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***Torrent of Lies on Shooting of Pope* Why Imperialists Have Launched Slander Campaign Against Bulgaria**



PLO Leader Arafat on the U.S.-Israeli War in Lebanon

Speech by Fidel Castro

'Only a People's Revolution Can Arm the People'



Cuba's Territorial Troop Militia plays key role in island's defense.

Prensa Latina

Imperialists target Bulgaria

By Margaret Jayko

The Italian government is spearheading an imperialist campaign to convince the world that the Bulgarian workers state — and standing behind it the Soviet Union — masterminded the shooting of Pope John Paul II in Rome on May 13, 1981.

This campaign has escalated in the last several months, despite the absence of a shred of evidence to verify the story. The complete lack of proof is admitted by virtually every person and paper that has endorsed this web of lies and innuendo.

Thus, *Newsweek's* January 3 cover story, "The Plot To Kill The Pope," begins, "Though the case remains unproven and much of the evidence is circumstantial, there is reason to believe that the Bulgarian secret police" were the organizers of the murder attempt. Then follows seven pages of pure speculation.

In the United States, public adherents to the "Bulgarian connection" story include former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; the *New York Times*; Zbigniew Brzezinski, White House national security adviser under President Carter; the *Wall Street Journal*; and Richard Pipes, the Reagan administration's departing senior specialist on Soviet affairs.

Pipes admitted to the *Washington Post* that "the Bulgarian connection has not been solidly made — and it is only inferential." However, that didn't stop him from telling the television cameras in an interview on the same day "to me the evidence is very strong."

What evidence? Stories in the press and "a gut feeling of how these people operate."

International big lie

The frame-up of Bulgaria is a classic case of the big lie technique. If you repeat something loud enough and long enough — no matter how outlandish — some people will be convinced that where's there's so much smoke there must be some fire.

What is really at the bottom of this entire episode is the ongoing imperialist slander campaign against the workers states and the national liberation movements of oppressed peoples. The goal is to brand those countries that have overthrown capitalism, and those people who are struggling to rid their countries of imperialist domination, as international outlaws, terrorists, and criminals.

Thus the Israeli and West German intelligence agencies, after saying they were skeptical about the specific charges against Bulgaria, explained that they regard Bulgaria "as well as other countries of the Soviet bloc, as important links in a terrorist network" (*New York Times*, December 18, 1982).

Polish émigré writer Michael Konrad contended January 8 that Bulgaria has "become the training ground for international terrorism."

This campaign is also designed to cover up the fact that the *real* international criminals are the imperialists themselves. Thus, many commentators equate the fabricated Bulgarian plot against the Pope with the CIA's very real attempts to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro.

For the imperialists, it is only a short step from the lying claim that the USSR and Bulgaria are the source of international terrorism, to justification of the most barbarous crimes in the name of combating terrorism.

The recent Israeli slaughter of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in Beirut, the many atrocities of the racist South African regime, and the current U.S. war against the revolutions in Central America and the Caribbean are all carried out under the banner of combating "Soviet imperialism." The freedom fighters in those countries are denigrated as terrorists and Soviet proxies.

As a workers state that has abolished capitalism, Bulgaria's fate is tied to the struggle against imperialism and for socialism. One illustration of this is the important aid that Bulgaria has given to the people of Nicaragua, especially in the field of agricultural expertise.

Part of the attempt to brand Bulgaria as a criminal country is the sudden spate of articles about Bulgaria's supposed role as a center for arms smuggling and drug dealing. Such smears are leveled against all those who stand up to imperialism, or who are associated with anti-imperialist struggles. The U.S. government has made similar slanderous charges against Cuba, the latest being the Reagan administration's indictment in November of four high-ranking Cuban officials on charges of smuggling narcotics into the United States.

Discredit antimissiles movement

The charges of Bulgarian guilt originated in a fantastic story by right-wing author Claire Sterling in *Reader's Digest*.

The "evidence" to back up Sterling's story was provided by the would-be assassin: Mehmet Ali Agca, a right-wing Turkish terrorist.

Agca, who originally claimed to be working for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), later said he worked with agents of the Bulgarian secret police to shoot the pope. They, in turn, are simply puppets of the Soviet Union's secret police — the KGB — according to Sterling and her imperialist backers. At the time of the shooting, the story continues, the KGB was headed by Yuri Andropov, now the central leader of the Soviet government. Therefore, Andropov "must be" guilty.

Smearing Andropov and the Soviet Union in this way is a useful thing for the Italian government at a time when it — like many governments in Western Europe — is confronted by a mass movement opposed to the basing of

NATO missiles in Europe.

The smear campaign puts pressure on opponents of the imperialists' arms build-up to back off, or at least to demand *bilateral* disarmament. After all, if the Soviet Union is the source of violence in the world, then they are the ones who should be disarmed.

Polish workers led by pope?

What is the motivation that is put forward for Moscow's alleged attempt, via Bulgaria, to kill the pope?

According to Sterling: "Pope John Paul II . . . is undeniably the spiritual father of Poland's Solidarity trade-union movement, which could never have been born without his blessing."

Socialist Party leader and Italian Defense Minister Lelio Lagorio told the Italian parliament on December 20 that the shooting of the pope was an "act of war" by the Soviet Union. He claimed it was a "precautionary and alternative solution to the invasion of Poland" by the Soviet Union.

This is yet another chapter in the imperialist attempts to distort the origins and aims of the struggle by the Polish people to democratize that workers' state. The imperialists try to portray the mass movement of the Polish working people as a struggle led by the Catholic church against "godless communism," a struggle whose goal is to drag Poland back into the capitalist fold.

But it is the workers and peasants of Poland, not the pope, who initiated and are leading the struggle to replace bureaucratic control of the country with workers democracy.

The Italian press has also featured "unconfirmed reports" that the Bulgarians had planned an attack on Polish Solidarity union leader Lech Walesa during his visit to Rome in January 1981.

The big-business media in Italy now claims that Luigi Scricciolo, a leader of the Italian Workers Federation (UIL) who was arrested last February on "terrorism" charges, worked with Bulgaria to plot Walesa's murder. This gives the Italian government a convenient "antiterrorism" handle with which to crack down on that country's militant trade-union movement.

Red Brigades

In order to further smear the workers states as international terrorists, Lagorio told the parliament that Bulgaria worked with the Red Brigades — an Italian terrorist organization — to kidnap U.S. Army Brig. Gen. James Dozier in 1981.

Although the Red Brigades has a political line that is hostile to the Soviet Union and the East European workers states, that did not stop the imperialist propaganda machine from expanding on Lagorio's lie.

Italian newspapers have claimed that Red Brigades leader Mario Moretti frequently traveled to Bulgaria. This was repudiated by a Red Brigades member currently on trial, who declared: "We deny the existence of any ex-

changes or political relations of any nature with the countries of the Eastern Bloc, with the countries of the social-imperialist area of the Soviet Union" (*Washington Post*, December 19).

While three of the four parties in the Italian government — the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, and Liberals — have been somewhat hesitant in accusing the Bulgarians outright of shooting the pope, the Socialist Party has thrown all caution to the wind.

Part of what's motivating them was pointed to by Henry Kamm in the December 24, 1982, *New York Times*. As Kamm noted "the Socialists . . . are making a strong effort to portray themselves as more vigilant over Italy's security than the Christian Democrats. At the same time, accusations against a country of the Soviet bloc are viewed here [Rome] as directed also against the powerful Communist Party. . . ."

The Communist Party has been pushing for a place in the government for years now, and has been kept out by one shaky coalition regime after another.

The Italian ruling class hopes that by leading an international campaign against "Bulgarian terrorism" they can lengthen the life-span of the latest government — the 43rd in the last 38 years.

Turkish government profits too

The bloody Turkish military dictatorship is also using this campaign against Bulgaria to its advantage, at home and abroad.

Agca, the man who shot the pope, is a well-known member of the Turkish National Action Party, a fascist outfit. In order to go to Rome to shoot the Pope, Agca had to escape from the Turkish prison where he was doing life for murdering the editor of a left-wing Turkish newspaper.

Now, the Turkish government is "reinvestigating" Agca's background and this murder, trying to portray him as a leftist. Thus, the *Christian Science Monitor* talks about "Agca's early PLO training, which might have begun as early as 1976 and would have been the first step on the path which led him to St. Peter's Square in Rome."

This is a crude attempt, which has appeared in numerous articles, to smear the PLO, with an eye toward eroding some of the tremendous support it has won around the world for its heroic resistance to the Israeli imperialist war machine in Lebanon.

Transforming Agca from a fascist into a liberation fighter helps make the entire story of an international left-wing terrorist conspiracy a bit more plausible. It also aids the Turkish government in its moves to crack down on democratic rights. The bloody martial law imposed by the regime is justified by the charge that Bulgaria and the Soviet Union are training thousands of Turkish terrorists.

The U.S. press, which is where the story on the "Bulgarian connection" originated, has been among the most zealous accusers of Bulgaria. The U.S. government is officially silent

on the charges, however, presumably fearing that a too-eager endorsement would discredit the Italian government's campaign. Having Reagan join those pointing the finger would immediately exonerate Bulgaria in the minds of many in the world who are suspicious of everything U.S. imperialism does.

In addition, over time, this whole frame-up will be seen for the fraud that it is. Thus, many of the imperialist powers are keeping a little distance to avoid getting egg on their faces.

The Bulgarian government has put out a 72-page document rebutting the charges against it. None of the big-business papers have seen fit to print any of it.

The Bulgarian authorities also held a news conference in the capital city of Sofia, where they presented the two Bulgarians and one

Turk who are wanted in Italy in connection with the pope's shooting. Boyan Traikov, a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Central Committee, invited the Italian magistrate who is heading the investigation to come to Sofia and question the three suspects.

The Italian government has refused to take up this offer. Instead, Italian Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani has declared a freeze on all diplomatic relations between Italy and Bulgaria.

This international imperialist "antiterrorist" campaign is designed to brand those who fight against exploitation and oppression as the criminal class, in order to justify imperialism's war and austerity drive. Exposing this propaganda offensive is the job of all those who have a stake in the fight against imperialism. □

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The murder of Terry Santana

Salvadoran solidarity activist assassinated

By Ernest Harsch

Flor "Terry" Santana, a well-known activist in the Salvadoran solidarity movement in the United States, was the victim of a political assassination in New York City on December 4.

Radio Venceremos, the official station of the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), declared in a December 13 broadcast: "The assassination of Terry Santana is but another consequence of the policies of the Reagan administration; therefore, we hold the Reagan administration directly responsible for it."

The 36-year-old Santana, who was of Cuban origin, had worked during the mid-1970s as a staff reporter for the *Daily World*, the newspaper that reflects the views of the Communist Party. She was an important source of information for other publications as well on the activities of counterrevolutionary Cuban organizations in the United States and on revolutionary struggles in Latin America.

Most recently, Santana was associated with *Es-Info*, a press service in New York that provided news and information about the liberation forces in El Salvador.

Shortly before her death, friends say, Santana reported that she had received death threats and would have to move from her apartment.

At 3:29 p.m. on December 4, firefighters were called to Santana's apartment in the predominantly Latino area of Manhattan known as Washington Heights. After they forced their way into the apartment, they found Santana dead. Rags soaked in flammable liquid were found around the apartment. Literature on Cuba and El Salvador was scattered about, including over Santana's charred body.

Within 20 minutes of the blaze, members of the Joint FBI-Police Terrorist Task Force arrived on the scene. Rather than investigating the causes of the fire and Santana's death, however, they carted away political literature and documents. Two days later members of the FBI's counterintelligence division took away more of Santana's files.

The FBI later announced that it had "found nothing suspicious" and was withdrawing from the case. But it kept Santana's political papers for review.

A preliminary report from the Fire Department described Santana's death as a "probable homicide." But the police and bourgeois news media have sought to deny the evidence of murder.

Initially, the police said it was either suicide or an "accident," suggesting that she had died while making some kind of incendiary weapons. Later, they decided to stick with the suicide story.

As evidence of the suicide claim, the police cited the fact that the door to Santana's apartment had been barricaded with furniture from the inside, although it would have been possible for a killer or killers to get away via the fire escape. Nor did the police explain how Santana could burn herself to death and then scatter unburned political literature over her body, which friends and family members said was so badly burned that she could not be recognized.

To justify their refusal to investigate Santana's murder — and to intimidate other opponents of U.S. intervention in El Salvador — the authorities have also been seeking to smear her as a "terrorist."

The December 6 New York *Daily News*, for example, said that according to unnamed "sources," Santana was "known" to the Joint FBI-Police Terrorist Task Force, which was set up in 1981 to conduct a dragnet operation among radicals on the pretext of possible ties to a Brink's armored car robbery and shooting in that year.

U.S. arms Guatemalan butchers

By Fred Murphy

The U.S. government announced January 7 that it would sell \$6.36 million worth of military equipment to the Guatemalan dictatorship of Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt. This decision to provide the first open military aid to Guatemala since 1977 came one month after Reagan's meeting with Ríos Montt in Honduras, when the U.S. president hailed the butcher for being "totally dedicated to democracy in Guatemala."

Since seizing power in the aftermath of a coup last March, Ríos Montt has directed a brutal campaign of counterinsurgency against the Indian peasants of Guatemala's northwestern highlands. Hundreds of villages have been destroyed or abandoned, with estimates of the dead ranging from 2,600 to 5,000. Tens of thousands have fled into Mexico, and up to half a million have been left homeless.

In face of this horror, the State Department asserts that Ríos Montt has taken "significant steps" in promoting "respect for human rights." Spokesman John Hughes said the embargo on military aid was lifted because "political violence in the cities has declined dramatically," while "recently there are indications that the level of violence in the countryside has declined as well."

The dictatorship has indeed claimed success in "pacifying" large areas of the highlands, where masses of Indians have been participating in the armed struggle against military rule,

"Sources," the *Daily News* went on, "said Santana belonged to a little-known political group called the FMLN — an acronym apparently based on the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas Liberacion National) [sic], a Puerto Rican terrorist group."

The "little-known" FMLN is, of course, the Salvadoran liberation movement. It has no relationship to the FALN, which the police claim is a Puerto Rican nationalist group engaged in bombings and sabotage.

A similar red-baiting article in the following day's Spanish-language edition of the *Miami Herald* said that "Santana frequented the Café de las Américas, a popular club of communists and socialists." This was an apparent reference to Casa de las Américas, an organization of Cuban-Americans who support the Cuban revolution.

The FMLN, in its December 13 broadcast over Radio Venceremos, stated, "This political assassination comes on top of other desperate attempts by the Reagan administration to prevent the peoples of the world, and especially the people of the United States, from knowing the truth about the struggle of the Salvadoran people."

Terminating the official investigation of Santana's death a cover-up, Radio Venceremos declared, "The FMLN calls on the international solidarity movement to denounce this political assassination." □

led by the Guatemala National Revolutionary Union (URNG).

U.S. journalists who were given an army-guided tour of the northwestern provinces in late December reported an "uneasy peace." Many villagers had been herded into closely guarded refugee camps and pressed into labor gangs or so-called civil patrols.

"The army burns their crops, burns their houses, until they take to the mountains," a relief worker told the *Miami Herald*. "When they come out, starving, they're called refugees."

The counterinsurgency operations shifted in late November to San Marcos Province, in the southwest. At least eight villages there came under aerial bombardment, mortar attack, or invasion by army units. Four villages were destroyed.

There is deep and widespread opposition among U.S. working people to arming and bankrolling a regime responsible for such terror. Also, 78 members of the House of Representatives have introduced a bill that would block the arms sale. "The 'quiet' the Administration cites as justification for the sales is the quiet of the dead," said Rep. Thomas Harkin of Iowa.

"We should not reward the Government of Guatemala," Harkin continued, "for being particularly effective in its brutality nor for simply moving the Government's violence into the countryside where it may be more difficult to see but is still horribly real." □

Arafat vows to continue fighting

'Let us start our new year with unshakable faith'

[The following are excerpts from a speech given by Yassir Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on January 1, 1983. The excerpts and subheads were provided by the PLO's Palestine Information Center in Ottawa, Canada.]

* * *

Our heroic fighters attained crowns of glory in their 80-day-long defense of Beirut with their bodies, their blood, and their souls. They defeated the attackers as a hell of fire was pouring on them continuously, day and night, from the land, air, and sea. The most modern American projectiles and rockets, the most advanced, including those internationally prohibited, were placed in the hands of these criminal killers — in the hands of criminal murderers of women and children — Sharon, and his master, the terrorist Begin, by the American Pentagon.

Lebanon and Beirut were to be used as testing grounds for these modern American weapons of destruction. Indeed, immense destruction, mass murder, and vast devastation was brought about by these weapons. This hell of fire and this genocide only served to strengthen the faith and will of our steadfast heroes. With their determination they attained new peaks and created miracles in our modern times.

On American responsibility for the war

This aggression was planned by the American administration, which provided it with the elements of strength and the weapons of the crime. The American administration attempted to cover this aggression with all the might available at its disposal. The American administration's delegate to the Security Council cast a veto to prevent condemnation of the aggressor. Agreements were torn up before the ink dried on them and hence precipitated the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. Further annual aid was increased by the American Congress to help assist this Israeli military gang.

This criminal campaign against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples was a paid sinister campaign by the American administration utilizing the criminal mercenaries in the Israeli army. The aim of this massive campaign was to subjugate the region to American hegemony and to subdue its will. Israel participated in this campaign with the hope of transforming its role from that of a watchdog to that of a junior

partner in this massive slave trading that our region and peoples are being subjected to.

On Arab complicity

It is unfortunate to witness that as these grave events accelerated, pressing a broader confrontation on the freedom-loving people of the area, that some chose the road of capitulation . . . instead of choosing to mobilize the wells of strength emanating from our peoples. They chose to overlook the great events taking place in the battlefield and sought to please the masters in the hope of heeding their vengeance.

History shall never forgive them. Our masses will never forget. These masses will pave the way of the bright future with their liberated will and unconquerable determination. Events have proven the purity and innovation of the revolutionary choice. This experience has provided the broad masses of our Arab nation with a truthful hope and a light to clarify the issues of the struggle now under way.

To the Lebanese people

I take this opportunity to extend a word from the heart to the heroic Lebanese people. We created this great glory and this saga for our Arab nation to gather in confronting the Israeli-American imperial octopus. We shared our bread and our gunpowder. This event is nothing but a typhoon that will strike the whole area. This enemy of ours does not only want to swallow Palestine, its greediness does not stop there, but extends to Lebanon and to other Arab lands. Those who collaborated with the enemy shall never find forgiveness among our people, nor shall they be vindicated by history.

We say to our beloved brethren in Lebanon in a spirit of thankfulness: We remain committed to our common covenant. We remain committed to our long march of struggle. These revolutionary arms are at your disposal until you liquidate this disgusting occupation. They are at your disposal until Lebanon regains its stability, its security, and the unity of its land and people.

On Palestinian rights

The tremors of the volcano instigated by Beirut will sweep the region and will only stop at the gates of Jerusalem.

There shall be no solution, no peace and no stability in this region by jumping over the rights of the Arab nation and its central cause, the cause of the people of Palestine. [They have] the right of return, the right of self-determination, and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, under the leadership of the PLO, whose leadership was established on the Arab

and in the international scene by the waging of our patriotic war.

On Arab and national unity

Our revolutionaries have taken their historical decision to assume the role of rebuilding Arab national solidarity. We will continue our efforts to unify and build our Arab front to prevent the Arab nation from falling prey to the new Sykes-Picot conspiracy.* Some have already fallen for this agreement and some are secretly and gradually falling for it.

Loyalty to Palestine is a central Arab cause. It is the norm of loyalty to the Arab masses. We protect this cause in the shade of our democratic oasis. We shall defend this democracy by our unity. Our freedom fighters, however, will never accept any fiddling around with the question of loyalty to Palestine.

Palestinian national unity, inside the occupied territories and outside, is a unity for all revolutionaries and for all militants. It is the armor that protects us from the vicious attacks of the enemy or even from the attacks of those who are close to us.

International appeal

[The Palestinian people] have the right to call upon international conscience, to call upon freedom lovers the world over, to call upon our friends and our allies, and to call upon the Jews inside Israel and outside Israel, in the United States and Europe, both Western and socialist Europe, to support peace and justice.

We ask them: Can a just peace be achieved in the land of Palestine and in our region through a chain of massacres starting with Deir Yassin and winding up in the massacre of Sabra and Shatila? Was it not the same fascistic Israeli military gang that perpetrated all these massacres? Can peace be achieved on the corpses of our women and children? Can a solution be imposed at the expense of our people?

Our people are asking the peoples of the world — without exception — for the right to self-determination.

We salute all national liberation movements in the world. We extend our greetings to the peoples and the governments of friendly nations that have continued to stand by us. We extend our greetings to the friendly countries of the Nonaligned Movement, to the Islamic nations, to the African states, to the socialist states, and to all other friendly nations.

The year of victory

This year is the year of victory over the ramifications of aggression after we have fought and have become victorious over aggression. Let us start our new year with an unshakable faith and self-confidence to create brighter tomorrows.

Revolution until victory. □

*In 1916 the British and French imperialists secretly agreed to carve up the Middle East. The Sykes-Picot Treaty gave what is now Lebanon and Syria to France, while reserving Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq for the British.

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Textile workers' heroic strike

Yearlong action challenges capitalist offensive

By Amar Jesani and Kunal Chattopadhyay

BOMBAY — A quarter of a million workers in Bombay's textile industry have been out on strike since Jan. 18, 1982.

The number of workers involved and the duration of the strike make this one of the greatest struggles ever waged by any sector of the Indian proletariat.

The strike has been prolonged beyond all the expectations of the government, the mill owners, and the reformist left. It is inspiring an ever-widening circle of workers and other oppressed people, including Dalits ("untouchables"), poor peasants, and agricultural workers. A victory in this strike could unleash a major wave of proletarian fightback on the political as well as economic level.

Capitalist offensive

In order to understand the implications of this strike, we have to look at the recent development of the class struggle in India.

The state of emergency declared by Indira Gandhi's regime in 1975 was part of an effort by the Indian bourgeoisie to strike a blow against working-class struggles and mass movements. It sought to take the political counteroffensive and thereby facilitate the task of restructuring Indian industries.

But the working class, despite the efforts of its misleaders, refused to passively accept economic cutbacks. By the end of the state of emergency, working-class struggles were rapidly picking up.

Following the March 1977 parliamentary elections — which brought down Gandhi's Congress Party regime — the number of workers' struggles, including strikes, rose sharply. The central government (first headed by Morarji Desai and then by Charan Singh) totally failed in attempts to impose new laws aimed at severely curtailing the rights of the common people, especially the organized working class. This led to renewed bourgeois unity behind Gandhi's Congress Party.

In January 1980, the Congress Party was returned to power. This coincided with the beginning of another world capitalist recession. In face of increasing economic difficulties, the Indian bourgeoisie had to step up the process of restructuring industry as part of its strategy of increasing the exploitation of labor.

This strategy was pushed through in a piecemeal fashion. Repression was increasingly legalized through the National Security Act (NSA), the Essential Services Maintenance Act, the Disturbed Areas Act, and so on. More and more workers began losing their jobs

through lockouts, job retrenchment, and closures, while inflation reduced the workers' standard of living. Working-class struggles took on a defensive character.

The government, however, intervened actively to defeat the workers. It crushed a number of strikes, including a 78-day strike of 100,000 public-sector workers in Bangalore and Hyderabad and a strike of more than 40 days by up to 75,000 locomotive workers on the railways.

History of militancy

The textile industry is also trying to restructure itself. To a large measure, it is seeking to shift to the production of yarn rather than cotton cloth, and to introduce a new wave of mechanization and automation. The top 20 textile barons are trying to take over many of the less viable concerns. All this would involve massive retrenchment and speedup for the workers.

The Bombay textile industry is one of the oldest industries in India. The textile workers, likewise, have long been among the vanguard of the Indian working class. In 1918 they held their first general strike.

To try to control these workers, the Indian bourgeoisie imposed the Congress Party-led Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh (RMMS) as the sole recognized trade union in the textile industry.

Since the 1950s, the workers have waged consistent struggles to dislodge the RMMS. Over time, they learned the futility of struggles through the courts to get recognition of the unions of their choice. This led to the extension of the practice of forming mill committees. In 1969, such committees were formed and put up a stiff fight against the RMMS leadership. In 1973-74, the workers carried out a 42-day strike against a wage agreement signed by the RMMS, winning the workers a wage hike. In 1976, despite the state of emergency, the workers fought against a government order limiting wage bonuses to 4 percent.

New leadership thrown up

Workers in the present strike have absorbed the major lessons of the earlier struggles.

The workers realized from the first that all attempts to have the RMMS derecognized through the legal process would be foiled by the provisions of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act. At the same time, all the other traditional left-led trade unions were losing the confidence of the workers because of their emphasis on legal procedures.

Because of this, the workers chose a new leadership. The 25,000 workers of seven textile enterprises who began their strike in October 1981 were not affiliated to any big union. But by the end of the year, Datta Samant had emerged as the undisputed leader of the textile workers.

Samant, a former member of Gandhi's Congress Party, led a struggle by the engineering workers for higher wages between 1977 and 1980. Because of his arrest under the National Security Act, he was extremely popular among the workers and their obvious choice for leader.

Samant has not been adverse to signing agreements accepting retrenchments and workload increases in exchange for wage hikes. But his methods of leading struggles are militant. He prefers direct action to legal battles. Unlike other union leaders, Samant refuses to heed the bosses' manipulation of statistics.

But it was not Datta Samant who led the workers out on strike. The workers, through their mill committees, forced him to announce the date that the strike would begin. When workers found that he was waiting for some positive response from the government to the workers' demands, they assembled at his office the second week of January 1982 and gave him an ultimatum. That left Samant with no alternative but to announce the start of the strike on January 18.

The demands put forward by the strikers include a wage rise of between 300 and 500 rupees, to bring wages in the textile industry up to par with those in engineering and other modern industries. They are also raising demands related to leave travel and housing allowances, for recognition of temporary workers (40 percent of the total work force) as permanent workers, for standardization of workload and working conditions, and for recognition of Samant's Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union (MGKU).

Immediately after the strike started, the employers obtained a court order prohibiting the workers from coming within a 100-meter radius of the mill gates. So the workers organized mill committee meetings at different sites in Bombay. Textile worker activists set up centers where they have organized daily meetings, discussions, the preparation of action programs, assistance for needy workers and their families, etc.

Thus a grassroots level leadership has arisen from among the workers themselves. It is this leadership that is spearheading the strike.

Usually, wage demands have been the

main plank in struggles led by Datta Samant. But for the textile workers wages have not been the primary issue, even at the very beginning of the movement. Their hatred of the RMMS is the driving force, and for them a success for the strike would be counted in terms of dislodging the RMMS.

This has pitted them against the power of the state. Also, from their past experiences, they have realized that such a political demand cannot be achieved without wider support from all sectors of the workers. That is why their central slogan is "The unity of the workers — be victorious."

Broad solidarity

Solidarity actions have included meetings, demonstrations, strikes, and financial help to the strikers and their families. The extent of mobilization of workers in Bombay and elsewhere has been spectacular, given the fact that Samant has no organized trade-union structure and that other unions supposedly supporting the strike are really not doing so.

Since the beginning of the strike, many rallies, public meetings, and other actions have been attended by 50,000 people or more. A public rally in Shivaji Park in mid-March drew between 300,000 and 400,000 workers. In May, about 500,000 workers joined a long march organized by the MGKU.

On August 18, the day the textile strike entered its eighth month, there was a large-scale revolt among Bombay policemen, demanding the unrestricted right to form unions. There was a great deal of violence in protest against the banning of the police union and the arrest of its leaders under the National Security Act. The government ruthlessly suppressed this upsurge with the help of the central and state reserve police and paramilitary and military forces.

At the same time, the regime used this opportunity to accuse the textile workers of looting when they came out in support of the demands of the policemen. Numerous activists and their family members were arrested and beaten up and their homes were ransacked.

Twenty-two worker activists were arrested under the NSA, but their places were immediately filled by the growing ranks of natural leaders.

On October 2, more than 300,000 workers turned out for another rally in Shivaji Park.

More than 1.5 million workers all over Maharashtra state struck for three days, October 11-13, in support of the striking textile workers. More than 10,000 workers voluntarily courted arrest in protest against the government's attitude toward the strike. Many, including Datta Samant, were jailed for 14 days.

The government responded to this show of solidarity with repressive measures. Some of the workers who insisted on being arrested were brutally beaten up.

In Lalbaug, the predominant residential area for textile workers, the police not only charged workers with clubs and beat them up, but also



Textile workers demonstrate in Bombay.

entered their houses and beat up women and children.

When workers demanded that they be arrested in Saki Naka, an industrial area, they were clubbed, arrested, and brought to an area called Goregaon. There, in a police compound surrounded by thick concentrations of cactus plants, the workers were forced out of the buses that brought them and made to stand in a queue. The police beat them up, one by one, with hard rubber belts. Many workers sustained multiple fractures. When the workers then demanded food and water, the police refused and shot at them.

Despite such brutal repression, workers stayed away from work for three consecutive days. The success of this solidarity movement forced the government to move a little, but the proposals it put forward were not enough and the workers rejected them outright.

The repression seems to have had almost no effect on the striking workers. The government has not been able to put into effect the draconian Essential Services Maintenance Act, despite the fact that the textile industry is classified as an "essential" service.

Many of the textile workers have strong roots in the countryside. As the strike dragged on, more than 70 percent of them went home. This is a common practice in India. But this time there was a marked difference. The workers who went back to the villages became propagandists. They formed support committees and sent material aid back to the 70,000 workers and their families who have stayed in Bombay.

In addition, they have extended the mood of militant struggle into the rural areas by participating in and organizing struggles of agricultural laborers for higher wages and against corruption in the Maharashtra state government's Employment Guarantee scheme.

Thus, for the first time in the recent history of the working-class movement in Maharashtra, a strong bond between striking

workers in the urban areas and the rural proletariat and poor peasants has been established.

Women's organizations have also mobilized in solidarity with the textile workers. Since women textile workers and women family members were also involved in the struggle, they were targeted by the repression as well. The daughter of a textile worker was raped in a police station. Women's groups organized a strong protest movement against such sexual attacks.

In Bombay, various feminist groups and organizations have supported the strike by collecting grain, raising money, staging demonstrations against repression, etc.

Reformists stand aside

The Stalinist parties and the centrist left have gotten scared by this mighty show of workers' strength.

They are hostile to Datta Samant, and have lost members and influence to him since 1977. They know that a victory of the textile strike would further undermine their support in Bombay and pave the way for Samant to spread his support into other parts of India.

Offering only passive moral support to the strike, these parties are waiting for the strike to fail, and with it Samant.

Of the major left parties in the state, only the Lal Nishan Party (Red Flag Party) and its trade union, the Sarva Shramik Sangh, have consistently and actively supported the striking workers. As a result, their position has been further consolidated.

At the national level, the National Campaign Committee — founded on June 4, 1981, in Bombay by several of the central trade-union federations — has taken a totally passive stance toward the strike. So far, it has not chalked out a concrete plan of solidarity action.

In West Bengal, where a coalition government led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]) is in power, very little has

been done to mobilize the working class in support of the Bombay textile workers.

During the strike, a by-election was held in the Thane parliamentary constituency of Bombay. Datta Samant formed a Kamgar Aghadi (Workers Front) and declared himself a candidate. The textile strike was the main plank of his election campaign. But both the CPI(M) and the pro-Moscow Communist Party of India decided to support a candidate of the Janata Party, a bourgeois party, in the name of "left and democratic unity."

The effect of all this has been that the solidarity movement that has grown up in Maharashtra has not been duplicated in the rest of India. Even among the far left, the response to this struggle has been very poor outside the state.

Within Maharashtra, the far left has seriously taken up the task of solidarizing with the textile workers.

After working separately to help build the solidarity movement, several of them formed a united front on this issue. They included the Navjavan Bharat Sabha (a Maoist organization) and its student wing, the Vidyarthi Pragati Sanghatna; the Lok Adhikar Chalval (an independent Marxist group); the United Trade Union Congress (led by the Revolutionary Socialist Party); the Bolshevik Leninist Group (a Trotskyist formation); and the Communist League (Indian section of the Fourth International). The UTUC later withdrew from the front.

On September 10, these organizations began a campaign centering around opposition to the National Security Act and its use against the strikers. They distributed 25,000 copies of a leaflet and held numerous street-corner meetings and demonstrations in various parts of Bombay. On September 22, a huge public meeting was organized in a hall in Bombay, addressed by the secretary of the MGKU, in addition to representatives of the constituent groups of the solidarity front.

The Communist League has taken up the task of solidarity with the textile workers outside of Maharashtra as well. Large-scale propaganda work is being carried out in Gujarat. In Bihar and West Bengal, in addition to propaganda work, the league is collecting financial aid for the striking textile workers.

At its recent national conference, the Communist League passed a resolution in support of the strike. Solidarity with the striking workers was taken up as one of the main tasks of the Indian Trotskyists in the coming period.

International solidarity needed

The textile strike has inspired numerous oppressed strata in Maharashtra, and its impact has led to a further radicalization of their activities.

Despite the passivity of the central trade-union federations and the Stalinist and centrist parties, workers in different parts of the country are becoming aware of the true significance of the textile strike.

The textile workers strike is not over. By the

time this article is printed, the strike will have lasted a year for the 250,000 workers. For 25,000 of them, who began their strike in October 1981, it will be the 15th month.

This is a historic working-class struggle, both for the Indian workers and internationally. But unless strong solidarity is built up in India and around the world, it will be difficult for the textile workers to win their central demands and be totally victorious.

A defeat would be a tremendous blow to the Indian workers. In light of the government's recent efforts to outlaw all strikes and push through the capitalists' strategy of restructuring industry at the cost of the rights of the Indian working class, a defeat in this strike

would in fact mean a crucial political blow against the entire Indian proletariat.

Thus, India-wide solidarity actions and the solidarity of workers around the world is urgently called for. Workers from other countries can show their solidarity by passing resolutions in support of the strikers, by sending financial aid, and by other demonstrations of solidarity.

Solidarity messages and financial aid should be sent to: Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union, 252 Janata Colony, Ghatkopar (East), Bombay, 400077, India. Copies should be sent to: Proletarian Politics, K-8 Nensay Colony, Express Highway, Borivli (E), Bombay, 400066, India. □

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Voters repudiate dictatorship

Workers Party campaigned for 'jobs, land, freedom'

By Fred Murphy

The people of Brazil decisively repudiated the military dictatorship headed by Gen. João Figueiredo in recent federal elections.

Opposition parties polled some 70 percent of the ballots in voting for state governors, the federal Chamber of Deputies and one-third of the federal Senate, state legislatures, and municipal councils and mayors.

While the dictatorship had sponsored legislative elections on several occasions in its 18 years of rule, the November 15 vote was the first to be held since press censorship was lifted, political exiles allowed to return, and political prisoners freed. It was also the first time Brazilians could choose among more than the two artificially created legal parties the regime had tolerated in earlier years.

These democratic gains were wrested in struggles that accompanied and were sparked by an unprecedented upsurge of strikes by industrial workers in 1978-80.

A particularly important product of those strikes was the Workers Party (PT), which took shape in 1979 and held its founding congress in 1980. The PT now enjoys the allegiance of tens of thousands of Brazilian workers; it is led by the same young trade-union militants who spearheaded the 1978-80 strike wave.

Workers Party's program

During the 1982 election campaign, the PT was able to present candidates throughout the country, campaigning on a platform of independent working-class struggle, summarized in the slogan "Jobs, land, and freedom!"

The PT's candidates called for reducing the workweek from 48 to 40 hours with no cut in pay so as to combat unemployment; for a thoroughgoing agrarian reform to provide land to those who work it; for an end to government control over the trade unions; and for an end to the military dictatorship.

PT President Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula") was the party's candidate for governor of São Paulo state. On November 7, he addressed a rally of more than 100,000 PT supporters at a São Paulo stadium. In preceding days, similar rallies of up to 20,000 persons were held by the PT in a series of towns and cities in the interior of the state.

The PT's slate in São Paulo received 1.1 million votes, more than 10 percent of the total cast there. In Diadema, a working-class suburb of São Paulo, PT candidate Gilson Luiz Correia de Menezes was elected mayor. Correia was a leader of the 1978 strike at the Saab-Scania auto factory that touched off the massive strike wave.

Throughout Brazil, the PT received about

1.5 million votes in the elections, or 3 percent of the total. It elected 12 federal deputies, 30 state legislators, and 90 municipal councilors.

Bourgeois opposition parties

The biggest winners in the voting were two bourgeois opposition parties — the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) and the Democratic Labor Party (PDT). Between them, they received nearly two-thirds of the popular vote and gained the governorships of 10 states having 55 percent of Brazil's population and producing nearly three-quarters of the country's gross domestic product.

The PMDB arose out of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), which was the only legal opposition party until 1979. In the mid-1970s the MDB became the rallying point for virtually all opposition to the dictatorship, and the PMDB candidates capitalized on this image in the election campaign.

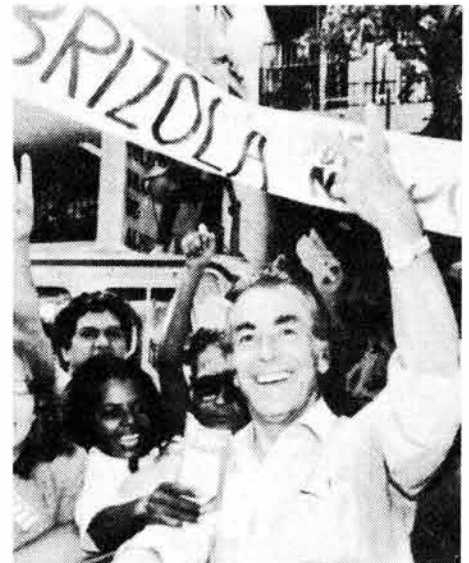
The PDT is a reincarnation of the old Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), founded in the 1940s by the populist dictator Getúlio Vargas. Its current leader is Leonel Brizola, who was a leading figure in the PTB regime that was overthrown in the 1964 coup. Brizola was elected governor of Rio de Janeiro state.

"To the armed forces," the *New York Times* said November 14, "Mr. Brizola is the firebrand who, as a governor and congressman, once expropriated American companies, organized armed political cells, praised Cuban communism, urged enlisted men to imprison their commanding officers and tried to rouse his supporters to armed resistance" during the 1964 coup.

Brizola fled Brazil after the military seized power and spent 15 years in exile. He and his party now have close ties to the Socialist International and espouse social-democratic positions, although they lack any organized relationship to the working class.

The regime tried to stave off a PDT victory in Rio de Janeiro with a redbaiting campaign against Brizola organized by the secret police. Hundreds of copies of Brizola's 1964 speech calling on "soldiers and sergeants to take over the barracks and arrest the generals" were distributed anonymously. But this ploy backfired, enhancing Brizola's standing among Rio voters who were fed up with military rule.

After the voting, the regime tried to carry through an electoral fraud against Brizola in Rio de Janeiro. Government television broadcast continual reports projecting a PDT defeat. But Brizola challenged those claims and demanded time for a televised rebuttal. After his broadcast the regime backed off. Its grudging acceptance of Brizola was voiced by Gen. Eu-



PDT candidate Leonel Brizola following his electoral victory.

clydes Figueiredo, the president's brother, who described the PDT leader as a "bone we will have to swallow and digest and get rid of at the right time."

Generals retain power

Despite the overwhelming vote against the generals, they retain decisive power. The executive branch is under total military control at the national level and is empowered to legislate by decree against the will of congress. The electoral college that will choose the next president in 1985 has been set up in such a way as to guarantee a majority for the regime's Democratic Social Party (PDS), even though the PDS received a scant 30 percent of the November ballots. And the repressive apparatus remains intact, empowered to enforce the draconian National Security Law, imposed during the darkest days of the dictatorship in the early 1970s.

As for the PMDB and the PDT, they are not interested in challenging this setup in any serious way. Each offered conciliatory statements after the elections, and each enjoys ruling-class support. Indeed, not a few financiers and industrialists lent open backing to these opposition parties, viewing them as useful safety valves for popular discontent.

Immediately after the elections, the regime appealed to the International Monetary Fund for massive financial aid to stave off an imminent debt crisis. Harsh austerity measures are already being imposed at the IMF's behest. These will mean a sharp rise in unemployment and further attacks on the living standards of Brazilian working people.

Through its successful election campaign, the Workers Party has put itself in a good position to lead the coming struggles against these measures and for an end to the military regime that is imposing them. □

Debate on PLO withdrawal from Beirut

Two positions expressed in the Fourth International

[The October 15 issue of the *Militant* and the October 18, 1982, issue of *Intercontinental Press* carried an article by Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness explaining the position of the Socialist Workers Party on the decision of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to negotiate the withdrawal of its forces from West Beirut during the Israeli siege of that city. Below is a reply to the Jaquith and Jenness article by the French and Italian sections of the Fourth International, and a rejoinder by Jaquith and Jenness.

[The first article, the reply to Jaquith and Jenness by the French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) and the Italian Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), originally appeared in the November 29 issue of the biweekly magazine *International Viewpoint*, published in Paris.]

Position of French LCR and Italian LCR

1. The article by comrades Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness describes the publication of the joint declaration of the French Revolutionary Communist League, the Italian Revolutionary Communist League and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, on the role of the Multinational Interposition Force (MIF) as an "editorial error." However this declaration was duly signed on September 21, and published in *Militant* on October 1, and in *Intercontinental Press* on October 4. The comrades have the right to consider that they were wrong to sign it. But it is then a political error that they claim to be correcting today, and not a simple "editorial error."

2. The comrades reproach the joint declaration for "implying" that the PLO bears part of the responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacres, for having accepted withdrawal from Beirut. They themselves "imply" that we have mistaken the enemy. This is a grossly polemical and demagogic argument.

The sections of the Fourth International have not mistaken the enemy. All during the siege of Beirut we mobilized against Zionist and imperialist aggression and for unconditional support of the PLO. We are absolutely in agreement in saluting the heroic resistance of the Palestinian fighters, which went on for seventy-nine days. This resistance did much to diplomatically isolate the Zionist state, to expose its criminal character and to popularize the national demands of the Palestinian people. It also threw into relief the passivity of the Arab states and the Soviet bureaucracy, which amounted to betrayal.

But this is not a reason for covering up the character of the Habib plan. We have described it as a thoroughly imperialist diktat. It was drawn up by a "mediator" who, from the first day, was implicated in the Zionist aggression. It has been implemented with the aid of a "multinational" force, which is itself thoroughly imperialist.

The Habib plan did not give anything in exchange for the withdrawal of 9,000 defenders from Beirut. The Zionist army did not with-

draw an inch. The fighters left under the surveillance of Ariel Sharon, to be disarmed on their arrival in the host countries, and put into camps. They left behind them a defenseless civilian population. The entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut, the searches, the systematic disarming of the population, the massacres, and the installation of the Phalangists in power were the logical follow up to the implementation of the Habib plan. And this is unfortunately not the end. The Zionists and Phalangists are not hiding their desire to expel or again displace tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees.

The article by David Frankel, widely quoted by comrades Doug Jenness and Cindy Jaquith, reduces the purpose of the Habib negotiations for the PLO to knowing how "they would not be slaughtered during the withdrawal (from Beirut)."

This is a little overquick to identify the PLO with its leadership and with the 9,000 evacuated fighters. There are 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon; the bulk of the resistance forces, and the population which supports them, have therefore remained at the mercy of the Zionist, imperialist and Phalangist troops.

The role of the Multinational Interposition Force is integral to the implementation of the Habib plan, in which it plays an essential part. Comrades Doug Jenness and Cindy Jaquith base their argument on a radical distinction between the role of the first interposition force, which, according to them, guaranteed the retreat of the Palestinian fighters, and the second which had the character of a "military force of occupation." The problem is that we cannot separate the different functions of the MIF since the month of August. At the same time as it guaranteed the withdrawal of the fighters it brought an international guarantee to the Phalangist regime, and opened the gates of West Beirut to the Zionist army by dismantling its defenses. Comrades Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness claim that it was the PLO themselves who dismantled their defense lines. This

is contrary to the eye-witness reports, and fortunately this is not the case. French parachutists were pictured engaged in this mineclearing exercise.

It is no longer possible to separate the function of the first from that of the second interposition force. Moreover, Yassir Arafat himself established their continuity in only reproaching the first for not having stayed to "protect" the camps after having protected the withdrawal.

Imagine an armed traveller, attacked in the corner of a wood by bandits with murderous intentions. Other bandits arrive who interpose themselves, but profit from the situation in robbing and then letting the traveller go, disarmed, in a wood infested with wolves. We can understand that the traveller would not be in a position personally to publicly draw out the moral of this story. But nothing forbids us from doing so and saying that a thief is a thief, even if claiming to be a savior.

The interposition force justified its presence in the eyes of the world by the "protection" it gave the Palestinian fighters. But it remained above all an imperialist military force which came, on the heels of the Zionist army, to fashion an "American peace" in the region.

3. For the whole duration of the war we gave unconditional support to the PLO in its struggle against Zionist aggression. But unconditional support does not mean uncritical, and does not imply that we take responsibility for the tactical choices made by the PLO leadership, that were furthermore disputed in its own ranks.

This is what the SWP comrades are now doing in considering that the withdrawal from Beirut, as it took place, was "necessary," and marking it up on the positive side of the PLO leadership's balance sheet.

In insisting in their articles on the revolutionary qualities of this leadership the comrades suggest an analogy between it and revolutionary leaderships such as the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua or the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador. It seems to us, on the contrary, necessary to insist on the historical, political, and social differences between these organizations. The PLO is a front. Bourgeois components play a hegemonic role in its leadership. Economic and military dependence on the bourgeois Arab regimes influence it in a determinant way.

This is why the continual confusion that comrade Frankel makes between the Palestinian resistance and the leadership of the PLO seems to us dangerous. He thus attributes to "the PLO fighters" the decision "to organize

the withdrawal," whereas the negotiations and their outcome were the subject of bitter controversy among the fighters themselves during the siege. It is even more wrong to accept the PLO leadership's proclamations, according to which the withdrawal from Beirut would be transformed from a military defeat into a diplomatic victory. This would be to underestimate the gains made by imperialism and the lasting consequences.

4. We are therefore in disagreement with the position of the American comrades who are reverting to abstaining from any criticism of the first interposition force in the imperialist countries. Even if the leadership of the PLO had no other choice that would be no reason for us to stop denouncing in our own countries the role of these military expeditions which prepared the ground for an imperialist solution in

the Middle East on the backs of the Palestinian resistance and against the interests of the Arab masses. It is even more important as in France the Mitterrand government was able to take advantage of the attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy and the Arab regimes to fraudulently present itself as the best protector of the Palestinians.

Today, however, we are absolutely in agreement in demanding the withdrawal from Lebanon of the Zionist troops and imperialist troops of the second interposition force. However it was Yassir Arafat and Walid Jumblatt who vehemently demanded the return of the MIF after the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Who could pretend that this second mission, in which the French parachutists actively participated in the sealing off and search and control operations in West Beirut, does not have any relationship with the first? □

rialism. They placed the agreement of the PLO forces to withdrawal from Beirut within this framework.

It was total disagreement with this erroneous line that led the Socialist Workers Party Political Bureau to disassociate itself from the joint declaration.

Relationship of class forces

Because they focus on the supposed intentions of the PLO leadership, the leaders of the French and Italian LCRs separate the withdrawal from the objective relationship of class forces under which it was agreed to.

West Beirut was surrounded by the Israeli army — an invasion force that was variously estimated at 50,000 to 120,000 troops. According to the British *Financial Times*, there were nine Israeli armored divisions (some 90,000 troops) and 1,300 tanks in Lebanon. Not to mention the Israeli air force, one of the most powerful in the world.

It was this force that guaranteed the entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut, the searches, the systematic disarming of the population, the massacres, and the installation of a Phalangist government in power. Not one of these things would have been prevented if the 9,000 PLO fighters in West Beirut had remained and fought it out to the last person.

If there is any "polemical and demagogic argument" involved in the discussion on this, it is the claim that we are guilty of "covering up the character of the Habib plan. . . . as a thoroughly imperialist diktat."

The Socialist Workers Party has been accused of many things, but not even its most determined political opponents have charged it with illusions in the good intentions of U.S. and European imperialism.

We understand full well that *all* plans agreed to by Washington involve the threat of its massive military muscle and its effort to advance U.S. imperialist interests. Of course the Habib plan was based on "imperialist diktat" — the "diktat" of a massive, U.S.-backed Israeli occupation army. That's precisely the point.

Revolutionary Marxists, like the PLO leaders, condemn the imperialist policies that led to the occupation of the southern half of Lebanon and the evacuation of West Beirut.

Our reply to the joint French and Italian declaration pointed out that, "Of course, as always, the U.S., French, and Italian capitalist governments had nothing progressive in mind in agreeing to the multinational force." And the article by David Frankel taking up the Habib plan in the October 8 issue of the *Militant* was headlined, "Why U.S. Marines will not bring peace to Lebanon." It explained how Washington used the precedent established by the multinational force sent under the Habib plan to reintroduce its forces into Lebanon after the massacre in Sabra and Shatila.

But the leaders of the French and Italian sections deliberately confuse this judgment of imperialist aims and policies with a judgment on the decision by the PLO leadership to use whatever means it could under the adverse

Reply by Cindy Jaquith and Doug Jenness

Two sharply counterposed political lines have been publicly expressed within the Fourth International on the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its leadership in the struggle against Israel's aggression in Lebanon. At the heart of the dispute is the attitude proletarian revolutionists should take to the PLO and its evacuation from West Beirut, not our framework of common opposition to the Israeli invasion and the role of Washington and its European imperialist allies in the Middle East.

We certainly did — and still do — "reproach the joint declaration [of the French and Italian Revolutionary Communist Leagues] for 'implying' that the PLO bears part of the responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacres."

Do the leaderships of the French and Italian sections of the Fourth International mean to argue that this was not the intent of their declaration? How else is one to read their assessment of the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut?

In their reply to our article on the joint statement, the French and Italian LCR leaders argue that the PLO fighters "left behind them a defenceless civilian population. The entry of Israeli troops into West Beirut, the searches, the systematic disarming of the population, the massacres, and the installation of the Phalangists in power were the logical follow up to the implementation of the Habib plan."

Since it was the PLO that agreed to evacuate West Beirut, the implication is hard to miss.

United Secretariat Resolution

Nor was this just a slip of the pen by the Italian and French LCR leaders. The resolution on Lebanon adopted by a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International — a resolution we oppose but was voted for by leaders of the French and Italian sections — flatly declares:

"The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leadership also bears part of the responsibility for the defeat. No one can contest this

abandoned and besieged leadership's right to negotiate. But from the beginning of the siege it got involved in secret negotiations with a 'mediator' representing imperialism over the conditions for an 'honorable' surrender. In effect its aim was to obtain diplomatic recognition from the United States in exchange for the retreat of its fighters. By doing this it contributed to disorienting and demobilising the resistance.

"This choice fits in with a long political trajectory" (*Intercontinental Press*, December 13, 1982, p. 874).

The idea that the PLO leadership is looking for a deal with U.S. imperialism — one at the expense of the Palestinian struggle — has been expressed repeatedly in the press of many sections of the Fourth International over the past dozen years. But it has been the PLO throughout this entire period that has *led* the opposition to Washington's plans in the Middle East. If we are to evaluate hypotheses in the light of facts, this one is a loser.

It is certainly true that the PLO leadership demands that the U.S. government — and most other governments as well — recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. But correctly raising this demand did not stop PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat from putting the blame for the Israeli aggression in Lebanon squarely on Washington. "This war was essentially a U.S. war," he declared at the Arab summit conference in Fez, Morocco.

Nor did the PLO leadership's supposed eagerness for a deal with Washington stop the PLO's Central Council from denouncing the Reagan plan at its November meeting.

Nevertheless, the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, and the leadership of the French and Italian sections who are supporters of that majority, argue that the PLO leadership is subordinating the struggle for Palestinian national liberation to the search for a diplomatic deal with U.S. impe-

conditions — including signing the Habib agreement — to prevent, or at least limit, further slaughter.

That is where we have a serious difference.

The onerous terms of the Habib plan reflected the unfavorable relationship of forces the PLO faced on the ground. Signing it was the mechanism that the PLO negotiated for its withdrawal from Beirut, not a statement of its political preferences.

Some have 'mistaken the enemy'

While the SWP has placed all our fire on the imperialist butchers and their allies throughout the Israeli occupation, the political line projected by the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International has also singled out the PLO for part of the blame. The result is that, as this wrong line has been put into practice, various other organizations associated with the Fourth International have indeed "mistaken the enemy."

For example, the Revolutionary Communist Group (GCR), the Lebanese section of the Fourth International, declared in a June 29 statement that by entering into negotiations for a retreat from West Beirut, the PLO leadership was in fact arranging a "shameful surrender" and "capitulation."

The GCR's June 29 statement, however, crossed beyond this utterly slanderous accusation, and beyond an ultraleft sectarian political line, to outright provocation. It openly threatened physical violence against the PLO leadership. The statement said:

"We should also remind the organizations that are negotiating that if they save their heads from [Israeli Defense Minister] Sharon's hands, they will not be able to save them from those of our country's patriotic fighters."

Presumably, these "patriotic fighters" included the GCR.

This scandalous declaration was published in the magazine *Inprecor*, whose masthead says it is published "under the responsibility of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International." This was done at a time when the PLO was the direct target of the entire Israeli war machine, backed up by Washington and other imperialist powers; when the PLO had already suffered thousands of dead and wounded and was conducting a heroic resistance under siege conditions; and when the PLO was under concerted political attack by the bourgeois press and capitalist politicians around the world.

Far from repudiating the contents of the GCR's June 29 statement, which did political damage to the entire Fourth International, the editors of *Inprecor* ran the document along with an introduction saying that the GCR declaration "expresses a sentiment widely held in the ranks of PLO fighters."

Why no repudiation?

Subsequent issues of *Inprecor* also failed to disassociate from the GCR statement, instead running further GCR declarations expressing the same positions. A public repudiation of the GCR provocation is long overdue.

No such repudiation has been forthcoming. This is not an oversight. There is a political explanation — the fact that the GCR's position, while taken farther than that of the United Secretariat majority, is in fact on the same axis and flows from the same basic framework.

Thus, in a lead article in the August 2 issue of *International Viewpoint*, Livio Maitan, a longtime member of the United Secretariat and the best-known leader of the Italian section of the Fourth International, argued that "the Palestinian and Lebanese progressive leaders will bear a heavy responsibility if they accept a compromise that would amount to capitulation."

"Such a compromise has not been achieved so far due to the exaggerated claims of Begin-Sharon. But at bottom a majority of the PLO leadership and the Lebanese progressives seem ready now to accept Israel's essential demand, that is, that they abandon Beirut and the key Palestinian military positions in return for the hope of getting some dubious political and diplomatic concessions."

Similarly, the editorial in the October 4 *International Viewpoint* on the massacre at Sabra and Shatila took a swipe at the PLO for withdrawing from West Beirut.

"Today, tragically, the necessary role played by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the self-defence of the refugee camps has been proved," the editorial said. "Its withdrawal left tens of thousands of Palestinians at the mercy of their worst enemies."

To try to bolster this position on the PLO's decision to withdraw from West Beirut, *International Viewpoint* ran an interview with a leader of the GCR who stated:

"... the PLO in West Beirut was in a good position to withstand a siege. Most of the Lebanese population, about four fifths, left the city. That reduced the danger of civilian casualties. It also meant that the large stocks of food had to be shared among many less people. There were large amounts of weapons and ammunition, as well as substantial defenses."

This outlandish statement flies in the face of virtually every eyewitness account that has been published on the siege of Beirut. Reporters from all over the world, individual leftists who were on the scene, and Palestinians of all viewpoints who have commented on the situation agree that there were hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped in West Beirut.

On the military plane, the GCR leader asserts that "tanks are not much use in built up areas," and on the basis of such evidence blithely concludes:

"The PLO was not defeated militarily; West Beirut was not defeated militarily. The defeat was political, and the responsibility for it rests with the right-wing leadership of El Fateh. It acted as the organizer of defeat."

Not even the most scandal-mongering enemies of the PLO in the bourgeois media, who have made wild exaggerations about the supposed military threat that it represented in order to justify the Israeli invasion, have claimed that the Palestinians were in a position

to stand up to the Israeli army.

The 88-day resistance of the PLO fighters in Lebanon maximized the political price that the imperialists paid for their military victory in Lebanon. But the claim that the PLO could have held out in West Beirut and thus turned the military tide is an attempt to hold the PLO responsible for the defeat in Lebanon by reconstructing reality.

What held off the Israelis for several weeks from blasting West Beirut to rubble was not the military might of the PLO, which unfortunately was far from adequate to the task, but the massive international political pressure that the PLO took the lead in mobilizing.

Advice for suicide from London

But Lebanon was not the only place where the PLO came under public attack from a section of the Fourth International for leading the necessary retreat from West Beirut. Phil Hearse, a leading writer for *Socialist Challenge*, newspaper of the International Marxist Group in Britain, argued in a feature article in the August 19 issue that "the PLO can best prepare the ground for continuing the struggle by staying in Beirut and fighting to the bitter end."

"The lesson of all defeats is that it is immeasurably better to go down with a fight."

How could a leader of the Fourth International have written such a thing? Imagine the picture of Hearse sitting at his typewriter in London, the capital of the imperialist power which, after the United States, is most responsible for the plight of the Palestinian people today. The PLO had been fighting tooth and nail, against overwhelming odds, for more than two months. And Hearse demands the Palestinians all fight "to the bitter end."

An editorial statement in the following issue of *Socialist Challenge* failed to say what the editors thought of Hearse's article, nor did it take up the basic political questions posed in it. Hearse himself continued to argue along the same lines in the September 11 *Socialist Challenge*. He asserted that "the evacuation of the Palestinians from West Beirut makes the next stage of the operation all that much easier for the Israelis."

But if the Israeli regime was so eager for the PLO's evacuation from West Beirut — as opposed to its physical destruction — why did they repeatedly try to sabotage the negotiations? As David Frankel explained in the October 8 issue of the *Militant*:

It is quite clear that the Israeli regime did everything in its power to literally blow up the negotiations. On August 1, for example, a front-page headline in the *New York Times* read, "Key Negotiations on P.L.O. Pullout Predicted Today." The negotiations were prevented by 14 hours of the fiercest Israeli shelling to hit West Beirut up to that point.

A truce was arranged, negotiations were resumed, and then on August 4 the Israelis launched a new attack on West Beirut. "Tempo of Talks Had Been Increased Just Before the Ground Assault," a *Times* headline reported.

And on August 12, the *Times* reported "Habib Peace Plan Appears on Verge of Final Approval."

Agreement was forestalled, however, by a 10-hour bombing of West Beirut by Israeli forces.

But international public opinion prevented the Israelis from simply breaking off the negotiations.

The end result was that the Israelis, who had hoped to destroy the leadership of the PLO, were forced to agree to their evacuation from West Beirut.

There certainly was a relationship between the imperialist disengagement force that the PLO was forced to accept in August as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the subsequent return of U.S., French, and Italian forces to Lebanon following the September 16-18 massacre in West Beirut. The relationship between the two is the political context — the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon. Since the PLO was unable to prevent that, it was also unable to prevent the consequences that followed from it.

PLO's political offensive

But the PLO leadership used the time bought by its fighters in West Beirut to advance the Palestinian cause through a political offensive and a battle for world public opinion. The PLO won unprecedented sympathy for the Palestinian struggle among working people around the world, including in the United States and Israel itself.

Rather than recognizing this as a political conquest of the PLO leadership in the face of gigantic military odds, the French and Italian sections condemn the PLO leaders for their handling of the crisis. They complain that the SWP is "a little overquick to identify the PLO with its leadership and with the 9,000 evacuated fighters."

No, we don't think the PLO is the same thing as its leadership, nor do we think it is synonymous with the 9,000 evacuated fighters. But neither do we think that the PLO fighters and their leadership have betrayed or flouted the will of the Palestinian people.

Taking their sectarian stance toward the PLO leadership a step further, the French and Italian LCR leaders argue that "bourgeois components play a hegemonic role" in the PLO's leadership, and that "economic and military dependence on the bourgeois Arab regimes influence it in a determinant way."

The idea that the decisive influence in the PLO is that of the bourgeois forces in the Arab world is belied by the PLO's entire history of conflict with the Arab regimes and with U.S. and Israeli imperialism.

The PLO is a revolutionary nationalist organization of the kind described by Lenin in 1920. It seeks to mobilize the masses in struggle for their national rights. Lenin proposed the term revolutionary nationalist to distinguish fighting national liberation movements based on the masses and seeking to advance their mobilization, from nationalist movements led by bourgeois forces, which seek to hold back the mobilization of the masses and subordinate their aspirations to collusion with imperialism.

The statement by the French and Italian LCR leaders is wrong in saying that the SWP's

recognition of "the revolutionary qualities" of the PLO leadership suggests "an analogy between it and revolutionary leaderships" such as the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua. The PLO is not a revolutionary proletarian, a communist organization like the FSLN, the New Jewel Movement in Grenada, or the Cuban Communist Party.

But recognizing this in no way implies that the PLO leadership pursues a course in conflict with the Palestinian people's struggle for national emancipation. That flies in the face of the facts.

Finally, a word on the claim that the PLO leadership's decision to withdraw from West Beirut was "the subject of bitter controversy among the fighters themselves during the siege."

Although there were reports of such debate early in the siege, by the time the actual re-

lationship of forces had become clear in August, there was no longer any substantial disagreement within the Palestinian national liberation movement over the negotiations and the decision to withdraw.

While the PLO is not a homogeneous movement, and debates within it are a permanent feature of its existence, not one of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations has issued any statement taking exception to the withdrawal decision. The PLO fighters themselves showed how they felt by holding up PLO flags and portraits of Arafat as they pulled out of West Beirut. And among the Arab masses, the prestige of the PLO has never been so high.

Revolutionary Marxists should be able to discern the difference between a defeat inflicted as a result of an unfavorable relationship of forces, and a betrayal. The Palestinian and Arab masses have. □

S. Korean opposition leader freed, exiled

By Will Reissner

South Korea's military dictatorship, beset by labor unrest and rocked by financial scandals, attempted to defuse the growing opposition movement by releasing Kim Dae Jung from prison on December 23.

Kim, the military regime's most prominent critic, had been sentenced to death by a military court in September 1980 on charges of sedition. That sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment and then to 20 years.

Although military strongman Chun Doo Hwan felt constrained to order Kim's release, Chun also hoped to minimize the subsequent growth of opposition activities by insisting that Kim accept exile in the United States as a condition of freedom.

Chun's government claimed that Kim — suffering chronic medical problems since an attempt was made on his life more than a decade ago — voluntarily chose to go to the United States for medical treatment. But the December 24 *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports that "considerable efforts" were needed to persuade Kim to accept exile as the price for his release.

Chun Doo Hwan hopes that with Kim out of prison and out of South Korea, the internal opposition will lose a symbol of resistance, while the South Korean dictatorship's international reputation will improve.

Kim Dae Jung has been subjected to continuous repression since his 1971 presidential race against General Park Chung Hee, who had seized power in a military coup a decade earlier.

In the 1971 campaign, Kim's blistering attacks on government corruption and lack of democracy won him wide popular support. Hundreds of thousands of people were drawn to his election rallies.

During the campaign, a car in which Kim was riding was hit by a truck, leaving him permanently injured. "It was a clear assassination

attempt," Kim charged.

In 1973, while in Japan rallying opposition to Park's rule, Kim was kidnapped from a Tokyo hotel by agents of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency and was forcibly returned to South Korea.

Between March 1976 and December 1978 Kim was imprisoned for demanding that Park step down and that democracy be restored.

Following Park's assassination in October 1979, Gen. Chun Doo Hwan took power. He ordered Kim arrested in May 1980, after Kim's announcement that he would again run for president. The formal charges against Kim included fomenting the massive Kwangju uprising that same month, which broke out after Kim was already in prison.

Chun's troops had killed and wounded up to 2,000 people in the city of Kwangju who were protesting continued military rule. Those troops acted with the specific approval of the commander of U.S. forces in South Korea.

Kim's release does not mark a lessening of government repression. One high official warned that the decision to exile Kim "should not be misconstrued as affecting the government's policy on other issues. . . . Those who jeopardize national security and stability will be punished even more severely."

Despite Kim's release, two young men currently await execution for having set fire to the U.S. cultural center in Pusan in March 1982. Moon Bu Shik, one of the youths sentenced to death, admitted the arson, explaining: "I wanted to protest U.S. support for the military-led Korean Government, to let the Americans know the anger of our people over the Kwangju incident and to protest humiliating remarks made by some U.S. officials about South Korea." □

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Women fight to preserve their gains

Demand labor movement defend women's rights against capitalist offensive

By Penny Duggan

[The following article appeared in the December 20 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly magazine published in Paris.]

* * *

Throughout Europe the theme of "Women Against the Crisis" is becoming increasingly familiar in meetings, conferences, and demonstrations. Under this slogan women from trade unions, political parties, women's groups, and campaigning organizations are coming together to protest at the way women are suffering from the combined effects of the capitalist crisis, and demand that the labor movement act in their defense.

While over the last 10 or 15 years women's position in Western Europe has improved considerably in a number of ways, there is a real risk that these gains will increasingly be lost.

Both because of their position in the family and in the workplace, women are in the front line of the capitalists' attack. Cuts in social spending on child care, health care, and other social services; cuts in the real level of wages; all place the greatest burden on women in their role as the mainstay of the home and family. As workers, women are regarded as expendable; after all they only work for "pin money" and so can be brought into the workforce or excluded as suits the needs of the employers. Along with all this is a massive ideological offensive to justify the material attacks being made on women's rights, which are trying to roll back the gains that women made during the 1970s, benefiting from the momentum of the women's movement in a period when the crisis was not so deep that concessions could not be made.

The scope of attacks on women in the present situation is raising the question of how women can organize to fight back with increasing urgency.

The women's liberation movement which grew up all over Europe in the 1970s is in an organizational decline. This movement developed primarily outside the organizations of the labor movement, resting on women-only groups that were often initiated by women from the student or professional sectors.

The impact of this movement was enormous. In every layer of society, the ideas of women's equality and liberation prompted discussion and response. Thus, although the women's groups and organizations have lost some of their organizational strength and political perspective, the ideas remain strong, and in much broader layers of society.

The commitment of the mass organizations

of the working class to defense of women's rights, uneven though it is, can provide a starting point for the joint action of women in defense of their own rights, within the context of an overall workers' solution to the crisis of capitalism.

Back to the family

To quote Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Social Services in the present British government, "You know, if God had meant there to be equal rights to work he would not have created men and women." Such sentiments are not specific even to such right-wingers as the present Thatcher government in Britain. Within the labor movement itself there are those who believe that women should sacrifice their jobs to provide jobs for men, or the young unemployed.

This ideological onslaught comes after over a decade of increasing opportunities for women. It is used to justify the cutting back at women's rights on every front — their right to work, particularly in qualified and full-time posts; their right to state-provided child-care facilities; their right even to decide when, and whether, to have children.

Such an attempt to turn the clock back is not new. During World War II women in many countries were encouraged to go out to work, to fulfill necessary production tasks previously done by men. In order to facilitate this in Britain, child-care centers, public laundries, and subsidized restaurants were instituted to some extent. A campaign was waged to convince women that they could, and should, do such jobs, many of which in the munitions factories were both heavy and dangerous. For many young women it gave them a taste of social and economic independence that they would remember all their lives. However, once the war was over and men returned to civilian life there was a dramatic turnaround in attitudes. Suddenly Dr. Spock began to be acclaimed as the great theorist on child care, with his position that women had to devote themselves to their children for the first five years of their lives, unless they wanted their babies to grow up psychologically disturbed. Women were told it was now their duty to give up their jobs for men. The social services suddenly vanished. Everything changed — the Paris fashion designers lengthened skirts and whittled down waists for the return to "femininity," after the practical short skirts of the war years.

Today it will not be so easy to drive women back to the home. The gains that women have made over the past years have been as a result of their own struggles, and the broad layers of

women who consider that they have the right to determine the course of their own lives will not be easily persuaded otherwise. The enormous entry of women into the workforce in the post-war boom has brought about a structural change in the position of women that cannot be easily reversed.

However, this does not mean that the present attack taking place on women's rights is not serious. It is vital that women and men together, as a united working class, fight every inch of the way to defend and extend women's rights.

Abortion under attack

One of the central campaigns of the women's movement in Europe has been for the right to abortion and contraception. Women know that unless they can decide when, and whether, to have children, then many other rights become almost meaningless.

Since the mid-1960s, some advance has been made on this front in almost every European country. Even where the laws have not been changed, the campaigns of women have provoked a discussion on this previously taboo subject, and quite often in practice, laws have been less strictly enforced.

But today, even where the laws are liberalized, women find themselves increasingly on the defensive. The British 1967 Abortion Act has survived 10 attempts in Parliament to amend it restrictively since it was passed, thanks to massive campaigns that have won the support of the trades union movement and the Labour Party. However, "backdoor" attacks continue: increasing bureaucratic procedures that doctors and their women patients have to go through, prosecutions brought by the virulent antiabortionists against well-known doctors, hysterical propaganda about aborted fetuses being left to die in hospital sinks, and, of course, cuts in the health service provisions for abortions.

In other "liberal" countries in northern Europe, the women's movement is preparing itself for defense action. A government commission in Sweden is preparing a report on the functioning of the abortion law there and, although it is not expected to propose any changes, it is thought that antiabortion groups will take the opportunity to do so.

Where abortion remains completely illegal, there are even attempts to harden attitudes. In the South of Ireland, where it is not allowed for any reason, there is an amendment to the constitution being put which would make any law mitigating this prohibition unconstitutional and thus severely increase the difficulties in

making any progress on this front.

In Belgium, where it is also illegal, prosecutions of women and doctors were restarted in 1982, having been de facto suspended since 1973. Although the sentences passed so far have been quite light, the doctors concerned are continuing to practice abortions, and thus run the risk of further prosecutions.

In the Spanish state a relative victory was scored when women and doctors charged with having had or performing abortions in the "Bilbao trials" were given minimum sentences or acquitted. However, the newly elected Socialist Party government has made only the most minimal promises on abortion — "a feeble depenalization of abortion which in fact would deny this right to women," the October 8 issue of *Combate*, the weekly paper of the Spanish section of the Fourth International, explained.

In Portugal, the Communist Party recently presented a bill to parliament that would have introduced some limited right to abortions in the first 12 weeks. Although the bill was defeated by 127 votes to 105 votes, it represented a step forward, insofar as it was the first time the subject had ever been raised in the Portuguese parliament.

One of the successes of the 1970s was the introduction of a law permitting abortions in the overwhelmingly Catholic country of Italy. However, this law was always fraught with difficulties in functioning — the clause allowing medical staff to refuse to do abortions on conscience grounds, for example, is considerably more of a barrier in Italy than in Britain, although the vast majority of women consulted in referenda have supported the right to abortion. Now, the special women's clinics — the *consultori* — have been incorporated into the state system and taken out of direct control by women. They have also been given responsibilities for the old, drug addicts, etc., and so are less able to help women.

The only real success on this question recently has come in France, where the Mitterrand government has, after much prevarication, agreed to introduce 70 percent reimbursement of the cost of abortions. This was originally promised before the May 10, 1981, election but only announced in December 1982.

Centerpiece of ideological attack

The attack on abortion rights constitutes the centerpiece of the ideological attack on women aimed at denying them a role outside their traditional place as the support of the home and family. As it has been one of the central campaigns of the women's movement, the fight for the right to choose is one of the questions of women's liberation that has been most widely debated within the labor movement and the workers political parties.

Although the British labor movement is in advance of the majority of Western European countries, with both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party being in support of abortion and prepared to take action in defense of the existing abortion laws, most Social



John Harris/Socialist Challenge

Striking women health workers in Britain demonstrate in September 1982.

Democratic union federations and political parties, and the Communist parties and their associated trade-union federations, have gone some way to supporting women's demands on this question. However, this is not the case for example in the Netherlands, where women are a particularly low percentage, 20 percent, of the workforce. In Belgium the debate within the labor movement has broadened to involve the Catholic trade-union federation.

This came about because, in order to achieve unity between the Social Democratic and the Catholic trade-union federations for a "Women against the crisis" demonstration for March 8, 1982, it was agreed to leave out the question of abortion. However this prompted a debate, particularly among the women at the base of the Catholic federation.

However, not surprisingly, it has been the problems of women as workers that have drawn the most response within the workers movement.

Women's right to work

Alongside the demand for women to have control over their own bodies goes the demand for the right of women to enter into paid employment outside the home.

As the economic crisis cuts the real wages of workers, and unemployment hits harder, it is becoming more and more glaringly obvious that women's wages, including for married women, are in no way just for inessential "extras" and luxuries, but are an essential form of income. Of course for the increasing numbers of women who live alone or who are the breadwinner for a family this was never in doubt. And for all women an income of their own has always been a guarantee of independence.

During the period of the economic crisis women's unemployment has been rising at a faster rate than men's. For example, in Britain unemployment among women is rising at twice the rate for men: 16.2 percent to 29.4 percent of the total from 1973 to 1978. In Belgium, only in 1982 did men's unemployment begin to rise higher than for women.

Women, because of their family responsibilities, make up the majority of the "re-

serve" workers for capitalism, in part-time jobs, on short-term contracts, or simply forced to move in and out of the workforce at different times to fit in with family needs. Women are also in general a less skilled sector of the workforce, who increasingly find it more difficult to get jobs again having once left employment for whatever reason.

One major area of women's employment that had been steadily increasing, the state sector, is now static. This also is an important factor in the rapid increase in women's unemployment, as the increasing number of women on the job market are now finding the former opportunities in the state sector drying up.

However, even the figures do not necessarily illustrate the full extent of women's unemployment. Many women, particularly married women, do not register as unemployed, because they are not entitled to unemployment benefits, or because they do not regard themselves as truly unemployed.

Women's right to work can only be defended by taking up a specific defense of women's right to jobs in the framework of defense of jobs by the working class as a whole. The demand for the 35-hour week, which will increase jobs, and for wages to be linked to the cost of living would be of enormous advantage to women as a layer for whom unemployment is high and wages low; in Britain women's average wage is still only 60 percent of the male average wage.

However, women also have to be given positive encouragement and increased opportunities to enter into new areas of employment that have traditionally been male dominated. In many European countries the affirmative action programs of the United States, which placed a legal requirement on employers to reach certain quotas of women employees in jobs such as mining, have been studied with interest.

A way to right the wrong

Women historically have been denied the training that would give them access to skilled jobs, both in industry and in other sectors. Un-

less rapid steps are taken to overcome this historical disadvantage then the notion of "equal access" to jobs is meaningless. Women just are not qualified to take up many jobs. For example, in Britain, where many skilled jobs in engineering, and electricians, traindrivers, etc., require apprenticeships, women are almost only found serving apprenticeships to become hairdressers.

The idea of positive action to help women get into different jobs is becoming more and more widely discussed. In Austria the Social Democrats made some limited attempt to encourage women to take courses in electrical engineering, and have declared themselves in favor of positive action in general.

In Germany a special apprentice program for young women was established at a factory in Cologne, but it was found that the young women finishing this course then found it difficult to get permanent jobs. This has happened in other countries where one particular company or educational institution has introduced such courses when this has not been part of an overall plan with an obligation on employers to also positively discriminate in employing workers. This is one of the many weaknesses in the Sex Discrimination Act in Britain, which allows for positive discrimination in education and training for jobs, and for advertising, but not at the point of employment. However both the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Labour Party in Britain have adopted a policy in favor of positive action, and some employers, often local councils, have declared themselves "equal opportunity" employers, who are thus committed to employing women on an equal basis, in traditionally male jobs.

Italian workers in Fiat cars have won a significant step forward on this front. There the unions forced the management to agree that 50 percent of all new recruits should be women. In Sweden companies that establish themselves in particularly crisis-hit areas with government grants have to employ at least 40 percent women. In addition if Swedish companies employ women in traditionally male jobs they can get large state subsidies.

These are some of the most significant practical steps that have been achieved. But it is significant that this question is getting increasing attention throughout Europe, from the Spanish state — where a planned conference of the Women's Commission of the Workers Commissions (CCOO — independent trade unions) has scheduled women's right to work and positive action as a major item for discussion — to Sweden. As Italian women wrote in motivating a European conference on women and work, "Even the themes of feminism have changed since this massive entry of women into the labor market (in the post-war boom). 'What kind of work?' has become the central question."

Part-time work = part-time unemployment

Part-time work is often seen as being a good thing for women, giving them a chance to

combine a job that offers them a little independence and some extra money for luxuries with taking the responsibility for the children and the family.

The truth of course is quite different. First of all women have the right to work and need a full wage, and a satisfying job. Secondly part-time work is in the interests of the employers. It allows employers to use the workforce more flexibly, in a way that is dictated by their need to increase their profits. It makes employment more precarious and breaks up the organization and solidarity of the workforce. Employers can use the labor power provided by women without having to pay either individually or through the state for the social services such as child care, which would make it easier for women to work full-time.

In many countries, of course, part-time workers do not have the same benefits in terms of holiday entitlement, sick pay retirement benefits, or job security as full-time workers. For example, in France, part-time workers on average get the equivalent of 15 percent to 20 percent less than the rate of pay of full-time workers. This is despite the fact that the position of part-time workers has been "improved" by recent decrees of the government.

Often part-time work is dressed up as "job sharing," or a new, emancipated way of organizing work which allows people to give more time to other activities. But, in contradistinction to the workers' demand for "job sharing with no loss of pay," part-time work does mean loss of pay. And it is quite clear by looking at the statistics that it is not women's choice to work part-time. Can it be that, for example, 40 percent of all women who work in Britain have freely chosen to accept badly paid and insecure jobs?

Many trade unions have formally criticized moves towards institutionalizing part-time work but there has been very little practical action on this front. For example, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) in France, which was opposed to part-time work, reacted quite differently when the Mitterrand government announced decrees enshrining it in the employment laws. CGT leader Krasucki was asked what the CGT would do; he replied that they had organized a press conference, and beyond that the workers would know what to do in their factories!

Such passivity in the face of new attacks on women, despite formal policies adopted, is nothing new.

Women against the crisis

The scope of attacks taking place on women today poses political questions sharply — how to defend women's rights as part of the defense of the rights and living standards of the working class. Is defense of women's rights, for example to work, counterposed to men's right to work?

Despite the advances that have been made within the workers movement in formal positions on women's rights, it is too often obvious that this is just demagoguery, and that in concrete

struggles to defend jobs the labor bureaucracy will sacrifice women.

Yet often women have been in the forefront of struggles. For example, in the clothing industry there have been some notable struggles. Women in the Lee Jeans factory in Scotland occupied their factory after it was announced that it was going to be closed, meaning the loss of all their jobs. They organized a campaign of solidarity throughout the British labor movement, which resulted in the factory being bought by another manufacturer. Their determination was saluted by many other workers as giving a real lead in the fight against unemployment. In Sweden, which women from Lee Jeans visited, there was also an important occupation of a textile factory by women workers who waged a successful solidarity campaign among other trade unionists, and also provoked discussion on the use of occupations in the fight against unemployment.

Women are prepared to counter every attack by the capitalists — not only to take action against immediate threats. In Belgium the International Women's Day demonstrations in the last two years brought together many women, and the trade-union federations, under the slogan "Women Against the Crisis." The Labour Party in Britain was forced by its growing, active, and left-wing women's organization to hold a national festival for women's rights in 1982, involving trades unions and women's groups, which built on the momentum of a "Women Against the Tories" festival organized by women's groups in 1981, and the series of unemployment marches the Labour Party had organized over the past year.

In some countries the trade-union bureaucracy has blocked this type of unity. This happened, for example, in West Germany. The national union federation, recognizing that women workers were increasingly turning to the unions, organized a series of events around this theme for International Women's Day 1982.

In France one of the most successful events in recent years was a conference on "Women and Work" organized in April 1982 which attracted 2,000 women and men, many of whom were trade-union activists, to discuss all the questions facing women in the crisis.

Increasingly, under the impact of the crisis, women are coming together from many different standpoints to defend women's rights. And it is also being shown that it is women within the mass organizations of the working class who can use that organizational strength to reach out and give a lead to all women.

This process is uneven; in some countries even the women's commissions in the unions of workers political parties are under attack. But the historic success in Britain, where the national trade-union federation, the TUC, called a national mass demonstration to oppose attacks on women's abortion rights points the way forward. This success was achieved by a determined fight by women through the trades unions to force their leaderships to defend their interests. □

Workers grow impatient with regime

Want action on economic crisis from Socialist and Communist parties

By Jean Lantier

[The following article is a report that was presented to a national workers conference of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. The conference was held November 13 and 14, and was attended by more than 1,000 people. Most of the participants were activists from the two major trade union federations in France — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which is led by the Communist Party (CP), and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), which is led by the Socialist Party (SP). The text of the article is taken from the December 20 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a biweekly magazine published in Paris.]

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Who has benefited from "the change" that the Socialist Party leaders talk about? Is it the workers who gave the Communist and Socialist parties their majority in parliament? In view of the results produced by the SP-CP government in its first 18 months in office, one could doubt it.

But if the workers are not the ones who gain by the measures adopted in the last 18 months, why are the bosses setting up such a howl against the government? The bosses and the right, in fact, are preparing the ground for a campaign to destabilize the government.

Can the gains that the bosses and the right-wing parties have made in their offensive be rolled back? Is there any way to mobilize the workers? To put it another way, what objectives can they be mobilized around?

A determined defense of the workers demands has to lead to a perspective for fighting capitalism as a whole. What sort of concrete perspective for that can be offered? Finally, how can we break the logjam in the present situation? We have to try to answer all these questions now.

CP-SP government helps capitalists

In his speech on November 5, Premier [Pierre] Mauroy lambasted the right, which likes to talk about people becoming disillusioned with the May 10, 1981, victory of the left. He did so in the name of those who, he said, benefited from the change. Who are they? Certainly not the workers. In the wake of May 10, they were cheated of a decisive social advance. The nationalizations did not even lead to the sort of rights for the workers and the unions that were associated with the nationalization of the public utilities after the war. What is more, the owners of those enterprises that were taken

over by the state received generous compensation.

In a letter to the new managers, Dreyfus, the minister of industry at the time, recommended that they retain all the usual criteria of capitalist management. In general, the government adopted the rule that capitalist profit could not be touched. In general, it rejected the idea of using the nationalized sector as a lever for dealing with the jobs problem, which it could have done by reorganizing production in accordance with need.

With the start of the new session of parliament after the 1981 elections, the government resorted to using the instrument of decrees, rather than passing laws on which there would be public debate. It pursued a constant line of aiding investors. Thus, it set out on the road of one concession after another to the demands of the capitalists.

There were in fact only two possible roads. And the government took the one of administering the economic crisis for the benefit of the bosses and at the expense of the workers. From June to November 1982, all the measures taken have had the effect of shifting the cost of social insurance from the bosses to the workers. All the relief measures by the government have been the removal of taxes from the corporations.

More generally, by freezing wages without freezing prices, the government inflicted a steady loss of buying power on the workers. It gave the bosses all the latitude necessary for shifting the costs of the crisis onto the workers. Mauroy's philosophy is the following: "It is our responsibility to prepare ourselves to endure a crisis that will last a long time and will affect the entire world. This international crisis is associated with technological changes that pose major problems for the present system of production." That is what he said recently in an interview with the daily *Le Matin de Paris*. Thus, clearly, he intends to direct his government toward helping the bosses overcome this crisis. He is offering them the following assistance: A freeze on employers' contributions to the social security system over 1983; a shift of the cost of family allowances to the workers; government aid in getting credit; state-financed loans; and tax writeoffs for investment in new machinery.

The government's attempt to do away with cost-of-living allowances means trying to tie wages to productivity. Transferring the costs of social insurance to individuals involves attacking the right to medical care. Now the cost of a hospital room has been separated from the medical costs reimbursable by the social security system. Hospital budgets are being cut.

There is a systematic attempt to impose the criterion of profitability on the hospitals. The system of unemployment insurance, which has come under attack from the employers' organizations, is also going to be severely cut back.

Disaster for workers

The effects of these measures have been immediate. Despite the government's claims that it is bound by principle to give priority to the poorest paid, the minimum wage is still just 2,891 francs net per month (7 French francs equal roughly 1 U.S. dollar). About 3 million wage earners (in a country of 55 million inhabitants) get less than 3,500 francs monthly net. There is a general and rather rapid decline in buying power. The employment rate is also dropping. In September, there were 2,039,700 registered unemployed, of whom barely half were getting unemployment benefits.

A study done by Catholic Aid in Lyon shows that from January to May 1982, requests for food increased considerably. More than 80 percent of the applicants were unemployed French citizens [a large proportion of the workers with the poorest pay and least job security are immigrants without French citizenship — IV].

Of these, half had a job in 1981. Among the French applicants, half were unskilled workers in plants in the Lyon region. Some 45.3 percent of those interviewed received no unemployment benefits.

The erosion of buying power and the growth of unemployment are creating poverty pockets that can spread.

This is the price that has to be paid for the course chosen by the government. Giving in to the demands of the capitalists in a period of economic crisis means making the workers pay an enormous price. And yet, the bosses are screaming and setting up piteous wails. Why are they unhappy with such a policy?

Are bosses biting hand that feeds them?

Despite the fact that the government has showered them with gifts, the bosses do not intend to give it the slightest respite. An SP-CP majority in parliament and Mitterrand in the presidential palace are the result of a working-class victory at the polls. And the bosses are determined to wipe it out. No matter what Mauroy does, the bosses will never regard his team as an acceptable government.

For the bourgeoisie, the problem remains the same. Under this government, as under the preceding one, it has to step up its attack on the working class in order to restructure the system of production to comply with the demands of profitability. In order to maintain their profit

rate, the bosses want to reduce wages, eliminate all restrictions on the way they employ labor (introduction of the shift system, rotating shifts, employment of part-time workers, freedom to transfer as they please, hiring and firing at their convenience) and the freedom to restructure whole industries. In order to achieve this, they have to inflict a decisive defeat on the working class as a whole and its organizations. So, the May 10 victory of the left, regardless of the policy of the government that came out of it, represents an obstacle to this offensive.

It is not that the government is not amenable to the capitalists' demands. Nonetheless, it is not the instrument the bosses need for their offensive. To the contrary, the Mauroy government came into office as a result of an electoral victory that reflected an unfavorable relationship of social forces for the bosses. This is why the main employers organization, the National Council of French Employers (CNPF), and the bosses in general, are trying to prepare the conditions for overturning the new majority. They are doing this by several methods.

The CNPF is taking advantage of all the government's measures to cut back the social gains of the workers. The stalling tactics of the bosses' phony industry-by-industry wage negotiations that were supposed to pave the way for an end to the wage freeze show how determined they are. By early November, only 15 contracts had been signed, affecting 450,000 workers.

At the same time, the bosses have turned a deaf ear to all the appeals to invest. Despite the tax breaks that have been offered, the investors' strike continues. The bosses are stashing away the subsidies to use them in restructuring their enterprises and increasing their profitability at the workers' expense.

Along with this, the CNPF and the SNPMI are complaining bitterly about the inadequacy of legislation to benefit "enterprises." Mauroy's November 5 speech announcing the shift of the cost of family allowances to the workers and making available all sorts of loans to capitalists is an indication of what the truth is on this score. The fact is that Gattaz, the chairman of the CNPF, is guided in this respect more by a desire to destabilize the government than by a calculation of the economic benefits accruing to the bosses from the government's measures.

Bosses mobilize against government

The CNPF and the bosses in general are mobilizing against the government. For this purpose, they have been manipulating sectors such as the doctors, the farmers organizations, and the defenders of private schools. These demonstrations indicate that the bosses are prepared to try to make a show of strength in the streets. Moreover, the fact that the bosses are using flanking tactics does not mean that they have excluded head-on attacks. Two cases illustrate this.

The unemployment fund, UNEDIC, could easily have been refloated, since the five trade-

union confederations involved in the negotiations made a major concession, agreeing that the workers would pick up 17 billion francs of the deficit. Nonetheless, the CNPF has broken off the negotiations and is threatening to put the fund in bankruptcy. The bosses think that it is essential to break up a system of unemployment insurance based on occasional unemployment and therefore unsuited to the chronic unemployment of a period of economic crisis. But the bosses also wanted to humiliate the government, which had tried to arbitrate the dispute, offering a Solomonic decision.

A second example is the Brest shipyards. The Brest bosses laid off workers. The government cancelled the layoffs. The bosses refused to accept the cancellation. Chotard himself, one of the leading figures in the CNPF, went to Brest. He not only advised the local bosses to remain firm; he suggested that the bosses of smaller companies declare bankruptcy in order to avoid complying with the government order.

Test of upcoming municipal elections

The right is linking this offensive with its preparations for the municipal elections. If the government and the majority parties are beaten, the right will use the March elections as a springboard for demanding that the date be moved up for the parliamentary elections. This perspective, however, involves two problems for the right. The institutions of the Fifth Republic, set up as a result of De Gaulle's coup d'état in 1958, give all power to the president.

Therefore, the prospect that the right faces is having to fight a prolonged offensive and running the risk of destabilizing institutions that have proved an effective bulwark against unrest. Mitterrand is in the presidential palace. It will take something more than early parliamentary elections to get him out.

The second unresolved problem is a consequence of the first. While the municipal elections are a test for the entire right, it is not united about the perspectives. No authoritative leader is emerging from its ranks with a political plan for uniting the offensive and leading it to victory. Nonetheless, if the municipal elections are won by the right, this will represent a turn in the political situation opened up after May 10.

Workers on defensive?

A certain doubt is creeping into the minds of the workers. Is the offensive of the right and the bosses changing the relationship of forces? This is reflected by a moderation of demands and actions, a hesitation to mobilize for fear of "playing into the hands of the right." But the experience since May 10 confirms the fact that struggle is the only thing that makes the bosses retreat. And there has been no lack of struggles. Despite the skepticism of a lot of trade-union officials, the most recent struggles show that the relationship of forces is still in favor of the workers.

The strikes at Citroen and Talbot involved

sections of workers that have traditionally not been very well-organized, the immigrants. However, these strata with less experience in struggle than the rest of the working class went into action and forced the bosses' organization in the PSA automotive empire to yield.

After the workers returned from vacation this year, the feelings were running so strongly against the company union and the straw bosses that the foremen were unable to regain any of the ground lost before the summer. Locals of real unions were formed in the plants that belong to the trust, reflecting a high level of combativity.*

It is clear that these struggles were not just a flareup in a backward sector. They are rather the clearest expression since May 10 of determination by the workers to bring "the new course" into the plants.

While attacks on the workers such as the cutbacks in social benefits and buying power have been successful, the workers have not been defeated. They have not yet begun to fight, and the tensions are building up. There will be a delayed-reaction effect in those sectors directly hit by the drop in real wages. Nothing has been settled, even if most workers have remained with their hands in their pockets.

A powderkeg in steel

Such a delayed-reaction effect can be predicted in the steel industry. Minister of Technology and Science Chevenement's commitment to applying the Davignon Plan (which means 12,000 layoffs on the way) will rekindle the struggles in the steel centers, and they will be fought with the determination that comes from desperation. This smoldering combativity has reached such a heat that the trade-union confederations have been obliged to offer an outlet. That is the only meaning of the days of action scheduled in October and November.

Under direct or diffuse pressure from their ranks, the union leaderships have wriggled, calling scattered actions and watering down demands and the objectives of mobilizations. The various confederations continue to follow a divisive policy that makes the fightback even more fragmented.

Despite this bag of tricks resorted to by the union bosses, even in the context of these days of action, where unity was achieved, the mobilizations were often powerful ones. This was the case for the workers in the national gas and electric company, the Paris tax clerks, and the railroad workers in Ile-et-Vilaine in Brittany. Moreover, in many congresses and national meetings of trade unions, leaders argued for organizing a general fightback. This happened, for example, at the national meeting of 4,000 CGT shop stewards in the national gas

* Previously the only union allowed by the Citroen management was the Free Trade-Unions Confederation affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The workers went on strike in early summer 1982 to get rid of these unions, and for free union elections.

and electricity company and at the congress of CGT workers in the nationalized sector of the armament industry.

Government losing credibility with workers

The government tried to present itself as the arbiter in these conflicts. It was shown up as a supporter of the bosses. In Citroen, the wage increase won by the struggle in June was declared illegal by [Jean] Auroux, the minister of labor. When the workers at the FNAC bookstores went on strike in October in defense of their cost-of-living allowances, the boss of the concern, Essel, was able to use a statement by the Minister of Labor declaring illegal the FNAC system of cost-of-living allowances tied to prices. This judgment was made, scandalously enough, on the basis of a Gaullist decree in 1959, the year following the successful coup d'état.

Thus, the workers have learned to some extent in experience that the government does not support their mobilizations and sometimes even displays open hostility to them. Moreover, a lot of workers involved in struggles have sought aid and support from the parliamentary deputies belonging to the new majority. Most often they have found a friendly deputy, but these deputies have not done anything more than listen in a polite and sympathetic way to their demands.

In every case, these deputies voted for the Beregovoy plan cutting social benefits and approved the austerity policy. This has made enough of an impression on the workers that the idea that there is a need for action by the workers and the unions independent of the government has been gaining ground, despite the obstacles that have been placed in the way of mobilization. This attitude has gained momentum inasmuch as the hopes placed in the new majority have been rapidly dashed.

In the wake of May 10, the workers parties and unions did not press their advantage. They did not try to mobilize the masses that had brought Giscard d'Estaing down. Nonetheless, there was a strong aspiration among the masses for unity. Far from challenging the logic of a sick system, the CP and the SP, the CGT, as well as the CFDT and FO [Labor Force] adapted themselves for administering the crisis.

Union bureaucrats urge more work, less pay

These organizations accept the argument that in order to maintain jobs it is necessary to aid the companies and unite bosses, unions, and workers in this. Some even advocate that the workers accept wage cuts for the sake of the company's competitiveness. This rigged game amounts to asking the workers to accept the reduction of their buying power, to agree to work more and harder, while the bosses keep the power to fire as they please, not invest, and lie about the real state of the company's leaders.

To sum it up, this means turning back the clock of the trade-union movement. It means that workers should work harder for less. This



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is unacceptable on the face of it. Wage sacrifices have never guaranteed the maintenance of jobs. As long as the bosses keep their monarchical power in the plants, as long as they get the profits, there cannot be any sharing of the responsibility between workers and bosses.

Since these organizations argue that workers should take responsibility for the companies, they claim that the most important task of the workers movement is aiding management. The top union bureaucrats — Marie, Krasucki, Herzog — as well as Mitterrand, all talk the same language. The time has come to bridge the old class barrier between the owners of the means of production and the exploited producers so that the workers and the bosses can run the factories shoulder to shoulder.

The CFDT says that the bosses have maintained an outmoded system of social relations, and that it has now to overcome this by assuming the role of making proposals. The CP says that comanagement today is no longer class collaboration because the bosses have shown their incompetence. What is needed today, all the unions say, is shop committees that will make proposals for improving production, unions that will work out alternative plans, and vigilance against waste.

A boss class that has not given an inch since the May 10 victory is not going to consider sharing its power for one instant. It will fight to the death to hold on to its power. Sharing the management of a factory with the boss is just another way of saying that the workers should make all the sacrifices for the sake of productivity.

When the bosses are waging a class war against buying power and jobs, it is criminal to hold out your hand to the enemy and offer to collaborate with him.

All the unions are trying to hold back the workers from mobilizing with the argument that this government has a long-term lease on power and that this should not be put in danger. A lot of workers are thinking, "if this had happened in Giscard's time, people would already be marching in the streets." But today even though the government is administering the capitalist crisis the argument that it is supposed to represent the workers is used as a pre-

text for giving up the fight on everything.

The Beregovoy plan for social welfare, the wage freeze, increased deductions for unemployment insurance, and the like are all getting past without a blow being struck, with the workers parties and unions agreeing not to notice. So, the SP and the CP, the CGT, and the CFDT are leading the workers down a blind alley. The plea that we cannot cause problems for a government that is helping the bosses push their rate of profit back up and to restructure their plants means asking us to give up every immediate demand, it becomes an alibi for surrendering on everything, it means opening the way for the return of the right.

A poison is seeping into some layers of trade-union activists, the idea that nothing can be done about this crisis, that it is a necessary stage to escape from inflation and unemployment. The propaganda campaign the government is waging under the slogan "Face the truth" is designed precisely to spread this idea, that the national economy has to be defended as it is, with its capitalist profit logic.

"Made in France, OK?"

The French CP is pushing a similar campaign. Its recent posters raise the cry "Made in France, OK?" What these arguments boil down to in essence is that the crisis can be eliminated by a national effort to increase the competitiveness of French products. In order to accomplish this, the CP and CGT leadership maintain, something more than a special effort and cooperation between workers and bosses is needed. That is, we need protectionist measures to keep out foreign products and to make sure that French goods are bought instead of them. The crisis is supposed to have been caused simply by the incompetence of the capitalists as managers.

These campaigns have a certain impact simply because they seem to appeal to common sense, but their apparent realism is only very superficial.

Blocking imports leads inevitably to higher prices. If import quotas were multiplied, French workers would have to buy products made in France all right. Sheltered from foreign competition, these goods would inexorably go up in price. At the same time, the foreign products that would be sold in smaller quantities would also increase in price to assure the Japanese or West German bosses the same rate of profit as the French ones. If they exported less, they would regain what they lost by higher prices.

Furthermore, it would not end there. Facing a reduction of their export market, the foreign firms would get their governments to impose retaliatory tariffs. This would lead to a spread of protectionism that would shrink export markets still further. What is more, protectionist measures would hit French industries that export a lot of their products, such as the aerospace and automotive industries. This would result in higher unemployment in these industries.

Since, in accordance with the dictates of

capitalist management, the French firms would have to maintain their level of competitiveness on the European and world markets, even if protectionism became systematic, the French bosses would continue to try to push down the level of wages and employment in order to maintain their ability to compete with foreign products.

Fundamentally, the SP's "Face the truth" campaign and the CP's "Made in France, OK?" campaign are a diversion. The French bourgeoisie is trying to make the workers pay for the crisis, for the restructuring of the productive system, and for the shutdown of branches considered unprofitable. The SP and CP can construct all sorts of schemes, but this reality cannot be gotten around. That is why it is necessary to attack the power of the bosses and the law of profit.

No way forward without attacking capitalism

This system is unjust and immoral. For example, in 1979, François Michelin (boss of the tire trust) declared to the French, German, and Swiss internal revenue services that his personal income amounted to 109,000,300 francs a month. And after 15 years, an ordinary worker earns 3,700 francs a month in the Michelin factories.

The bosses shed salt tears, complaining that there is a recession on and they cannot pay. What do generally unverifiable claims like that matter for the workers? Wages and jobs are basic immediate needs, regardless of whether the bosses say they can pay or not. The demands the LCR supports correspond to the needs of the workers:

A 35-hour week with no cut in wages is the least that can be done right away to deal with unemployment. The bosses lay off people when they consider that they have a surplus of the commodity that labor power represents for them. It is a commodity for the bosses, but the only means of survival the workers have.

A 35-hour workweek would make possible massive hiring of the unemployed, who are mainly women and youth. This means, of course, taking on the bosses, forcing them to retreat. But then the only thing the bosses understand is a relationship of forces. The 40-hour week was won by the June 1936 general strike. The Gattazes of the day were pleading poverty no less piteously than the present ones. So, to provide jobs now, we need a 35-hour workweek, whether the bosses consider this possible or not!

When the bosses tell us, "you are out to ruin the economy," our answer is that this economy is based on their principles and their ownership, and that we are not responsible for it, although we are the ones who produce the wealth. It is they who are responsible for unemployment, the waste of human beings, and the stalling of technological advance.

The way to fight inflation is with a sliding scale of wages and prices. Wages cannot be tied to productivity or the success of the plant. They must be based on prices by means of au-

tomatic and retroactive cost-of-living increases in accordance with an index that reflects price increases.

The poorest first?

Some trade-union and government officials are saying, help the poorly paid first, the others can wait. The buying power of the workers has to be defended, and not just that of the workers at the bottom of the scale. The demagogic statements of these union and government officials is based on the idea that total wages must not rise, in order not to overburden the companies. This already represents resignation. In fact, these people set a cutoff point, beyond which wages cannot be defended. For the CDFT, for example, the cutoff point is twice the minimum wage. What new scientific notion is this that workers cannot go beyond 7,200 francs a month (that is, twice the minimum wage demanded by the CFDT)? In trade, a lot of high managerial personnel make less than that. On the other hand, in certain sectors of petrochemicals and aerospace, workers make more than that.

Total wages must rise as much as necessary to meet the workers' needs for buying power. What is more, the very trade-union confederations that have formed special unions for professionals are now telling us that such people do not have to be defended. The only way the workers have to win the professionals over is to show them that they have an interest in joining the working-class camp. To cast them off altogether means driving them into the camp of the bosses, since it is neither an accomplished fact nor inevitable that they will line up with the bosses.

All wages set by contract and law must be defeated by a sliding scale, and in heavy industry that includes a wage scale that goes up to 10,200 francs a month.

Is making the bosses pay a simplistic or irresponsible slogan? It is a simple thing to say that this has to be the real objective of working-class mobilizations. To cut through the smokescreens of the reformists and the verbiage about helping to manage the companies and buckling down and joining in a great national effort, the LCR reaffirms that it is the bosses who are responsible for the crisis. In order to solve the problem of jobs, production, and inflation in a lasting way, they are the ones we have to go after; we have to break their law of profit, that is, expropriate them. This involves another kind of logic, which has been developed by the workers movement in the past. It has to be repopularized.

Reorient production to meet social needs

The bosses produce to make a profit. Regardless of whether social needs are left unsatisfied or not, the bosses decide in a completely anarchic way to halt or continue production in accordance with the sole criterion of profit. The law of profit has to be replaced by a law of satisfying social needs.

Let's take the example of steel, which is one of the most illustrative. The bosses want to

eliminate 15,000 more jobs. Why? Because there is no more need for steel? To the contrary, this basic product is extensively used in building housing. And there is a lack of housing. The CP program says that it is necessary to build 500,000 dwellings a year. Before May 10, the SP said that 16 million out of 55 million French people lived in homes that were not even minimally equipped. But the capitalists consider that it is not profitable to meet these needs. Nonetheless, the nationalized sector includes the USINOR and SACILOR steel trusts. These two large enterprises could be turned immediately to production oriented to meeting the most urgent social needs.

The utilization of the nationalized sector should be the keystone of such a policy. With its present scope, it could serve as the springboard toward an overall reorientation of production. The nationalized banks hold 77.1 percent of credit and 85.8 percent of deposits. The nationalized sector accounts for 33 percent of corporate investment and 12 percent of the gross domestic product. Multinational giants such as Rhone-Poulenc in the artificial fibers industry (the third-largest in the field worldwide) and the Thomson electrical appliances trust are now included in the nationalized sector. They could be oriented to meeting the immediate social needs (for household appliances and clothing).

The task of a workers government would be to use this public sector to take public initiatives to provide jobs and meet the needs of the people. The extreme concentration of these units of production makes this task easier, as well as making it easier to establish workers control over production in order to reorganize it.

Where is the money to come from?

Where is the money going to come from? Even though neither Credit Agricole (which used to be the world's largest credit concern), nor real estate credit, nor consumer credit, nor the foreign banks have been nationalized, the nationalized credit sector could be concentrated into one bank with a great pooled capital. Such a bank could provide the funds necessary for the nationalized sector.

Today, the capitalists are still pillaging the nationalized sector. In both the railroads and Social Insurance system, capitalists are diverting funds. A centralization of the nationalized banks must be accompanied by the establishment of exchange control, in order to stop the flight of capital.

Not only should controls be set up on foreign trade should be renegotiated [deletion in original]. The present government has done this with Algeria. It agreed to raise the price of Algerian natural gas in order to safeguard the sales of French industrial products in Algeria. It is possible to oblige our trading partners to renegotiate the terms of trade in conformity with a reorientation of production to meet social need. When a country such as France is carrying a foreign debt of 233 billion francs,

that means there is something to negotiate. If you are a big debtor, you are also an important customer.

The crisis can only be ended by the victory of one or the other of the two camps that exist, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the LCR, with its limited means, has to work to prepare our class for this confrontation. This work has to be directed toward two objectives. The first task is to promote united mobilizations of the working class. This means giving impetus to struggles for immediate demands, in defense of our social gains, struggles that have an anticapitalist dimension.

In order to accomplish this, we have to remove the obstacles to mobilization. It is necessary to overcome the divisions by stepping up appeals for unity and making efforts in more and more places to promote it in action. We have to show the workers that resting on your arms means giving up without a fight in the face of the offensive by the bosses and the right. It is necessary to show in practice that the only way to get significant wage increases, more jobs, and to stop social service cutbacks is to take on the bosses.

At the same time, we have to indicate where these mobilizations have to lead, that is, to disarming the bosses. One of the main obstacles to mobilizing the workers is precisely the lack of anticapitalist answers being offered, the lack of alternatives to the proposals of the reformists for finding a way out of the crisis. To point the way out of this dilemma, the LCR has to reassert that socialism is the only way out of the crisis in the interest of the workers.

In carrying out these two tasks, we have to intervene in the struggles to direct action and demands against the bosses. In FNAC, at Bella, in Citroen-Levallois, and elsewhere this has been the primary role for LCR activists — to push for unity, for demands that unite the workers, for objectives and forms of action that promote unity.

At the same time, this means that we have to answer the questions of thousands of trade-union and political activists attached until recently to the dominant organizations in the workers movement, who have realized that they have been led down a blind alley but do not have any anticapitalist alternatives.

From this standpoint, the role of the trade-union opposition caucuses is central. They will grow if they turn toward action, challenge the reformist orientations of the established leadership, and, by their activity and the answers they offer, revive the understanding and spirit of class-struggle unionism. The LCR has to play an active role in this anticapitalist current that exists now, as it did with the *Rouen Appeal*. A national current of opinion took form around this petition drive demanding anticapitalist policies corresponding to the needs of the workers. That was a beginning.

Finally, in presenting an anticapitalist program, the LCR has to propagate on a mass scale the revolutionary perspective that distinguishes it as an organization and is its reason for existence. □

Iran

Nicaraguan trade delegation welcomed in Tehran

TEHRAN — On December 7, Nicaragua's Minister of Foreign Trade Alejandro Martínez Cuenca began a five-day visit here as part of a three-person delegation from Nicaragua.

This is the first time that a high official of the Nicaraguan government has visited Iran since the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Somoza regime in July 1979.

Over the last two years, Ahmad Azizi, Iranian deputy minister of foreign affairs, has visited Nicaragua twice.

Before leaving Tehran, Martínez spoke with reporters. He noted, "in our visit with the prime minister, the ministers of foreign affairs, economics and finance, and trade, and with the general director of Iran's central bank and the deputy oil minister, we had discussions concerning the just positions of both countries against world imperialism.

"We also had discussions with regard to establishing economic and financial relations on the basis of mutual respect for the rights of both nations. In most of these discussions we had common agreement and believe that our two countries should expand trade exchanges immediately."

He added, "Our visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran was a useful experience. We closely observed the efforts of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the reconstruction of the new Iran."

The response of Iranian officials to the Nicaraguans' visit was also very positive.

According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, during the meeting between Martínez and Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hossein Musavi, the prime minister noted the conspiracy of U.S. imperialism both in Latin America and in the Persian Gulf.

Musavi pointed out, "all the efforts of our nation during the last four years have been spent to maintain the independence of our country. This is one of the accomplishments of the Islamic revolution.

"Our nation has been determined to fight against all pressures, such as military pressures such as the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, which was started by the U.S. provocation, and the recent military maneuvers in the Persian Gulf, also carried out with the participation and presence of the United States.

"Our nation, in order to withstand these ever growing pressures and other problems, decided to move toward self-sufficiency and to maintain itself with whatever it has."

In regard to trade agreements between the

two countries, Heda'i Atzayeh, deputy trade minister of Iran, told reporters, "Nicaragua's resources and production in the past were plundered by world imperialist dealers. Our purchasing and business policies are based on trade relations with Third World and Nonaligned countries. The trade ministry tries to initiate economic and business relations with countries such as Nicaragua."

He added, "During the stay of this delegation in Tehran, an agreement was made between the two countries for the purchase of sugar. There was also a discussion on the purchase of coffee, wood, sesame, spices, and meats.

"Since the visiting time of the Nicaraguan delegation was short, a delegation from the Iranian trade ministry will travel to Nicaragua shortly in order to investigate the possibilities of exports and other related things. And also to estimate the necessary measures that have to be taken in further developing relations between the two countries."

Atzayeh said an Iranian delegation "will also be sent to Nicaragua for purchasing meat and to work out an agreement for slaughtering cattle according to Islamic tradition, so that the import of meat could be made possible."

Concerning the economic situation of Nicaragua and the threats made by Honduras against Nicaragua, Atzayeh asserted, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's aim in developing a relationship with Nicaragua is to give the necessary aid to the people of Nicaragua and their revolution. This is based on the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support all oppressed peoples of the world." □

Iranian poet freed

In an important victory for the Iranian revolution, the poet Morid Mirghaed has been released from jail in the city of Masjed-e Suleiman. Mirghaed, a member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (HKE), had been held there without charges since late July.

The poet's release came shortly before a major speech by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini sharply criticizing official abuses in the judicial system.

Four supporters of the HKE are still imprisoned. HKE leaders Bahram Ali Atai and Mohammed Bagher Falsafi have been held at Evin Prison in Tehran since last March, and Shanaz Dilmaghani was jailed there in November. In Ahwaz, a young soldier, Hassan Sadegh, remains under a 10-year prison sentence for reading and distributing the HKE's now-banned weekly *Kargar*.

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Speech by Fidel Castro

'Only a people's revolution can arm the people'

[The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was given in Havana on December 11 at a ceremony marking the 26th anniversary of the *Granma* landing* and the founding of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. The translation is from the December 19 issue of the *Granma* weekly review.]

* * *

Distinguished Guests;
Comrades of the Revolutionary Armed Forces;
Comrades of the Territorial Troop Militia:
(APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "FIDEL, FIDEL, GIVE THE YANKEES HELL!")

As has been said, today we are commemorating the 26th anniversary of the landing of the *Granma* and the founding of our glorious Revolutionary Armed Forces. This ceremony should have been held some days ago, on December 2, but in order not to interrupt work it was decided to have it on a Saturday afternoon.

As a very special symbol of this ceremony, the 163rd Army Corps of the Territorial Troop Militia and its seven divisions were given their combat flags today.

The militia has a long and inspiring history in our country. They were set up in 1959, the first year of the Revolution. Our Rebel Army was still small. Threats and danger of aggression developed from the very first months. It has been reported that in May, after the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law, the U.S. government decided to destabilize the country, as it's called now, in order to attack it afterward; they wanted to apply the Guatemala formula, which was used 30 years ago to overthrow a democratic and progressive government in Central America.

We quickly realized the need to incorporate the people into the defense of the country. I believe it was Lenin who said that the value of a revolution was determined by its ability to defend itself. (APPLAUSE) That was how the demand, the clamor to arm our workers, farmers, students and manual and intellectual laborers began. This soon showed the imperialists that we were determined to struggle and that this was a people's revolution, for only a people's revolution can arm the people. (APPLAUSE)

Throughout history there have been thousands of changes of govern-

We quickly realized the need to incorporate the people into the defense of the country . . .

ment; nearly every week there is talk of coups or changes of government in one way or the other. There are some processes which are even called revolutionary, but for special reasons they are afraid to arm the people. The exploiting classes have always opposed arming the people. How can an exploitative society arm the people? How can an exploitative society give arms to the workers, peasants and students when we read that workers are involved in constant strikes and struggles as well as the peasants and students? If an exploitative society were to arm the people, it would disappear in a question of weeks, days or hours. So this issue in itself indicates whether or not a revolution is genuine or not. But the people were armed not because of definitions or theory alone; there was

*In November 1956, Castro and 82 other July 26 fighters set out from exile in Mexico aboard a small yacht, the *Granma*. Only 12 survived, but their landing in Cuba marked the start of the guerrilla war that toppled the Batista dictatorship two years later.

also a need for it.

That was how the National Revolutionary Militia came into being. It was always organically linked to our Revolutionary Armed Forces. There was no need for any separation since the Revolutionary Armed Forces are a single institution and they are made up of the armed people — the people in uniform, as Camilo said. (APPLAUSE)

I remember that then we had virtually no centers for military training, just a few that were improvised during the first months. The first militia units were organized in the factories; they trained in the yards of factories, in the street, everywhere.

How timely it was to have organized the militia then, since the enemy had sneaky things in mind, including organizing counterrevolutionary bands all over the country. There were times when there were bands in all the former provinces, including the province of Havana. There were constant landings of weapons by sea and by air, explosives were brought in for sabotage operations, etc. — an active counterrevolutionary campaign just like the one the Yankee imperialists are organizing now

The first militia units were organized in the factories; they trained in the yards of factories, in the streets, everywhere . . .

against Nicaragua. In certain parts of the country the bands became fairly powerful, such as in the Escambray area.

The historical fact is that originally the aggressors were not thinking of Girón, they were thinking of the Escambray, where they planned to land their mercenary expedition. I recall that just a few months, just a few weeks before the Girón invasion, 40,000 members of the militia from the capital of the republic, workers and students from the capital, were mobilized — 40,000! They moved into the Escambray, (APPLAUSE) they surrounded and divided up the area which they searched inch by inch and they captured — I don't recall the exact figures — between 500 and 1,000 counterrevolutionaries in just a few weeks. (APPLAUSE) Some counterrevolutionaries were left, very few, but they continued to get help from abroad, of course, and other reactionaries joined their ranks.

In those days there was a huge anti-communist campaign, when the peasants didn't even know what communism was; they were told it was a terrible thing that had to be fought against. Actually, then the socialist revolution hadn't been proclaimed yet, nor had Marxism-Leninism been proclaimed as our doctrine. The proclamation of the socialist revolution and of Marxism-Leninism was the result of a genuine revolutionary process, because without socialism and Marxism-Leninism, it is absolutely impossible to speak of revolution. (APPLAUSE) There are many people who have tried to distort ideas and come up with a sort of hybrid, a cross between socialist, Marxist-Leninist ideology and capitalist ideology.

There can be revolutions, there were in other times, in past centuries: nationalist, democratic or progressive revolutions. This was the case of our struggles for independence, for example; that was not yet the era of socialism or Marxism-Leninism. But now, no hybrid can be called revolutionary, no crossbreed works. How a process develops is another thing, it goes by steps, periods or stages. But today it is not possible to speak of revolutionary ideas if they are not inspired by the doctrine of the working class, Marxism-Leninism, if their short-, middle- or long-term objective is not socialism.

At the time of the Escambray events, as I was saying, socialism had not been proclaimed, but the enemy realized that this was a genuine rev-

olution and a people's revolution and he got ready to fight it with all possible means.

That period marked the start of the departures abroad, the efforts to take away our doctors, professors, technicians, and we opened the doors. We didn't want to make a revolution with those people, we didn't want to impose socialism on them; if they preferred capitalism and the Yankee consumer society, then they should leave and good luck to them. Things were much better for us (APPLAUSE) because, in fact, tens of thousands of fine homes belonging to the oligarchy and the bourgeoisie, to rich people who built bigger houses than those of millionaires in the United States, were left for use as schools or homes for the people. Many of those elegant and well-built apartment buildings, where bourgeois who left used to live, now house workers, proletarians.

It was very good for us because they took away that whole social group that wasn't capable of joining the revolutionary process, it was

Today it is not possible to speak of revolutionary ideas if they are not inspired by the doctrine of the working-class, Marxism-Leninism . . .

good because we were left with the good people, the great majority of the country, who were with the Revolution.

At that time, I repeat, the danger was increasingly real and growing: sabotage and the activity of the bands was intense.

The Escambray cleanup was the first big service rendered by the militia, the militia of the capital, although militiamen from Oriente and other provinces served in the Escambray afterward. The Escambray was almost completely cleaned up a few weeks before the Girón invasion; the enemy had to change plans since he no longer had a base for aggression and thus attacked at Girón. At that time we still weren't organized into army corps, divisions or regiments; our organization was still at the level of militia battalions and relatively small units of the Rebel Army. That was the situation at the time of the Girón invasion.

But just a few days previously, a few days we could say, we had received hundreds of cannon of all kinds from Czechoslovakia and the USSR; 57, 75 and 85mm; mortars of different caliber; 122mm howitzers; we still didn't have the famous multiple rocket launchers. We had received tanks and various kinds of infantry weapons; also a large number of antiaircraft guns; we had practically no planes then, there were just a few, and less pilots than planes; we needed the antiaircraft guns. A few days before, schools for thousands of militia members had been improvised; we would assemble them according to district in the capital and would ask who wanted to learn to be gunners. Of course, thousands responded immediately, and training camps for artillery personnel from the militia were improvised everywhere.

The fact is that when the enemy landed on April 17, 1961, following the bombing of the airfields two days before — for that attack was treacherous, it was an effort to destroy the few planes we had; but they encountered antiaircraft machine guns operated by the militia at all the points they attacked. (APPLAUSE) It was a treacherous attack but a stupid one at that, because it alerted us to the fact that the invasion was imminent. With the cynical methods typical of imperialism, they claimed that the planes hadn't come from anywhere, not from Nicaragua, Guatemala or the United States; they had come from Cuba itself where the air force had revolted, bombed some bases and then sought refuge in Miami and other places. They even told this lie at the UN, they told it to everyone there — just like they're doing now with Nicaragua regarding the attacks from Honduras. Every day there are attacks and every day they deny them.

This is to warn those who are gullible and who think the imperialists are capable of telling the truth sometimes; they distort even the most simple things, they always report things in a tendentious manner; their philosophy is the philosophy of lies, and we have experience in this respect.

Since we knew an invasion was imminent, all forces were mobilized. When the landing came, not only the Rebel Army and our incipient navy

and air force were mobilized and on the alert, but also hundreds of militia battalions all over the country. It's possible that the imperialists still don't know exactly what happened, but wherever they would have landed they would have received the same kind of beating; and if instead of sending one they had sent ten expeditions, they would have received the same punishment everywhere. (APPLAUSE) The people were waiting for them everywhere.

I repeat, our regular armed forces were very small. They handled a few planes and some newly arrived tanks. Nearly all the infantry and all the ground and air artillery was handled by the militia. So when the news of the landing at Girón was confirmed, after the officers from the Matanzas Officer School — one of our first schools for military cadres — were sent there, a river of militia battalions, ground cannon batteries and antiaircraft guns, along with tanks and some well-trained units of our regular forces, flowed out of the capital and headed for the scene.

Girón was the second time the militia from the capital covered themselves in glory, (APPLAUSE) and dozens of them gave their lives along with many fighters from our then small regular forces, and the militia and the Rebel Army fought together as one army, under the same leadership and command.

Afterward came very important events which forced us to mobilize constantly, given the imperialists' threats. Suffice it to mention the October Crisis [1962], when hundreds of thousands of militia members were again mobilized all over the country. Years later many of those militiamen went on internationalist missions.

Little by little, the militia of the early years joined the regular troops of our Revolutionary Armed Forces and the reserves. General military service did not exist yet. Many members of the militia became cadres and officers, and many of them are now outstanding officers of our Revolutionary Armed Forces.

In time military service was set up. This meant the incorporation of young people into the armed forces and the training of young people for the armed forces. As the years went by, wave after wave of young people passed through the armed forces and gradually became the main reserves. Hundreds of thousands of young people have undergone military service in this country, and now they are the main reserves of the armed forces.

The concept of the militia was watered down a little. Who would have thought then that it would reappear, again because of the needs of na-

The imperialists distort even the most simple things, they always report things in a tendentious manner; their philosophy is the philosophy of lies . . .

tional defense, with such extraordinary vigor as is now the case! Why? Because, although our regular units are at full strength and the armed forces have the reserves they need thanks to the young people who passed through its ranks, this still wasn't enough and we couldn't say there was total incorporation of the people in defense tasks, which is a basic concept of the Revolution. This was not due to a whim of any kind but to the fact that the weapons we had were just enough for the regular forces and reserves. We couldn't organize the militia if we didn't have the weapons.

That was the situation when new turmoil developed in 1980: the Yankee imperialists were no longer bogged down in Vietnam; the revolutionary movement was growing in Central America; the imperialists were again turning their aggressive eyes on our country and were making threats of different kinds, along with landings and maneuvers on our own soil, at the Guantánamo base. We clearly saw new danger of an imperialist attack on our country, and we gave thought to how to increase our defenses and power.

Thus, based on our own past experience and that of other revolutionary countries adjusted to the conditions in our country, the idea of organizing the Territorial Troop Militia came about. This was a necessary response to new dangerous situations, but it was also a response to the need to fill certain gaps in the defense of the country which could not be

covered by the regular forces or reserves. The call to organize the Territorial Troop Militia was made in this Square on May Day, 1980.

But then, as I said, it was just an idea; (APPLAUSE) we didn't have the weapons. But the international situation kept getting worse. A new, very aggressive administration took office in the United States, an administration, as we've said on other occasions, with a fascist mentality. They have even said that socialism is something anachronistic which should disappear from the face of the earth. They didn't say anachronistic, I believe Mr. Reagan called it "aberrant," saying it must disappear from the face of the earth, that the time must come when socialism is a thing of the past. Such language, this talk of wiping socialism from the face of the earth, had not been heard since the time of Adolf Hitler. This is very dangerous. During the election campaign and after the inauguration of the new administration, this philosophy was accompanied by threats of total blockade against our country, punishment, attacks and even invasion.

This put our Party in the position of taking exceptional measures to strengthen our defenses. Because of this we asked the Soviet Union for weapons for the Territorial Troop Militia. (APPLAUSE) This was at the time of the 2nd Congress of the Party, and, to tell the truth, although this was a request for weapons for hundreds of thousands of men and women, we got a positive answer in less than 15 days. (APPLAUSE)

Thus, ships filled with weapons for the Territorial Troop Militia started to arrive. The imperialists, who are ever alert and spying, always snooping where Cuba is concerned, as if it were their and not our affair, started a big uproar over the arrival of ships loaded with weapons. They kept records of how many thousands of tons. They kick up storms every so often, such as after the MIG-23s arrived; they do it whenever it suits them; when it doesn't they don't say a word and often, strangely enough, nothing at all is published. They can't always control their press, but at least they control those so-called mysterious news sources, which provide information and tell lies of all sorts. Such as the time when they called the teachers going to Nicaragua to teach the children there a special forces battalion going to El Salvador. That's the kind of lie they tell.

They started a big uproar, saying the Soviets were giving us those weapons and then we shipped them to Central America, to El Salvador. Just think, those weapons for the Territorial Troop Militia of Cuba were supposed to be going to Central America, to El Salvador. Well, if those arms actually went to El Salvador, the government wouldn't last five minutes. (APPLAUSE) This is all absurd. Nobody asked the Soviets for weapons for Central America, and there are provisions in our agreements with the Soviets banning the shipment of weapons to third countries. There have been special circumstances over the past 20 years

We clearly saw new danger of an imperialist attack on our country, and we gave thought to how to increase our defenses and power . . .

when we have had to aid certain countries; once it was Algeria, another time it was Angola. That is, there have been cases when Cuban personnel have gone somewhere with their weapons, but there has never been a case of shipment of Soviet weapons to third countries, nor has Cuba donated Soviet weapons to other countries; we have never given Soviet weapons to the revolutionary movement. We fulfill our agreements. But the imperialists claimed that those weapons were going to be distributed in Central America. They have talked so much about all this, about so many tons of weapons and so many thousands of weapons that if this were true there would be armies of hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries in Central America. They turned this into another of their big lies; but it is true that all during 1981 weapons for the Territorial Troop Militia were arriving in Cuba. Those weren't the only weapons that arrived. Later on I will mention other weapons that arrived, not for the militia but for the Revolutionary Armed Forces, that is, for the regular and reserve troops. (APPLAUSE)

The imperialists' threats forced us to undertake a feverish effort to or-

ganize and train the Territorial Troop Militia, because it was to constitute a considerable force of over 500,000 fighters. This required an effort by the entire country: the Party, People's Power, the central state administration and the mass organizations, as well as an extraordinary effort by our armed forces to organize and train the militia, to prepare the cadres, etc. — an effort over and above the yearly effort of combat training for regular and reserve forces which is intense per se. On top of that came the task of organizing and training the Territorial Troop Militia.

The people had responded to the idea with great enthusiasm, millions of people volunteered! As you know, the basic principles of the militia are that it is a voluntary, selective, mass organization organized on a geographical basis. The first hundreds of thousands were selected, but there were millions of requests and we didn't have weapons for more.

The imperialists' threats forced us to undertake a feverish effort to organize and train the Territorial Troop Militia . . .

We again encountered the problem of millions of people who were ready to fight but who lacked weapons. We said, "Well, we'll give them something." We don't have arms factories, but we can manufacture mines or grenades so that every citizen of this country will have at least a grenade or two or three if the country is attacked. (APPLAUSE)

It isn't an easy task, you must understand, to organize and train more than 500,000 fighters. The military schools were asked to make a special effort to train cadres; they worked to lay the groundwork, receive the weapons and see to their upkeep and storage. This required the construction of hundreds of warehouses in which the People's Power played a key role; hundreds of shooting ranges were needed and dozens of armories for the repair and maintenance of the weapons. Amidst great tension and effort, the miracle of organizing the Territorial Troop Militia came about in the brief period of time between 1981 and 1982, less than two years, and more than a year ahead of schedule. Now our people can count on a powerful force which is added to the Revolutionary Armed Forces for the defense of the country. (APPLAUSE) By means of donations from workers, voluntary work by workers, fund-raising drives by the mass organizations, including the Pioneers, tens of millions of pesos were raised to cover the expenses of the Territorial Troop Militia. This has given rise to a new principle, that is, that the Territorial Troop Militia is financed directly by the people. (APPLAUSE)

We had to train more than 40,000 cadres, that is, officers, and it has been done; we have more than 40,000 officers for the militia trained by the Revolutionary Armed Forces. There are thousands: half of them in six-month courses, others in one-year courses. During this year of military instruction, 10,000 cadres will be in six-month or one-year courses, training or refreshing their knowledge; they are undergoing constant training and improvement. We have about 1,000 battalions of the Territorial Troop Militia — 1,000 battalions! — divided into more than 200 regiments, several divisions and this 163rd Army Corps which received its flag today. (APPLAUSE) Thus, in a matter of months our defenses have been strengthened by more than 500,000 fighters from the people.

There is something very important: about 25 percent of the members of the Territorial Troop Militia are women. (APPLAUSE) Since women aren't called up for military service, there was a large number of young women at the peak of their physical and mental abilities, in addition to their extraordinary revolutionary mettle. (APPLAUSE) The Territorial Troop Militia has become their trench, although there are women in the regular units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and there may be more in the future, especially as the women demonstrate their excellent combat capability. (APPLAUSE)

As you know, many young men are in the regular forces or reserves and others are involved in different tasks. In the militia we have young men who are over 16 and are not doing military service because they are studying or for other reasons or they have not been called up yet and are not part of the reserves. There are also men who are not in the reserves



Prensa Latina

Unit of Territorial Troop Militia in Havana May Day parade, 1982.

for some reason, their age or the work they do does not allow them to carry out tasks for the regular forces or the reserves. Also in the militia are students, farmers and housewives.

Thus, I repeat, the Revolution is adding a tremendous force to our defense: women who are in the prime of life for military activities. (APPLAUSE) And there's something that must be emphasized at this point, something that has been demonstrated by experience; and that is that the women are more disciplined and more punctual than the men both in class and in combat training. (APPLAUSE)

There's also a large number of students in the Territorial Troop Militia. I believe that we have a whole regiment composed of students.

**There is something very important:
about 25 percent of the members
of the Territorial Troop Militia
are women . . .**

They have joined the Territorial Troop Militia with tremendous enthusiasm.

What has been done in this field is really a feat as well as a great victory for the Party, the state, the mass organizations and the Revolutionary Armed Forces. But it's understood that we mustn't feel satisfied with the results and that we must go on improving and preparing our officers and troops. This calls for dedication and discipline. We have a program that calls for 40 hours a year of training of the troops plus ten days' mobilization at the battalion level during the five-year period. These training plans must be met in full and once again require our people's enthusiasm and fighting spirit.

It is to be expected that the Territorial Troop Militia will continue to grow. There are at least one million citizens in this country who have applied for admittance and haven't been accepted because there aren't enough weapons for them. Maybe we'll have the weapons some day, but not in the immediate future.

Some may wonder how we manage to recruit so many people. To that we could answer that our big problem is not recruiting, but having to turn down so many people who want to join the militia. That's our problem. (APPLAUSE) There's a large number of citizens who are unhappy because they are not in the Territorial Troop Militia.

This is why today we are proud to see the fruits of those efforts, to see here the militia troops that, as part of our Revolutionary Armed Forces, will defend the capital of the republic against any attack. (APPLAUSE) This means that they will defend every district, every city block, every house, every stone in the capital with their own lives. And they are more familiar than anybody else with their factories, their buildings and their houses and have more reason to defend them than anybody else. (APPLAUSE)

However, on a day like today, on an anniversary like this one, it is not enough to speak of the efforts made in connection with the Territorial Troop Militia which, of course, constitutes the main factor in this celebration as representative of all the militia members in the country. We must speak, in addition to the above mentioned effort, of the enormous efforts made by the armed forces' regular troops and reserves. (APPLAUSE) In the face of the danger we mentioned, we asked the Soviet Union to advance the weapons that we were to receive during this five-year period. To tell the truth, in less than two years, our Revolutionary Armed Forces have received and assimilated the great majority of the weapons we were to receive in the five-year period. (APPLAUSE)

Now then, please note and let it serve as a warning to the imperialists, who kept count of all the ships and tried to estimate ton after ton, that having received most of the weapons that we were to receive in the five-

**Regardless of the cost, we will adopt
whatever measure necessary
to strengthen our defense . . .**

year period does not mean that we renounce our right to receive additional weapons if necessary. (APPLAUSE) If they want to go on losing sleep to figure and calculate the number of ships and tons of arms, that's their business. Anyway, I think they can at least draw the conclusion that we are speaking seriously, that we are a people seriously determined to defend ourselves and that we don't underestimate the imperialists; we're not afraid of them, no, but we don't underestimate them. We don't dismiss their threats because we know that they are capable of committing many crimes and doing all kinds of outrageous things. We know because of what they have done here and what they've done and are doing elsewhere in the world. And regardless of the cost,

we will adopt whatever measure necessary to strengthen our defense.

Our armed forces have worked hard to improve the training courses given to our regular and reserve troops. The firepower of our land forces, aviation, antiaircraft defense forces and the navy has been boosted considerably. This effort, together with the earlier effort of organizing the Militia, has required a tremendous effort, a long and untiring job on the part of the armed forces cadres and officers. No one can

Faced with imperialist threats we can't back down an inch, because it would spur them on, encourage them, make them bolder . . .

imagine how much effort, how much sweat, how much sacrifice and how much work are involved in the task of training more cadres for the regular troops, of mastering an increasingly more sophisticated technique.

But in addition to successfully carrying out that task, our armed forces have not neglected or been careless for one single moment when it comes to paying special interest, special attention to the Cuban internationalist contingents in Angola and Ethiopia, (APPLAUSE) and the various military missions that are serving in several countries of the world. This attention was not reduced one bit; on the contrary, it was increased; and because at the same time the imperialists were threatening other areas it became necessary to give utmost attention to our forces abroad. Perhaps they thought that by threatening us we would become nervous, we would recall our internationalist fighters right away; but no one got nervous here. That didn't result in a single internationalist fighter returning home; on the contrary, if the situation warranted it, we were prepared to send reinforcements.

There's a news dispatch, published yesterday, based on information provided by the CIA, which says that Cuba has reinforced its troops in Angola. I'm not saying here whether that's true or not; (LAUGHTER) but if we did it, we were simply doing our duty in the face of imperialist threats. Faced with imperialist threats we can't back down; (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) faced with the imperialist threats we can't back down an inch, because it would spur them on, encourage them, make them bolder, for they have the mentality of bullies and their aggressive nature would be encouraged. That's why it has been the philosophy of the Revolution never to back down even an inch in the face of the pressure and the aggressions of the imperialists.

Our internationalist contingents are not carrying out their mission out of sheer pleasure or for the prestige to our country, or anything like that; they are doing their duty at the request of the countries where they are serving and they are moved by no material interest of any sort. They are not like the imperialist soldiers scattered all over the world defending their monopolies, their economic interests, their exploiting interests; we are defending no economic interest, no national interest. They entrench themselves in foreign countries for the vile reasons of economic or ma-

We are aware of our weaknesses and deficiencies and we will struggle incessantly to correct them . . .

terial interest; we entrench ourselves behind our ideals and principles. Martí once said, "Trenches of ideas are worth more than trenches of stone," and we could say that principle is a thousand times worthier and more motivating than entrenching oneself behind a shameful material interest. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) Our troops will not stay anywhere one minute longer than the country needs them and the country asks for them; as soon as the country where they are doing a mission says so, our men wouldn't waste a minute to start their return home.

That's why our troops will never be a problem to any country where they are present, or threaten any other country. They have gone there to do a mission in support of certain countries. And I repeat it, they will

never stay one minute longer than the moment the country in question asks us to bring them back. We're not defending strategic positions or national interests, so this doesn't pose any problem for us, and we will always honor this principle, as well as the principle of absolute respect, the most absolute respect for the domestic policy and the foreign policy of the countries that have requested such help.

In carrying out this huge task, I repeat, we haven't neglected our international contingents for a second. Nor have the armed forces — and it is fitting to recognize this on a day like today — neglected their support for production activities. An example of this is the Army of Working Youth, (APPLAUSE) whose tenth anniversary will soon be celebrated and which constitutes the country's most productive force in cane cutting — in the past two harvests it has cut 15.2 million tons of cane, (APPLAUSE) weeded over 200,000 hectares and planted close to 54,000. Over 600 platoons have cut more than 11,500 tons each over the two-year period. It is fitting to express here our recognition and our gratitude for all this and to emphasize the contributions made to the economy of the country, not only cutting cane, which is its fundamental task, but also in other activities. We figured out yesterday that in ten years' time the Army of Working Youth will have cut the equivalent of a full harvest. (APPLAUSE)

The armed forces have not neglected political work with the troops, ideological motivation, patriotic motivation of our combatants, inasmuch as our main strength does not lie in our weapons; it lies in our morale, our patriotism and our revolutionary consciousness; it lies in the men wielding those weapons. (APPLAUSE)

Neither the country nor the armed forces have neglected giving attention to people and we know the difficulties many of our officers have in

Plans have been made to defend the country against any type of attack . . .

regard to housing. With great effort and sacrifice projects are being implemented, and will continue to be implemented, so that we can at least in a modest way, yes, with modest homes, gradually solve the housing problems of the officers and permanent cadres in our armed forces.

I don't know the extent to which our people are familiar with how our officers live, the sacrifice they make, the time they are separated from their families, the fact that there are officers who have fulfilled various internationalist missions, and the willingness of our officers to depart immediately on any task assigned to them anywhere in the world. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) And this justifies our people's effort to improve their material conditions or, to say it better, the material conditions of their relatives, who don't see them for months or even years when they are away on a mission, not just weeks, as normally happens. Hence together with our effort, given our limited resources, to meet the housing needs of manual and intellectual workers and our peasants, we must also make great efforts to meet the housing needs of our military cadres. We are sure that all the people understand this and support it. (APPLAUSE)

I have spoken about great efforts and great successes. It is fitting for us to do so on a day like this. This doesn't mean in the least that a spirit of criticism or self-criticism is missing here; it doesn't mean in the least that we have turned our back on our difficulties and our deficiencies. I think that another condition of a revolutionary is to go through life dissatisfied with what he has accomplished, always thinking that he can do better and that all human tasks can always be improved upon. That must be the consciousness of our workers, our students, our people, our armed forces. And that's how we are; we are aware of our weaknesses and deficiencies and we will struggle incessantly to correct them.

There's one minor point that has currently prompted a Party campaign. It's a piece of information that might seem unimportant and yet has a lot of importance, and that is the question of military registration and the documents pertaining to it. Our combatants know what it means and certainly so does a large part of the population, but keeping an up-to-date account of the military registration papers must be constantly stressed.

I know that the comrades in the armed forces are very much interested in stressing the importance of this task since any changes of address must be immediately reported; if a new skill is attained, it must be reported; if a militiaman becomes an engineer, if a worker becomes an engineer, if a student graduates; in short, all these changes must be reported and not only in the case of the men themselves, but in terms of private means of civilian transportation. These vehicles must be registered, along with any changes in the equipment, problems or transfers. This information has a lot of importance, keeping the military registration documents up to date, for they are indispensable for the organization, control and mobilization of the people and their means of defense.

It must be borne in mind that our concept of defense is not just in the hands of an institution; it is something in the hands of all the people. Indeed, who is not associated here with defense in one way or another? Any man who is not serving in the regular troops is serving in the reserves, or else is a member of the Territorial Troop Militia, or wishes to join the Territorial Troop Militia, or is a member of Civil Defense, or is indispensable to production. And the men who are indispensable in production are also soldiers because they can't be moved from that position in peacetime, and some of them not even in wartime; there are those who can't be moved in peacetime but will have to be moved if war breaks out; and there are some who can't be moved during war because they must guarantee services and production that are indispensable to the people.

So all the people take part one way or the other in defense and that's what makes it necessary, particularly in the case of those who have joined the regular units, the reserves, the Territorial Troop Militia, etc., to have their records kept up to date. It would be good for the mass organizations to set some quick goals for themselves — the students, the workers, the Federation of Cuban Women — to bring the documents of the military registration up to date within the shortest period of time possible. I am taking advantage of this occasion to make an appeal in this regard.

Great progress has also been made in preparing our people, the state and all the institutions for our defense. The presidents of the organs of People's Power and the Party secretaries in the various provinces have attended courses on defense; in other words, the Party, People's Power and the central state organs have been prepared. Joint plans have been made to defend the country against any type of attack, whether a total blockade, a surprise attack as the imperialists prefer, a war of attrition,

Cuba did not hesitate to give diplomatic and political support to Argentina at the outbreak of the Malvinas war, because it is a cause of the Argentine people . . .

an invasion, etc. Therefore, our country is now better prepared than ever before to defend itself. Great efforts have been made in these preparations.

As you all know, extensive work has also been done in preparing our terrain in case of war.

It wouldn't be fair on a day like today to overlook the tremendous efforts made this year for quite a long period of time by our construction workers. (APPLAUSE) Their equipment and materials, their human and technical resources were dedicated to engineering work on the battleground, moving dozens of thousands of cubic meters of earth in order to increase combat possibilities and the protection of men and armament. Thus, it is only fair that on a day like today we also pay tribute to them. (APPLAUSE)

Without a doubt, the efforts made in the preparations for defense mean vast expenditures, and millions and millions of hours are spent one way or another by our workers in preparing for defense, by the Territorial Troop Militia in six-month and one-year courses and in the courses for our reservists. A constant mobilization of workers has been necessary and this is why it is indispensable to know who we cannot do without and to see to it that this information be kept up to date. This calls

for great effort and material expenses, but we cannot hesitate in doing it. Defense is costly, but it would be much more costly to be unarmed and defenseless while facing imperialism. (APPLAUSE) Preparations for defense are made not only to fight off an attack but also to prevent such an attack, and this is demonstrated not only at war but also in times of peace; and preserving peace will always be a victory. However, peace in the face of a treacherous enemy like imperialism is preserved when the enemy knows that any attack will cost him dearly. And, to tell the truth, the imperialists can't even imagine how much an attack on our country will cost them. It will cost them dearly in many ways. (APPLAUSE) Thus, we prepare for defense not only for war but also to prevent war, to defend peace and to defend the lives of our citizens.

Thus, in the same way that we do not hesitate to dedicate everything necessary to public health, because we cannot conceive of a child or any person dying because of the lack of a doctor, a medicine or any other material thing — and this is a priority matter to us; in the same way that

Reagan is impressed by the improvement of human rights in El Salvador, a country where massacres are perpetrated every day . . .

we do not spare resources when it comes to education, resources that the Revolution has been providing since the very beginning so that every child has a school to go to, so that not a single illiterate person exists in our country — in that same way, much less can we spare efforts and sacrifices to defend our national territory, to defend our homeland, to defend our Revolution, to defend our people's creative work and lives; to defend peace itself. (APPLAUSE)

Imperialism, known for its aggressiveness the world over, is particularly aggressive in this hemisphere because it looks on Latin America as its exclusive property, as its own backyard, as it is wont to say. And in this backyard there has been and there still is a lot of poverty, a lot of hunger and a lot of injustice. And this gives rise to the struggle of the peoples, it gives rise to revolutions, especially when all other ways are cut off, when the people find no democratic channel through which to carry out their struggle, as has been happening in Central America for dozens upon dozens of years. Ah, but the imperialists don't understand that such a struggle is the result of exploitation, the consequence of a historical situation maintained by colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism; so they always look for somebody to blame for the existence of revolutions. If you think about it, that's what they did in the case of Cuba: look around to see who they could blame for the existence of our Revolution.

Everybody knows what gave rise to the Revolution in Cuba. And in one way or another the same thing is occurring in other countries. Ah, but the imperialists — above all, the present U.S. administration — consider every revolution as an action of Soviet expansionism, and if it happens in Latin America, they say it's a case of Soviet-Cuban expansionism. Every time it happens in Latin America we are sure to be on the record as the guilty party. And this makes the imperialists become threatening and aggressive.

Mr. Reagan has just finished making a tour of Latin America, or rather of some countries in Latin America. It is obvious that the purpose of the trip was twofold: first, to solve the crisis between the United States and Latin America as a result of the Malvinas war. As is generally known, at the outbreak of the Malvinas conflict, Latin America, with few exceptions, united in support of Argentina. Despite the vast ideological differences between the Argentine and the Cuban governments, Cuba did not hesitate to give diplomatic and political support to Argentina at the outbreak of the Malvinas war, because it is a cause of the Argentine people and a legitimate claim by the Argentine people. (APPLAUSE) Therefore, it was our elementary duty to support Argentina and we did so in every international forum, everywhere. And it must be said that Argentina was given wide international support, especially by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The U.S. government, acting in a demagogical fashion, first tried to

present itself in the role of mediator, only to follow by undermining the OAS, by tearing apart the famous Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, by supporting an extracontinental power in its attack against the Argentine people. A government that talks so much about extracontinental interventions, that considers every revolution that takes place in Latin America as an extracontinental intervention, when it came to a real extracontinental intervention, a European intervention, a war between a NATO member country and a Latin American country, removed its mask and openly supported Great Britain in its conflict with Argentina, a conflict which, to a certain extent, was also a conflict with Latin America.

This action had disastrous consequences for the United States' policy toward Latin America. And as a result, with its characteristic scorn to-

One of the great lies that the imperialists use concerning Central America is their attempt to impute the revolutions in this area to the Soviet Union . . .

ward the peoples and historic reality, the United States came up with a post-Malvinas plan to mend its relations with Latin America, overlooking the fact that those relations are affected not only by the Malvinas conflict but also by an infinite number of other factors. The plan was to extend a cordial invitation to the largest possible number of Latin American presidents to visit Washington, give them the royal treatment, smooth their feathers and follow up with a little visit to South America, to Brazil and Colombia. It is clear that the main purpose of the visit was to mend damaged political relations. But, at the same time, Mr. Reagan included Central America in his tour, with the evident purpose of boosting the plans to isolate Nicaragua, for destabilizing and attacking Nicaragua and for the control and domination of Central America.

Watching the results of this visit has been quite an interesting experience, because nobody has the slightest idea what Mr. Reagan thought Latin America was like. But he certainly found a lot of new things, things that no other U.S. president had ever found in Latin America, since in Brazil as well as in Colombia — we must say this in all fairness and honesty — he found statesmen who responded to his demands with authority and an air of independence. (APPLAUSE) Never before had the Yankee imperialists been faced with such straightforward language in all their tours as in Brazil and Colombia when it came to economic and political matters and the Central American situation. In Central America it was different. There, the Yankees' scorn for peoples and governments knows no limits. The Yankees went to Central America to issue orders. But in Brazil, where Mr. Reagan tried to present himself as one of the Three Wise Men, making some offers of loans, the replies he got can certainly be described as correct and dignified. There's no doubt that Brazil is already a strong country with a certain level of economic development, and therefore was capable of giving a dignified reply to Reagan's proposals. And so did Colombia. Unfortunately, the Central American countries are very weak; they're afflicted by a terrible economic crisis and are completely dependent on the United States. Costa Rica alone has a foreign debt of \$4,000 million. In other words, every baby born in Costa Rica owes \$2,000. This is why the Yankee imperialists arrived in Costa Rica issuing orders.

It was the weirdest trip in the whole world, made inside a steel urn, armored and surrounded by thousands of escorts and security guards. No contact with the people at all anywhere. The visit to Central America was of only a few hours' duration. Of course, Nicaragua was deliberately excluded from the tour. A visit to Costa Rica and Honduras, where Reagan met with various leaders. And, of course, he offered no concrete assistance, made no concrete offer. The presidents of Honduras and Costa Rica remained standing there with their hands out, because the emperor even denied them the crumbs they begged from him. It seems that he thought that his divine presence there was more than sufficient to reward those governments so little deserving of respect.

In Costa Rica, he hugged Magaña. I'm not sure if you know who Magaña is, but you must have read about him in the papers. He's a pres-

ident foisted on the people through a rigged, unilateral election in El Salvador, an election in which the revolutionary opposition, the left-wing opposition was excluded. And, in the extraordinary but habitual custom of the imperialists, Reagan said that he was really impressed by the improvement in the human rights situation in El Salvador, that there had been a remarkable improvement and that, therefore, there was justification for continuing the shipments of arms to that country. And Reagan expects to bring this up to Congress, because Congress demands an improvement in human rights in El Salvador and Reagan must certify that. And he has no qualms in attesting that he's impressed by the improvement of human rights in El Salvador, a country where massacres are perpetrated every day, where hundreds of persons are being murdered.

That is the objective reality, but imperialist philosophy allows for such logic as the following: 99 people instead of 100 are being murdered every week, which is an extraordinary improvement and justifies the continuation of the shipments of arms to El Salvador, to repress the people. This is imperialist morality, imperialist philosophy, regardless of its widespread propaganda. And Reagan had no qualms in attesting to the improvement of everything in El Salvador.

And in Honduras he embraced Ríos Montt. This man is another extraordinary figure who has appeared on the Central American scene thanks to U.S. maneuvers. Ah, another astonishing fact: after the big hug he gave Mr. Ríos Montt — who in a matter of months has been responsible for the murder of thousands of Guatemalan Indians, even wiping out entire villages — Reagan stated that he was impressed with Ríos Montt's great personal integrity and that, for that reason, U.S. military aid to Guatemala would undoubtedly soon be resumed.

That is what imperialist morality and imperialist philosophy are like. In their attempts to turn reality and history upside down, they go to such extremes as to blame the revolutionary forces for the economic difficulties in those countries. In other words, they view everything upside down and inside out. The revolutionaries exist precisely as a result of the repression and the longstanding social and economic problems of

Thousands of former Somoza guards have been brought together, organized, trained and armed in Honduras in order to assault Nicaragua . . .

those countries: poverty, misery, political tyranny, as well as centuries of exploitation by colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism. And imperialism and neocolonialism are to blame for the horrid poverty these nations are living in. Imperialism is to blame for the bloody repression in which these countries have been living for decades, for the tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of crimes that have been committed; from the intervention in Nicaragua at the time of Sandino, the successive interventions in Central America, the support for genocidal governments to the toppling of the democratic, progressive government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. These are the causes, these are the roots of the struggles of these peoples, who got tired of putting up with it all and decided to fight.

From time to time, even the imperialists themselves recognize that there are economic difficulties. But they don't have the slightest honesty in recognizing that they are the ones responsible for the underdevelopment and the economic difficulties affecting the peoples of Central America, so they look for someone to blame for those revolutions.

One of the great lies that the imperialists use concerning Central America is their attempt to impute the revolutions in this area to the Soviet Union. This has to do with the imperialist idea of presenting the Central American conflicts as part of the East-West conflict. And some people around the world are silly and ignorant enough to play along with this imperialist propaganda, saying that the conflict in Central America is part of the East-West conflict.

The fact is that the East has had nothing whatsoever to do with Central America and the problems of Central America. That is the plain historical truth. The Soviets didn't know even one of the present leaders of Nicaragua. That is, during the period of revolutionary struggle in



Salvadoran troops battle guerrillas. "There is no peace in El Salvador because the U.S. government does not want there to be peace."

Nicaragua, these leaders were unknown to the Soviets.

The same thing holds true for El Salvador. There, the Communist Party is only one of the five left-wing organizations joined together in the Farabundo Martí Front. Communist parties have contacts among themselves, but with the exception of the Communist Party of El Salvador — militant and independent but small, and not one of the major groups — the Soviet Union did not know the leaders of these revolutionary organizations and had no contact with them. The same goes for Guatemala.

In this way, the imperialists repeat daily the most ludicrous, absurd and unbelievable lie, over and over in the fashion of Goebbels. It is repeated by the idiots who play along with the imperialist game and propaganda, presenting the problem of Central America as an East-West problem and the result of a Soviet-Cuban intervention.

We Cubans live in this hemisphere. We have relations with the revolutionary movements, we know the revolutionary leaders in the area. I'm not going to deny it; we know them. But what I'm trying to explain here is the enormous lie of those who try to implicate the Soviet Union, for the same cannot be said of the Soviet Union regarding the revolutionary leaders in Central America. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) It is a malicious lie with a clear aim: to justify imperialist intervention in Central America.

Now take the example of Cuba. When we were in our revolutionary struggle, how could anyone blame the Soviet Union for our revolutionary struggle, including the Moncada attack, the *Granma* expedition and the Sierra Maestra campaign? Nobody in the Soviet Union knew about us or had contact with any of our fighters. What country in another continent could possibly tell us to attack the Moncada Garrison, or to make the *Granma* expedition? In what way could they play a part and what responsibility could they have had? There were ideological influences from Europe and from the socialist countries, that is true, but then everybody has that.

Christianity, for example, was not the religion of the native population living in this hemisphere. But after Columbus arrived they were

There is no peace between Honduras and Nicaragua because the United States doesn't want it . . .

made Christians willingly or unwillingly. On way or another they were converted to Christianity and today they are Christians. To those who talk about alien ideologies it could be said that they cannot be Christians because that ideology came from the Middle East. And the liberal bourgeois ideas in the United States and in the Constitution of that country also come from European philosophers. Of course, it had to be

Europe with its much greater material, technical and cultural development. One could say that the Constitution of the United States is based on alien ideas, exotic ideas from another continent. Such are the ludicrous arguments they use to fight Marxism-Leninism. Alien ideologies! It would be nice to know what is an alien ideology in this world we live in.

And the imperialists resort to those lies about an alleged Soviet participation. Exactly like in Cuba, exactly the same way as in Cuba, and everybody knows that the revolutionary movement has developed within other Central American countries. I repeat that the contacts between the Soviet Union and Cuba began after the Revolution came to power. Likewise, the relations between the Soviet Union and Nicaragua began after their Revolution came to power.

At the same time as they make up all these theories, the imperialists have made their plan to destabilize and attack Nicaragua. Everyone knows that they have used large sums of money to equip the Honduran army and that they carry out joint military maneuvers with Honduras near the Nicaraguan border. But everyone also knows that some months back the United States decided to destabilize and overthrow the Nicaraguan government, and that the CIA was assigned \$19 million for these plans, for which they have the help of groups of former Somocista guards who fled to Honduras after the Sandinista Revolution came to power, together with reactionary forces inside Nicaragua, although the main force utilized by the U.S. government is that of the Somocistas. Thousands of former Somoza guards have been brought together, organized, trained and armed in Honduras in order to assault Nicaragua. And while the United States has intensified the arms buildup of the Hon-

The imperialists reply to the peoples' claims for independence, freedom and justice with massacres . . .

duran army and the Somocista bands, they want the Nicaraguans — as they wanted us Cubans to do — to stay unarmed. Moreover, the Honduran government systematically denies the facts and lies more and more shamelessly to the world.

At present, those plans are well known; you would have to be brazen to deny them. When Reagan himself is asked about this question he changes the subject, he becomes very evasive when somebody asks him specifically about the CIA's plan to destabilize and attack Nicaragua, and he never gives an answer. But the press in the United States has published charges concerning the matter; this time it has not happened as it did before the invasion of Playa Girón, when some U.S. newspapers — among them the *New York Times* — knew that the aggression was going to take place and the government exerted great pressure on them not to reveal those plans. In the name of an alleged patriotism they appealed to the press not to say a word; in the name of the alleged security of the United States they appealed to the press not to say anything, because the sacrosanct interests of U.S. security were involved. And that meant a loss of prestige and much criticism for some of the press in the United States; but this time things have been different. *Newsweek* magazine has made extensive revelations on the aggression plans against Nicaragua. The *New York Times* and other U.S. news media have also revealed those plans. In other words, the U.S. government is openly and shamelessly preparing to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, saying, "Either you get down on your knees or we'll destroy you." This is virtually the language the United States is using with Nicaragua.

Since Reagan's visit the military actions against Nicaragua carried out by the counterrevolutionary groups based on the Honduran border have multiplied and now take place virtually every day.

Just less than 48 hours ago, a monstrous event happened. A helicopter carrying 75 children from an area under attack by the counterrevolutionaries crashed as a result of such actions. The counterrevolutionary bands and their aggressions against Nicaragua from Honduras are directly or indirectly responsible for the fact that the helicopter crashed and caught fire, and 75 innocent Nicaraguan children perished. This is since Reagan's visit, during a trip in which he said he was going to talk of peace and search for peace in Central America. That is what

imperialist policies are like.

There is no peace in El Salvador because the U.S. government doesn't want there to be peace in El Salvador. The revolutionaries have expressed their willingness to find political formulas and solutions and they are saying so now that they are stronger than ever. This is a great merit on their part; this is their contribution to an attempt at solving the crisis in Central America. But the U.S. administration is unwilling; they want a military victory for the reactionary, fascist, repressive forces, they want the revolutionaries to be wiped out — despite the fact that the revolutionaries are getting stronger all the time and can never be wiped out by the genocidal government of El Salvador, no matter how much military assistance the United States gives. But because of the U.S. policy, the Salvadoran government refuses to initiate any dialogue, any possibility of a political solution.

I repeat that there could be peace in El Salvador. There could also be peace between Nicaragua and Honduras, but if there is no peace between Nicaragua and Honduras, it is a consequence of the imperialist plans, their plans for destabilization and aggression. There is no peace between Honduras and Nicaragua because the United States doesn't want it. There is no peace in Namibia because the United States doesn't want it. There is no peace in Angola because the United States doesn't want it and because it supports South Africa in its efforts to destabilize Mozambique and Angola. There is no peace in the Middle East because the United States doesn't want it and supports the demands, blackmail and aggressions of the Zionist government against the Palestinian people and the other Arab peoples. The imperialists reply to the peoples' claims for independence, freedom and justice with massacres: massacres in Angola; massacres in Namibia; massacres within South Africa itself against patriots; massacres in Lesotho like the one three days ago by a South African commando; massacres in Mozambique; massacres in Lebanon, where the residents of entire neighborhoods inhabited by Palestinians, like Shatila and Sabra, were knifed to

Nobody wants war, we do not want war, no thinking person wants war . . .

death simply for being a people robbed of its land and home country, which is now scattered in many parts of the world and which stands up for the right to have a homeland of its own; massacres in El Salvador; massacres of Indians in Guatemala; and massacres of children in Nicaragua. That is the reply the imperialists give — that is their philosophy when they face the struggle of the peoples!

But together with this aggressive, fascist, bloody, repressive attitude, trying to oppose the course of history, trying to stop the advances of the peoples, is the imperialists' selfishness, evidenced in every conceivable way; a selfishness that has worsened the economic crisis that now afflicts the world, mainly the capitalist countries. The selfishness of the United States has a lot to do with that crisis, what with their monetary policy, their protectionist policy, their policy restricting trade, credits, world financing, which are leading mankind into an ever graver and more dangerous situation. Just to show to what extremes such selfishness takes them, in recent days they levied a tax of 30 to 40 percent on Peruvian textiles. Peru is a country with serious economic difficulties, a Third World country that was exporting \$80 million worth of textiles to the United States, and in a move to sharply reduce such exports they levied a tax of 30 to 40 percent on the value to keep them from entering the United States. Such is the selfish policy they follow with all countries, particularly the Third World countries, which are facing an extraordinarily serious economic situation, with a debt of roughly \$600,000 million.

This selfish policy is also being manifested at the Conference on the Law of the Sea. Nearly 120 countries have signed the Convention that was under discussion for many years; but the United States didn't sign it and urged its industrialized and developed allies not to sign it, simply because the Convention provides that all marine areas and soils outside of the 200-mile limit of economic preference of the states bordering on



the sea belongs to all of humanity. In other words, they have openly declared before the overwhelming majority of mankind that they are unwilling to sign the Convention and have implicitly admitted their intention and aim, based on their economic resources and technology, to take over the international subsoil.

That's what imperialism is all about: an aggressive policy, exploitive policy, selfish policy, shamelessness, lies, bloody responses to the peoples' struggle and economic strangulation of the underdeveloped countries. That's imperialism beyond its empty propaganda, beyond its falsehoods, beyond its lies, and these realities cannot be hidden from the world, and much less can they hide it from the Latin American peoples, and even less from our people. (APPLAUSE)

I think that these reflections on a day like today help us understand the need to be on the alert, to be well prepared in all fields: in the political field, in the ideological field and in the field of defense, in the face of these dangers and these risks.

I mentioned many countries where there was no peace on account of the imperialists. But in Europe there is also no tranquility or security on account of the imperialists, on account of their attempts to impose their military hegemony, their attempts to deploy hundreds of medium-range nuclear missiles near the border with the Soviet Union. Because of their policy of arms buildup, their policy of terror, there's no peace not just in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and the Middle East, but it can be said that there's no peace in the world; the least that can be said is that there's no tranquility, no security, that we stand at the threshold of an uncontrollable arms race and that the dangers of a world conflagration are growing; they are growing and are very real.

Nobody wants war, we do not want war, no thinking person wants war; no thinking person can believe that world problems can be solved

One thing we will never ever do is give up our principles, never ever give up our dignity, never ever give up our ideology, our independence . . .

today by means of a world conflagration. Both peace and peaceful coexistence are within the principles of Marxism-Leninism. We do not depart from such principles, which are also our principles.

The idea that this whole situation is a consequence of an alleged Soviet arms buildup is a fabulous lie. For many years the Soviet Union lived under very difficult conditions, surrounded by U.S. nuclear bases everywhere, when the United States had a virtual monopoly on atomic weapons. Yet the Soviets managed to preserve their equanimity, their serenity. As a consequence of their economic and technical development over the past 20 years, they achieved nuclear balance, the one that now prevails in the world. However, imperialism goes on devising more and more theories to justify its arms buildup, based on a supposed nucle-

ar superiority on the part of the Soviet Union.

And that is a really worrisome policy, really dangerous policy, that makes all of us wonder what can we do to achieve peace, what contribution can we make to help reduce international tensions. It is the duty of all of the socialist countries, the progressive countries and of course also of our own country, and we're willing to do our duty. But peace is also defended with decision, peace is defended with the courage needed for it.

As I said before, one can't back down one inch to imperialist blackmail, pressure, threats and aggressions, because they grow bolder

Let the imperialists bear in mind that we can't be hired, bought or intimidated . . .

if you do. We are not a world power, we are a small country and are willing to make our contribution to peace; but one thing we will never ever do is give up our principles, never ever give up our dignity, never ever give up our ideology, our independence. (APPLAUSE)

We are not to blame for the imperialist threats against our country, we are not to blame for the imperialist aggressions against our country, we are not to blame for their criminal economic blockade, we are not to blame for their incessant harassment; we will always be able to give a dignified, courageous reply in the face of such risks, such threats. We love life, but more than life we love our principles, the honor of our country, the dignity of our country, the independence of our country; we love man's sacred values more than life itself. (APPLAUSE) Without honor, without freedom, without justice, without independence, life is not worth living and this is why we've always said, we've repeated and we've proved that we're willing to die rather than give up our principles. (APPLAUSE)

We harbor the hope that the imperialists will come to their senses, get some advice, get some recommendations; we harbor the hope that world war can be prevented, for it would really mark the end of mankind; we harbor the hope that with the firm struggle of the peoples and with world public opinion mobilized we can gradually tie the hands of the imperialists and that many problems that worry us today, like the problems in Central America, the problems in South Africa, the problems in the Middle East — problems that we could call regional problems — can be solved in a just, reasonable and dignified manner. In the meanwhile we will go on struggling in our country, we will go on struggling for our economic and social development, in spite of the difficulties.

I can't understand how the imperialists are not ashamed of telling lies against Cuba. I can't understand why they don't make a comparison of the situation in many unfortunate and exploited countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with that of Cuba. Illiteracy disappeared in our country a long time ago; today there are more illiterates in the United States than in Cuba, they have a greater rate of illiteracy. It has been reduced here practically to zero and they have millions of illiterates and semi-illiterates. How can a comparison be made between the situation here and the situation in Central America? The levels of education, health, employment, of decency; the eradication of gambling, drugs, prostitution, begging. How can a comparison be made today of the security of our citizens, the dignity of our citizens, the respect shown to every human being in this country, the equality of opportunity, the legal and real equality enjoyed by our citizens, the eradication of every vestige of discrimination, the eradication of every vestige of exploitation and social injustice? Are the imperialists not ashamed of comparing what we have in Cuba and Cuba's achievements with what colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism have left in Central America? And all this we have accomplished through our struggles, through hard work, through courage, through perseverance, through determination; we have accomplished it through our efforts, our work and also through international cooperation, where our invariably close friend the Soviet Union stands in the forefront. (APPLAUSE)

In recent days when the president of Colombia hinted that Cuba might be reinstated in the Latin American system, Mr. Reagan replied he would be in agreement if Cuba broke its ties with the Soviet Union. Has the honorable president of the United States' ability to reason grown weaker? We are prepared to live in peace, in mutual respect, but we will never break our ties with the Soviet Union. (APPLAUSE) Let the imperialists clearly understand that we are not the kind of people who break their ties with their friends to become the allies of their enemies. (APPLAUSE) Let the imperialists bear in mind that we can't be hired, bought or intimidated. This country and this Revolution have followed a clean path, a straight path, a bright path, and it is along this path that we will march on regardless of the cost. This is our path and the path of the future generations of Cubans. (APPLAUSE)

For all these reasons, fellow citizens, let us dedicate ourselves to work, production and the struggle against our economic difficulties as never before, and let us dedicate ourselves as never before to defending the country in all fields: political, ideological, military. In this manner we will fulfill our beautiful slogan of

Patria o muerte!
Venceremos! (OVATION)



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Women chart revolutionary course

NWO congress caps island-wide discussions

By Baxter Smith

ST. GEORGE'S — "This is our revolution. We know what we want and we know where we are going," Patsy Romain declared in the opening speech of the December 6-7 congress of Grenada's National Women's Organization (NWO).

For two days, more than 300 delegates gathered here from throughout this eastern Caribbean island. They discussed the advances that women have made in Grenada since the beginning of the revolution that toppled dictator Eric Gairy in 1979, the problems that they continue to face, and their role in the further advance of the Grenada revolution.

Reflecting the crucial role of workers in this revolutionary process, more than two-thirds of the delegates to the congress were working women.

The NWO congress also reflected the internationalism of the Grenada revolution, and the interest that it is arousing among working people in other countries.

Overseas guests came from Cuba, the Soviet Union, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Jamaica, Guyana, the United States, and a dozen or so other countries. The Soviet guest, in her address to the congress, spoke about the social and economic conquests for women made possible by the 1917 Russian revolution.

Messages of solidarity were sent to the congress from the Union of Vietnamese Women, the African National Congress, the South-West Africa People's Organisation, the Seychelles Women's Association, and other groups.

NWO in every village

Beginning as a group of 60 women in December 1977, the NWO today has some 6,500 members, or 27 percent of all Grenadian women above the age of 14. There is an NWO group in every village.

The NWO has been a driving force behind the revolution here and women have received many of the benefits of the revolution. Women hold ministerial and deputy ministerial positions and other high government posts. There are women leaders of the trade unions and of the National Youth Organization. There is a Ministry for Women's Affairs, the only one in the English-speaking Caribbean. One-quarter of the People's Militia is comprised of women.

Women map goals

The congress delegates unanimously adopted a three-year work plan to help advance the fight against unemployment in Grenada and to further the education of women.

This capped several months of intensive preparation. Women in every parish and in the sister isles of Carriacou and Petit Martinique studied and discussed the draft work plan in workshops, presentations, women's parish council meetings, and other forums. According to the NWO newsletter *Scotilda*, more than 2,000 women attended women's parish council meetings where the plan was discussed. Many of the suggestions offered at these meetings are incorporated into the final plan.

In reviewing the highlights of the work plan, NWO President Phyllis Coard told the congress that in the "new socialist society that we are aiming to build," women will be "marching together with all sections of the working people of our country."

The NWO president pointed to the oppression of women from slave through capitalist societies. She said that following the March 13, 1979, revolution, "many women's groups formed spontaneously out of women's desire to be organized." In May 1980, after the NWO opened its ranks to all women, it grew rapidly.

Women, Coard declared, have gotten "many material and physical benefits, yet the greatest benefit has been the equality of opportunity that the revolution has offered us."

Nontraditional jobs

A major goal of the NWO over the next three years will be preparing women for the thousands of jobs expected to come on stream in agriculture and construction, fields in which women have not traditionally been employed. The NWO hopes to help women learn the necessary practical and technical skills to become drivers, mechanics, carpenters, masons, and farmers.

According to the latest unemployment figures, one woman in every five who wants to work is jobless. This equals a 17 percent jobless rate for women. Unemployment overall is 14 percent, far less than when the revolution began in 1979, but still a major problem.

Because the revolutionary government is viewing agriculture and construction as prime avenues to develop the economy, Coard told the congress that "if women do not enter these fields we will find a situation where jobs will become available, yet women will still be out of work." Moreover, if women do not take these jobs, it will hamper the economy, because the jobless figures show there are not enough unemployed men to fill them.

"We want to seek to alter women's attitudes about what is women's work," the NWO president said. To help with this, she urged that agriculture and construction training become

compulsory in schools for boys and girls.

Much of this false conception about what is women's work is bound up with the ideological and class underpinnings of women's oppression.

During her speech, Coard got the loudest applause when she touched on matters that cut to the heart of women's oppression in the family.

Large-scale sexploitation of women here is a thing of the past. Unlike before the revolution, no longer do women have to degrade themselves by offering sexual favors when seeking or keeping employment. But there is still abuse of women in the family. And this abuse, Coard said, "must be stamped out." She encouraged efforts to educate police officers about the seriousness of women's complaints against assaults in the home.

Coard also spoke about "false conceptions of morality" whereby social pressures prevent some pregnant teenagers from continuing their education.

Congress participants cheered when Coard announced that the Ministry of Legal Affairs had agreed to meet with the NWO to draw up new legislation that would make children born out of wedlock "legitimate." Under such legislation no child would ever have to suffer the social and financial stigma of being "illegitimate."

'Tremendous exercise in democracy'

Coard also spoke about the problems of child support when fathers skip out on the need to support their offspring. She said that this problem and others involving family matters might be better handled through the creation of family courts, where members of the mass organizations could play a major role.

Coard said adoption of these types of measures would create in Grenada a "new type of human being with an all-rounded human personality."

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop also addressed the congress. He saluted the "tremendous exercise in democracy" that was seen in preparation for the congress. He also paid tribute to the role of women in the struggle to topple the former dictatorship.

Bishop rebutted the slanders leveled at the November meeting of Caricom, where Grenada was smeared for alleged human rights violations. The prime minister spoke about the expansion of human rights for women that has gone on since the revolution.

Bishop explained to the congress that adoption of the maternity leave law, equal-pay-for-equal-work law, trade union laws, and others have expanded the human rights of women. □