." It compared Valco's decision to similar production cutbacks by the copper companies in Chile and the aluminum companies in Jamaica in the 1970s, which were used to help bring down the Allende and Manley regimes in those countries.

Stung by this response, and concerned about what might follow, Valco soon retreated and announced it was not closing down any of its plants in Ghana.

The most direct challenge to the PNDC came in July, following the discovery on July 4 of the bodies of three high court judges and a former head of Military Intelligence. The abductions and murders were carried out by unknown assailants. Although the PNDC and all the organizations supporting the revolution condemned these killings, the counterrevolutionary forces blamed the government and seized on the incident to press for the PNDC's ouster.

The Ghana Association of Recognised Professional Bodies — which represents organizations of doctors, lawyers, accountants, and other professionals — demanded that the PNDC hand power over to a government of "national unity" and that the chain of command within the armed forces be restored (the senior officers today have little authority within the military). The Bar Association, which has also been openly hostile to the revolution, called its members out on a two-week "mourning" strike.

For several weeks, this offensive met with little active response from either the government or the mass organizations. But by the end of July, workers began pouring into the streets in massive numbers to counter these attacks.

The July 31 demonstrations, the largest since the first few months after Limann's overthrow, were organized by the PDCs and WDCs and supported by the various trade unions and left-wing organizations.

Responding to the charge by the professionals' association that Ghana had been governed by "the law of the jungle" since December 31, the New Democratic Movement, one of the larger left groups, declared, "The masses of this country know that what December 31st overturned was the law and order of the rich and privileged minority in the society and that of their foreign masters."

The NDM also called on the PNDC "to guide the December 31st Revolution to its logical conclusion, i.e., the freeing of our dear country from imperialist domination and the

creation of a genuinely democratic society based on the provision of the material necessities of life."

### Rifts in government

The sharpening class polarization in Ghana has been reflected by rifts within the government as well.

While the mass mobilizations against the professionals' association were under way, the PNDC dumped three of the more conservative secretaries from the cabinet. All three had been associated with bourgeois parties prior to December 31, and demonstrations earlier this year had demanded their ouster from the government.

In August, two of the seven members of the PNDC resigned, the first change in the council's composition since it was set up.

Rev. Kwabena Damuah resigned after he came under considerable fire for criticizing the seizure of several buildings during the mass workers' demonstrations (the buildings had belonged to the Freemasons and other groups opposed to the revolution).

Around the same time, Joshua Amarte Kwei, a prominent union activist, also resigned, although for different reasons. He later explained that while he remained a strong supporter of the revolution, he had become impatient with its pace and felt he could be more effective outside the government.

The two were replaced on the council by Dana Ennin, a manager at the State Fishing Corp. who is also the first woman on the council; and Ebo Tawiah, the secretary-general of the Maritime and Dockworkers' Union.

### Revolution edges forward

Despite the counterrevolutionary attacks, the country's severe economic difficulties, and the government's hesitancy in meeting these problems head-on, working people have continued to make modest — though significant — gains.

One of the most important developments in recent months has been the greater level of mobilization among urban workers. While in the first months after Rawlings's seizure of power the workers responded largely at the call of the PNDC, they are now acting increasingly on their own initiative. This process has advanced with the greater organization of the Workers Defence Committees and the closer cooperation among the various defense committees, trade unions, and political organizations.

Following the July 31 demonstrations, the formation of an Organising Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (OCDR) was announced in Accra. It is composed of the Trades Union Congress; the Central Workers Defence Committee of the Accra-Tema region; the Accra PDC and the PDCs of the armed forces and police; and the People's Revolutionary League of Ghana and the June Fourth Movement, two of the prerovolution political organizations.

In an effort to begin countering the antirevolution propaganda of the bourgeois press, the PDCs have begun publishing their own week-

ly, *Nsamankow*, named after the 1824 Battle of Nsamankow, in which the Ashanti people defeated a British colonial force.

Several new social programs have been announced, despite Ghana's economic difficulties. At a Workers Defence Committee meeting in Accra in early July, Secretary for Works and Housing Mawuse Dake announced that the PNDC had approved a new housing program to build rental housing for workers. Part of the financing for it would be provided by a wealth tax imposed on affluent homeowners.

In addition, farmers are to be given soft-term loans to boost agricultural production, and students are being organized to teach literacy classes in the countryside during school breaks.

Numerous organizations have been urging the PNDC to adopt more sweeping measures

than it already has.

According to the September 6 London weekly *West Africa*, graduates of a PDC cadre school in Accra adopted a resolution that called on the PNDC "to smash the old political and economic structures based on the selfish exploitation of the country's resources" (as paraphrased by *West Africa*).

The influential National Union of Ghana Students has demanded the nationalization of foreign banks and oil companies, and the revision of agreements with other large imperialist firms.

In response to the counterrevolutionary attacks, the National Youth Organising Committee in early September called on the PNDC to establish a popular militia. It warned against failure to do so, emphasizing that "a revolution unarmed is dead." □

From South Africa  
to the Western Sahara,  
the African continent is in revolt.

AND INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS  
BRINGS IT TO YOU WITH EACH ISSUE.

*Intercontinental Press* gives you the most important developments in the African liberation struggle: the rebellions of South Africa's Black majority, Namibia's fight for independence, the struggle in Eritrea, and much more.

*IP* regularly carries key documents of the liberation movements and exclusive interviews with figures such as South African trade union leader Tozamile Botha.

And looking behind the immediate headlines, *IP* provides in-depth analysis of the events shaping the continent's future.

That's not all. *Intercontinental Press* regularly does the same thing for the whole world.

So fill in the coupon below and begin receiving *IP* at home.

-----Clip and mail today-----

YES! I want to subscribe. Enclosed is ☐ \$25 for a one-year subscription; ☐ \$12.50 for six months; ☐ \$6.25 for a three-month introductory subscription.

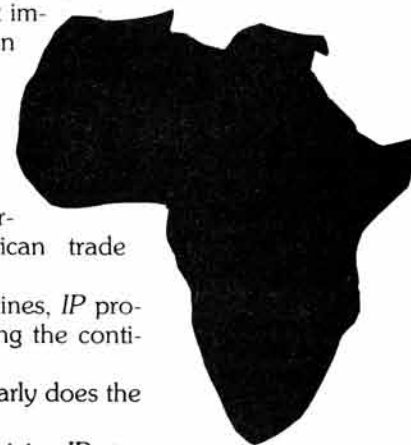
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Airmail rates: Central America and Caribbean \$25; Europe and South America \$35; Asia and Africa \$45. Payment in U.S. dollars only.

*Intercontinental Press*, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014





# 'The workers should take the lead'

*Speech by ANC representative David Ndaba*

[The following are major excerpts from a speech by David Ndaba, a representative of the United Nations Observer Mission of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African liberation movement. The speech was delivered at an international solidarity rally held at Oberlin College in Ohio August 6. It was part of a national educational conference sponsored by the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.]

\* \* \*

On behalf of the oppressed and struggling working people of South Africa and their liberation movement, the African National Congress, I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance for this opportunity to share with you once more our views on the international struggle against imperialism.

I bring you greetings from young men and women who are today crossing the rivers, the valleys, the mountains of South Africa and Namibia, fighting with guns in hand for the liberation of their motherland.

We are meeting today at a time when the liberation struggle in southern Africa has reached a very difficult stage. At a time when the people of Namibia are at the very threshold of power, they have been delayed by the maneuvers of the so-called western Contact Group led by the United States.\*

We are also meeting at a time when the people inside South Africa have risen up. For many years now the apartheid regime has tried to repress each and every move by the resistance movement inside South Africa. For the past 20 years our liberation movement, the African National Congress, has been illegal in South Africa. It has been banned by the apartheid regime.

The apartheid regime terrorists have unleashed untold violence and terror all over southern Africa, suppressing brutally the movement of the people, detaining the workers, detaining individuals, and trying by all means to suppress the African National Congress.

Despite all that amount of repression, despite all those instruments of repression — the army and the police, with their arsenal of

weapons supplied by the Western countries — the people inside South Africa have declared in action that the ANC still lives.

## Seventieth Anniversary

The movement that I represent, the African National Congress, was formed in 1912 and today we are celebrating our 70th anniversary. It is the oldest liberation movement on the African continent.

We tried to achieve our freedom through peaceful means of struggle, appealing to the British government in London, appealing to the white government in Pretoria, but to no avail. All those peaceful means of protests, demonstrations, and strikes were met with force and yet more force.

In 1960 at Sharpeville, 69 African people were brutally massacred for protesting against the apartheid laws. A state of emergency was declared in South Africa, the African National Congress was outlawed, and then hundreds of the ANC leadership were arrested.

But that never stopped the people from their forward march to freedom. A year later the African National Congress's military wing, called Umkhonto we Sizwe — the Spear of the Nation — was formed in order to pick up arms to fight for our freedom.

I know of no other organization in the world that for 50 years tried to achieve freedom through peaceful means. It was after all those peaceful means were met with force that we decided to pick up arms as well.

As our commander-in-chief, Nelson Mandela, who has been in jail for the past 20 years, said in 1961: "The people's patience is not endless, there comes a time in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices — to submit or fight. The time has now come for South Africa. We shall not submit. We have no choice but to hit back with everything at our disposal in defense of our freedom, our people, and our future." His words are still true today.

We in the ANC maintain that our land was seized by force and that the apartheid regime is the rule of the force of arms. This was witnessed in the Soweto uprising of 1976, when more than 1,000 children were brutally massacred for protesting against their inferior education and all the racist laws in South Africa.

## Never the same after Soweto

When we left South Africa in 1976 we all said in one voice that after Bloody Wednesday, after June 16, 1976, South Africa would never be the same again. Indeed it hasn't been the same again.

Today, we are meeting at a time when those young men and women — survivors of Bloody

Wednesday — are going back into South Africa, having received the necessary skills to face that regime with arms. Since arms have been used to oppress us, we are convinced that there is no other way that you can establish in South Africa a just society under the white minority regime. A just society can only be established with the overthrow of the apartheid regime, and to this cause we will fight until the last.

Inside South Africa itself the African National Congress is politically mobilizing the people from all walks of life, but particularly the working people. We've called on the people to form their own organizations, their own unions, and their own committees. We've called on the women to organize themselves around each and every issue that affects their lives. We have emphasized that the workers, particularly the Black working class inside South Africa, should take the leading role as the vanguard force in this liberation struggle.

I must say that we have not been disappointed by the response of the working people inside South Africa. Even the apartheid regime, the rulers themselves, have acknowledged that over the past 18 months there hasn't been any industry or any region in South Africa that has not been affected by massive strikes and boycotts.

In the meantime we are concentrating on increasing the capability and striking power of our guerrilla forces. ANC guerrillas have now spread throughout South Africa. The press itself reported that there have been a number of sabotage attempts carried out by the ANC guerrillas against electric power stations, oil and fuel plants, police stations, and even against the biggest military base in South Africa. The ANC guerrillas have used the biggest artillery weapon in their hands, the 122-millimeter rocket, to attack the military base inside Pretoria itself.

Only through the combination of political mass action by the workers and armed activities will we finally achieve our freedom.

## Apartheid regime's friend

The apartheid regime has never been as isolated as it is today. Internationally, working people have all come out opposed to the apartheid regime.

This regime has never needed a friend and an ally as much as it does today. It has found that friend and ally in the U.S. administration.

The apartheid regime, whose hands are dripping with the blood of our people, a regime that is unleashing terror and violence all over southern Africa — in Namibia, Angola,

\*The Contact Group is composed of the U.S., British, French, West German, and Canadian governments, which are involved in negotiating with the South African regime, SWAPO [South West Africa People's Organisation — the Namibian liberation movement], and various African governments on the question of Namibia.

Mozambique, and Zimbabwe — a regime that has murdered more than 25,000 people in the past 10 years, has now been embraced as a friend and ally of the United States by the Reagan administration.

This came as no surprise to us because the imperialist forces benefit from the apartheid system. The apartheid system insures that they have Black labor at their disposal. The multinational corporations in South Africa are not there despite the apartheid system. They are there *because* of the apartheid system.

Today they are closing down steel plants in Ohio, closing down auto plants in Detroit, closing down other industries. They are causing problems right here in the United States by denying the American workers their jobs, while in South Africa they are opening up new industrial plants, new auto industries, new steel plants. Now they are even importing coal into the United States because it is cheaper to import the coal from South Africa than to dig that coal inside the United States itself. This is why we say we are facing a common struggle and a common enemy.

#### **We must fight on all fronts**

The Reagan administration is supporting the reactionary regimes in Latin America and the apartheid regime in racist South Africa. It is carrying out an act of war in the Middle East. In other words, the Reagan administration is fighting us on all fronts and everywhere. Therefore we, the working people, must fight our enemies everywhere and on all fronts.

Our fight for freedom is not recognized by the imperialists. By fighting for freedom the imperialists say that you are merely creating conditions for "Soviet expansionism." When our freedom fighters have carried out successful actions they say that "a Russian-made bomb was used," that "Russian-made weapons were used."

We want to tell all those imperialist allies that we have no particular liking for Soviet weapons. But we *do* have a particular liking for weapons, because it has been weapons that have been used to oppress us.

We are neither pro-North, pro-South, pro-East, nor pro-West. We stand for African independence and self-determination. For that reason we are going to fight side by side with the working people in the United States.

We are one with the people of Palestine under the leadership of the PLO. We say to you, the working people in the United States, that unless you engage in each and every effort to stop the Zionist dictatorial regime from eliminating the Palestinian people and the people of Lebanon, it will encourage the racist regime in South Africa to embark on massive aggression against Angola, against Mozambique, against Zimbabwe, against independent states.

#### **Solidarity with U.S. workers**

I want to call upon you to embark on this act of solidarity. An act of solidarity which is not

an act of charity, but an act of mutual aid between forces fighting for the same objective.

We salute the victorious people of Grenada, Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Iran because we recognize that each and every victory of the oppressed masses all over the world is not only a victory for those peoples, but it is also a victory of those who are still struggling for those same objectives. And for us all these victorious struggles, particularly in southern Africa — the victory of the people of Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe — have further changed the balance of forces in favor of the liberation movements.

We greet the heroic people of El Salvador and their movement, the FDR-FMLN [Re-

volutionary Democratic Front—Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front], assured of their inevitable victory over the imperialist-backed dictatorship.

Finally, we express our solidarity with the working people of the United States, right in the belly of the beast. We vow that we are all in the common struggle. In expressing our solidarity with your struggle for fundamental changes in this capitalist system, to be replaced by a more progressive system where the world exploitation of man by man is ended, we vow that we will never rest until the last vestiges of racism, colonialism, and imperialism have been completely wiped out from the African continent. □

---

## **Grenada**

---

# **Public workers fight to transform their union**

**By Baxter Smith**

ST. GEORGE'S — Wayne Sandiford leaned forward in his chair and drilled his fingers on the desk. "We want the union to be engaged in the activities of the revolution," he said.

Sandiford is a leader of the November 12 committee of the Public Workers Union (PWU). He is an example of the kind of leaders who have been stepping forward to revolutionize the trade unions here since the March 13, 1979, revolution.

The November 12 committee is a prorevolution caucus that is working for a radical change in the PWU's orientation. A change, as Sandiford puts it, from the perspective of the union as a "semi- or quasi-exclusive club of civil servants," which the PWU's predecessor was set up to be back in the 1930s.

The committee's objectives are democratizing the union and getting it involved in activities of the revolution. It wants the union to encourage its members to join the various mass organizations, such as the National Youth Organization, the People's Militia, and the National Women's Organization.

The PWU's executive, however, sees the union only as a bargainer for wages. This "pure economism," as Sandiford terms it, ignores the union's potential social role.

#### **Union's role**

The PWU organizes workers in the various ministries and government offices. With a membership of some 1,200, it is one of the larger unions in Grenada.

Although the PWU plays a vital role in the day-to-day work of the government, the government's attitude has been to allow the union members to work out their own problems without the government stepping in.

This, by itself, is an indication of the differ-

ence between the workers and farmers government here and capitalist governments that seize every opportunity to thwart union democracy and independent political action by the working class.

Also, there is quite a contrast between the honesty of the November 12 committee and the executive of the PWU, with its history of plotting behind the backs and against the interests of public workers. But there are still some old-line bureaucrats in public service who feel more comfortable with the favoritism and closed-door maneuvering promoted under former Prime Minister Eric Gairy than with the democracy demanded by the November 12 committee.

It is this layer of bureaucrats the PWU executive draws its strength from.

#### **Executive footdragging**

In October 1981, Sandiford and other activists requested a general meeting for November 12 to discuss union problems. No general meetings of the union had been held since the executive was elected in May 1981, even though the constitution stipulates four such meetings a year.

The executive declined to authorize the meeting, but it went on anyway, involving nearly 400 unionists, about a third of the entire membership.

Activists at the meeting proposed a new union structure. They wanted representation in union bodies to be by ministry rather than by job classification, so that problems common to the different ministries could be more easily addressed. These representatives would be elected by workers in the respective ministries.

Also proposed was a program of activities to mesh the union with activities of the revolution. Finally, those at the meeting decided to

form themselves into the November 12 committee.

Since then, in attempting to link the union to the programs of the revolution, the committee has turned out a large percentage of the PWU for the anniversary of the March 13 revolution and for May Day. According to Sandiford, PWU participation in the two actions was larger and more spirited than the year before.

In May the executive designated May 27 for the annual meeting to elect new officers. The November 12 committee volunteered to help with preparation for the election so it would go smoothly. But the executive declined.

A large number of members showed up on May 27. The executive planned to have ballot voting. But some members were denied ballots. Others were given two or more ballots. Bogus ballots were also handed out. Moreover, the official voting list excluded 300 bona fide members and contained names of members

who had left the public service, left the country, or who had died. A box of ballots already marked was found in the possession of the union executive.

This ballot fraud sparked an angry debate over whether to have voting by ballot or by hand. The meeting broke up and no elections were held.

Another meeting in June to hold elections resulted in a similar cancellation due to further irregularities.

No new date was set for elections. But the executive's stalling has only encouraged PWU activists to press forward

#### Part of revolutionary process

The problems in the PWU are not unique in Grenada. Members of the dockworkers union are carrying out a similar rank-and-file struggle against a union bureaucracy that has been hostile to the revolution.

At the same time, a number of other unions have been transformed since the beginning of the revolution in March 1979, with the rise of new, class-struggle leaderships.

Moreover, politically conscious workers in all the unions — whether in the elected leaderships or not — are attempting to bring the memberships as a whole around to revolutionary positions and an understanding of the need to be actively involved in all aspects of the revolutionary process.

Many questions have yet to be fully discussed or worked out in action, including those touching on the unions' relationship to the government, their independence, and so on. Just like the rest of the society, the union leaderships and memberships are being transformed and revolutionized.

Sandiford is confident that the same thing will happen to the PWU. "It is inevitable that the union will be revolutionized," he said. □

---

## United States

---

# Bosses wield bludgeon against labor

## Press for more and more concessions

By George Johnson

NEW YORK — In wringing concessions in wages and working conditions from their employees, the U.S. capitalists use the blackjack of layoffs and plant closings.

These are potent weapons, given the scale of the economic crisis in this country. The official unemployment rate is 9.8 percent. The real rate, according to the Machinists union, is 16 percent — and 52.6 percent among Black teenagers.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number of Americans living below the government's official poverty standard rose to 31.5 million in 1981, or 14 percent of the population, the highest rate in 16 years. Only 41 percent of the officially unemployed now receive unemployment benefits, as opposed to almost 60 percent during the 1975 recession.

A look at the givebacks by workers reveals that they have been quite extensive. Also evident is that the capitalists have not gotten everything they want, and that they are determined to press much further.

#### Scope of givebacks

One year ago, the government signaled the union-busting intentions of the class it represents, the corporate owners, by launching an all-out attack on the air traffic controllers that led to the decertification of their union.

Since then, concessions have been wrested from workers covered by national union contracts in the trucking, rubber, and auto industries. General Motors (GM) and Ford, the two largest U.S. automakers, got concessions

worth \$4 billion. Ford got \$1 billion and GM got \$3 billion, at a cost to union members of \$9,000 each over the two-and-a-half-year life of the contracts.

The July 1982 issue of *Current Wage Developments*, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, reported recent cutbacks, concessions, and wage freezes for unionized and nonunionized workers at Alcoa, Exxon, Caterpillar, Clark Equipment, Cummins Diesel in Indiana, Hecla Mining in Idaho, Pierce Packing in Montana, and others.

In addition, workers have granted concessions "in hundreds of smaller companies," according to *Business Week*. "Every industrial town in the recession-scarred Midwest," the magazine reported, "probably has some company, large or small, where workers have agreed to accept cutbacks to save their jobs or even to prevent bankruptcy."

Just as ruthlessly as they are using the U.S. military machine to maintain their domination of foreign markets and raw materials against revolutionary movements of workers and peasants in colonial and semicolonial countries, the U.S. capitalists are pressing their austerity campaign on workers at home.

First-quarter wage increases in 1982 averaged 2.2 percent, against 9 percent in 1981, well below the inflation rate. This loss in real wages is in addition to the well-publicized increases in taxes for workers, and the slashing by the administration and Congress of social benefits programs

But the bosses have been unable so far to convince workers to make all the sacrifices

they are demanding. This is despite a slick campaign that includes movies and slide presentations on the corporations' difficulties in competing with foreign products, especially in the auto and steel industries.

A large number of GM workers — 48 percent — voted against a national concessions contract. The electrical giants, General Electric and Westinghouse, signed contracts containing virtually no givebacks.

And at the end of July, the Steelworkers union rejected company demands for an early opening of the basic steel contract, which would have meant an employers' drive for concessions.

In auto, the corporations have found it difficult to get all the concessions they seek from plant locals (where working conditions are determined more than in the national contracts). Ford workers at Brook Park, in Ohio, voted in late June against local givebacks, despite their having supported the national concessions contract earlier.

At bottom, the reasons for this opposition to concessions boil down to a mistrust of the corporations — and a growing rejection of the justifications and threats they use to demand concessions — by the rank-and-file workers.

The corporate claims that concessions are needed to modernize aging plants and equipment are belied by their actions. On August 30, *Business Week* reported what amount to concession-selling sessions by the steel industry with "hundreds of local union officials," who were told givebacks were necessary "to



generate capital to modernize."

"And then," a retired Inland Steel vice-president told the magazine, "U.S. Steel turned around and bought Marathon [a giant oil company]. The union guys must feel as if they've been duped."

The company claims that concessions will save jobs ring hollow in the face of continued plant shutdowns, such as the closing of two more GM plants announced in mid-August.

### Stance of union bureaucracy

Without exception, the union officials accept the need to save "our" industries by making them more competitive, through sacrifices by the workers. They actively push the boss-inspired, chauvinist, "Buy American" campaign. Some United Auto Workers locals have gone so far as to ban foreign cars from employee parking lots.

The officials have also acted as a roadblock in the way of the unions actively taking up the fight for women's rights and against racial oppression. Some top bureaucrats, such as American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker, have campaigned in opposition to the demands of Blacks, in particular around the issue of affirmative action.

Racial oppression is the biggest single method used to divide the American working class. The fight against racism is a life-and-death question for the U.S. labor movement. The unions need to support affirmative action programs against discrimination in hiring and in layoffs, as well as the demands of Black workers for equality in education and other areas.

The ability of the unions to fight back against the rulers' attacks on wages and working conditions, and against their cutbacks in government social programs, is also sapped by the labor officials' support for Washington's imperialist foreign policy. The leadership of the AFL-CIO even supported the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

The bureaucracy's opposition to the unions taking up broad social issues, its support for Washington's war policies, and its backing of the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties all flow from the basic political perspective of the union officialdom, which is support to capitalism.

Despite occasional grumblings about war spending being "too high," and complaints about the offensive against workers at home, there is no section of the bureaucracy at any level that is prepared to break with class collaboration.

While many union officials are on record for extending social benefits, or for measures such as a massive public works program or the shortening of the workweek to fight unemployment, they do nothing to mobilize the power of the unions to fight for these proposals.

Rather, the bureaucrats merely call on their Democratic Party "friends" to pass "pro-labor" legislation — and shrug it off when they do not.

U.S. workers, unlike their brothers and sis-

ters in almost every other advanced capitalist country, do not have a mass labor or socialist party. That lack, which the policy of the labor misleaders helps to perpetuate, is crucial for understanding why there has been no organized fightback against the capitalist onslaught.

The willingness of the union bureaucrats to accommodate the employers is not, however, returned. A major factor in the breakdown of concession bargaining in the steel industry was the corporations' insistence that the union's far-reaching proposals for concessions — including even deferral of cost-of-living payments to the last three months of the contract — were not enough.

The August 30 *Business Week* attributed the union's vote not to reopen the basic steel agreement to "an industry decision, with U.S. Steel in a lead role, to force the United Steelworkers to accept deeper concessions than the union wants to make — deeper even than the union concessions in the auto industry — and management is willing to risk a strike next year to win its goal."

To this clear statement that the employers intend to go much further in driving down wages and working conditions should be added current strikes at Brown and Sharpe in Providence, Rhode Island, and at Iowa Beef Processors in Dakota City, Nebraska.

Police have used tear gas and clubs against strikers in both cities, and in Southern Indiana as well. At Dakota City, the state has sent in the National Guard with armored personnel carriers to break the strike.

The statement by Steelworkers Vice-president Joseph Odorcich, following the breakdown of steel concession bargaining, could apply to a number of industries: "Now I'm convinced that the steel companies think this is a good time to take us on and try to break the union."

Such a confrontation in a major industry would be a historic test of strength. The ruling class has not yet tried to force such a showdown because it is well aware that despite the obstruction of the union misleaders, any attempt to break a major industrial union would mean the kind of class battle that could mobilize millions of workers. Up to now, the strategy of the employers has been to chip away at the strength of the unions without inviting major battles.

### Mood among workers

On the industrial front there has been little motion so far other than defensive strikes, in a small number of which, like the 205-day American Standard strike in Pittsburgh, the rank and file have been strong enough to beat back the worst of the employers' demands for givebacks.

A more accurate measure of the workers' mood than the number of strikes — the lowest in 20 years — is the often lively discussion on the shop floor of every facet of the capitalist crisis and how it affects workers.

This discussion has deepened considerably in the last few months, spurred by the steel

industry's demands for concessions, by recent closings of auto plants and more threatened layoffs, and the U.S.-backed Israeli aggression in Lebanon.

One of the biggest topics of discussion is the government's involvement in wars in the Middle East, Central America, and other parts of the world. There is widespread recognition of the fact that the rulers are driving toward war, and deep opposition to their course.

Resentment over the cutbacks in government spending for social services, while spending for war soars, is also extensive.

There is little faith, if any, that the economy is going to get better anytime soon, and even less in the "reinvestment" schemes put forward by the companies. Along with this is skepticism that concessions will save jobs. And there is a deep distrust of the union leaders, who have failed so miserably to defend the workers against company and government attacks.

All this, and the anger among Blacks and Latinos over the racial oppression they suffer, leads large numbers of workers to consider seriously the argument that the ills they face are the result of capitalism.

That is not to say that these workers are convinced that capitalism is the problem, or that socialism is the answer. But they are open to socialist proposals, including the need to fight unemployment through a massive public works program, a shorter workweek, and other measures.

The main questions raised are how the power of the labor movement can be mobilized to fight against Washington's imperialist intervention around the world, beginning in Central America and the Middle East; how labor can fight for a real program to counteract the effects of unemployment, and how labor can fight for the rights of Blacks and women, when the leadership of the unions refuses to take action.

Workers sense that the labor movement must be transformed if it is to be an effective weapon in fighting for their interests.

Despite the fact that only a tiny handful of labor officials are willing to even mention the idea of a labor party, there is great interest in the proposal for such a party as a means of fighting for the interests of the oppressed and exploited.

There is growing receptivity to the idea that the government represents the corporate rich, and must be replaced with a workers and farmers government if the economic crisis is to be solved and the threat of war ended.

As the economic crisis deepens, a planned economy, run in the interests of people, not profits, becomes to more and more a thinkable idea.

In the midst of this wide gap between what is necessary to defend the workers, and a union leadership that is totally incapable of formulating a program for this defense, socialist workers in the plants find an increasingly fertile ground for their solutions to the crisis of the capitalist system. □

# New stage in the Iran-Iraq war

## Statement of the Workers Unity Party (HVK)

[The following statement was adopted by the National Committee of the Workers Unity Party (HVK) of Iran on July 23. The HVK is one of the groups in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International. The translation was provided by the HVK.]

\* \* \*

The forces of the Islamic Republic started their advance inside the Iraqi borders on July 13. According to various reports, these forces have advanced about 20 kilometers onto Iraqi soil, and fighting is continuing. This advance reflects a new stage in the war imposed by the Iraqi regime.

The recent advance has taken place after the continued counterrevolutionary aggression of [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein, following the great revolutionary victory in recapturing Khorramshahr.\* In recent weeks, Iranian cities in the war zone — including Abadan, Ahwaz, Khorramabad, and others — have been savagely bombarded by the Iraqi regime's long-range cannons or by Iraqi aircraft, leaving hundreds killed or wounded. Furthermore, according to official reports, parts of Iran are still under Iraqi military control.

On July 14, the joint communiqué of the Army and the Revolutionary Guards explained the aims of this advance called "Operation Ramadan": "This operation has started with the 12th Imam's blessings and directives, under the leadership of his worthy successor, Imam Khomeini, in order to complete the defense of the Islamic homeland and prevent renewed aggression by Saddam and other American mercenaries. Also, to protect the cities of the Islamic homeland from enemy fire and achieve the determined goals. This operation is now proceeding intensely against the deceived enemy and Saddam's aggression."

In response to these advances, the imperialists have escalated their counterrevolutionary propaganda. All the positions announced so far by imperialist officials and their press on Operation Ramadan have been against the Islamic Republic. They indicate the imperialists' great apprehension over the recent advances.

The White House, despite its so-called neutrality in this war, has announced that "the United States, in the Iran-Iraq war, is willing to aid those countries in the region that see themselves threatened." Reports from the foreign press indicate that the United States is

planning to stage new military maneuvers in the region.

The Israeli Prime Minister [Menachem] Begin has announced: "If the Iranian forces are planning to advance towards Jerusalem, we will crush them mid-way." Officials of the European governments, while making known their apprehension about Operation Ramadan, considered the advance made by the Iranian forces as an important danger for the economic interests of capitalist Europe in Iraq and the Middle East.

Radio Cologne has reported: "According to the economics minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, the new Iranian operation is a serious threat to Germany's export market in the Middle East." The British newspaper *Financial Times* has declared: "The Iranian victory has changed the balance of forces in the region."

Also, the *New York Times* has said: "Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, in a messianic manner, has shouted for liberation from the foreign yoke and has plans for an expanded republic based on Islamic principles." And the American press, citing President Reagan, has said: "The aggression of the Iranian forces against Iraq can threaten the entire Persian Gulf area."

The recent UN Security Council resolution, calling for a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, the placing of a so-called peacekeeping force in the war zones, and the opening of negotiations between Iran and Iraq, indicate that in addition to the world's imperialist governments, the Moscow bureaucracy is also worried about the continued victories of the revolution against Saddam.

Under these circumstances, financial and military aid to the Iraqi regime from imperialism's puppet governments in the region, such as those of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, continues. Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, has asked for an emergency meeting of Arab leaders to discuss the Iran-Iraq war.

At the same time, leaders of counterrevolutionary proimperialist groups outside the country, such as Ali Amini, Shahpur Bakhtiar (both prime ministers during the shah's regime), as well as the leadership of the People's Mujahedeen Organization — which is tending more and more in the direction of the imperialists' policies — have all condemned the Iranian advance onto Iraqi soil.

Against all the statements, propaganda threats, and counterrevolutionary activities of the imperialists, of the region's reactionary regimes, of royalist counterrevolutionary and reactionary groups, and of reformist currents, revolutionary socialists declare their positions on the recent advance of the forces of the Is-

lamic Republic and the new stage of the war against Saddam's aggression to be the following:

1. The war imposed by the Iraqi regime is still the axis separating the ranks of revolution and counterrevolution in the region.

On one side of this war front are the world's imperialist countries and the reactionary regimes of the region, which are trying to behead the Iranian revolution through Saddam's counterrevolutionary aggression.

On the other side are the dispossessed and oppressed masses of Iran: workers, peasants, and other toilers, who, after the overthrow of the shah's regime, are struggling to completely eradicate the imperialist yoke and do away with imperialist exploitation, including exploitation by the capitalists and big landowners — the principal base of imperialism in Iran.

2. The recent advance of the Islamic Republic's forces onto Iraqi soil has taken place in defense of the revolution. It is a principled move that must be supported by all workers and peasants and their organizations, especially by the workers *shoras* [committees].

Continuation of the war on Iraqi soil does not change the character of this war. The proletariat, just as before, will fight against the Iraqi regime's aggressive army to defend its revolution on Iraqi soil, under the military leadership of the Islamic Republic. The extent of advance inside Iraqi borders will be determined according to military criteria.

3. At this stage of the war, winning Iraqi toilers to the perspective of unity with the Iranian revolution has crucial importance in the struggle to eradicate the yoke of imperialism. In the present situation, victory in the war and the advance of the revolution is impossible without winning over the Iraqi toilers to the side of the Iranian revolution. Therefore, with the advance of the forces of the Islamic Republic — the bulk of them composed of volunteers from the anti-imperialist toiling masses, the Baseej (Mobilization Corps) — the proletariat will struggle for the rights of the Iraqi toilers in all areas.

Fulfillment of this fundamental task — winning over the Iraqi toilers — is crucial at this stage of the war. If for any reason the Iraqi workers and toilers see the Islamic Republic's forces inside Iraq as an army of foreign invaders, and thus mobilize and struggle against these forces, the proper political response will be to halt the advance inside Iraq and make the corresponding political decisions.

Objectively, the war against Saddam's aggression has a class character: the Iranian and Iraqi workers and peasants have identical interests and are in one common front against the

\*Khorramshahr, the last major stronghold of the Iraqi forces that had occupied parts of western Iran since September 1980, was liberated by Iranian troops on May 24.



Iraqi Ba'athist regime.

4. The Saddam Hussein regime, which has been the most important instrument of imperialist intervention against the Iranian revolution in the recent period, is still a great danger for the struggles of the Iranian workers and toilers, and, consequently, for the Iraqi toilers as well. It must be overthrown.

The struggle to overthrow this regime is mainly up to the Iraqi workers and peasants. And it is also the right of the oppressed Iraqi people to choose their government freely. Nonetheless, entrance of the forces of the Islamic Republic into Iraq can be a powerful aid to the Iraqi workers and peasants in their revolutionary struggle to overthrow the yoke of Saddam and his imperialist supporters.

5. Since the Islamic Republic is a capitalist

regime whose point of departure is not the interests of the toilers, it always creates obstacles for the defense of the revolution and its extension. Therefore, while struggling decisively against the aggression of Saddam's army under the military leadership of the Islamic Republic government, the proletariat continues to maintain its own political independence in this stage of the war. It puts forward its own revolutionary program against the capitalist government and politicians.

The proletariat, just as before, condemns at every stage all the obstacles and sabotage created by the Islamic Republic against the defense of the revolution. By struggling for its own demands and those of its allies, the proletariat prepares for the establishment of a workers and farmers government.

This means that in this stage of the war as

well, in order to strengthen the revolution's barricades against the Iraqi regime and imperialism and win over the Iraqi toilers to the perspective of unity with the Iranian revolution, the proletariat raises the necessity of deepgoing revolutionary reforms to eradicate the yoke of imperialism and its fundamental bases: the sabotaging capitalists and big landowners.

The proletariat emphasizes demands such as land reform, a state monopoly of foreign trade, workers control of production, granting the rights of oppressed nationalities — including the oppressed Arab nationality — and ending the fratricide in Kurdistan, eliminating the limitations on the Baseej and extending political liberties. The proletariat also demands the extension of workers and peasants shoras to all fields of the revolution. □

# The entry of Iranian forces into Iraq

## *Resolution of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE)*

[The following resolution was adopted August 16 by the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE) of Iran. The HKE is one of the groups in Iran affiliated to the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

"To the oppressed Iraqi nation, the noble, suffering, and tortured people of Iraq: Now your crusading brothers have been forced to enter Iraqi territory in the course of defending their homeland and fighting the enemy of Islam. They also intend to liberate the oppressed Iraqi nation, with God's will, from the evil of a party that during its illegal reign has inflicted countless severe blows upon the noble Iraqi nation. . . .

"Rise and join your sincere Iranian brothers with Islamic brotherhood, in order to do away with this tyrannical government. Rise and establish your own desired Islamic regime."

— From the message of Imam Khomeini on the beginning of "Operation Ramadan," July 14, 1982.

The entry of Iran's fighting forces onto Iraqi soil through the carrying out of "Operation Ramadan" is a crucial turning point in Iran's 23-month war against the military aggression of [Iraqi President] Saddam [Hussein] and imperialism. The character of the war — one of national liberation on the part of Iran and one of aggression and subversion on the part of Iraq — has not changed with the entry of Iran into Iraq. As before, Iraq is the aggressor in this war.

By entering Iraqi territory, Iran is still carrying on a defensive war against the forces of aggression. But the first stage of Saddam's and imperialism's aggression against Iran — marked initially by the occupation of Khor-

ramshahr, Qasr-e Shirin, and hundreds of smaller cities and villages in Iran and later by the strengthening of Iraq's positions — spurred the military mobilization of the Iranian toilers. In this way, the chain of victories — breaking the siege of Abadan, the victory at Bostan, the operations at Shush and Dezful, and finally the liberation of Khorramshahr — put an end to Iraq's forces in most of the occupied territories. This was completed with what the Iraqis called their "tactical retreats."

The first stage, which lasted 22 months, is now behind us. Iran's military forces have entered Iraqi territory as a result of Iran's success and victories. The war against the military aggression of Saddam and imperialism is now continuing on Iraqi soil.

Finally, Saddam's and imperialism's aggression, almost two years since Iraq's first military conquests, has been turned into its opposite. U.S. imperialism, racist Israel, and the traitorous right-wing Arab regimes in the region cannot tolerate this fact. Hostility between the Iranian revolution and imperialism has grown sharper. Counterrevolutionary military aggression faces mortal defeat. The gamble the imperialists rushed into with their military attacks raised the stakes higher than ever before.

A look at the overall situation in the Middle East, where the criminal murder machine of U.S. imperialism and Israel has carried out unprecedented atrocities in the invasion of Lebanon, reveals the truth about the current situation.

The liberation of Khorramshahr was a decisive blow to the Iraqi-imperialist invasion. This great victory of the Iranian revolution imbued the masses of the region with self-confidence. It brought the wave of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggles to a new crescendo. Under these circumstances, 13 days after the

liberation of Khorramshahr, U.S. imperialism unleashed its main supporter in the Middle East, the military machine of the usurper regime of Israel. A vast and unprecedented invasion of Lebanon began. U.S. imperialism's policy is to bare its fangs and claws to the millions of people who have risen up in anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggles in the region.

Israel's invasion of Lebanon had as its immediate aim the destruction of the Palestinian liberation movement. What is essential to understand here is that U.S. imperialism and Israel were forced to carry out this operation not on the basis of a series of victories but from a position of weakness. It is for this reason that the savage invasion has no chance of achieving their aims. The invasion of Lebanon did not set off a wave of pessimism and despair among the masses; rather, it inflamed their rage and hatred.

This operation by U.S. imperialism and Israel has provoked the oppressed Arab and Muslim masses throughout the region. It has stirred new awareness among them. From India and Pakistan to North Africa, the toilers are filled with solidarity for the Palestinians' demands and the struggle against Zionism.

What is new this time is that there is not only solidarity among the masses of oppressed Arabs and Muslims, but also a wave of antiwar sentiment inside Israel. Every day brings news of discontent in the Zionist army, and even of demonstrations against the war.

In the framework of the confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution in the Middle East, and taking into consideration the breadth of anti-imperialist agitation throughout the region, even Israel's savage attack on Lebanon only exposes the difficulty world imperialism faces in stopping and turning back the struggles of the oppressed of the Middle East.

Israel's success in its latest criminal aggres-



sion cannot deal the workers and peasants of the Middle East a defeat big enough to stop or crush the overall trend of anti-imperialist movements among the oppressed masses. As a result, the Middle East, instead of witnessing the strengthening of imperialism's military domination, has entered an era of confrontations between the oppressed and the imperialist war machine.

### **Extending military mobilization is the key to repelling aggression**

It is by considering these characteristics of the overall situation in the Middle East that Iran's entry into Iraqi territory takes on particular importance. Iraq's military aggression opened up a period of direct military confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution in Iran.

From the very first moments of the Iraqi-imperialist invasion, the people of Iran showed their united determination to repel the aggression. In subsequent months, struggles mounted to eliminate the obstacles to military mobilization. Finally, beginning with the breaking of the siege of Abadan (the first operation carried out with broad participation by the fighters of the Mobilization Corps)<sup>1</sup>, victories were scored through vast military mobilizations by the masses of people. The liberation of Khorramshahr and now the entry into Iraq have only been possible through measures to broaden and strengthen this military mobilization.

To reach this stage in repelling the military aggression, the mass movement was forced to pay a high price. Everyone recalls that at the start of the aggression [President Abolhassan] Bani-Sadr was Iran's commander in chief. As soon as the aggression against Iran began, the political infighting that had opened with the selection of the cabinet reached a peak and even eclipsed the issue of the war.

Instead of setting forth a program of anti-imperialist action to repel Saddam's military aggression, this infighting only resulted in the most severe street clashes. By announcing his so-called insurrection against oppression, Bani-Sadr had the aim of crushing the mass movement for repelling military aggression. But the revolution won out. Bani-Sadr was deposed and fled the country.

The People's Mujahedeen Organization responded to Bani-Sadr's call for insurrection by launching its "armed struggle." This was clearly futile inside Iran. But Bani-Sadr's moves, along with the counterrevolutionary actions of ultraleft groups like the Mujahedeen, Peykar [a Maoist group], and others, lent the necessary cover for an intense imperialist campaign of bombings and terror.

The imperialists' aim was to disorient, demoralize, and sow discord among the Iranian workers and toilers. The oppressed masses of the whole country recognized this danger and, by holding marches of up to 1 million persons,

neutralized this imperialist ploy.

The Iranian bourgeoisie — the main supporter of imperialist terror — now had no alternative but to limit political freedoms in order to pursue its aims. The policy of executing members and supporters of ultraleft groups that was implemented by the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor with the aim of confronting imperialist terror only provided the pretext needed by the arrogant upper classes and the forces under their influence and pressure. The latter now set in motion their own restrictive plans against the organizations and legal rights of the workers and toilers.

It was in this period — mid-1981 — that the Council of Guardians for the first time ruled candidates of workers parties off the ballot. Factory managers took advantage of the atmosphere of arrests and jailings in order to smear anti-imperialist workers and imprison them. The firing of many Moslem workers, activists in the Baseej and the Reconstruction Crusade,<sup>2</sup> and leaders of the factory *shoras* [committees] and Islamic *anjomans* [societies] began and spread.

Toward the end of last year, the formation of Islamic factory *shoras* was suspended. The *shoras* were blocked from extending workers control over production, which had involved steps toward halting sabotage by the capitalists and their hangers-on.

The implementation of a deepgoing land reform was stalled by channeling this into the state bureaucracy. No more was heard about the formation and strengthening of the rural *shoras*, which are the only guarantee for such a program.

The literacy campaign, despite the masses' enthusiasm for teaching or learning to read and write, awaited the approval of various programs.

Political freedoms won after the February insurrection and codified in the constitution of the Islamic Republic have been eroded. This came in the context of the struggle against Saddam's invasion and the imperialist terror, that is, an unprecedented state of emergency. Last year, even a number of anti-imperialist intellectuals who had been active against the Pahlavi regime's oppression were arrested.

Moreover, just at the time of the final victories at the war front and the liberation of Khorramshahr, the press of all the workers parties that had condemned armed struggle against the Islamic Republic — such as the Tudeh Party, the People's Fedayan (Majority), and the Revolutionary Workers Party — were all shut down and legal activity was denied to these groups.

In this way, the overall crisis of revolutionary anti-imperialist leadership imposed severe unevenness on the movement to spread the

revolution through repelling the military aggression of Iraq and imperialism. Military mobilization spread, but in the field of gaining vital democratic and social demands, the capitalist and landlord classes have been able to block the deepening of the revolution.

### **New conditions after Iran's entry into Iraq**

Despite such unevenness in its development, the Iranian revolution has been able to score victories in repelling Saddam's military forces from the occupied territories. Now, with Iran's entry onto Iraqi soil, further decisive struggles for the total defeat of Saddam's aggression can unfold.

But to accomplish such a thing requires mobilization and organization of the workers and toilers of Iran to deepen the anti-imperialist struggle. As opposed to the earlier period, when we were divided between the spreading of military mobilization on the one hand and the strengthening of the social organization and struggles of the workers and toilers on the other, military victory on Iraqi territory now poses every day the need for a revolutionary, anti-imperialist social program.

The Iranian workers and toilers were not caught off guard by the entry onto Iraqi territory. They have discussed all the political and social questions that flow from it, such as how to assure the victory of the revolution in Iraq. Thus since the beginning of Operation Ramadan we have seen an explosion of discussion on all questions of the revolution among militants and activists in the popular movements, among all revolutionary Muslims.

### **Final defeat of Saddam requires solidarity between Iraqi and Iranian workers**

The basic problem is that historic events like the overthrow of Saddam's regime and the blossoming of the Iraqi revolution cannot be based on the will of the Iranian forces alone. Rather, they must be seen in their historical dimension and acted upon accordingly.

Grasping the need for revolutionary solidarity by the toiling masses of Iraq with the Iranian revolution, and taking steps to strengthen this solidarity, requires above all else an awareness of the character of the oppression and misery which the masses of Iraq have suffered because of the dictatorial regime of Saddam.

Like Iran, Iraq is an underdeveloped country that has fallen under world imperialism's economic exploitation. The economic reconstruction of Iraq, which is needed because of the backwardness inherited from world imperialism and its influence, requires an end to dependency.

The peasants of Iraq, like those of Iran, are faced with the land problem and require a deepgoing agrarian reform. The national rights of the Iraqi Kurds, who were crushed through the collaboration and unity in action of Saddam and the ex-shah of Iran, should be recognized. In a word, Iraq is faced with the same problems that face Iran, with the difference

1. The Baseej-e Mustazafin (Mobilization Corps of the Oppressed) is a volunteer militia made up largely of poor and working-class youth.

2. The Jihad-e Sazandegi (Reconstruction Crusade) is a government-sponsored organization of student youth that provides aid to peasant villages such as literacy and construction projects. The Crusade has also played an important role at the war front, building roads and organizing logistics.

that Iraq is still in the grip of a military dictatorship.

The masses of Iraq are plainly faced with the task of overthrowing Saddam's regime, which is supported by the imperialists and by the right-wing regimes in the region.

Widespread agitation among the Iraqi masses against Saddam's dictatorship, which is the vital element for the military victory of Iran in Iraqi territory, cannot be produced on command. The situation cannot be changed in an hour or a day. The Iraqi people's sympathy for the Iranian revolution, while it exists, and while it is a crucial element in the agitation of the Iraqi people against Saddam's dictatorship, is not sufficient in and of itself.

Rather, in order to help the people of Iraq to turn Saddam's war against Iran into a civil war of the Iraqi people against Saddam's regime, there must be effective propaganda. The oppressed masses of Iraq must be mobilized.

On the banner of the Iranian revolution is inscribed resolute combat against imperialism. This banner stands for uprooting imperialist domination and achieving the demands of independence and freedom. It is the banner of the social rights of the Iranian people; of industrialization and economic production; of uprooting landlords, feudalists, and khans in the countryside; of literacy for all; of full rights for the oppressed nationalities; of achieving equal rights for women in society.

Indeed, such are the measures of the Iranian revolution that no right-wing dictatorship can confront them. But a whole series of paths to political freedom and social gains for the oppressed of Iran have been blocked as a result of imperialist terror and the clever stratagems of the native rich and powerful in the past period.

This is the main obstacle in the way of defeating Saddam's forces on Iraqi territory. If one binds the wings of a dove, one ought not be surprised that it doesn't fly. Preventing the organization of the toilers and blocking further development of anti-imperialist measures means binding the wings of the dove of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. This is at the root of the difficulties facing the continuation of military combat on Iraqi soil.

Victory on Iraqi territory cannot be the result of a few clever military orders for the army. The struggle to repel Saddam's invasion on Iranian territory showed that it wasn't the wisdom of a military plan but the overall agitation of the toilers in military mobilizations that played the decisive role in the defeat of Iraq. Likewise, today it is the activity of the workers and toilers of Iran in deepening the revolution that is more powerful than any military stratagem or weapon in defeating the Iraqi army. Revolution is the state of activity and effort on the part of the masses, not a few military commands.

#### **Political preconditions for military victory on Iraqi soil**

The lessons of the defeat of the Iraqi military forces can now be grasped by everyone. The military mobilization of the workers, toilers,

and youth of the country has been the backbone of Iran's victories. A coordinated mobilization with universal military training must now be implemented. Formation of the Army of 20 Million will be possible once the workers and toilers who participate in the mobilizations place confidence in commanders who are of their own flesh and blood and who are the personification of their will. This program has been on the order of the day since the victory of the February [1979] insurrection.

The criminal invasion of Lebanon by the usurper Israeli regime has driven home the fact that the confrontation between revolution and imperialism — involving the aroused masses in their millions — is a protracted struggle. The Cuban revolution, more than 20 years since its victory, is still under pressure and threats from U.S. imperialism and is now on military alert.

This protracted confrontation puts an end to all the myths that solving social problems must be put off because of the problems of wartime. This is clearly a false approach. Every Iranian worker and toiler knows that the antagonism of U.S. imperialism toward the Iranian revolution will not end even after the overthrow of Saddam's regime.

In order to strengthen the Iranian revolution in this protracted confrontation, a program of military mobilization is needed that can create a military power free from bureaucratism. The actions of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards and of the Komitehs of the Islamic Revolution [neighborhood-based security units] offer the first examples in this direction. The Revolutionary Guards and the Mobilization Corps were the key to Iran's military victory in repelling the aggressors.

Defending the revolution through setting up the Army of 20 Million, through establishing the military might of the revolution free of the capitalist and landlord saboteurs — this is the real anti-imperialist program to advance successfully along the road of confrontation with the imperialist warmongers.

#### **The need to rebuild the economy and strengthen workers' organizations**

Industry and agriculture in Iran suffer from a heritage of backwardness. Three centuries of imperialist exploitation and domestic repression left the Iranian revolution a dependent economy. This has also shaped public consciousness: It is impossible to overcome these difficulties without implementing the most thoroughgoing social measures.

Shortages, production bottlenecks, lack of planning, the effectiveness of the imperialist economic boycott, high prices, and unemployment are all the results of the profiteering system of Iranian capitalism.

A lot has been said since the victory of the revolution in Iran about good and bad capitalists and landlords. Meanwhile, all that any of them want to do is accumulate wealth. This wealth is accumulated by fleecing the workers and toilers. These are the chains that bind the Iranian economic system hand and foot, chains

that have held back the productivity of labor and prevented economic reconstruction. This is the reason for the failures of government officials in the past three years.

The governments, instead of educating and organizing the masses, instead of mobilizing their limitless power to solve all the economic and social problems, have instead taken the side of the native capitalist and landlord classes.

Thus, the content of the government's agrarian laws is not the needs of the broad masses of villagers or the needs of our country's agriculture, but rather the needs of the landlord class and the capitalists.

It is a confirmed fact — based on the experiences of revolutions all over the world — that a policy of compromise, collaboration, and dependence on capitalism makes victory over imperialism impossible. There have been many petty-bourgeois and bourgeois political currents in the colonial and semicolonial world that have demonstrated this through their own actions.

Gandhi was the great leader of the anticolonial movement of India. He based the Indian people's anticolonial hopes on collaboration with and dependence upon the Indian capitalists. Sufficient time has passed since this experience for all to know that Indian society has not been able to solve a single one of its historical problems resulting from backwardness and imperialist oppression. The problems of poverty, illiteracy, lack of housing, lack of health facilities, and of course hunger are still stalking India. The productive forces of labor have not been liberated from capitalist profiteering.

The Indian bourgeoisie — imitating the imperialist centers — holds elections and has a parliament and other legislative bodies. But the downtrodden of India are still left with empty plates.

In Egypt, Nasserism gave rise to Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. The Iraqi Ba'ath Party turned into the agent of imperialism's attack on the Iranian revolution. Neither effected any fundamental change in social relations in Egyptian or Iraqi society.

The program for social change of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political currents only scratches the surface of society. A policy of reliance on the native capitalist and landlord classes never gets the anti-imperialist movement anywhere.

A program of national economic reconstruction requires the mobilization of the workers. This means workers organizations, such as the shoras. To confront the intrigues of the capitalist agents in the factories, workers control must be implemented. By merging related industries to create unified industrial sectors, with nationwide state planning of production, and by nationalizing the banks and imposing a state monopoly on foreign trade, one can compensate for the lack of capitalist profitability in the country's economy.

The workers and toilers are the majority; they should control the country's economy. When the dispossessed masses control society



not only will the running of the economy based on the needs of society be guaranteed, but all idle talk about good and bad capitalists and landlords will be exposed in practice. It will then be demonstrated whether the capitalists are willing to invest to raise production in the interests of society, or only to reap greater profits.

Solving the land question and implementing an agrarian reform is likewise possible only through mobilizing the masses of the country's villagers. The experience of movements like the Reconstruction Crusade has shown that only through forming village shoras can backwardness in the villages be uprooted and self-sufficiency in agriculture be secured. The distribution of land to the villagers, along with financial and technical support, is what is needed.

The need to uproot illiteracy is still on the agenda after three years. So the implementation of a decisive program through a general mobilization of all available resources in the country is necessary.

There is also a need to grant the rights of the nationalities, to uphold the freedom to speak and teach in the national languages and to develop the culture of these nationalities. These are fundamental measures for uprooting the poverty inherited from imperialist rule over our country. They must all be implemented.

#### **Remove limitations on political freedoms and workers organizations**

How can U.S. imperialism and Pahlavi oppression salvage their rule over Iran? The aim of the imperialists and their puppet regimes is clear. Their central aim is to preserve their interests and continue plundering the oppressed nations. Thus their policy is to prevent the people from becoming aware of their activities.

The vicious rule of American imperialism over Iranian society, while rooted in economics, was accompanied by rule over our society's culture. The February insurrection and the victory of the Islamic revolution began with a rejection of Western values and a revival of Islamic culture and traditions. Three centuries of colonial influence and misery for our people came to an end.

Today, we must take three centuries' worth of vengeance on the imperialists and the rich and powerful of our own country. Every aspect of the Great Satan's oppression must be understood. We must go to the roots. The principles of freedom of thought, assembly, and expression, of freedom of the press and the right to form and strengthen mass organizations are important tools for advancing along this path.

Exposing the actions of the high and mighty is only possible by taking these rights into account. One of the aims of the capitalists and landlords is to lay the groundwork for preventing the activity of working class parties. Thus the blocking of the Revolutionary Workers Party and the Tudeh Party from participating in the elections delighted these forces.

Things have now gone so far that, under the pressure and influence of the rich and power-

ful, the publication of newspapers by the workers parties has even been forbidden, under the excuse that there is an atmosphere of imperialist terror. These measures coincided with the final repelling of Iraq's military aggression and the liberation of Khorramshahr.

Particularly under these circumstances, the need for freedom of expression is felt more acutely. At a time when different viewpoints are even being expressed among Islamic *faqihs* [highest religious authorities] — differences that have led to greater clarity — how can it be that the workers parties' publications are being suppressed?

Such illegal limitations can only be turned into tools in the hands of the arrogant against the workers organizations. The capitalists and landlords will now seek to use these restrictions against the workers' military mobilizations, the Revolutionary Guards, and the revolutionary Komitehs. Likewise, they will pursue their aim of preventing the spread and development of Islamic workers shoras and anjomans.

Every blow to the political liberties won through the February insurrection is a direct blow to the organization and mobilization of the workers and toilers in anti-imperialist struggle.

The experience of the Iranian workers during the shah's time is still fresh. The workers shouldered a backbreaking burden of Pahlavi oppression. They had no possibility of organization, and were deprived of any means for deciding their own fate. But that same working class changed the country's political scene with their strikes. These, added to the people's overall agitation against oppression, provided the necessary power to overthrow the Pahlavi regime.

Now, in the fourth year of the revolution, the petty-bourgeois intellectuals that occupy government posts, under the pressure of the capitalists and landlords, have blocked the recognition of the most elementary rights of the workers and toilers that were codified in the constitution of the Islamic Republic.

Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafi, two leaders of the Revolutionary Workers Party, are now being illegally detained. No article in the constitution authorizes the holding of these two brothers in prison. Bahram Ali Atai has complained to the Supreme Court about this violation of the constitution. But since his detention, this brother has not even had a hearing in order to demonstrate his innocence.

The banning of the socialist weekly *Kargar* and the papers of the Tudeh Party and other workers parties is likewise in violation of the constitution. It is hardly necessary to stress again the need for freedom of expression for the workers parties in the context of the deepening of the Iranian revolution. Suffice it to say that these restrictions trample the constitution under foot and are illegal.

Now even the publication of books is under attack. Such censorship, which has occurred in the case of the distribution of *Ketab-e Engel-*

*ab*,<sup>3</sup> indicates the seriousness of the dangers that threaten the gains of the revolution. The Iranian revolution and the struggles of the masses of workers and toilers not only do not benefit from such measures, but they are harmed by them.

#### **Only a workers and farmers government can steadfastly stand up to imperialism**

The Iranian revolution, despite its unevenness in development, has been able to repel the military aggression of Iraq and imperialism. It has been able to carry this resistance onto Iraqi soil. At the same time, however, the revolution is faced with limitations on political freedom and workers organizations.

This revolution now must be the standard-bearer of the struggle to remove the political and social obstacles that block its own development. Hence there is a greater need than ever to establish a government that is free from the pressure and influence of the capitalist and landlord classes, one based on the organizations of the workers and toilers.

The workers are always asking themselves, why don't we have our own representatives in parliament, or, even more importantly, in the government itself?

In the struggles against Pahlavi oppression, the Iranian workers and toilers looked to Islam as the religion that expressed their politics. Since politics is always the embodiment of class interests in society, the worker and toiler Muslims used Islam to throw off their oppression. Now they have decided on a perspective of cutting off the yoke of imperialism and getting rid of capitalist and landlord rule.

The Iranian clerics who joined the mass struggle and participated in overthrowing Pahlavi oppression must now reject the interests of the capitalists and landlords. Those who are not conscious of the need to break from the interests of the capitalists in the anti-imperialist struggle, or who underestimate this, will never achieve victory.

In the context of U.S. imperialism's eternal hostility to the Iranian revolution and the Islamic Republican government of Iran, every worker and toiler is aware of the need to defend the revolution and the Islamic Republic against imperialism's attacks and intrigues and those of its internal and external allies.

For the defense of the revolution, it is necessary to get rid of the pressure and influence that the capitalists and landlords have in determining policy through the state bureaucracy. The only guarantee for the implementation of this is the establishment of a government based on the organizations of the oppressed masses.

A government that supports the interests of the downtrodden of society and that is composed of workers and toilers — that is, a workers and farmers government — is the only

3. *Ketab-e Engelab* (Book of Revolution) was a collection of articles by revolutionary leaders such as Tomás Borge of Nicaragua and V.I. Lenin published by the HKE in August. The regime ordered its distribution suspended.



way to secure victory in the struggle against imperialism's intrigues. Such a government could show the way for the victory of the struggles of the Arab and Palestinian masses of the Middle East.

With the establishment of a workers and farmers government in Iran, the oppressed masses of the Islamic world, particularly in the Middle East, would find the way to defeat the

rule of imperialism and Zionism.

With a thoroughgoing anti-imperialist transformation in Iran and the establishment of such a government, the Arab and Kurdish masses of Iraq would look at the Iranian armed forces as the liberation army of the Middle East. In this way, the entry of Iran onto Iraqi territory could become a turning point in the history of the entire region. □

## Honduras

# Guerrillas challenge dictatorship

*Regime's role in region heightens social conflict*

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The Honduran regime of President Roberto Suazo Córdova has been pushed into a key role in the Reagan administration's counterrevolutionary war in Central America.

Honduran troops have been operating against the rebel forces in El Salvador. They have also been backing up the 4,000 to 5,000 exiled soldiers of the late Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. These rightist forces are based in camps along the Nicaraguan border and conduct constant terror-raids into Nicaragua. Some 100 U.S. military advisers are officially operating inside Honduras, and estimates of the total number of U.S. servicemen there are as high as 900.

But by pushing Honduras into the forefront of the military confrontation in the region, Washington has also sped up the evolution of an already tense social conflict within Honduras. This was highlighted September 17 when more than 80 of Honduras's leading businessmen and 3 government officials were taken hostage in San Pedro Sula, the country's second-largest city and main industrial center.

A commando unit of the Cinchonero guerrilla organization carried out the daring seizure of San Pedro Sula's Chamber of Commerce headquarters as a top-level meeting was being held to discuss the country's economic crisis.

Among the government officials captured were the minister of housing, the minister of finance, and the president of the central bank.

Although smaller in scope, the action is reminiscent of the Sandinistas' 1978 takeover of the National Palace in Nicaragua, which won the release of 58 political prisoners.

### Cinchonero demands

The Cinchoneros have issued eight demands in return for the release of the hostages. The main ones are:

- Freedom for 60-70 political prisoners, about half of whom are Salvadoran freedom fighters imprisoned by the Honduran government.
- A halt to Honduran military intervention in El Salvador.
- Immediate expulsion of U.S., Chilean, Is-

raeli, and Argentine military advisers.

- Expulsion of the Somozaist forces based along the Nicaraguan border.

- Use of the millions of dollars in imperialist military aid to resolve the crushing problems of Honduran workers and peasants.

The initial response of the Suazo Córdova regime was to try to retake the Chamber of Commerce headquarters by force. Surrounding the area with members of the elite "Cobra" military unit, they riddled the building with bullets, gravely threatening the lives of all the hostages.

One of the hostages, Mario Belot, president of the Chamber of Commerce, complained bitterly about the government's lack of concern for their lives. "They were shooting at us from all directions," he told reporters by telephone.

A negotiating committee was subsequently set up to discuss the guerrillas' demands. It is made up of the bishop of San Pedro Sula, the Vatican's diplomatic envoy in Central America, and an official from the Venezuelan embassy.

Among the Salvadorans whose release is being demanded is Commander Alejandro Montenegro of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Montenegro was the leader of an operation earlier this year that resulted in the destruction of three-quarters of the Salvadoran dictatorship's airforce. He was arrested in Honduras on August 22.

Worldwide exposure of the Honduran government's brutal repression of democratic rights is clearly one of the Cinchoneros' aims.

Many of the Honduran political prisoners whose release is being demanded are in fact believed to have been murdered during their detention by security forces.

What they want to do, one of the Cinchonero commanders told reporters, is to "force the army to admit they have murdered them."

### Volatile political situation

The Cinchoneros take their name from a legendary 19th-century peasant leader, Serapio "Cinchonero" Romero. Romero, executed in 1869 following an armed campaign to stop the seizure of peasants' land, is viewed as a national hero by the poor and exploited of Honduras.

The combination of a deteriorating economy, an increasingly repressive government, and highly unpopular military campaigns against the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan revolutions have produced a volatile political situation in Honduras.

As U.S. arms (\$60 million in 1982-83), advisers (already twice as many as in El Salvador), and "diplomatic" personnel (largest U.S. embassy staff north of Brazil) pour in, even sectors of the Honduran ruling class and Catholic church hierarchy have warned against the growing social tension this militarization has produced.

Following the purge of 75 of the army's more liberal officers, and open calls by high military officials for U.S. military intervention, the editors of the Honduran daily *El Tiempo* have expressed concern over the government's course. In mid-August they criticized the establishment of an "army whose weapons cost the Honduran people hundreds of millions of dollars, and unending political and economic sacrifice."

Catholic bishops have also blasted increasing expenditures on arms in a time of social crisis. The vice-president of the Honduran parliament has called for the expulsion of the Somozaist National Guards. And even the former head of internal security has publicly charged the government with trying to start a "criminal and bloody" war against Nicaragua.

### Economic crisis

Meanwhile, workers' purchasing power has dropped by more than 35 percent, production has declined by 50 percent, and imports by more than 60 percent. Unemployment tops 150,000, and another 120,000 may lose their jobs if two big U.S. corporations — the Standard Fruit banana company and the Rosario Resources mining company — carry through threats to shut down operations.

Only vast infusions of U.S. dollars are keeping the economy afloat. Following his visit to Washington in July, President Suazo Córdova boasted that he had secured agreement for more than a half a billion in loans (\$150 million from the International Monetary Fund, \$110 million from the World Bank, \$134 million from the Inter-American Development Bank, and \$116 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development). The total of these loans is nearly two-thirds of the country's annual export income.

Whatever the outcome of the hostage seizure in San Pedro Sula, none of these social and economic problems will quickly go away.

As the president of the Honduran Socialist Party, Marco Virgilio Carías, warned at the end of August, "making war on Nicaragua and intervening in El Salvador can only accelerate conditions for a revolution in Honduras." □

You won't miss a single issue if you subscribe.