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Reagan Plans More Troops, More Aid for Salvadoran Dictatorship



U.S. military personnel line up in front of Salvadoran troops.

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Reagan plans more aid, more troops for Salvadoran regime

By Steve Wattenmaker

The Reagan administration has announced plans to escalate U.S. military involvement in El Salvador. These moves come amid growing disarray among that country's government officials and officer corps in the face of rebel military victories, renewed struggles by urban workers, and popular support for an opposition call for immediate negotiations.

The White House has promised the Salvadoran regime an additional \$60 million to supplement the \$26 million already authorized for 1983. It is also asking Congress to appropriate \$86.3 million for 1984.

Speaking in San Francisco March 4, President Reagan said that Washington "may want to go beyond" the current limit of 55 U.S. military personnel in El Salvador. He piously pledged that restrictions preventing — on paper — U.S. GIs from participating directly in combat operations would remain untouched. Actually, the so-called advisers have already been photographed in combat, and at least one has been wounded in action. Washington is now laying the basis to brush aside even the formal restrictions.

Earlier in the week, White House officials explained that Reagan believes the Salvadoran civil war is approaching a critical stage, and that he is prepared to take "all necessary measures" to prevent a victory by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR).

New Vietnam

In his San Francisco speech, Reagan sought to con the American people by claiming, "I can give you assurances that there is no parallel whatsoever with Vietnam."

Few U.S. working people will find this very assuring, however. As *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis put it, "Vietnam is in the air, and everybody knows it."

Commenting on Reagan's pledge to keep U.S. troops away from combat, Lewis added that the American people "have not forgotten how we were slipped into the Vietnam War."

Reagan attempted to explain these latest moves just like every escalation of the Vietnam War was justified — by sending up an SOS about alleged outside communist subversion. He told the San Francisco audience that the Salvadoran rebels are armed and trained "by countries such as Cuba, and others of the Iron Curtain countries."

"If they get a foothold," he warned, "with Nicaragua already there, and El Salvador should fall as a result of this armed violence on the part of the guerrillas, I think Costa Rica,

Honduras, Panama, all of these would follow."

Sounding a similar alarm a few days earlier, Democratic Sen. Henry Jackson, a backer of administration policy in El Salvador, asserted that it's "the region we have to be concerned about. . . . The real danger is the destabilization of Mexico."

"There are severe problems in Mexico that could be utilized in an effort to destabilize it. Serious unemployment. Unrest. Corruption. The financial problems. It's all there."

And Secretary of State George Shultz told a Senate committee February 28 that the issue of El Salvador is "connected right up to Mexico, with which we have a long border."

Shultz continued that "the emergence of another country, added to Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, and perhaps others, to Soviet and Cuban influence is bad news for this country."

Reagan was even a bit frank in explaining what the "bad news" is. He estimated in San Francisco that "50 percent of everything we import comes through the Caribbean, the Panama Canal."

What Washington wants to protect in Central America and the Caribbean is not democracy, but the profits of U.S. capitalists. To do that, it supports ruthless military dictators that seek to stamp out every trace of democracy.

What Washington is combating is not outside subversion, but the struggle by workers and peasants to free themselves from these U.S.-backed dictatorships and from grinding poverty, both of which are part and parcel of imperialism's profiteering in these countries.

What Washington fears is the example already set by the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and Grenadian people in throwing off imperialist domination and establishing governments that advance the interests of workers and farmers.

The only outside subversion comes from Washington and its reactionary cronies.

All these statements by U.S. officials are a reminder that Washington's intervention in El Salvador, combined with its involvement in the counterrevolutionary war against Nicaragua along the Honduran border, threaten a wider war that could engulf the entire Central American and Caribbean region.

Rebel gains

The mood of crisis in Washington deepens with each new show of strength and popular support by the FMLN and FDR.

The rebels took the offensive at the beginning of 1983, overrunning army garrisons in Morazán, Chalatenango, San Miguel, and Usulután provinces. For several days beginning January 31, FMLN troops held Berlín, a city of 35,000. Antigovernment rallies were

held there and in other liberated towns, and new fighters were won to the rebel forces.

In mid-February the FMLN laid siege for 13 days to Suchitoto, a town of 6,000 only 27 miles northeast of the capital, San Salvador. On February 23 FMLN forces captured Tejutla, 12 miles north of Suchitoto, marking the third time in a month that the rebels had taken or surrounded a town of more than 10,000 people.

Protests against the regime are also on the upswing in the cities. Strikes by public and private employees have reemerged in late 1982 and early 1983. And on March 1 more than 5,000 farm workers camped in front of the Constituent Assembly in San Salvador, demanding that the limited land redistribution law be extended. With 400 chanting farm workers in the gallery, the assembly voted two days later to extend the law for 10 months.

'Dialogue without conditions'

Another powerful weapon in increasing the regime's isolation, both at home and abroad, is the standing offer of the FMLN and FDR to begin negotiations with the government with no prior conditions. FDR leader Guillermo Ungo and FMLN Commander Ana Guadalupe Martínez reaffirmed this proposal at a February 28 news conference in Mexico City, where they also announced a one-day ceasefire during the pope's visit to El Salvador.

This negotiations proposal has been flatly rejected by the regime and its backers, although it has growing popular support inside El Salvador.

The Committee of Trade Union Unity (CUS), a grouping of unions representing half a million Salvadoran workers, has declared itself in favor of the FMLN-FDR proposal.

Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas has urged the government to open talks. Even the Christian Democratic Youth, affiliated to the former governing party, has declared in favor of a dialogue, as have sections of the junior officer corps.

Internationally, the governments of France, Mexico, Venezuela, Panama, Cuba, Nicaragua, and other countries have come out in favor of the FMLN-FDR proposal. The Nonaligned Movement, and the recent congress of the Socialist International, have also declared themselves in favor of talks.

The U.S. government, however, has repeatedly rejected any negotiations proposal. Shultz stood pat on this question in his February 28 testimony before a Senate committee. He went so far as to label Catholic clergy who support talks as "churchmen who want to see Soviet influence in El Salvador improved!"

Turning its back on the negotiations proposal is more than just imperial arrogance by Washington that denies the Salvadoran people the right to determine their own affairs. It also reveals the U.S. government's fears that giving an inch on the question of dialogue will further demoralize and fracture the Salvadoran regime.

Concern over the deteriorating situation in

El Salvador has also mounted among U.S. capitalist politicians who have previously expressed tactical differences with the Reagan administration's policy. Democratic Rep. Clarence Long, returning from a visit to El Salvador recently, described the military situation as "depressing." He said he now has an "open mind" about supporting some aspects of the Reagan proposals.

Other capitalist politicians have continued to express tactical reservations about whether White House policy best serves U.S. interests in the region — reservations that have also been voiced on the editorial pages of U.S. newspapers.

On March 3 Republican Senators Mark Hatfield and James Leach introduced a bill that would cut off military aid to El Salvador and withdraw U.S. personnel unless the Salvadoran regime participates in "good faith" negotiations "with all major parties to the conflict which are willing to participate unconditionally . . . for the purpose of achieving a cease-fire and an equitable political solution."

Earlier in February, 81 members of the House of Representatives introduced a bill to declare White House certification of human rights progress in El Salvador "null and void" and to suspend military aid to the regime. The Reagan administration's proof of such progress in human rights is that "only" 5,000 Salvadorans were butchered by government forces and rightists last year.

Divisions in Congress over administration policy reflect pressure from growing opposition in the U.S. population, especially among working people. This antiwar sentiment has also begun to make an impact at the highest levels of the trade-union officialdom. In January top officials of the AFL-CIO voted to oppose the human rights certification of El Salvador.

Three top officials of AFL-CIO unions — Douglas Fraser of the United Auto Workers, William Winpisinger of the Machinists, and Jack Sheinkman of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers — wrote to Congress calling for negotiations and for "the termination of all military aid to El Salvador."

New election hoax

While rejecting negotiations and escalating U.S. military involvement, the Reagan administration cooked up a scheme in hopes of countering mounting criticism of its backing to the bloody Salvadoran regime. It brought pressure on the Salvadoran government to move up the timetable for elections there from March 1984 to later this year.

According to the *New York Times*, White House officials admitted privately that this was a maneuver to "dramatize" the regime's "commitment to democratic rule and national conciliation."

The original plan was to keep the U.S. role a secret, so that the proposal would appear to be a Salvadoran initiative, hopefully timed to coincide with the pope's visit there. White House envoy Richard Stone let the cat out of the bag en route to San Salvador, however.

Despite the resulting embarrassment both for Washington and the Salvadoran rulers, provisional President Alvaro Magaña took the occasion of the pope's arrival at the San Salvador airport March 6 to announce that the elections would be moved up.

President Reagan immediately hailed this decision.

The elections will be for municipal officials and president. The Constituent Assembly, headed by ultraright death-squad leader Roberto D'Abuisson, will remain unchanged.

This is not the first time Washington has promoted elections as a public relations ploy to polish up the image of the Salvadoran dictatorship. Rigged elections in March 1982 were trumpeted as proof positive that democracy was at work in El Salvador. In fact, opposition candidates were effectively barred from participation by government insistence that the FMLN lay down its arms as a precondition. Moreover, Salvadoran army bayonets

"guaranteed" a large voter turnout, which was subsequently shown to have been vastly exaggerated by U.S. and Salvadoran government officials.

Massacre in Las Hojas

A more truthful picture of the Salvadoran regime's "commitment to democratic rule and national conciliation" emerged February 27 with news of a massacre of 18 farm workers in Sonsonate Province. The victims, bound and shot in the head, were found by relatives in underbrush along a river outside the village of Las Hojas.

The apparent cause of the massacre? The army's eagerness to oblige a local landowner who wanted to destroy a farming cooperative so that he could take over its 200 acres for his own use.

The army commander in Sonsonate admitted his troops had carried out the killings. But the victims, he said, were "subversives." □

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CIA plot exposed

Armed attacks on Cuba also weighed

By Harry Ring

It has been publicly exposed that the Reagan administration had plans under way in 1981 to overthrow the government of Grenada. A key role in the plan was assigned to the CIA.

A Caribbean island with a Black, English-speaking population of 110,000, Grenada was the scene of a victorious popular revolution in 1979. The dictatorship of Eric Gairy was ended and a government established representing the interests of Grenada's workers and farmers.

Since the revolution, unemployment has been reduced from a staggering 49 percent to 14.2 percent. Housing has been improved, and the island's economy significantly developed.

Despite heavy economic pressure coupled with political and military threats, the Grenadian government, headed by Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, has refused to remain under the U.S. thumb. It has pursued its own independent course and has not hesitated to accept the friendship and aid of Cuba.

It is for these "crimes" that Washington wants to bring down the Bishop government and force Grenada to return to the U.S. "backyard."

'Destabilization' plan

The *Washington Post* reported February 27 on the plans to "destabilize" the Grenadian government.

The paper reported, "The details of the operation are not known beyond a general description from knowledgeable sources that the CIA developed plans in the summer of 1981 to cause economic difficulty for Grenada in hopes of undermining the political control of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop."

For reasons of its own, the Senate Intelligence Committee opposed the CIA plan.

"Sources said the aborted 1981 CIA covert plan in Grenada included actions to destabilize Bishop's government politically. . . .

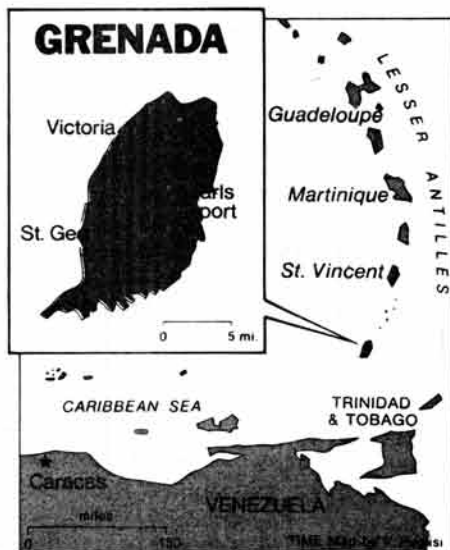
"CIA officials presented the covert action plan to the Senate Intelligence Committee in July 1981. Because of what were perceived as unusual and unspecified components, it met strong opposition."

The committee members apparently decided that trying to topple the revolutionary government in Nicaragua was a higher priority.

"Six months after the Senate Intelligence Committee nixed the CIA's Grenada plan," the *Post* reported, "the members supported a covert campaign against the Cuba-Nicaragua arms supply line to the Salvadoran insurgents."

That covert plan against Nicaragua is now in full swing. Stopping an alleged flow of arms to

El Salvador is simply a cover story. CIA-organized Nicaraguan exiles are conducting murderous raids into Nicaragua across the border from neighboring Honduras.



Threats against Cuba

At the same time there have been ominous threats to Cuba. In the fall of 1981, Fidel Castro warned of the danger of U.S. aggression, and the people of Cuba were organized into a mighty, popular militia.

Now the *Washington Post* confirms that in November 1981 the National Security Council (NSC) authorized possible military action against Cuba. The paper quotes NSC minutes as stating that the CIA, possibly using U.S. personnel, might take "unilateral paramilitary action against special Cuban targets."

Meanwhile, the drive against Grenada continued.

In 1981, while the CIA was busy plotting overthrow, a bullying military threat was directed against the tiny island.

That fall, U.S. military forces conducted a full-scale mock invasion of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, under the code name "Amber." Amber was code for Grenada.

Additionally, strong economic pressure has been put on the island. At least twice Washington has used its clout to block international financial agencies from making much needed loans to Grenada.

Last summer during his vacation in Barbados, Grenada's island neighbor, Reagan launched into a vitriolic attack against Grenada.

"El Salvador isn't the only country that's being threatened with Marxism," Reagan de-

clared. Grenada, he asserted, "bears the Soviet and Cuban trademark, which means it will attempt to spread the virus among its neighbors."

Nor is it only the Reagan administration that is out to do in the Grenadian government. As the *Post* now confirms, covert operations against Grenada were first discussed by the Carter administration.

Even the superliars in charge of U.S. propaganda against people reshaping their own destinies find it difficult to paint up a 130-square-mile island as a military threat to the United States. So the ploy is that Cuba and the Soviet Union are preparing to use Grenada as a military base that will allegedly threaten this country.

The pretext for this scare charge is that Cuba is helping Grenada build a modern airport that can handle large, wide-body planes.

Tourism has always been an important part of Grenada's economy and its present tiny airport cannot accommodate direct flights from abroad. Tourists headed for Grenada must go to Barbados and wait there for small planes to shuttle them to Grenada. Because of this problem, an estimated 20 percent of Grenada-bound tourists don't get there.

With Cuban financial and technical aid, Grenada plans to have the new airport ready by March 13, 1984, when it celebrates the fifth anniversary of its revolution.

Human rights

Washington asserts that its hostility toward Grenada also stems from Grenada's alleged lack of concern for human rights.

Coming from a government that got along so nicely with the brutal Gairy dictatorship, that takes brass.

In fact, the revolution is bringing the people of Grenada a greater degree of freedom and democracy than they have ever experienced.

Unionization has been encouraged, and the unions have an increasing voice on work-related issues.

Newly established women's organizations are changing the status of Grenadian women, who were long and bitterly oppressed.

Through communitywide meetings the people are being involved in the country's decision-making process.

Prime Minister Bishop recently commented that Washington's professed concern about human rights in Grenada is "highly hypocritical."

"It's no problem," Bishop observed, "when it's South Africa or Chile or South Korea or Haiti. . . .

"It's very clear to us that human rights is just really being used as a red herring to try to hide the reasons for hostility to Grenada."

That hostility, Bishop said, "has much more to do with the fact that we are very determined to pursue an independent and nonaligned path and to build our own process in this part of the world: a part of the world that U.S. administrations keep regarding as their own backyard, which we do not accept." □

Papal visit widens class polarization

Pope is silent on U.S.-backed attacks, slams Sandinista policies

By Michael Baumann
and Jane Harris

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — "Pope! Pope! Pope!"

This chant, intended to convey support for everything the pope said, was begun by priests and nuns near the pope's altar.

Picked up by strategically placed groups throughout the crowd, it initially dominated response to the pope's outdoor mass here.

Then other voices were heard, at first faintly, then by the hundreds of thousands, so loud the mass had to be halted several times.

"We want a church on the side of the poor!"

"Between Christianity and revolution there is no contradiction!"

"People's power!"

"We want peace!"

Class polarization

Pope John Paul's visit to Nicaragua March 4 dramatically illustrated the polarization of class forces in this country.

The size of the turnout for the pope's mass here, the centerpiece of the visit, was impossible to determine with accuracy. It appeared to be well over half a million, making it among the largest mobilizations in the history of the country.

Opponents of the revolution had come to show their support for the pope's attacks on the revolution.

Defenders of Nicaragua's freedom to choose its own destiny had come to ask the pope to use his moral authority to help stop the murderous attacks on Nicaragua's borders that are daily claiming the lives of their sons and daughters.

Between these two sharply defined poles, there were hundreds of thousands of others who came simply because they are Catholics. For them it was a day of political education. Laid before their eyes was an open confrontation between the church hierarchy and the revolution they themselves had helped to make.

The Catholic church in Nicaragua, like many other institutions that predate the revolution, is divided between those who are for and those who oppose the revolution.

The church hierarchy retains strong ties to the wealthy families who still control much of the country's economy. The hierarchy, like almost everybody else, was happy to be rid of Somoza. But not at the price of seeing their wealthy backers yield political power to the country's majority of peasants and workers. Nor at the price of yielding increasing amounts of their own former authority in education and civil affairs.

As a group, the bishops of Nicaragua are al-

lies of imperialism and sworn opponents of the revolution.

There is also something known here as the "people's church." These are the church units of the poor urban *barrios*, border villages, and the countryside that actively participated in the struggle to overthrow Somoza and that continue to support and participate in the effort to build a revolutionary new society. Leaders of the "people's church" are routinely described by the counterrevolution as "communists."

The great bulk of Nicaragua's Catholic population is just beginning to come to grips with the contradiction between the revolution they are part of and the church officialdom they are used to respecting. In their majority, however, they did not hesitate to tell the pope in no uncertain terms that they expected him to help in ending the war.

The pope's visit to this overwhelmingly Catholic country was preceded by months of collaboration between the Vatican and the local hierarchy.

In early December, three months before the pope's scheduled tour of Central America, Vatican sources leaked to the *New York Times* a supposed ultimatum: the pope would skip Nicaragua unless all five priests who hold major governmental posts stepped down. When both the priests and the Sandinista government refused to buckle, the ultimatum was quietly dropped.

In mid-February, less than three weeks before the visit, several international news agencies reported that a special delegation of Nicaraguan church officials, visiting the Vatican to discuss last-minute preparations, was still urging cancellation of the visit.

Sabotage fails

When it became clear that the visit could not be cancelled without doing more damage to the Vatican than to the Nicaraguan revolution, efforts turned to making the visit a show of support for the hierarchy and against the Sandinistas.

In the weeks leading up to March 4, two distinct political perspectives were laid out.

The reactionary daily *La Prensa*, main voice of the capitalist opposition, laid out a line that the pope's visit was strictly a religious affair, having nothing to do with "politics."

The Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) daily *Barricada* and the prorevolution daily *El Nuevo Diario* laid out a different perspective. They said that the Nicaraguan people should call on the pope to use his moral authority in the world to press for an end to counterrevolutionary attacks, which have taken a terrible toll in human lives.

These clashing perspectives were vocalized the day of the visit in the two slogans: "Pope! Pope! Pope!" and "We want peace!"

Ortega's speech

In welcoming the pope at the airport, FSLN Commander Daniel Ortega, head of Nicaragua's Government of National Reconstruction, gave a brief speech detailing U.S. aggression against Nicaragua, and the peoples of the entire region.

"Welcome to Nicaragua," Ortega said. "You are being received by a heroic people, martyred yet jubilant, which after long years of suffering and war that meant the deaths of 50,000 brothers has undertaken deep social and moral changes.

"You come to our country at a time when we are just starting to rebuild the nation that was pillaged and vilified by exploiters who had only limitless selfishness and ambition in their hearts.

"You come to a country that is blessed by the blood and sweat of the poor and humble and those who before were humiliated by the powerful but today are free of their chains, who are again confronting aggressive action from the same North American policy as that of 1921, when our country was occupied by U.S. intervention troops."

Ortega went on to explain that "62 years later that same U.S. policy still doesn't let our people heal the wounds that they caused." He called attention to the funeral of 17 high school students the day before, who had been killed by counterrevolutionaries earlier in the week.

"You are visiting a Central America shaken by hunger and thirst for justice," Ortega told the pope. "El Salvador is the country that is fighting hardest for better ways of life and, today as yesterday, it's the United States that is interfering more and more in defense of an unjust and lost cause."

Among those greeting the pope at the airport was Rev. Ernesto Cardenal, the minister of culture and one of the five priests that the Vatican had demanded give up their posts. As Cardenal dropped to his knees, it was clear that the pope was animatedly telling Cardenal something, though the press couldn't get close enough to hear.

[According to the *New York Times*, when Cardenal started to kiss the pope's ring, the pope withdrew his hand, shook his finger angrily at Cardenal, and — a Vatican official said — told the priest, "You must straighten out your position with the church." — *IP*]

To ensure that everyone who wanted to hear the pope had a chance to do so, a special committee made up of representatives of the gov-

ernment, FSLN, the local church hierarchy, and the Vatican was set up to make preparations.

With the exception of units patrolling the border, virtually the entire society ceased normal functioning March 4. Practically every unit of collective transportation on the Pacific Coast was pressed into service — buses, trucks, even farm tractors pulling cotton and sugar trailers.

Despite the shortage of gasoline, the government provided every single vehicle with fuel free of charge. No matter how far from Managua they lived, no one who wanted to attend the pope's mass had to pay a cent for the trip to Managua and back.

The effort clearly cost millions of dollars and probably several months' supply of gasoline.

These facts were well known to the Vatican. Nonetheless, the pope insisted on sending a special message "to the thousands and thousands of Nicaraguans who have not been able, as they wished, to go to the meeting places." Since everyone in Nicaragua knew the truth, the pope's implication was clearly intended for the international press, to convey the false impression that the government had sought to limit the turnout.

Scene in plaza

When the pope arrived in Managua's July 19 Plaza, hundreds of thousands awaited him, many of whom had slept there overnight. In the background stood an enormous billboard made by 600 Catholics. It said: "Welcome John Paul II, thanks to God and the Revolution."

Hundreds of Vatican, Nicaraguan, and FSLN flags were raised, as well as thousands of placards, both hand-lettered and printed, urging the pope to use his power to help bring peace to Central America.

In anticipation of the pope's upcoming visit to El Salvador, thousands carried placards bearing a photograph of martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, whose murder was organized by members of the present government there. The placard read: "Monsignor Romero, in Nicaragua we venerate your memory."

Dozens of doves were set in flight around the plaza.

The ceremony began with opening remarks by the Archbishop of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo. As soon as he began speaking, organized chants of "Obando! Obando! Obando!" began to be heard from a group of clergy seated at the side of the main altar.

Obando y Bravo, the highest church official in Managua, is also one of the most outspoken opponents of the revolution. To organize a cheer for him is equivalent to booing the revolution.

In response, some in the crowd began to chant, "Between Christianity and revolution, there is no contradiction!" and "We want peace!"

When the pope began his sermon, the same

group of clergy began chanting again, this time "Pope! Pope! Pope!"

Again the cry of "We want peace!" was heard from the crowd.

By that time it was 5 p.m. In the scorching summer heat, tensions began to mount as the pope got on with the text of his sermon, ironically entitled "Unity in the Church."

Earlier in the day, in León, he had launched an attack on the government's role in education, and against the rebellious sections of the church. [See speech by FSLN Commander Tomás Borge on page 145, which traces the Sandinista government's view of education.]

Here in Managua he spoke of the past natural disasters that had befallen Nicaragua (earthquakes, floods, and drought), but made no mention whatsoever of the present disaster — U.S.-engineered aggression against the country.

He spoke of what the bible had to say about the "sad inheritance of divisions between men, provoked by the sin of arrogance, . . ." which he blamed for producing "wars, oppression, persecution of men by one another, hatred, and conflicts of all types."

Patience dwindles

As the sermon continued large sections of the crowd, all too familiar with the real and present causes of war and social injustice, began to lose patience.

Only the day before, thousands of them had gathered in the same plaza to pay homage to the 17 slain Sandinista youth that Ortega had called to the pope's attention earlier in the day.

They had expected the pope to bring some message of solidarity and sympathy. And when none came, they made their feelings known to the pope, chanting "We want peace!" This was especially true of two groups near the front of the crowd — the Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs of the Revolution, and the Disabled Veterans of the Revolutionary War.

By contrast, the chanting led from the altar was clearly organized from the start. It was picked up by groups well-distributed among the crowd, several of which had already shown their political character by hooting and jeering as the FSLN National Directorate walked onto the stage.



Vatican radio blasted speech by Daniel Ortega (at microphone) at Managua airport reception for pope.

Intercontinental Press reporters, having obtained the written text of the pope's sermon ahead of time, noticed that after underlined sentences, the clergy would begin to chant in unison.

As the pope sought to continue his sermon, at times drowned out for five minutes or more, the momentum clearly shifted toward those chanting for peace.

Pope forced to respond

In fact, the chant "We want peace!" resounded so loudly that the pope was finally forced to respond. "The church is the first to want peace," he shouted back in annoyance, and then returned to his text.

At the close of his sermon, he again departed from his prepared remarks, this time to speak in Miskito, the language of Nicaragua's largest Indian population. No translation was provided, and as the Miskito language is not widely known on Nicaragua's Pacific Coast, few people knew what the pope had said.

Since false accusations of mistreatment of the Miskitos has been a favorite theme of imperialist propaganda, however, thousands in the crowd took no chances. They began to chant "People's power!" to show their support for the revolution.

[According to the *New York Times*, the pope's remarks in Miskito were, "I love the Miskitos because they are human beings. Miskito power!" — *IP*]

Setback for counterrevolution

As can be imagined, in a crowd of such size and under such conditions, there was a lot of confusion.

This was reflected in the fact that some people remained silent during the chanting. Others chanted "Pope! Pope! Pope! We want peace!" — mixture of the two counterposed slogans. Still others had difficulty hearing what the pope was saying, or didn't realize he was attacking the revolution and those in the church who support it.

It is clear, however, that the counterrevolution failed to turn the pope's visit into a blow against the revolution. The fact that this was by far the largest open mobilization by opponents of the government since the overthrow of

Somoza certainly put some wind in their sails.

But they paid a much bigger political price. The majority of those who mobilized for the pope's visit repudiated the views of the capitalist opposition and Catholic hierarchy. The overwhelming sentiment in the crowd was for a firm statement by the pope condemning the counterrevolutionary attacks on Nicaragua.

The day after the pope's visit, a front-page article in *Barricada* reported interviews with the Mothers of the Heroes and Martyrs of the Revolution. They expressed deep disappointment that the pope had not said a word condemning the war against Nicaragua, and had offered no prayer for their dead sons and daughters. The same was true of interviews with people who had relatives killed by the counterrevolutionaries along the Honduran border.

In the two days following the visit, *Intercontinental Press* spoke to more than two dozen people at random in the street, at a market, at a bus stop, at a baseball game, and at a Sunday church service, asking their impression of the pope's visit.

A range of views was expressed, running from a middle-aged tailor who denounced the pope as an "imperialist," to an elderly woman who was disturbed because she had been told

that the Sandinistas had kidnapped Archbishop Obando y Bravo four times.

Many, perhaps half or more of those questioned, expressed disappointment that the pope hadn't gone further than calling for peace, that he hadn't urged the real aggressor — the U.S. government — to halt the war.

Large sections of Nicaragua's Catholic population will never again have the same respect for either the Vatican or its local representatives.

A few — like the tailor, a Sandinista Defense Committee activist, a street vendor, and a laborer — were openly critical of the role the pope had played.

Many others, however, still seemed to be thinking things over, pondering the lessons of the day. An example of the exchange of views that is taking place throughout the country occurred at the Sandinista Youth Center.

A young man, Alfonso, began by saying, "It was beautiful. The pope spoke of unity — how everyone should unite."

"Do you really think this is possible in Nicaragua?" *Intercontinental Press* asked.

"Of course not!" an old timer, Salvador Gutierrez, interrupted. "How can we unite? We don't even have the clothes to walk into their churches!" □

against the people.

The pope, however, did feel pressure to call for "an authentic dialogue" involving all sides in El Salvador. He also made a visit to Romero's tomb.

The next day, the U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, Deane Hinton, rushed to warn people not to misinterpret the pope. He was not endorsing the call by rebel forces for a dialogue, Hinton said. "The pope did not say what kind of dialogue he was talking about."

Calling the papal visit "marvelous," Hinton praised the "fantastic faith and flexibility" of the pope, "in marked contrast" to the FMLN's announcement that it would step up armed actions following the visit.

In both Costa Rica and Panama, the pope launched ideological tirades against the struggle for liberation and social justice being waged by the people of Latin America and the Caribbean.

He began his weeklong tour in Costa Rica on March 2 by warning that the solution to the people's misery must be found "without resort to violence or to collectivist systems that can prove no less oppressive to the dignity of man than pure economic capitalism."

In Panama, the pope urged Central America's peasants to reject "the temptation of violence, armed guerrilla struggle and the egoistic struggle of classes."

"This," he said, "is not the path of Jesus Christ, the Church, or your Christian faith."

Putting the onus for violence and social injustice on the oppressed and exploited in the region, the pope warned, "there are those who wish you to abandon your work and take up the arms of hate to struggle against your brothers. You should not follow them. Where does this path of violence lead? Without a doubt, it increases hatred and the distance between social groups.

"These methods, completely contrary to the love of God and the teachings of your Church and of Jesus Christ, mock the reality of your noble aspirations and provoke new evils of social and moral decay."

Earlier in the day the pope had made his usual condemnations of divorce, contraception, and abortion — in a word, of women's rights.

In Guatemala, the bloody dictatorship of Gen. Ríos Montt executed six men on charges of subversion just days before the pope was due to arrive. The Vatican had issued an appeal for clemency for the six. Ríos Montt, notorious for his butchery of thousands of Indians, is a "born-again" Protestant. The military has persecuted Catholic clergy who work with the impoverished Indians.

While in Guatemala, the pope indirectly criticized the executions, the repression of the Indian population, and attacks on the Catholic church.

The rebel forces in Guatemala, organized into the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG), called for a one-week truce in the war between the government and the guerrillas. □

Pope bolsters reaction

By Margaret Jayko

The imperialist press has utilized Pope John Paul II's anticommunist pronouncements and condemnations of class struggle during his tour of Central America and the Caribbean to bolster reactionary forces in the region.

The pope's message — calling for peace in the abstract while remaining silent on the U.S.-instigated counterrevolutionary wars in the region — has been played up by opponents of the rebel forces in El Salvador and Guatemala and of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, the pope openly sided with the counterrevolutionary Catholic church hierarchy against the masses of workers and peasants who support the revolution.

The Vatican released a statement the next day on the pope's private meeting with the Nicaraguan government.

According to the statement, the Nicaraguan leaders asked the pope to use his "good offices" to head off Washington's impending direct military intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua, saying that such an intervention could lead to a regional explosion. The pope ignored this urgent request.

A Vatican radio broadcast the same day attacked the Sandinistas, saying they had attempted to make "political capital" from the pope's visit.

The Vatican gave the false impression that it was the government, not the Catholic church hierarchy, that had instigated chanting during

the Managua mass, which interrupted the pope several times. The radio singled out for particular attack Commander Daniel Ortega's speech greeting the pope, which centered on U.S. aggression against Nicaragua, El Salvador, and all of Central America, and called for peace in the region.

In El Salvador, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) called for a one-day truce during the pope's stay there. The FMLN and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) had called on the Salvadoran people to mobilize during the visit to ask the pope to support a dialogue between the rebels and the government.

As the pope's motorcade traveled from the airport to San Salvador, people in the crowd carried posters saying, "Catholics Support Dialogue."

During the pope's mass in Costa Rica, portraits of former Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero were displayed by Salvadoran exiles. Romero was assassinated by government forces in 1980 because of his condemnations of the regime's terror and injustice.

To undercut the impact of the opposition's call for negotiations, and its recent military gains and renewed activity in the cities, Washington cajoled the Salvadoran government to push up the date for scheduled elections from 1984 to later this year. The pope endorsed the call for elections as soon as he got off the plane in San Salvador. The FDR, on the other hand, denounced the elections as a sham, designed to give cover to the government's continuing war

Trial of SWP opens in Los Angeles

Gelfand & Co. use cops, informers against socialists

By David Frankel

LOS ANGELES — A trial of the Socialist Workers Party opened in U.S. District Court here on March 2. The opening witness for the prosecution was Alan Gelfand, an attorney for the Los Angeles County government, who was expelled from the SWP in 1979. He is demanding that the federal court reinstate him in the SWP.

In their final pretrial brief submitted February 25, Gelfand and his lawyers simply dismissed the constitutional right to freedom of political association, stating that the SWP is trying "to hide behind the belated assertion of their alleged First Amendment rights."

But unionists, leaders in the struggle for Black rights, representatives of numerous political tendencies within the workers movement, defenders of the Bill of Rights from a broad spectrum — all have rallied to the defense of the SWP. It is clear that the attack the SWP is currently fighting is a threat to the democratic rights of all working people.

Gelfand's brief argues that he does "not ask the court to enter upon anything approaching constitutionally proscribed territory. . . . No ideological position nor political dispute need be resolved."

Yet on the very next page, he asks the court to "weigh the defendants' conduct in light of the principles, traditions, and historic necessities of the movement they purport to represent." In other words, a federal court, representing the interests of the capitalist class, is being asked to decide whether the conduct of the Marxist leadership of the SWP is in keeping with the "principles, traditions, and historic necessities" of the working class!

Gelfand was expelled from the SWP in 1979 for filing a court brief against the party in an attempt to disrupt the SWP's 10-year offensive to expose the U.S. government's secret police.

Gelfand argues that his expulsion was the work of government agents who took over the leadership of the SWP several decades ago.

He admits he has no evidence — only a circumstantial case from which his conclusions must be inferred. However, he argues the court can identify these "agents" by examining the record of the SWP leaders responsible for expelling Gelfand and ruling on whether they have deviated from Marxist principles. And he asks that the courts determine who can be a leader of the SWP by removing from leadership in the party the "agents" that it thus identifies!

Clearly, this kind of trumped-up charge can be used against any union, any Black or Latino organization, any group organizing against the

government or its policies, thus giving the federal courts a handle to intervene in and disrupt them.

Innocent concern

Gelfand's story is that he was a loyal party member who happened in August 1977 to stumble across evidence that Joseph Hansen — a veteran leader of the SWP for 40 years — was really an agent of both the FBI and of the Soviet secret police, which used to be known as the GPU.

Gelfand innocently requested information and an investigation of his suspicions, so the story goes. His innocent "questions" about the integrity of Hansen brought an inexplicably hostile response from the leadership of the SWP, he claims. His attempts to raise his suspicions at internal meetings were ruled out of order (by membership vote, of course, which he neglects to mention).

The refusal to discuss his questions about Hansen, he asserts, was so universal that he became suspicious other SWP leaders were engineering a cover-up. Eventually he came to the conclusion that they too must be agents, helped to their places of leadership in the party by the nefarious Hansen.

A somewhat different picture emerges from the statements made by Gelfand under oath in pretrial depositions taken by lawyers for the SWP.

Gelfand's initial legal intervention in the SWP's fight against the FBI and CIA took place in December 1978, when he was still a

member of the SWP. That move, he admits, followed secret consultations between him and leaders of both the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in England, and the Workers League (WL) in the United States.

The WL is an outfit whose central activity since 1975 has been to slander the SWP as an organization dominated by FBI agents. Although the group puts out a 20-page, twice-weekly, multicolored newspaper, the paper is rarely even seen in the working-class movement. The WL maintains only one public headquarters in the U.S. It participates in no coalitions working in solidarity with the revolutions in Central America, in no Black rights organizations, in no political activity within the labor movement.

The Workers League is little more than a U.S. branch office of the British WRP.

According to Gelfand's testimony he traveled to England in July 1977 on what he says was a vacation.

When he returned at the beginning of August he voiced his "suspicions" about Joe Hansen to participants at an SWP convention. A few weeks later he tried to disrupt a meeting of the Los Angeles branch of the SWP with the same accusations posed as questions.

The following summer, Gelfand was back in England. As he explained in his first deposition, "While I was in England in 1978, I called the newspaper of the Workers Revolutionary Party."

Gelfand said that "eventually arrangements were made" for him to meet with somebody



SWP's attorney David Epstein cross examines Gelfand.

Diane Jacobs

from the WRP, who he eventually identified as Alex Mitchell, a central leader of the group.

Upon his return from England, Gelfand said, "It's my recollection that I telephoned [WL National Secretary] David North sometime in the late summer or early fall of 1978."

Gelfand estimated that he had as many as six substantial discussions with North between his return from England and his expulsion from the SWP in January 1979.

Thus, while still pretending to be a loyal member of the SWP, Gelfand was conducting a systematic operation designed to disrupt the party. Further, it seems clear now that the intention all along was to turn to the courts as a weapon against the SWP.

As the prosecution's trial brief explained, "Mr. Gelfand, a lawyer, not only understood the full implications of the evidence implicating Mr. Hansen, he researched and grasped the Party's democratic procedures. . . . Moreover, he knew how to make a record operating within those procedures."

It is this carefully constructed fictitious record that Gelfand has utilized to demand court intervention, a gross violation of the rights of the SWP.

Finances too

Return trips to England to meet with Mitchell and other WRP leaders were made by Gelfand in the summers of 1980 and 1981. Gelfand and one of his lawyers also met "more than 15" times with WL representatives in the United States, Gelfand estimated.

Not only were the WRP and WL intimately involved in helping Gelfand work out the strategy for his campaign against the SWP. They also helped finance it.

In Gelfand's original deposition, taken in October 1980, the following exchange was recorded:

"Q. Mr. Gelfand, is anybody helping you to bear the expenses of this litigation?"

"A. No."

"Q. So all the expenses of this litigation are being borne by yourself?"

"A. That's right."

At that time, Gelfand's suit against the SWP was already more than a year old. He had put up thousands of dollars in court fees, travel expenses, transcript costs, and other outlays. Although he declined to say how much his attorneys had been paid, he admitted in a later deposition that he paid \$30,000 just in lawyers' fees in 1980. Gelfand's salary from the Los Angeles County government in 1979 was approximately \$28,000.

The second deposition of Gelfand took place in March 1982. According to Gelfand's testimony at that time, he began receiving money from David North of the WL "to help with some of the costs of this case" immediately after his October 1980 deposition, when he had claimed that he was paying all expenses himself.

Legal fees alone in 1980, 1981, and the first three months of 1982 cost him a total of \$115,000, according to Gelfand. He admitted

he had already received \$40,000 from North to help meet these expenses. On top of all this, Gelfand admitted that North and two other WL members had been working full-time on his suit as "investigators."

Clearly, Gelfand's suit against the SWP is a WRP-WL operation, from start to finish. This is also reflected in the witnesses Gelfand has indicated he will call. These include North; Jean Brust, who is another WL member; and Cliff Slaughter, a longtime central leader of the WRP.

Cops testify for Gelfand

Prominent among the witnesses Gelfand is calling are cops. These include Rickey Gibby and Vincent Perizzi, two Los Angeles cops who infiltrated the SWP in the 1970s to spy on and disrupt it. The trial brief submitted by Gelfand's lawyers relies on Gibby's reports on SWP meetings to back up its claims that Gelfand was being silenced by agents in the SWP leadership.

Gibby, apparently an expert on First Amendment rights, said he had "never seen anything like it" — referring to the fact that Gelfand was ruled out of order at a meeting of the Los Angeles SWP branch when he attempted to raise his "suspicions" that the SWP was led by cops.

Another Gelfand witness will be former FBI informer Edward Heisler, who has proven quite cooperative in Gelfand's endeavor. Heisler has provided Gelfand with thousands of pages of SWP documents.

Defending the admitted fink in his October 1980 deposition, Gelfand stated: "What we are talking about are highly trained intelligence agents not agent provocateurs. Ed Heisler, contrary to what [SWP leader Larry] Seigle said, was not an agent provocateur. Their job is to carry out the party line as best they can so that they can elevate themselves to positions of leadership."

Gelfand notwithstanding, however, in 1969 Heisler's intelligence reports helped set up members of the SWP for an attack by ultraright thugs in the Chicago-based Legion of Justice. He also repeatedly urged inexperienced members to violate the SWP's policy against use of illegal drugs, thereby putting them and the party in a position to be victimized by the police.

The fact that Heisler's attempts at disruption

and provocation had so little success was due not to his intentions, but to the political strengths of the party he was trying to destroy.

While professing great concern over the infiltration of government agents in the SWP, Gelfand is relying on the testimony of real, proven cops as his authorities on the SWP!

Moreover, in their trial brief, Gelfand's lawyers dismiss as one of "a series of frivolous motions" the SWP's attempts to get the judge in the case, Mariana Pfaelzer, to withdraw because of prejudice against the party.

As a member and later president of the Los Angeles Police Commission from 1974 to 1978, Pfaelzer reviewed and approved police operations against the SWP *including those of undercover cops Gibby and Perizzi, who are witnesses for Gelfand!*

Another of Gelfand's activities as a loyal member came to light recently when he submitted into evidence tape recordings of meetings between himself and SWP leaders in Los Angeles. These meetings, which took place while Gelfand was still pretending to be an innocent, concerned member of the SWP, were taped secretly — an illegal action in California. Gelfand has refused to say how the recordings were made.

Did he attend SWP meetings wired for sound, perhaps with a body mike? Did he carry a miniature tape recorder in his briefcase? Perhaps he had a confederate who used what company spies at Lockheed know as the "big ear." These gadgets are said to be particularly useful in keeping tabs on union meetings and on the personal lives of workers.

The testimony of cops and informers. The use of secret recordings. Agent baiting. Gelfand's methods of fighting against the supposed agents who long ago took over the SWP are precisely those that have been used by the cops for decades in their endless attempts to disrupt the workers movement.

The real objective of Gelfand and his collaborators in the WRP-WL is recorded in the last section of their trial brief. It presents an extensive legal argument on why the government, through its courts, should indeed be able to intrude on the internal life and functioning of political organizations. Thus, while Gelfand pretends to be defending the workers movement against government agents, in reality he is defending and promoting government disruption of the working-class movement. □

Defense campaign launched

Rallies to protest trial held across country

By Will Reissner

An emergency campaign to fight government attacks on political rights in the United States has been launched by the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF). The immediate target of these attacks is the Socialist Workers Party, now on trial in a Los Angeles federal court. But the issues in the case are important

for every progressive organization and individual in the country.

For that reason, PRDF has been soliciting statements of support from prominent individuals in the labor movement, Black and women's rights organizations, and other groups (see accompanying article). To help defray the legal costs of conducting this fight for

political freedom, PRDF has launched a \$75,000 emergency fund appeal, as well.

The SWP is defending itself against government attempts to use the courts to intervene in the party's internal political and organizational affairs. Alan Gelfand, a Los Angeles County government lawyer, is asking the court to reinstate him as a member of the SWP; he was expelled in 1979. Gelfand also demands that the federal court remove SWP leaders who voted for his expulsion from the offices to which they were elected by the party membership.

The case will be decided by Judge Mariana Pfaelzer. While Pfaelzer was a member of the Los Angeles Police Commission, she approved massive spying, infiltration, and disruption operations by the Los Angeles cops against the SWP and many other political organizations.

Dozens of meetings protesting the trial are being organized throughout the United States. The first, which took place in Los Angeles on February 25, was attended by nearly 100 people. More than \$6,000 was raised.

Carol Downer, a leader of the Feminist Women's Health Center, told the rally that her organization too had been a target of Los Angeles police spying.

"A political organization that holds views that are not always popular," she said, "has to be able to control its membership character. . . . If we in the women's movement couldn't do this, very shortly we'd cease to exist as a women's health center."

Sandra Morgan, statewide president of the Service Employees International Union, added that the trial is a threat to "the right to have who we want in our union."

Jaime Bismarc, a Central Committee member of Casa Nicaragua, expressed his organization's solidarity with the SWP in this fight.

Anthony Russo of the U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Association — who together with Daniel Ellsberg was responsible for bringing the Pentagon Papers to public attention during the Vietnam War — told the rally that "this government is founded on lies. And this suit is more of these same lies."

"We in the U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Association support this effort completely," Russo stated. "The SWP is effective. We hope it will go on being more and more so."

Larry Seigle, a member of the SWP's Political Committee and himself a defendant in the case, also spoke.

"What is posed here is whether [the SWP membership has] the right to organize as a party," Seigle explained. "An organization like the SWP is based on agreement: that is, membership is open to those who agree to carry out a certain program, to defend certain ideas, and to organize in a certain way to advance those goals."

Those who don't agree, Seigle added, "have the right to organize their own party, but they don't have the right to be a member of your party."

Seigle pointed out that if, as Gelfand claims, "our membership, leadership, and program can be decided by the courts, then what we really face is that the Socialist Workers Party has no right to exist as a legal party in this country."

Seigle added: "The right of working people to organize unions and keep the bosses out of the unions; the right of Blacks to organize civil rights organizations and keep people wearing white sheets out of their organizations — this fundamental right is embodied in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It was one of the great victories of the first American revolution. And working people have fought many battles to preserve that right since then."

Summing up the stakes in the trial Seigle asked: "Do individuals, ordinary people, have the right to get together and set up an organization without having a government representative present at every meeting? Without the government approving its aims, dictating its structure? That's what the First Amendment is all about, and that's why this case is so important."

Gelfand's suit is being funded by two organizations, the British-based Workers Revolutionary Party and its U.S. followers of the Workers League. For several years the WRP and WL have been publishing volumes of material repeating the slander that the SWP is controlled by agents of the U.S. government. Gelfand makes these lies the basis of his case.

Seigle told the Los Angeles rally a little bit about the WRP and about the WL, which masquerades as part of the U.S. workers movement. He pointed out that these organizations believe "that cops are workers, and militant cops are militant workers who should be supported."

"They think that Malcolm X was an arch-reactionary and posed a serious threat to the fight for Black rights."

"They were and are opponents of the Cuban revolution," Seigle added. The WRP and WL even hold that there has been no socialist revolution in Cuba, that capitalism still exists there, and that Fidel Castro is another Batista.

In fact, said Seigle, one of Gelfand's main "proofs" that the SWP is and has been domi-

nated by U.S. government agents, "is the incontrovertible evidence that the SWP believes there has been a socialist revolution in Cuba."

That shows, following the tortuous logic of the Workers League and Gelfand, that "SWP members have been duped into abandoning Marxism," Seigle explained.

Absurd though the claim of a government takeover of the SWP may be, Seigle said, such charges are standard operating procedure in attacking and disrupting the workers movement.

During the McCarthy era, he said, the federal court "framed the Rosenbergs as agents of the Soviet Union and sent them to the electric chair."

"Lenin was accused of being a paid agent of the German kaiser . . ."

"Stalin accused his political opponents, including Leon Trotsky and other leaders of the Russian revolution, of being Nazi agents."

"And in our own generation," Seigle continued, "the policy of accusing activists of being police agents was a standard policy of every FBI disruption operation from the Communist Party, to the antiwar movement, to the Black Panther Party."

"The pernicious and destructive character of these kinds of smear attacks must be understood and repudiated," he said.

A March 12 rally in Toledo, Ohio will hear from a broad range of speakers, including leaders of the National Black Independent Political Party, the National Organization for Women, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and the former president of the Toledo Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO).

The same evening, PRDF is sponsoring a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, in defense of workers under assault by the government and big business.

The rally — originally called to support a damage suit by unionists fired by Lockheed because of their political views — has been broadened to protest the current attack on the SWP in federal court in Los Angeles.

Among the speakers will be union officials, leaders of civil rights organizations, a Georgia leader of the American Agriculture Movement, and a representative from the office of Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young. □

Union, Black, and women's leaders speak out against court attack on SWP

Dozens of prominent public figures have protested the legal attack now under way against the Socialist Workers Party by the U.S. government.

Anthony Mazzocchi, former vice-president of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, stated: "This case threatens to establish the precedent of government interference in any political organization, from the NAACP to NOW to the Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador."

"Gelfand's claim that the Socialist Workers

Party has been 'taken over' by agents of the FBI and CIA flies in the face of all the activities of the SWP. In particular, the SWP has been in the forefront of efforts to halt government spying and disruption . . ."

Tommy Kersey, Georgia chairperson of the American Agriculture Movement, warned that this trial "is a violation of the most fundamental right of the American people, the right to band together in voluntary organizations like unions, civil rights organizations, and the AAM."

Alice Peurala, former president of United Steelworkers of America Local 65 in Chicago, recalls that "the workers' movement has a long history of struggling for political freedom and the right to exist without court interference.

"We have paid too much in blood, sweat, and tears for these rights to lose them now."

Anne Braden, longtime civil rights activist, stated that this trial "obviously deprives the Socialist Workers Party of all semblance of constitutional rights, and thus threatens the rights of all of us."

Rev. Ben Chavis, deputy director of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice and a leader of the National Black Independent Political Party, issued a statement opposing the "Los Angeles Federal Court's conduct of the *Gelfand v. Smith, et al.* case."

Lupe Sánchez, executive director of the Arizona Farmworkers Union, warned of the dangers of government interference posed by the case. "Any organization, including unions," she pointed out, "could then be a potential candidate for the government to come in and 'reorganize' it, no matter what its constitution."

James Lafferty, chairperson of the Oakland County, Michigan, chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, states that, "having worked with members of the Socialist Workers Party for many years in the anti-Vietnam War movement and many other causes, I know the charges raised in the case of *Gelfand v. Smith* to be utterly false. . . . The actions of Judge Mariana Pfaelzer are not only continued government harassment of the SWP, but are unprecedented challenges to the right of voluntary association free from government harassment."

Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, a leader in the Irish freedom struggle, noted that "the attacks on the party's existence by Judge Pfaelzer threaten all of us in the workers movement, all of us in the anti-imperialist movement, and all of us who hold dear our democratic rights."

Georgia State Senator **Julian Bond** states that the trial is a threat to "organizations like labor unions, organizations fighting discrimination, or working to advance the cause of the oppressed and exploited anywhere in the world. . . . The intervention of the courts is an infringement of First Amendment rights, not just of the Socialist Workers Party, but of the rights of all Americans."

Ron Dellums, U.S. congressman from California, wrote that the trial "raises serious questions regarding First Amendment rights. Judicial interference in the internal affairs of a voluntary organization jeopardizes the right of free speech and assembly . . . which must be preserved."

Rev. Fred Taylor, director of Chapters and Affiliates of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, warned that "as a voluntary organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference could be opened up to a similar attack by the government by this type of court intervention. We know the U.S. government,

through the FBI, has intervened into the SCLC by intense surveillance of our founder, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and by the use of informers."

Dorothy Healey, national vice-chairperson of the Democratic Socialists of America, warned that "members of the Socialist Workers Party in the first place and all of us on the left have a great stake in the outcome of this case. If the courts can do this to the SWP, who will be next?"

Healey added that "this action reveals the utter political bankruptcy of the Workers League and the Workers Revolutionary Party, for even *considering* the use of the capitalist

courts to determine who should be a member and officer of a revolutionary organization."

John McTernan, a Los Angeles attorney who provided legal defense for the Communist Party when it was under government attack in the witch-hunting Smith Act trials in the 1950s, and whose law firm has been retained by the SWP in this case, explained that "this lawsuit represents a misuse of the judicial process [that] places intolerable financial burdens" on a political organization. "As a result, this action constitutes a serious impediment to the exercise of First Amendment liberties by political organizations and their supporters." □

United States

Independent truckers strike

11-day shutdown protests staggering tax hike

By Steve Wattenmaker

Thousands of independent truckers rolled to a stop for 11 days in February to protest crushing new taxes that are pushing them toward economic ruin.

The nationwide strike, which began January 31, was called by the 30,000-member Independent Truckers Association (ITA). It was backed by 4,000 drivers organized in the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association of America, as well as regional drivers groups across the midwest.

Independent owner-operators are men and women who generally lease their services to large trucking companies. They make up about one-quarter of the 400,000 truck drivers in the United States. They haul 90 percent of all fresh produce and half of the nation's steel.

Already financially pressed by three years of deep recession, independent truckers suffered a staggering blow January 6, when President Reagan signed the Highway Revenue Act into law. This tax package, voted by Congress in late 1982, will boost truckers' taxes \$5,000 a year by 1985.

Road use taxes alone are slated to jump from an average of \$242 a year to \$1,900. Congress also attached a 5-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax hike to the legislation.

Rallies press demands

Forced to the point of desperation by this move, the independent truckers shut down.

Speaking at rallies and meetings across the United States owner-operators explained to their supporters that many of them will not only lose their livelihoods, but also their homes, which they put up to secure the loans used to buy their rigs.

At a meeting of 300 angry owner-operators in Fremont, Ohio, Virginia Jenkins explained what the new law will mean for her and her

husband. Their road use tax will jump 667 percent from the 1982 level.

Jenkins told the meeting she hadn't joined the 1973-74 or 1979 strikes called by independent truckers to force a rollback in spiraling fuel costs. But times had changed.

"I just can't take it anymore! No more!" She was met with stormy applause and cheers of, "Send her to Washington!"

Truck motorcades protesting the tax levy converged on Boston, Massachusetts; Denver, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and St. Louis, Missouri.

By the third day of the strike, spot shortages of fresh fruits and vegetables were reported from Florida to Michigan. Truck traffic on the busy Chicago-to-New York corridor was down by at least 20 percent.

Strikers smeared

Throughout the strike the ITA and the drivers stood up to a steady barrage of media lies, White House smears, and police harassment — all calculated to pit other working people against the strikers.

The truckers were accused of being greedy, anticonsumer, antiunion. They were portrayed as businessmen unwilling to pay their fair share of taxes to maintain the highways they use.

While formally on record opposing the new taxes, the major trucking companies, represented by the American Trucking Association, joined in the chorus denouncing the strike. The association's president charged the ITA with using "bully tactics."

The owner-operators answered that while the large trucking companies will also have to pay the new taxes, they are in a position to pass along those increases to consumers. Given stiff competition in the industry, and with little economic clout of their own, the independents

will absorb the full brunt of the taxes; many will go under.

Using the shooting death of a trucker as his pretext, President Reagan — without offering any proof — accused the strikers of “murder” and directed the FBI to assist local cops “to put an end to this violence.”

Ohio police arrested 17 striking drivers on “riot” charges. Nearly 100 strikers were arrested across the country during the shutdown.

Despite repeated statements from the ITA deploring violence, headlines such as “Bullets and rocks fly as truckers try to block new taxes” were standard fare.

The independent truckers actively sought allies among other sectors of the working population.

Mike Parkhurst, ITA president, reported that he had gotten offers of support from some locals of the Teamsters union, which organizes truck drivers, as well as from local officials of the steel and auto workers unions.

“We know the rank-and-file Teamsters are with us,” Parkhurst said. “They know that we are fighting for them as well. They know that if this legislation goes into effect, 20 percent more of them will be put out of work, to add to the many tens of thousands already taken from behind the wheel.”

A leader of the strikers in Toledo, Ohio, Darryl Duncan — an owner-operator and a Teamster shop steward — told a mass meeting, “We have to get out of this ‘independent’ mentality. We need to be organized — we need an organization to win this thing.”

Support from farmers

Especially important to the strikers was the support won from working farmers. Owner-operators and farmers held joint rallies ranging up to several hundred people in Ohio and other states.

The American Agriculture Movement (AAM), which has sponsored tractorcades and other militant protests against the squeeze on small farmers, endorsed the truckers’ action at its annual convention in early January.

The Colorado chapter of the AAM released a statement of support for the truckers that explained, “The farmer needs the trucker. The working person needs the farmer. We all need to cooperate together. We pledge to work together. . . .

“We can learn from the example of the Polish workers and farmers. Parity and solidarity are what we need. We need a government that listens to us, a government composed of farmers, workers, and independent truckers. Together we could solve our problems in short order.”

The statement was signed by a representative of the AAM, two members of the ITA, and a member of the United Auto Workers.

Labor tops bait strike

Although barraged by an avalanche of media hysteria surrounding the strike, working people in the United States were generally sympathetic to the truckers’ action as a coun-



Independent trucker walks picket line in Detroit.

terpunch against the probusiness, prowar policies of the U.S. government. In sharp contrast, top AFL-CIO officials were largely silent on the strike. Teamsters President Roy Williams, in a February 3 statement, actually joined in the government’s violence-baiting of the owner-operators, calling for police protection for working truckers.

The newspapers of two political tendencies that claim to speak in the interests of the working class also sabotaged solidarity with the strike.

The *People’s World*, West Coast weekly of the U.S. Communist Party, condemned the action in two articles appearing February 5 and 12. It prominently featured the violence-baiting statement by Teamster President Roy Williams and lent credence to the officialdom’s accusation that the strike benefited big business, not working people.

(The *Daily World*, sister publication of the *People’s World*, reported favorably on the strike in the few news items it carried.)

The February 9 *Guardian*, which describes itself as an “independent radical weekly,” carried a major article headlined “Truckers’ action isn’t very progressive.”

The article quoted extensively from leaders of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), a dissident group inside the Teamsters. Bob Masters, editor of the TDU paper *Convoy*, said, “We think the best thing would be for [independents] to organize against the companies and not the government.”

The *Guardian* also fell hook, line, and sinker for the claim that the owner-operators are in the same camp with the trucking bosses, and it condemned both for opposing “a modest and insufficient effort to slightly increase the truckers’ share of maintaining the roads.”

What revolutionary workers said

How should the labor movement have re-

sponded to the truckers’ appeals for solidarity?

An editorial in the February 25 issue of the *Militant*, which reflects the views of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, pointed out that although the truckers have gone back to work, their struggle is far from over.

The *Militant* said that the labor movement “must recognize the owner-operators as fellow toilers, like workers who own their own tools — their trucks. . . .

“The bosses carefully nurture the illusion that these drivers are really owners and that any one of them can someday buy their own fleet. They do this to try to trick these drivers into identifying with management, not the union. . . .

“The stance of the Teamster officialdom pushes the independents — a significant sector of the industry — to look to becoming small fleet owners as the solution to the insecurities they face. And it is precisely because the bosses are pushing in that direction that the labor movement should be aggressively and without hesitation championing the demands of the truckers and showing them solidarity in every possible way.

“There is nothing inevitable about hostility between unionists and independent truckers. The truckers are open to seeing what labor has to offer. But the labor movement must step forward and show itself capable of charting a course that will solve the big problems the truckers face. This is a fight that is in the direct interests of the unions themselves.

“It will take an even broader unity of all working people — unionists, independents, family farmers, Blacks, Latinos, and women — to organize a strong enough fightback so that the offensive is turned back. . . . Vigorous support by labor to the fight of the independent truckers against the government would be a meaningful first step in the process of forging this necessary alliance.” □

PLO deals a blow to U.S. plans

National Council reaffirms course of independent struggle

By David Frankel

Ending a nine-day meeting in Algiers February 22, the Palestine National Council (PNC) dealt a stinging blow to Washington's attempts to drive back and split the Palestinian national liberation struggle.

The 350-member National Council functions as the parliament-in-exile of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). This was its first meeting since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last June, and it was closely watched on all sides.

Would the military blows dealt to the PLO by the Israeli war machine result in a political retreat? The PLO's answer was a resounding, "No!"

Among the positions adopted in the final resolution of the National Council meeting (see page 150 for full text) were the following:

- The PLO reaffirmed its independence from any government, vowing to resist "pressures aimed against this independence, from whatever quarter they may come."

- In keeping with its character as an independent national liberation movement, the PLO declared that the basis for its relations with the various Arab states is "commitment to the Palestinian people's rights, including their rights to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of their independent state under PLO leadership."

- Reaffirming its determination "to develop and escalate armed struggle against the Zionist enemy," the PLO also stressed "the right of the Palestinian revolution's forces to conduct military action against the Zionist enemy from all the Arab fronts." (The Jordanian, Syrian, Egyptian, and Lebanese governments have all refused to allow the PLO to carry out such military actions from their territory.)

- U.S. imperialism, the PLO declared, stands "at the head of the camp hostile to our just cause and the causes of struggling peoples."

Having reaffirmed its character as an independent national liberation movement committed to a policy of armed struggle and opposition to imperialism, the National Council also addressed President Reagan's plan for Mideast negotiations.

Immediately after the withdrawal of PLO fighters from West Beirut last August, Reagan tried to take advantage of the military blows dealt to the Palestinian struggle by the Israeli aggression. He proposed that the Jordanian government replace the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that Jordan's King Hussein open negotiations with Israel.

While explicitly ruling out the formation of any independent Palestinian state, Reagan stated his support for some kind of federation between Jordan and the West Bank, claiming that he would support Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank on that basis.

In other words, in return for a U.S. promise to support a future Israeli withdrawal, Reagan demanded immediate political surrender by the PLO. If the Palestinians did not take this offer quickly they would get nothing, U.S. officials threatened.

PLO replies to Reagan

The National Council declared in its resolution on the U.S. proposal:

"The Reagan plan in its procedure and contents does not respond to the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights. The Reagan plan negates the Palestinian rights to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state. It also ignores the PLO as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative and contradicts international legitimacy. The PNC declares its refusal to consider the plan as a sound basis for a just and permanent settlement to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Zionist conflict."

Unable to contain their outrage over the PLO's refusal to give up its struggle, the editors of the *New York Times* declared, "What [the PLO] really rejects is reality, diplomacy and, as always, Israel."

By rejecting Reagan's offer, the *Times* shrilled, "the P.L.O. makes its 'parliament' as irrelevant as its army."

A similar tone was struck by the editors of the *Washington Post*, who argued February 22 that the PLO "assured itself a continuing position on the far fringe, with little influence."

Why all the fuss and bother if the PLO really is "irrelevant" and "on the far fringe, with little influence"? Why don't these far-sighted editors, who claim to know what's best for the Palestinian people and the rest of the Middle East, just ignore the rejecters of reality in the PLO?

The truth is that the U.S. rulers and their hiring press fear the PLO and the struggle of the Palestinian people that it embodies.

Fear behind racist abuse

Behind the demands that the PLO accept "reality" — that is, the status quo of imperialist domination and the Israeli colonial-settler state — is fear that the ongoing struggle of the Palestinian people will help trigger new revolutionary upheavals in the Middle East.

Fear is also behind the racist abuse that has been heaped on the PLO. *Washington Post* reporter Jonathan Randal derides the "amateurish improvisation" and "self-defeating sloppiness" of the PNC arrangements. He suggests that the PLO has lost its effectiveness because it no longer has "a foothold in a modern, efficient, westernized society" (i.e., Lebanon).

David Ignatius of the *Wall Street Journal* refers to the PNC meeting as a "circus-like event" where "PLO speakers generated reams of vituperative prose."

Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* referred to "a festival of bombast" and "an air of unreality" at the PNC meeting. "The radicals," he complained, "have declared 'a thousand no's' to American peace plans but have failed to outline any coherent alternative strategy for achieving Palestinian statehood."

It is certainly true that the PLO does not have the power to force the Israeli aggressors to retreat right now. It does not follow, however, that the PLO should give up its struggle for justice and accept imperialist dictates.

Rather, the PLO has correctly sought to hold firm, maintain its unity, and wait for the inevitable shifts in the balance of forces in the region that will create new opportunities for the Palestinian people to advance their struggle. Pursuing this course requires the PLO to take advantage of any diplomatic openings that appear, while continuing its organizational work in Lebanon, in the West Bank, and in various Arab countries.

Role of imperialist media

One point that is worth taking up in more detail is the role played by the mass media in regard to the PLO. Newspapers and television stations that reach tens of millions of working people are among the more powerful political levers in the hands of the capitalist rulers. Far from being objective or accurate, their coverage of major world events is intended to advance the political course being followed by the imperialists.

During the months leading up to the National Council meeting, the major media in the imperialist countries tried to deepen existing divisions within the PLO and to create new ones, in hopes of contributing to a split in the organization.

Incredible feats of journalistic acrobatics were performed to portray PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat as a supporter of the Reagan initiative.

Reporters poured momentous significance into Arafat's facial expressions, whether he embraced or shook hands with particular par-

ticipants, and so on.

An instructive example of how the imperialist media covered the meeting were the articles that appeared in the *New York Times*, the most prestigious U.S. daily.

"The Palestine National Council opened its 16th session today with Yasir Arafat beating back attempts by radical factions to reject President Reagan's Middle East peace plan," reported Thomas Friedman in the February 15 issue.

Claiming that Arafat's approach was one of "not ruling out anything regarding the Reagan peace initiative," Friedman assured his readers that this position was "certain to be adopted."

Two days later, Friedman felt it necessary to change his tune on the Reagan plan, saying that "it is apparent that there will not be a clear-cut answer — neither a total rejection nor an endorsement."

Then, on February 22, the *Times* reported in a front-page headline, "P.L.O. Council Says Reagan's Proposal Is Not Acceptable." Never one to give up, however, Friedman insisted that the PNC "did not reject the Reagan plan outright."

"P.L.O. Strengthens Rebuff to Reagan" was the headline the following day. Friedman assured his readers that the PNC's final resolution — which declares the PLO's "refusal to consider the [Reagan] plan as a sound basis for a just and permanent settlement to the Palestinian question" — nevertheless "fell short of a flat rejection of the American peace initiative."

Finally, on February 24, the editors of the *Times* made clear what had really happened at the PNC meeting. Its hate-filled editorial declared that the PLO was "demanding the impossible" by sticking with its struggle for an independent Palestinian state.

The editors of the *Times*, who have supported the Israeli dispossession of the Palestinians from the outset, even had the gall to declare that, "the cause of the Palestinians . . . has once more been betrayed" — by the PLO!

Meeting with Mubarak?

There have also been frequent press reports about the possibility of Arafat meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, with the implication that the PLO leader was ready to give up his opposition to the Camp David accords.

But at the PNC, Arafat spent nine hours meeting with Egyptian opposition leaders. Not at all fazed, the *Washington Post* explained February 21 that "the opposition is to serve as the conduit to the Mubarak government — a move to avoid possible friction [in the PLO]."

The PNC itself declared that relations between the PLO and the Egyptian regime could only be developed "on the basis of the latter's abandoning of the Camp David policy."

Of course, the imperialist media advances its line by quoting the views of individual Palestinian figures who favor moves such as recognition of Israel by the PLO. As long as the PLO remains a broad national movement representing different class forces and political



YASSIR ARAFAT

viewpoints, such opportunities for distortion will abound. It is necessary to recognize them for what they are.

A case in point is the way figures in the PLO such as Issam Sartawi have treated the PLO's declarations of support in April 1981 for the Mideast proposal put forward by former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, or the resolution agreed to at the Arab summit at Fez, Morocco, last year.

Sartawi, who called on the PLO to recognize Israel in an interview that appeared in the *Washington Post* February 7, argued that the PLO had already taken that step indirectly when it endorsed the Brezhnev plan. But Sartawi's views were repudiated by Arafat's Fatah organization, and Sartawi resigned from the PNC on February 20. Clearly, the PLO did not have the same thing in mind as Sartawi when it endorsed the Brezhnev plan.

Those favoring recognition of Israel by the PLO have also advanced Sartawi's argument in regard to the Fez summit resolution, saying that it was an implicit recognition of Israel. This was certainly true insofar as the Saudi regime was concerned. But the same resolution was supported by the PLO for different reasons, as is made clear by the PNC statement on Fez.

The PNC urged that political action "be complemented by military action in order to alter the balance of power in favour of Palestinian rights and struggle." It also explicitly noted that the Fez resolution did not take precedence over the PLO's political program and resolutions.

Criticism from Syria

Criticism of the PLO leadership has not come just from the most proimperialist forces in the Arab world. The governments of Libya and Syria, themselves in sharp confrontation with imperialism, have also voiced dissatisfaction with the PLO leadership from time to time.

During the siege of West Beirut, Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi urged the PLO to fight to the last, saying that "revolutionary suicide" would be its most effective course, not the negotiated withdrawal that the PLO was eventually successful in carrying out.

Since the PLO's withdrawal, the Syrian government has sharply criticized Arafat for

meeting with Jordan's King Hussein, implying that the PLO leader was preparing to accept the Reagan plan. The bourgeois media has tried to use the Syrian attacks to bolster its own campaign to split the PLO.

Attempts by the Syrian government to reach into the PLO and determine its decisions included pressure on the organization to hold its National Council meeting in the Syrian capital of Damascus. It was in this context that the PNC stressed "adherence to independent Palestinian decision-making, protecting and resisting the pressures aimed against this independence, from whatever quarter they may come."

In its resolution, the PNC reaffirmed its desire to work with the Syrian and Libyan governments in the fight against imperialism through the framework of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front. While calling for revival of the front "on a new, effective, and clear basis," the resolution added: "The PNC noticed that the front did not live up to the standard of the required duties during the Zionist invasion of Lebanon."

Washington looks to Hussein

Now that Reagan's bid to split the PLO has been thrown back in his face, Washington is trying to move ahead with the other side of the Reagan plan, which is to gain Jordanian recognition of Israel.

As Reagan himself put it February 23, the day after the PNC meeting ended, "the greatest security for Israel, and this is what's back of our plan, is to create new Egypts, more nations, more neighbors that are willing to sign peace treaties with [Israel]."

Just as the Camp David deal provided Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat with the fiction of Palestinian "autonomy" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a cover for his sellout, Reagan offered Hussein a fig leaf by calling for "something in the nature of a homeland" for the Palestinians. He hastened to add that "no one has ever advocated creating a nation."

But it is one thing for Reagan, along with the well-paid editors in New York and Washington who are helping him push his policy, to pretend that the PLO is now irrelevant. It is another thing entirely for Hussein, who rules a mostly Palestinian country.

Although Reagan wants "new Egypts," masses of Arab working people have come to the realization that just as the bloodbath caused by the Israeli aggression in Lebanon was a direct result of the Camp David treaty, so a "new Egypt" in Jordan would free the Israeli regime for new aggression against Syria.

Meanwhile, Hussein knows very well that the Palestinian struggle and the PLO are not going to disappear. As Arafat declared at the PNC meeting:

"We adhere to the rifle for the sake of peace built on justice and international legitimacy and in order to restore our people's inalienable national rights, their right to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on their national soil." □

A fight to extend the socialist revolution

1. The meaning of Solidarity's struggle

By Ernest Harsch

For more than two and a half years now, the Polish workers have been fighting a massive and heroic struggle to transform their society. They have been fighting to create a society where working people themselves make the decisions — not the privileged bureaucracy that now governs that country.

Despite a year of brutal repression, the working people of Poland have not allowed themselves to be beaten into submission. They have defied Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski and the other bureaucrats with courage, with stubbornness, and with the conviction that justice is on their side.

A common struggle

Working people in the United States and other capitalist countries have a lot in common with the Polish workers' struggle. In a very real sense, they ultimately have the same enemy.

Their common enemy is the world capitalist system. The system of production for private profit. The system that fosters social inequalities and racism, that causes war and mass hunger, that results in the oppression of entire nations. The system that Reagan and his kind represent. The system that Lenin called "imperialism."

This is the first of two articles based on a talk given by Ernest Harsch in New York, Boston, and Chicago following his return from a visit to Poland in October and November 1982. The second one will deal with Solidarity's historical and political roots and its place in the world class struggle.

It is a worldwide system of exploitation and oppression: of the working people in the most advanced capitalist countries like the United States, Britain, and France; of the working people and other oppressed masses of the colonial and semicolonial world; and of the working people of those countries where capitalism has been abolished.

In the United States, the fight of working people is directly against their own capitalist class. It can be seen every day: in the struggle of workers against unemployment and to defend their unions, in the fight of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities against racial oppression, in the struggle against draft registration and against U.S. intervention in Central America.

In Poland, the workers are also in conflict with the same bankers and businessmen.

Directly, because of the efforts of the imperialist banks and governments to squeeze them dry financially, to pressure the Polish working people to foot the bill for the huge interest payments on the imperialist loans.

And indirectly, through the struggle of the Polish workers against the bureaucracy that governs that country, that blocks them from exercising political power. This bureaucracy is a petty-bourgeois social layer with interests alien to those of the workers and farmers. It balances between the workers and the world capitalist system, coming under pressure from both. And it helps transmit the pressures from the capitalists against the Polish working people.

What exists in Poland and the United States are two aspects of the same worldwide struggle. It is a struggle of working people against all forms of oppression and exploitation, which can only be eliminated through the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society on a world scale.

That is the basis of the common struggle of the Polish and American workers. That is the framework for building genuine solidarity between them.

Of course, most working people do not now see it that way, either in Poland or in countries like the United States. But it is a fundamental point.

'Our factories belong to the people'

What is the character of Solidarity's struggle?

There have been a lot of charges that Solidarity and the workers who make it up are anti-socialist.

Jaruzelski and the other Polish generals and party bureaucrats try to claim that *they* are the representatives of the Polish working class, that *they* are the communists and socialists. Anyone who opposes them is, therefore, by definition antisocialist.

Reagan and the other imperialist rulers voice agreement with Jaruzelski on this point. As part of their anticommunist propaganda drive, they too maintain that Jaruzelski and the other Polish bureaucrats are Marxists. They say that the way Poland is currently run is what communism really means for the workers: repression, the denial of democratic and trade-union rights, food shortages, waste, corruption.

By the same token, the White House, with the help of the big-business news media, has portrayed Solidarity's fight against these abuses of communist principles as a workers' revolt against communism. They try to make it appear as if the Polish workers would some-

how want to bring capitalism back to Poland, to have someone like Rockefeller running the Lenin Shipyard and scores of other factories, or someone like Reagan sitting in the prime minister's office.

Both Reagan and Jaruzelski are lying. It is Solidarity that rests on Poland's long traditions of working-class struggle. It is Solidarity that represents the workers' aspirations for a society that is truly democratic, where social justice and inequality are a thing of the past, where the workers themselves are able to decide how the products of their labor are used.

During the August 1980 strike at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, Lech Walesa explained, "We are not against the socialist system. We do not want to upset the principle of the social ownership of the means of production — we think that our factories belong to the Polish people. But we demand that the people be the genuine managers of the factories and the country."

In 1981, Solidarity's main newspaper, *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*, made a similar point: "The basic means of production — the factories, steelworks, mines, shipyards, railways, and banks — are not privately owned by capitalists and there is no one who would want to return this national property to the capitalists. . . . Workers want their factories to be more socialist, genuinely socialist."

A fight for workers' rights

The formation of Solidarity was a direct result of the massive 1980 strike wave. The key demand in those strikes was for independent trade unions.

Within a couple of months after the workers won their demand, Solidarity had recruited nearly 10 million members — the vast bulk of Poland's working class.

From its inception, Solidarity was democratic. Its leaders were directly elected by the ranks of the union, and its policies and programs were openly discussed and voted on. This was the polar opposite of the old government-run unions, where union officials were appointed by the bureaucracy and the members had little say over their unions' policies and activities.

Solidarity's emergence was a big step forward for the Polish workers. It gave them a powerful weapon to defend and advance their interests, and the interests of Polish working people as a whole.

For the first time in many years, the Polish workers had a representative organization of their own — a fighting organization, militant, democratic, and based on the shop floor. Solidarity's very existence exposed the myth that

the bureaucrats and their so-called Polish United Workers Party really represented the interests of the workers.

What the 1980 strikes and the emergence of Solidarity reflected was the fundamental conflict between the working people — the workers, farmers, and other social layers allied with them — and the governing bureaucracy.

Although the bureaucracy is not a distinct social class, with any necessary relationship to the means of production, this conflict is an expression of the class struggle. It is a struggle by the working class against its oppressors within Poland, who themselves are a reflection of the pressures on that country from the world capitalist system.

The demands that Solidarity raised help underline the working-class character of its struggle:

- It demanded that the bureaucracy's substantial material privileges be abolished, and that efforts be made to bring about social equality among all sectors of the population.
- It called for an end to police surveillance and repression, for an end to the widespread censorship, and for freedom of artistic and intellectual expression.
- It pressed for the involvement of working people in the making of economic and political decisions.
- It insisted that the factories be run by democratically elected workers councils.
- It championed the rights of the farmers and strove to forge a genuine alliance between the workers and farmers.

From this, it is clear that Solidarity was an authentic working-class movement, concerned with changing Polish society in the interests of the working people.

Solidarity also won the support of the overwhelming majority of the entire Polish population. Some million and a half farmers formed Rural Solidarity and allied themselves directly with Solidarity. University students formed a pro-Solidarity students' association. Intellectuals rallied to the movement in large numbers, and put their skills and knowledge at the disposal of the workers. Even many working-class members of the Polish United Workers Party, about a million of them, joined Solidarity.

Most of the demands that Solidarity and its allies raised were widely supported. Few people thought they were "too radical." In fact, most of the points are legally recognized in Poland. The very first article of the Polish constitution states that the working people are the rulers of the country. All Solidarity was trying to do was translate that into living reality.

Bureaucrats strike back

The bureaucrats were dead set against that. Even though they lard all their speeches with Marxist-sounding demagoguery, they don't believe in it and don't mean it. They are not in favor of the workers wielding political power. They want the political power, since that is the only way they can maintain their privileges.

So they fought back.

For more than a year after Solidarity's emer-



Solidarity supporters protest martial law. Sign reads: "Solidarity was, is, and will be."

gence, the authorities tried to intimidate, undermine, and weaken the new union with all sorts of threats, maneuvers, phony promises, and provocations. These more limited attacks failed. So in December 1981, they went further and declared martial law.

Jaruzelski set up a governing military council. Solidarity's activities were outlawed. Its leaders were jailed. Many democratic rights were suspended.

Against difficult odds, workers launched a series of courageous protest strikes around the country. But they were broken by force, one by one. The government's special riot police, the ZOMO, murdered a number of miners in Silesia in the process of crushing these strikes.

Since martial law was first imposed, some 2,500 union activists have been tried by martial law courts and sentenced to prison terms. Trials of others are still under way, and the authorities are planning to bring several prominent Solidarity leaders and intellectual supporters of Solidarity to trial, including Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Andrzej Gwiazda, Karol Modzelewski, and Jan Rulewski.

In addition, thousands of unionists have been fired from their jobs, and blacklisted from getting any others. Soldiers and police constantly patrol the streets of Warsaw and other cities. Street demonstrations are often attacked by the police, a practice that has led to a

string of deaths since the imposition of martial law. According to the underground press, the figure stood at around 37 known deaths by late 1982.

On October 8, 1982, the government escalated its campaign against Solidarity by formally outlawing the union, along with the farmers' organization, Rural Solidarity. At the same time, it is trying to impose new government-controlled trade unions, which very few workers are joining.

All this has been a big blow to the workers movement. Many of the gains they won before have now been taken away. The most important, obviously, has been the right to their own independent and democratically run trade union, Solidarity.

Massive resistance

But that does not mean that the workers movement has been crushed.

Following the imposition of martial law and the detention of their main leaders, many Solidarity activists began to reorganize themselves. They formed what everyone in Poland calls the "underground."

Although these activists take precautions to avoid arrest and function under conditions of clandestinity, they are not isolated from the rest of the population. The "underground" itself is quite massive, and enjoys the tacit support of the bulk of Poland's working people. Almost every large factory in the country now has some kind of clandestine union committee.

That does not mean, however, that Solidarity is still intact, that it is still functioning as a trade union of 10 million members. That would be impossible under such conditions of repression. A layer of its former members have become demoralized. Many others are not active on a day-to-day level because of the fear of repression, even though they continue to support Solidarity and pay union dues.

What is left is a very decentralized movement, with no single authoritative national leadership, involving some tens of thousands of committed activists. It would be more accurate to talk about Solidarity today as a loose movement of social protest and struggle, rather than as some organized structure. It is not the same thing that existed before martial law, but it is still an influential force.

Those involved in the underground committees carry out numerous activities: gathering information, collecting money for victims of the repression, publishing bulletins and newspapers. There are several hundred of these bulletins appearing regularly. In addition, unionists have been able to set up a number of transmitters to make sporadic Radio Solidarity broadcasts.

The extent of support for this movement is massive. There have been many strikes and demonstrations, in every major city. Just on August 31, 1982, several hundred thousand people took to the streets to protest against martial law and to demand that Solidarity be allowed to resume its legal activities. The government admitted that demonstrations took place in 66 cities on that day.

This support for Solidarity is so large that the government has trouble denying it. In October, after Solidarity had already been banned, a member of the Polish parliament read out the findings of an official opinion poll conducted in large industrial enterprises around the country. "The overwhelming majority of those polled strongly identify themselves with Solidarity," he said, "assess its efforts as an advocate of workers' interests as effective, or highly effective, and insist that the union's activity should be resumed."

The other side of this is that the government is extremely unpopular. It is being kept in power today largely through force and the threat of force, including the common realization that behind the bureaucrats in Warsaw stand the ones in Moscow.

The situation in Poland today is marked by an uneasy standoff between the bureaucracy

and the workers. The government has so far been unable to crush the workers and beat them into submission. But at the same time the workers have not been able to regain what they lost with the imposition of martial law.

Important discussions are now taking place within Poland's factories over the future program, strategy, and tactics of the workers movement. The Polish workers are trying to figure out what to do next, how to recover from the setbacks they have suffered.

The Polish workers have learned many important political lessons over the past two and a half years. They have become more conscious of their strength and abilities. Thus, whatever forms their struggle will take in the future, it is certain that they will continue to press for their rights.

[Next: *Solidarity's historical and political roots.*]

Lebanon

Israel's concentration camps

Interview with Israeli attorney Lea Tsemel

[The following is an interview with Lea Tsemel, an Israeli attorney representing the families of more than 6,000 Palestinians in southern Lebanon being held in some 15 Israeli concentration camps there and inside Israel itself. The interview was obtained by and originally published in *International Viewpoint*, published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

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Question. How do you come to be representing the Palestinian internees picked up by the Israelis in Lebanon?

Answer. My experience of other, less wide-ranging, actions by the Israeli army in Lebanon led me to think right from the beginning that Israel was going to take a large number of prisoners. I have previously had to take up the cases of Palestinians and Lebanese picked up in military operations and brought to trial in Israel. But I should say that I was expecting a few hundred at the most, not tens of thousands.

At the beginning of the war, the question of internees was obscured behind a thick smoke-screen. Nobody could get any definite information, other than that tens of thousands of men had been taken by the Israelis. At the beginning of July, representatives of several international organizations and support committees for the internees asked me to take on the defense of the internees.

Q. What did you do?

A. Authorizations from the families of the internees began to trickle in, so I was able to take up their cases formally with the au-

thorities. First of all, helped by two other Palestinian lawyers, I tried to get a formal answer from the authorities on their detention. After nearly three months of administrative harassment and false leads I finally got confirmation of their detention by the Israelis, and was refused permission to visit them.

We then decided to appeal to the High Court of Justice, so that it would ask the authorities why our clients were detained, and what was their formal status; and also to get permission to visit them so that we could give them the legal help they needed.

Q. Meanwhile you received other authorizations . . .

A. The Association of Families of Internees, in collaboration with other institutions, got more than 5,000 other authorizations sent to me. Some of the people these relate to are certainly at El Ansar [an Israeli concentration camp in southern Lebanon] . . .

Q. It is a heavy responsibility to represent thousands of internees . . .

A. Legal action is only one aspect of the defense of Palestinian and Lebanese internees. The essential point of the defense campaign is not our work as lawyers. It is above all a political campaign in Israel and worldwide. We don't need lawyers to say that the conditions of detention at Ansar and very likely elsewhere are atrocious. There is plenty of evidence for this.

The main problem is that local and international public opinion does not even know of the existence of thousands of internees. The

primary task of all those who know what is happening at Ansar should be to publish the facts, the dozens of eyewitness reports, to demand independent commissions of inquiry, to demand that their government raise the problem with the Israeli authorities. It's a case of actual concentration camps, and missing persons.

Q. Do you have information on this question of missing persons?

A. All that I can say is while Israel admits holding 6,000 people, the families state that more than 15,000 people taken by the Israelis have not returned. Where are they? Israel admits the existence of El Ansar. We have plenty of information on a whole series of other camps, including in Israel itself. In South Lebanon the rumor is that the Israelis sent back some of the detainees to the Phalangist militias and to [Maj. Saad] Haddad. After the massacres at Beirut everyone knows what that means . . .

Q. What are the main points of your legal action in the High Court?

A. First of all to get a formal status for the internees. Nobody in fact knows on what basis the Israelis are holding prisoner these thousands of people: as prisoners of war, civilian detainees? If they are civilians, the Fourth Geneva Convention, concerning the protection of civil rights, should be applied. If they are being held as prisoners of war, the Third Convention should be applied. Israel is applying neither one nor the other. There is obvious violation of international rights.

The fact is that during the session of the High Court the prosecutor was even hesitant to admit that Israel had invaded Lebanon and occupied part of its territory. The argument by which Israel applies clauses included in the Convention, while refusing to recognize that this same Convention applies to the internees, is not only intolerable but factually false. The fact that neither the families nor the lawyers can visit the detainees, the fact that some of them have been transferred to Israel and so on, are in contradiction to the Fourth Convention.

Q. What is the next stage?

A. Obviously, everything depends on the verdict of the Court, which has given the state 60 days to reply to our case. If we receive permission to see the internees we could at least know who is being held by the Israeli army, take up the most urgent cases, and get some of them freed.

But our actions as lawyers only have meaning if they are within the context of a big political campaign in support of the internees. Only international solidarity can effectively defend the Palestinian detainees, and win the only just demand, from the point of view of right and justice: the release of the internees and closing down the concentration camps in Lebanon and Israel. □

Economy gains amid problems

Post-1979 reform measures yield first results

By Will Reissner

In 1982 Vietnam's economy, plagued by tremendous problems since the end of the war in 1975, showed encouraging signs of turning a corner.

"For the first time we have been able to cover our own needs in food to a large extent without having to import large quantities," reported To Huu, vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers, in September.

The 1982 grain harvest set an all-time record — 16.3 million tons. This was up from a yearly average of only 13 million tons from 1976 to 1980. If the target for 1983 — 17 million tons — is achieved, Vietnam will be self-sufficient in food grains for the first time since World War II.

Fish, a staple of the Vietnamese diet that has been in somewhat short supply in recent years, has become more abundant. The fishing industry was an export earner in 1982.

Production of export crops has also increased substantially, and industrial crops such as soybeans and rubber surpassed their targets as well.

Industry, too, showed gains in a number of sectors: electricity, coal, engineering, metallurgy, cement, fertilizer, chemicals, and consumer goods. Small industry and handicrafts have also expanded their contribution to the national output.

Exports have risen substantially — from \$369 million in 1981 to \$430 million in 1982 — and circulation of goods within Vietnam itself has been boosted due to improvements made in the transportation and communications systems between north and south.

Growth from low base

These improvements in economic performance, are in part the result of a number of reforms carried out since mid-1979 by the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The reforms reflect a sober process of rethinking economic policy.

As a result of these reforms, notes Vietnamese journalist Nguyen Gia Ngo, the long-term decline in production has "been stopped and a new tendency has begun to emerge — production has been gradually stabilized and begins to rise. These small beginnings show how essential the new policies were for our economy and everyday life."

Tremendous problems still remain, however, and much existing productive capacity is still underutilized.

At the Fifth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), held in March 1982, General Secretary Le Duan bluntly told dele-

gates: "On the economic front, our country is now being confronted with many acute problems."

Le Duan noted that "production rises slowly while the population increases quickly. The national production is not in a position to meet the needs of social consumption. There are shortages of food, clothing materials, and other essential consumer goods.

"The livelihood of the working people," Le Duan stated, "is fraught with difficulties."

Why Vietnam is so poor

Many of Vietnam's economic problems were unavoidable. As Nguyen Khac Vien noted in the June 1982 *Vietnam Courier*, "like many third-world countries, Vietnam faces countless problems in its economic and cultural development: a high population growth rate, technological backwardness, lack of capital, a problematic food situation; these difficulties are compounded by the appalling consequences of three decades of war."

In a conversation with *Intercontinental Press* in December, Vietnam's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Nguyen Ngoc Dung, pointed out that following the 1975 war victory, the Vietnamese leadership "underestimated the problems we faced in rebuilding the economy and laying the basis for economic growth and development."

"The most important thing to understand," she said, "is why we face so many difficulties." At the root of the problems, Dung stated, are four factors: the wartime destruction, the legacy of colonialism, the general problems of underdevelopment, and the inherent limitations of an economy characterized by small-scale production.

Under these conditions she noted, "the road to socialism is long and hard. We face a severe contradiction between the urgent need to boost the low living standards of our people and the need to accumulate capital in order to develop the economy."

Even under conditions of peace, Dung stressed, there would be no easy solutions to these problems. But since 1975, Vietnam has been hit by a U.S. economic blockade, as well as by wars on its southwestern and northern borders.

Dung added that "for generations we had to concentrate all our efforts on waging war for our national liberation. As a result, our experience with and knowledge of economic and technical questions was limited.

"We therefore made many mistakes in the rebuilding process and suffer from many shortcomings that cannot be surmounted overnight," Dung explained.

The legacy of the past weighs heavily on Vietnam's efforts to build a modern, developed society.

Nearly three-quarters of a century of French colonialism left Vietnam an overwhelmingly peasant and backward society. The French built few industries. Education was available only to a tiny minority of Vietnamese, and then only in the French language.

When the French were driven out of Vietnam in 1954 following a long and devastating national liberation struggle, the trials of the Vietnamese people were not over. Vietnam was partitioned, and Washington rushed in to take the place of the French in the South.

The war to free all of Vietnam from imperialist control and to reunify the country was finally won in 1975. But before the Vietnamese victory, the country was subjected to the most brutal bombardment in human history. Today Vietnam still has to contend with the aftermath of the U.S. war effort.

The transportation system was severely damaged. Many bridges still have not been rebuilt to this day.

Population dislocations

The war also dislocated the population. To isolate the National Liberation Front from its rural supporters, the Pentagon sponsored the "strategic hamlets" program, which uprooted peasants from their land and grouped them in concentration camps. In the Mekong Delta, a key rice-growing region, peasants were reduced to living on rice rations provided from the United States.

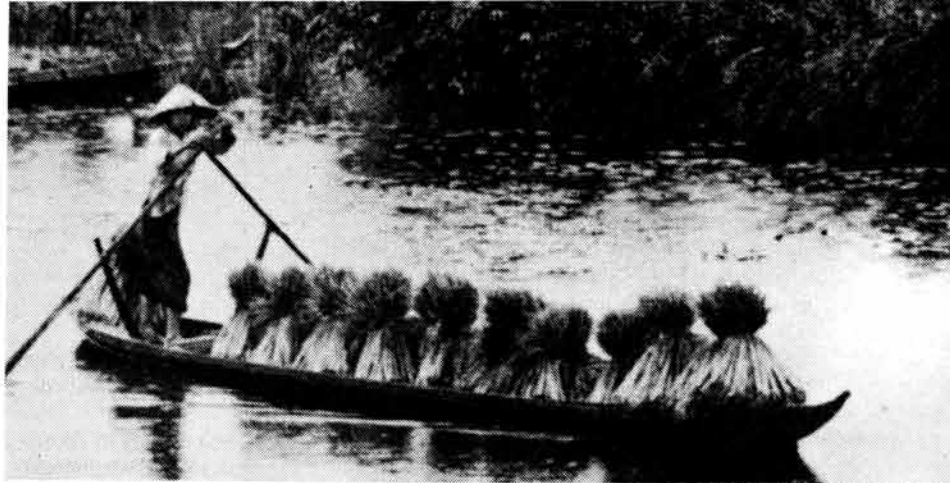
Massive spraying of chemical defoliants and the establishment of "free fire" zones further disrupted rural life.

The war caused a huge exodus from the countryside into the relative safety of the cities. When the large-scale U.S. intervention began in 1964, the population of South Vietnam was 80 percent rural. Eight years later, only 35 percent of South Vietnam's people were still in the countryside.

In the mushrooming urban areas, most of the population lived off the proceeds of U.S. military and economic aid. Only a small proportion of the urban population was actually engaged in productive labor.

Moreover, the social and population dislocations caused by the war and by the infusion of U.S. dollars caused an epidemic of crime, prostitution, and drug addiction.

The war also left a heavy legacy of orphans, widows, and disabled former soldiers and civilians. According to Duong Quoc Chinh, Vietnam's minister for disabled soldiers and social affairs, there are about 1.5 million dis-



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abled former soldiers, who make up 2.5 percent of the total population.

War ends, problems remain

Looking back to the period right after the end of the war, Nguyen Khac Vien recalls that "one of the mistakes made in 1975-76 was to underestimate the scale of the war damage: material destruction, social upheavals, long-term effects of the massive spraying of defoliants, the psychological impact of American intervention."

Vien adds that "another error in 1976 was to underestimate the aggressive intentions of the China-U.S. alliance."

With the collapse of the Saigon regime in 1975 and Vietnam's reunification in 1976, the country's problems were not over. In rapid succession Vietnam was hit by natural catastrophes — terrible droughts alternating with record floods.

U.S. reconstruction aid, promised in the 1973 Paris accords, was never provided.

When Washington banned all trade with Vietnam, many of the factories in the South, which had been established to turn imported raw materials into consumer goods, were forced to shut down.

And peace itself proved to be fleeting. In 1978 and 1979 Vietnam had to fight a two-pronged war on its southwestern and northern borders against Pol Pot's forces in Kampuchea and a massive invasion by troops from China.

The Chinese invasion caused considerable destruction in northern Vietnam. One of its lasting effects was the destruction of Vietnam's apatite (calcium phosphate) mines, which provided a key ingredient for fertilizer production.

In view of the problems that plagued Vietnam in the immediate postwar period, Nguyen Khac Vien stresses the importance of the decision in 1976 to quickly reunify the country under one administration and government. "One can scarcely imagine how Vietnam would have overcome all the trials of recent years if it had had two separate governments, north and south," Vien writes. "Firmly choosing the socialist path for the whole country has allowed us to think in the long term with a clear perspective, without which we would only have been able to patch things up without far-reaching effects."

While Vietnam's economic problems stem in large measure from overwhelming objective obstacles, Vietnamese officials are quick to point out that their own mistakes and miscalculations exacerbated these problems.

Nguyen Khac Vien recalls that "in the excitement of victory — the scope of which came rather unexpectedly — we rather lost sight of realities. Everything seemed possible and close at hand."

Vietnam's deputy ambassador to the United Nations Nguyen Ngoc Dung adds that following the victory there were those who felt that "we could immediately build socialism and a utopia. It took a while for some to understand the hard work needed to build socialism."

The heady optimism of the immediate post-victory period was reflected at the Fourth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party, held in 1976. There, an overly ambitious five-year economic plan was presented, reflecting hopes for rapid development of heavy industry and agricultural collectivization.

That congress projected that by 1980 annual production of rice would total 21 million tons; fish, 1 million tons; coal, 10 million tons; cement, 2 million tons.

Just how unrealistic these targets were is seen in the goals now being set for achievement by 1985: rice, 19-20 million tons; fish, 700,000 tons; coal, 8-9 million tons; cement, 2 million tons.

The Fourth Congress also projected growth rates of 8-10 percent per year in agriculture; 16-18 percent in industry; and 14-15 percent in national income.

Today the goals for annual growth rates by 1985 are 6-7 percent in agriculture, 4-5 percent in industry, and 4.5-5 percent in national income.

'Difficulties of advance to socialism'

At the VCP's Fifth Congress held in March 1982, the party's leadership acknowledged serious errors in the initial postwar period.

The Central Committee's Political Report to the Fifth Congress recognized that "we failed to fully realize the difficulties and complexities of the advance to socialism from a primarily small-production economy . . ."

Le Duan, the party's general secretary, told the delegates that "the Central Committee

comes before this congress with a harsh self-criticism." He noted that "in some fields, the shortcomings and errors in leadership and management have been the *main* cause of the onset and sharpness of the economic and social problems of the last few years" (emphasis added).

The crux of the party leadership's assessment focused on two mistakes: an attempt to move too rapidly in developing the economy; and "the system of administrative, bureaucratic management."

The congress focused on three key tasks for the rest of the 1980s: national defense; stabilization of living standards; and the "gradual building of the material and technical bases of socialism."

The earlier attempt to advance too rapidly in the economic sphere, notes Nguyen Khac Vien, "resulted in excessive investment in far too ambitious projects with the aim of rapidly developing heavy industry, and this when the country was hardly back on its feet after the war, with an inadequate energy and transport network and completely inexperienced managerial and planning cadres, and while the population still lacked many essential commodities."

As a result, according to Vien, "these investments have not yet brought any tangible results, while shortages have been getting worse, the population has increased, and foreign aid, considerable during the war, has been cut off."

In agriculture, writes Vien, the attempt to move too fast led to "ill-considered increases in the size of co-operatives in the North, and to accelerated collectivization in the South." This in turn "caused disenchantment amongst the peasantry and led to a drop in production."

Vien adds that "as far as handicrafts, small industry and petty trade were concerned, the trend was to abolish them as soon as possible to move toward 'large-scale socialist production.' Important economic resources were neutralized in this way, thus worsening the shortages in goods and services."

'Bureaucratic management'

The second main target of the Fifth Congress criticisms was the "bureaucratic management" system, which the reports noted had manifested itself in an overly centralized state control of virtually every aspect of economic life.

A key advantage of a planned economy is that the state can marshal the available economic resources to solve the most pressing social needs of the population. This is done by determining what must be accomplished, and then laying out general production goals and price guidelines, and deciding on allocations of raw materials, natural resources, and capital to achieve those goals.

This had been done abruptly and taken to an extreme, however, the congress decided. The smallest production decisions were often made at the national level. All prices were determined centrally. Each enterprise had to rely to-

tally on the state for supplies and raw materials. Subsidies from the state made up for an enterprise's losses, with little attention to questions of efficiency. Wages and agricultural prices were set without regard to providing material incentives for workers and peasants to boost production.

To make matters worse, the state simply did not yet have the expertise or experienced personnel to even begin to administer such a centralized system.

Party organizational secretary Le Duc Tho reminded the Fifth Congress delegates that because of the constant warfare, even though the CP had been a ruling party for more than 35 years, "our party has not had much time to concentrate on economic leadership and . . . our experience in economic leadership is very limited."

The system of central control over all aspects of economic life had been established in North Vietnam in the 1960s to run a simple economy whose total production was geared to the war effort, and in which foreign aid covered most state expenditures.

"In this situation," Nguyen Khac Vien points out, "the peasants did not really sell their produce to the State, but delivered it as a patriotic duty in exchange for which the State provided them with a number of industrial products, mostly from foreign aid. As a result, in both home and foreign trade, prices did not reflect the true value of commodities.

"Everything was supervised by the central State authority which drew up plans, provided enterprises with equipment and raw materials, then collected the products with prices and wages set centrally.

"The private sector" in North Vietnam, Vien continues, "was insignificant compared to the State sector. A free market existed, but had no real economic weight.

"In this situation of a poor country geared up for an almost superhuman war effort, wages were distributed on a somewhat egalitarian basis, a spirit of self-sacrifice prevailed."

When this system of state control over most areas of the economy was extended to the South, many officials viewed the existing network of private trade and industry with undisguised hostility.

"Although no law had prohibited private undertakings — commercial, handicraft, industrial — the general atmosphere" in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in the early years after reunification "was such that a pernicious character was attached to them. Many cadres thought that the sooner they disappeared, the better it was for the building of the new socialist society," writes Vien.

As a result, people with cash or equipment "hesitated to engage in business activities for fear of being labelled 'capitalists,'" and local authorities were slow to grant permits to those who were prepared to engage in business for fear of fostering a rebirth of capitalism.

The attempts to focus all attention on large-scale state-run economic projects while neglecting or discouraging small-scale, often pri-

vately owned light industry had disastrous results.

The country's infrastructure was simply unable to absorb the large investments, many of which remained idle or operated at only partial capacity.

Meanwhile, the already existing light industrial factories that produced consumer goods were paralyzed.

This situation poses not only economic, but also political problems for the revolution, especially as regards the alliance between workers and the huge peasant population.

During the war, peasants willingly made gigantic sacrifices for the war effort. But at a certain point, in order for the revolution to consolidate its support in the countryside, it must provide peasants with the opportunity to improve their daily conditions of existence.

In order for the peasants to be convinced to increase production, they must get what they consider a fair price for their produce. And, in addition, with the proceeds of those sales, the peasants must be able to buy agricultural tools and consumer goods from the state. Otherwise they eventually stop sending their goods to market and become hostile to the new system.

Economic reforms

A process of change in policy began with the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee in September 1979. Further measures were introduced in 1981, and the whole change was codified in the Fifth Congress in March 1982.

These reforms have had a very salutary effect on Vietnam's economy. In contrast to the 1976-1980 emphasis on pressing ahead with large-scale "socialist" production, the new policy places "top priority" on satisfying the essential needs of the population by stimulating food production and consumer goods.

In his report to the Fifth Congress, Council of Ministers Chairman Pham Van Dong made a sharp distinction between the long-term goals of Vietnam's economic development and the immediate measures required in the period of transition.

For the whole transitional period to socialism, Pham Van Dong stressed, the key question is industrialization and the establishment of large-scale socialist production, with heavy industry a priority.

But in the initial period, defined by the congress as running to 1990, the concrete priority is on stimulating agriculture and consumer-goods industries, which are indispensable not only for raising the population's abysmal living standards, but will also serve as a base for the subsequent development of heavy industry.

More latitude for state enterprises

The September 1979 Central Committee plenum, and subsequent resolutions of the Council of Ministers in 1981, called for a fundamental change in the management system in state-run enterprises.

Each individual enterprise was allowed broader initiative in carrying out the goals as-

signed to it in the state plan.

"Provided they strictly observe the State plan," wrote Vu Duy Hoang in the June 1982 *Vietnam Courier*, "directors have the power to take every decision which they judge most beneficial to the economy, with regard to the use of equipment, funds, as well as manpower without having to wait for a decision from above as in the past."

Local state-owned factories can now seek raw materials wherever they can find them, rather than count on the state to provide them all. Within limits they can use profits to expand the enterprise. They can borrow directly from banks. They can even borrow foreign currency from banks to purchase raw materials or parts and equipment abroad.

Enterprises can now recruit workers directly, have greater control over hiring, and can vary pay scales to reward the most productive.

New wage system

In 1981 a fundamental change was made in the manner in which pay scales were determined. The wartime egalitarian pay system, which did not make salary distinctions reflecting differences in productivity and skills levels, was changed because, in the words of journalist Le Viet, it "did nothing to promote initiative and enthusiasm at work. The practice of shirking responsibility was widespread."

Through the introduction of wages and bonuses that reward workers for higher productivity, output per worker has now increased, while absenteeism has declined.

In addition, workers who find ways to save on raw materials, energy, imported materials, and equipment receive up to 70 percent of the savings. Workers who discover cases of theft, embezzlement, or waste get a reward of up to 20 percent of the value of the materials recovered.

Private enterprise encouraged

The 1979 Central Committee resolution also "affirmed the legality and legitimacy of private individual enterprise in the period of transition to socialism, a period which is to last many years," according to Nguyen Khac Vien.

The existence of small-scale agriculture, handicrafts, and industrial production that depend "on the private sector and the free market" is now viewed as "an objective necessity throughout the transition period, and furthermore as a positive factor since it answers many of our society's needs."

As a result of these reforms, there has been a marked revival of commerce and industry in Cholon, the predominantly Chinese section of Ho Chi Minh City in which much of the light industry and trade was centered.

While most of the ethnic Chinese bankers, major traders, and industrialists have left Vietnam since 1975, most of the small traders and artisans remain.

Vien states that in Cholon, "the panic which had set in before and after the war started by Beijing [Peking] and had caused a number of

people to leave, is over." As a result of the reforms, "trading and industrial activities have been resumed with renewed vigour."

However, "the emancipation of small private production in no way implies a relaxation of efforts to extend the State and co-operative sectors," Vien asserts.

The efforts of the state, particularly in the area of commerce, are essential to limit the negative side of the growth of private trade — speculation, black marketeering, smuggling, and inflation.

Key reform in agriculture

The reform that had the most immediate impact in boosting production, however, was the inauguration of a new contractual quota system in agriculture.

The contract system was introduced in the cooperatives of the north in 1980, and spread to the whole country in 1981. Under the previous system, farm cooperative members were given work points for doing a certain amount of labor on a given area or task. At the end of the harvest, the proceeds were divided up in proportion to the number of points each member had accumulated.

Under the new system, members sign a contract with the cooperative in which the cooperative pledges to take care of soil preparation, irrigation and drainage; and to provide seeds, fertilizer, and insecticides. In return, the member agrees to sell a specific amount of the crop to the state at a fixed price.

If the farmer produces more than that amount, the surplus can be sold on the open market or to the state at a much higher price, or can be retained for personal use.

In the short time the contractual quota system has been in operation, food production has expanded considerably.

The new system does not mean a retreat from the establishment of cooperative labor and production in the countryside. Rather it marks a change in the form and methods by which this goal is pursued.

In a speech to the National Assembly in December, Vo Van Kiet, the deputy prime minister in charge of planning, reported that collectivization of farmland in the Mekong Delta will move forward gradually and that by 1985 the creation of production teams — the lowest level of collectivization — will be "fundamentally complete" throughout the South.

A key factor in spurring the gradual growth of the agricultural collectives must be the growth of state-run industries producing agricultural machinery. In a September 1982 interview, Nguyen Khac Vien pointed out that "people will prefer the cooperative if there is sufficient machinery. When a combine harvester is available, they won't cut rice with a sickle. Youth will follow the collective rather than the individual road."

Much remains to be done

Despite encouraging gains in the economy in the past two years, much remains to be done to build the basis for solid growth and develop-

ment.

As Nguyen Khac Vien points out, in the short run "the emancipation of small-scale production should improve the supply of consumer goods and generate employment for millions of people, providing them with a decent livelihood. The overhaul of the wages and bonuses system along with improvements in the State retail trade should lead to a gradual increase in living standards of salaried workers."

In addition, "the progressive expansion of the State sector, with the assistance of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, will eventually lead to the creation of essential industrial structures. . . . It can be hoped that the first such industries will emerge in the course of the coming decade."

Progress brings new problems

But along with the progress comes new problems. Hoang Tung, a member of the VCP Central Committee, notes that there have been serious excesses by private industry in Ho Chi Minh City. "The decision encouraging small private trade or industry was a wise one," Tung states. "But the enforcement terms were not clearly enough defined. A number of private enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City have no scruples."

Among the problems Tung enumerates are the theft of materials from state enterprises for sale to private industries and charging of inflated prices for their products.

Tung states that in the future, private factories "will not be permitted to purchase raw materials just anywhere and at any price. Moreover they will have to deliver a share of their production to the state trade organization in order to cut down prices at Ho Chi Minh City and in the southern part of Vietnam."

There have also been serious abuses of the greater latitude being allowed in internal trade — black marketeering, speculation, profiteering on trade between provinces.

The government newspaper *Nhan Dan* pointed to some of these problems in a recent editorial. "Distribution and circulation is now the most complex and hottest battleground of the 'which will win' struggle between the two roads of socialism and capitalism," the editorial stated.

It called for efforts to "punish speculators, smugglers, manufacturers of counterfeit goods" and to "eliminate the exploitative practices of the bourgeois traders."

Vien, too, acknowledges problems with the reforms. "In Vietnam," he notes, "the transition to socialism has barely begun. Who will win? This is a serious and urgent question, especially in Ho Chi Minh City. Here the State sector faces great difficulties in its competition with private enterprise."

Vien adds: "It is a closely disputed contest. Besides, it is by no means easy to manage parallel free and socialist markets. There will be more ups and downs, more rules to make or to break, more resistance to overcome, more traps to avoid."

He is, however, cautiously optimistic. The state sector in industry and trade is making steady progress, educational levels are rising, relations between North and South are expanding, and "cadres and leaders are learning to conserve the wealth and manage the affairs of the State ever better. Socialism has begun to take root."

In short, says Vien, "in Ho Chi Minh City, patches of light and shadow exist side by side and jostle with each other, but light is indisputably gaining."

External factors

Two factors beyond Vietnam's control can make the country's progress easier or more difficult.

The first is the question of peace, which Vietnam desperately needs to pull itself out of its problems and lay a solid basis for the future.

Relations with China remain tense on the northern border, requiring large expenditures of money, personnel, and matériel to defend it. And, Vietnamese troops have had to remain in Kampuchea to prevent a return of the U.S.- and China-backed guerrillas led by Pol Pot, who operate along Kampuchea's border with Thailand.

The second factor is foreign aid, which would make it much easier for Vietnam to repair the ravages of three decades of war and develop its economy and society.

Punishing Vietnam

Since 1978 there has been a drastic decline in foreign aid from the capitalist world, as Washington and its allies try to punish Vietnam for helping Kampuchean rebels overthrow the murderous Pol Pot regime.

Between 1975 and 1978 Vietnam received \$2 billion in aid from the capitalist world, of which \$740 million was in grants and the rest in loans.

Since late 1978, the amount of this aid has dropped sharply. Sweden continues to provide annual grants of about \$80 million, and France has offered loans of about \$29 million. Belgium has also provided some aid. But Japan, Australia, and other countries have cancelled their loan and aid packages.

Under pressure from Washington and its allies, assistance from international institutions, which totalled \$625 million over 1975-78, has also declined sharply.

The major remaining sources of aid are the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, which provided \$560 million in grants and 2 percent interest loans in 1981.

The best help that supporters of the Vietnamese revolution can give to the still frail but promising economic turnabout is to demand an end to the military threats against Vietnam and Kampuchea, and a resumption of aid and trade from the capitalist countries.

With peace, aid, and trade, Vietnam will be in a position to make steady progress. As Nguyen Khac Vien summarizes the prospects: "No great leap forward, but determined steps." □

New democratic openings

Interview with leader of Revolutionary Workers Party

[The following is an interview with Claudio Tavárez, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in the Dominican Republic. The interview was conducted in Spanish at the end of December; the translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Question. How has the capitalist economic crisis affected working people in the Dominican Republic?

Answer. The world crisis of capitalism has had a disastrous effect on the Dominican Republic. One example is the recent layoffs that hit 800 out of 2,000 workers at Falconbridge, a U.S.-Canadian nickel mining concern.

The government just fired 1,000 workers from the water resources agency who had gone on strike for higher wages and for trade-union rights. In the free trade zones, there is continual repression of the unions. Hundreds of workers in the city of Santiago have been fired for trying to organize unions to defend their living conditions.

Sugar workers were recently threatened with firings if they carried out a strike for demands that are widely supported by Dominican working people — for social benefits, and for reinstatement of hundreds of workers fired earlier for participating in the sugar industry trade unions.

At the same time, sugar prices remain low while millions and millions of dollars must be spent on importing petroleum. The high prices charged by the oil monopolies have helped bring the Dominican economy to bankruptcy.

But this crisis has a special character in the Dominican Republic. At the same time that in the countries of Central America — El Salvador and Guatemala in particular — a liberation struggle is under way, in the Dominican Republic there is a democratic opening.

In this situation the revolutionary movement has an opportunity to approach the working class more directly with a clear political line not only on the repercussions of the economic crisis but also on the aggressive policies of U.S. imperialism against the revolutions in Central America.

These two things are combined — it is no longer simply a crisis of capitalism, but U.S. imperialism's war policy that the workers and peasants of the Dominican Republic see as the result of that crisis. This means the struggle against U.S. imperialist intervention against El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada has a fundamental role.

Q. Could you explain the character of the current Dominican government of President Salvador Jorge Blanco, the attitude toward it among working people, and the character of this "democratic opening" that you mentioned?

A. The democratic opening actually began with the previous government of Antonio Guzmán, which came to power in the 1978 elections. One could see reflected in these elections the political crisis of U.S. imperialism, which had resulted from its defeat in Vietnam and from the Watergate scandal.

The dictatorial regime of Joaquín Balaguer had arisen from the defeat inflicted on the Dominican people in 1965 by U.S. imperialism's military intervention. Forty thousand U.S. Marines were sent to crush the popular insurrection that took place that year. Hundreds and hundreds of fighters were massacred; hundreds more were jailed or forced into exile.

But by 1978 imperialism was in crisis and the Dominican regime was worn out. Carter came along with his so-called human rights policy, and of course the bourgeois opposition in the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) took advantage of that campaign for its own purposes.

Still more important, however, was the rising revolutionary struggle in Nicaragua at that time. The PRD came out against the Somoza dictatorship and took part in solidarity demonstrations with Nicaragua. The fight against Somoza had a big impact on the struggle against Balaguer, who thus found himself forced to hold more or less "clean" elections.

The army could not be sent into the streets to force people to vote for Balaguer, as had happened in past elections. In 1974, for example, soldiers with red bandanas and armed gangs intimidated voters, forced them at bayonet point to vote for Balaguer. But in 1978 Balaguer could not do this, and so the masses seized the opportunity to vote for the PRD instead.

We should recall that in 1965 the civil war began around a call for constitutional rule, for the return to government of Juan Bosch, who had been elected president but ousted by a military coup in 1963.

There were many illusions among the masses, and even currents on the left called for a critical vote for the PRD in the 1978 elections. The PRD had considerable credibility among the masses.

The PRD won the election in 1978 and carried out certain measures — political prisoners were all released, a general amnesty allowed

all the exiles to return, the anticommunist laws Balaguer had decreed were repealed. Those laws had been used to limit press freedom by banning the discussion and practice of communism.

Once those laws were revoked the organizations of the left gained legal status and began to publish legal newspapers. There was also an opening with regard to trade-union activity. The mass movement made a series of organizational gains, the result of 12 years of struggle the people carried out against the Balaguer dictatorship.

Guzmán's government also used repression, but not to the degree that Balaguer's did. It was mainly characterized by a high degree of administrative corruption, which was so extensive that it is widely believed to have been the cause of President Guzmán's suicide at the end of his term in office.

The new PRD government of Salvador Jorge Blanco, therefore, presents itself as opposed to corruption, as an honest government. It presents the problem of corruption as the fundamental one in the Dominican Republic.

With Jorge in power it has become more clear that this is not the problem, that the problem instead is imperialist domination and capitalism. Just as Guzmán did and as any capitalist government would, Jorge's regime has found it necessary to attack the workers and peasants in order to defend the interests of imperialism and the Dominican bourgeoisie.

There are still many illusions among the workers, of course, since this government has not yet had sufficient time to demonstrate its true character to the masses.

Jorge had promised to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba and with the other workers states. That has not been done. Persecution of Haitian immigrant workers continues, and there have been cases of violent repression. A student was murdered by the police at the university. In November, a demonstration of thousands of students was broken up with tear-gas bombs by the National Police.

Q. You mentioned the problems of Haitian immigrants. Could you explain the relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic?

A. In recent years there have been protests against the deportation, persecution, and murder of Haitians in the Dominican Republic. From this experience the PRT has reached a conclusion that has also come to be widely accepted in the Dominican revolutionary movement: that the Dominican revolution is closely

bound up with the fate of our sister republic of Haiti.

Haitian labor in the sugar industry is one of the principal sources of wealth for the Dominican ruling class. Every year the Dominican government contracts or purchases the labor of 15,000 to 20,000 Haitian laborers for the sugar harvest. They work in conditions of superexploitation, of near-slavery, without any of the rights even that Dominican workers enjoy.

A special problem is the racism against Haitians that is encouraged by the Dominican bourgeoisie. This is rooted in the historical fact that the question of Dominican independence was always posed as independence from Haiti rather than as independence from Spanish colonialism. Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the same island. Large areas of what came to be the Dominican Republic were under Haitian occupation during much of the 19th century.

This longstanding anti-Haitian sentiment enables the Dominican bourgeoisie to carry out repression and superexploitation against Haitian immigrants. Haitians live in isolated, impoverished communities known as *bateyes*.

What is more, the Dominican government collaborates with the Haitian dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and allows Duvalier's paramilitary thugs, the *Tonton-Macoutes*, to patrol the Haitian *bateyes*. They repress any opposition that develops there either against conditions in the Dominican Republic or the dictatorship in Haiti.

Work in defense of the Haitian immigrants is of course quite difficult. It is only now that the trade unions are beginning to raise demands on behalf of the Haitian workers on the sugar plantations.

Despite the fact that Haitians make up part of the labor force in the sugar industry, some unions refuse to accept them as members or fail to make efforts to organize them. The Ministry of Labor does not recognize any rights for the Haitian workers. Social Security taxes are deducted from their wages but they receive none of the benefits. They have no schools, no hospitals, and their housing conditions are the poorest in the country.

But the problems of Haitian immigrants in the United States and the publicity these received have had an impact in the Dominican Republic, where exile organizations have begun to function more or less openly. The Dominican revolutionary movement has a big responsibility in this regard; it must fight to see that Haitians have a right to organize and to oppose the campaign of terror against the Haitian exile movement that has been going on under the Balaguer, Guzmán, and Jorge Blanco regimes.

There is one case in particular, that of Luis Samuel Roche, a Haitian exile who took part in the fight against U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Roche was 50 years old and had fought in a guerrilla movement against the Duvalier regime in 1962. He disappeared on June 5, 1982, in the Dominican



Claudio Tavárez meeting with Haitian refugees in San Cristóbal in 1979.

capital, Santo Domingo. The campaign to save his life and clarify his whereabouts has had a big impact on public opinion. A delegation from the UN High Commission on Refugees has even visited the country to take up the situation of Haitian exiles in general and the case of Roche in particular.

The government has up to now refused to say what happened to Roche, even though it is known that he was arrested and taken to a police station in Santo Domingo. The most recent report is that he was beaten to death there by the National Police.

A deputy in parliament from the Reformist Party has declared that he knows all the details of how Roche was murdered. We called for a commission of inquiry from the Chamber of Deputies to probe these charges, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Up to now the Chamber of Deputies and the president himself have refused to put the question on the agenda.

In any case, the fight of the Haitian people is coming to be recognized in the Dominican Republic, along with the important role Haitian workers play in the economy. This is being expanded to other areas besides sugar, such as the rice and coffee harvests. Solidarity with the most oppressed sectors of the working class and with the Haitian people is fundamental for the workers movement in the Dominican Republic.

This is becoming understood, and now there is never an event such as a rally in solidarity with El Salvador or Nicaragua in which the fight of the Haitian people against their dictatorship and the fight to defend the Haitian immigrants in the *bateyes* is not raised. One demonstration of 5,000 people, headed by Luis Samuel Roche's wife, was attacked by the police.

Q. The defeat of 1965 at the hands of U.S. imperialism must remain an important part of the consciousness of working people in the Dominican Republic. How has this affected the movement in solidarity with Central America? How has the Dominican government responded to this movement?

A. I would say that the Dominican people are among the most politically conscious people in the world, precisely because of having suffered directly a U.S. military invasion and having fought for nearly six months against thousands and thousands of marines.

Dominicans understand concretely what an invasion of Nicaragua, for example, would mean. They understand what U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Guatemala means, and they grasp the threats to bomb or invade Cuba. They are very sensitive to the attacks of U.S. imperialism.

As a result, the governments of both Guzmán and Jorge Blanco have taken care not to appear identified with Washington's foreign policy of aggression. They have opted to remain silent, and on occasion have taken positions against imperialist policy. They supported Argentina in the Malvinas War, and they have backed the French-Mexican declaration calling for negotiations in El Salvador.

A Sandinista delegation headed by Nicaraguan government junta member Sergio Ramírez was invited to Jorge Blanco's inauguration. We consider it positive that Nicaragua's revolutionary government and the Dominican government maintain friendly relations. We are in favor of strengthening such ties and oppose any blockade or break in relations, any obstacle to good relations between them. These aid in the struggle against U.S. imperialism's policy of isolating the Sandinista government and the Central American and Caribbean revolutions.

But while there are good relations between the government and Nicaragua, things are not the same with regard to El Salvador. The representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front [FDR] was expelled from the country, and since then there has been no FDR delegation in the Dominican Republic.

With regard to Cuba, the government has taken one tiny step forward by allowing a quota of 50 visitors' visas for Cubans to come to our country. This is important because in the past all kinds of obstacles were put up to prevent even Cuban sporting teams and scientists from attending events or congresses in the Dominican Republic. The correct thing to do would be to establish full diplomatic relations with Cuba; that is a fundamental demand of our solidarity movement.

The Dominican government is obviously responding to mass pressure. What's more, the weakness of U.S. imperialism, its defeat in Nicaragua and its economic crisis, have made it possible for the local bourgeoisie to find more room to maneuver. Revolutionary organizations ought to take advantage of this contradiction to maneuver in favor of the revo-

lution. It's all part of the political struggle, part of the process of learning to govern before taking power, similar to the ways the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutionaries are learning how to maneuver diplomatically to advance the interests of working people.

Q. What has been the evolution of the leftist forces in the Dominican Republic since the 1965 defeat?

A. After the crushing of the April 1965 insurrection through the U.S. intervention, the strongest left currents in the Dominican Republic were the Maoists. There were various organizations that professed Maoism, as well as organizations that held to a guerrilla-warfare strategy.

The latter included one of the most important revolutionary figures of recent times, Col. Francisco Caamaño Deñó. He had led the April 1965 revolution; after it was defeated, he had to flee the country. He went to Cuba and returned from there with a small group of followers at the beginning of the 1970s. In 1972 Caamaño was captured and murdered by the repressive forces, aided by the Central Intelligence Agency. He died in much the same way that Che Guevara had in Bolivia.

That was another big setback for the revolutionary movement — losing a young leader who was among the most respected figures in the country. It was of course a limitation on Caamaño's part not to have seen that more than a guerrilla foco was necessary to overthrow the dictatorship.

Not only was Caamaño killed. A whole group of leaders who had come out of the 1965 upsurge were also killed. They had participated with him in the founding of the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) in Havana in 1967.

Later the popular movement focused mainly around the fight for democratic rights against the Balaguer dictatorship. Once Balaguer was ousted through the 1978 elections, fresh debates and discussions arose around questions of strategy and the character of the Dominican revolution.

As a result, the organizations that had held to a guerrilla-warfare policy abandoned it. The most important of these was the Camilo Torres Revolutionary Committees (CORECATO), which split into two tendencies, the Socialist Party (PS) and the Socialist Workers Movement (MST).

The Maoist currents also underwent splits and regroupments. The main organizations from this background today are the Communist Workers Nucleus (NCT), the Dominican Workers Party (PTD), and the Dominican People's Movement (MPD).

Out of a series of discussion on how to unite in action against the Guzmán government's policies and how to orient to the May 1982 elections, various coalitions arose. One of these is the Socialist Bloc, made up of the NCT, the MST, and the PS. These three groups and seven others — including our own, the PRT — joined to present candidates in the

elections as the United Left, confronting the capitalist parties.

Another bloc, involving the Communist Party, the Movement for Socialism, and the Socialist Unity Movement, also presented candidates in the elections under the name Socialist Unity.

As a product of common experiences in the election and in other mass activity, a wide-ranging political discussion has opened up

among the various organizations over points of agreement, disagreement, and convergence of program, strategy, and orientation. As part of this process, the MST and PRT have deepened their political collaboration — for example in common work in solidarity with the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions — and have adopted a perspective of fusion. They are pursuing discussions to bring about such a fusion in the near future. □

No. Korea hits U.S. maneuvers

By Will Reissner

In response to giant U.S.-organized "Team Spirit '83" military maneuvers in South Korea, the armed forces of North Korea were placed on a "semiwar" footing on February 1.

The order called on "the entire units of the Korean People's Army, all the members of the Korean People's Security Forces, the Worker-Peasant Red Guards and the Young Red Guards to enter into a semiwar state from February 1 to mid-April, the period of the enemy's joint military exercises."

"Team Spirit '83" involves 191,000 military personnel from South Korea and the United States, 73,000 of them U.S. troops. In addition, "observers" from Japan's so-called Self-Defense Forces are taking part in the maneuvers.

The war games involve the largest number of ground troops of any military exercise ever staged by the Pentagon. They simulate an invasion of North Korea by land, sea, and air. In all, six divisions of the South Korean and U.S. armies will take part.

The Pentagon also announced on February 3 that American aircraft carriers will stage joint war games with Japanese and South Korean naval forces in the Sea of Japan off North Korea's east coast.

These exercises are an important component of Washington's plans to solidify a three-sided military alliance between the United States, Japan, and South Korea to protect imperialist interests in Asia. The Pentagon has long been pressing the Japanese government to take more military responsibility for policing the seas in the western Pacific and for providing military aid to South Korea.

This alliance was brought closer to fulfillment during Japanese Premier Yasuhiro Nakasone's visits to Seoul and Washington in mid-January. While in South Korea, Nakasone promised South Korean military dictator Chun Doo Hwan some \$4 billion in aid.

In Washington during a January 18-19 visit, Nakasone pledged to boost Japanese military spending and promised that Japanese forces would close off four key maritime straits in the event of an emergency.

Nakasone also stated that if a military conflict breaks out on the Korean peninsula, Japan will turn itself into a giant logistical base for U.S. forces, as it did during the Korean War.

The deadly serious character of the "Team



Spirit '83" maneuvers was underscored by a January 16 dispatch by United Press International, which obtained a copy of the classified U.S. government document "Fiscal 1984-88 Defense Guidance." In it the Pentagon contemplates a move against North Korea in the event of any military confrontation with the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

And on January 22, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Meyer acknowledged in Seoul that the United States could use the tactical nuclear weapons it already has in South Korea in any conflict on the Korean peninsula.

The Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL), based in Havana, released a statement condemning the military maneuvers, which it called "a serious threat of war against the [North Korean people] and against peace in the whole region." It affirmed OSPAAAL's support to the struggle of the Korean people "to achieve the peaceful and independent reunification of their homeland." □

The new education in the new Nicaragua

'A society where all students work and all workers study'

[The conflict between the old and the new — between the backwardness inherited from imperialism, and the concrete advances and longer-range goals of the revolution — is being fought out in every institution in Nicaraguan society.]

[In the following speech Commander Tomás Borge addresses the developing struggle in education, large areas of which remain under the control of the reactionary Catholic church hierarchy. Borge, Nicaragua's minister of the interior, is the sole survivor of the three founding members of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).]

[The speech was given in Managua, February 4, before an audience of 2,000 at the congress of the National Association of Nicaraguan Educators (ANDEN), the country's main teachers union. Because of the importance of the themes it addresses, the speech was broadcast on television, reprinted February 7 in both the FSLN daily *Barricada* and the prorevolutionary daily *El Nuevo Diario*, and published as a pamphlet by ANDEN. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Since ANDEN's founding congress February 3-4, 1979, much water, blood, and sweat has flowed — a long drama, the unfurling of many triumphant flags for our people. That kind of teachers' congress and this enthusiastic celebration take place in two qualitatively different times.

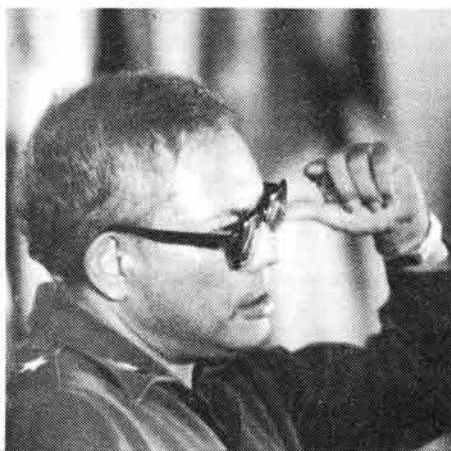
In February 1979 we were just about to see the Monimbó insurrection take place. The first anniversary of the fall of *compañero* Camilo Ortega had just passed. Our people were entering, with cleansing violence, a brilliant place in modern history. That congress was held in the midst of repression so fierce that it seemed a hallucination, repression in which the

To be capable of teaching, the teachers too must be students . . .

Nicaraguan people's capacity for struggle and ability to determine their own future were put to the test.

This meeting of commemoration is taking place at a time when people's power is being consolidated, in the midst of a revolutionary situation that grips Central America and is spreading to the rest of the continent.

It is not at all unusual that teachers who yesterday fought the Somozaist dictatorship today



IP/Michael Baumann

TOMÁS BORGE

Education is a system of values and ideas that justifies the interests of the class that wields state power . . .

defend the revolution they helped make, that they do not stand apart from the heroic struggle of the peoples of Central America. In February 1979 Nicaraguan teachers did not struggle, could not struggle, for a new system of education. They had to fight to create the conditions of struggle for a new education.

Right now that struggle is the order of the day. A new philosophy, a new structure, a new strategy of education constitute the most important task of this revolutionary process, a task that belongs to the entire society but whose fundamental responsibility lies with the teachers.

Of course, when we speak of the new education, we are not only referring to academic programs or to the social priorities of this great challenge. We are referring to the quest for the new man, to the transformation of man through education. We are referring to the unpostponable task of converting our people into a nation of students and teachers — that is, a country where the students learn to be teachers and the teachers learn to be students.

One of the most important challenges is to create in teachers the consciousness that they too must be students. To be capable of teaching others, the teacher must learn to be his own instructor as well.

Education in the countryside

In this universe of education, in the field of

teaching, the teachers in the countryside are the ones who confront the most serious problems. Many times the rural educator does not have an adequate place to give classes or, worse, no place at all. Generally he lacks housing as well. He is often separated from his family and has serious difficulties in obtaining school texts, not only for his students but also for his own pedagogical guidance. In addition to earning low wages, he has to travel some distance just to pick up his check.

The country's economic limitations have not made it possible to undertake a special housing program for teachers. However, in our opinion, ANDEN should put forward the demand that homes be constructed beside each school, with community participation.

There is receptivity in MINVAH [Ministry of Housing] for such a program. It not only makes sense socially but also makes headway in a practical sense as well, given that teachers contend, and with some justification, that they can't live in the rural communities with their families because homes are lacking.

A house for the rural teacher means not only an increase in his real wages, but also makes it possible for him to live as part of the community that is the object of his attention as a teacher. Right now the fact is that a great number of rural teachers give classes only three or four days a week, a situation they blame on the housing shortage.

ANDEN's demand for priority to wage increases for rural teachers was just, as was the

The revolutionary state must organize and direct the new education . . .

response it received in the Ministry of Education. In addition to benefitting from the general pay raise, beginning last year teachers received a bonus depending on where they are located.

This morning the National Directorate [of the FSLN], in discussing the conditions of rural teachers in the country's most remote areas — the Atlantic Coast, north and central Zelaya Province, and other similar regions — agreed to propose to the Junta of National Reconstruction that it study, as quickly as possible, forms of material incentives for this entire layer of teachers.

Naturally, the rural teachers also have the obligation to respond to this notable effort with more dedication and commitment to their work.

An aspect of singular importance is the need to confront teachers' empiricism, the need to seek new mechanisms to assure the continuity

of their studies. The teacher should identify with the content of the new education, becoming part of a system that enables him to advance in the fields of teaching, culture, science, and particularly in the field of political education. All of this is extremely difficult and complex.

But how can a teacher raise the cultural level of his students if he hasn't mastered new teach-

The medieval church promised the poor a paradise after death while helping to build an inferno on earth . . .

ing techniques; if he lacks culture adequate to the level that should be imparted in his teaching? How can a teacher form patriotic and revolutionary consciousness in his students if he lacks the basic elements for projecting this capacity as an architect or sculptor of consciousness?

How can a teacher explain the politics of the revolution to his students if he has no basis on which to form an opinion, if he himself doesn't know what the revolution is? How can a teacher explain to his students the essence of exploitation, exploitation that has stripped part of his own hide, if he doesn't know how to explain exploitation conceptually? How can he create profoundly anti-imperialist consciousness if he is ignorant of the essence of imperialism?

How can he speak to them of the perspectives of the new society if he doesn't know what pillars the new society must be built on? How can he involve his students in conceiving a strategy of education if he doesn't have the remotest idea of what the new education is?

To answer all these problems we must understand their roots. Before speaking about what the new education means, it's essential that we understand what the role of education has been in the social process. It's necessary for us to define education in the full sense in order to later place it in the context of the revolutionary process.

Education and society

Education is the process through which society reproduces the ideas, values, moral and ethical principles, and behavioral habits of the successive generations. All social organization is a function of the class interests that hold state power. Education is a process of forming individuals in ideology, in a complex system of values and ideas that justifies the interests of the class that wields state power.

In primitive society there were no special educational institutions, not even a special layer of teachers. Children learned through everyday practice. Guided by adults, they assimilated customs and ethical norms inside their own primitive communities, where prizes, taboos, and imitation played a role.

In primitive society, where social classes

didn't exist, there was no objective interest in ideologically ensuring the reproduction of a system where some men exploited others. The productive forces, obviously very rudimentary (arrows, stone axes, etc.), were barely able to produce what was necessary for subsistence. There they couldn't form groups based on different social classes.

But this society had its own dynamic. It began to change with the development of the means of production. This development made necessary the first great division between intellectual and manual labor. This division made possible the appearance of a ruling minority that monopolized man's incipient knowledge and a ruled majority of laborers who, in the course of a long process, were converted into slaves.

The minority not only monopolized knowledge but also the apparatus of coercion, that is, arms. A complex process of development gave rise to private property — monopoly over the means of production, land, and the most important instruments of labor.

Along with the means of material production, the ruling class also appropriated the means of spiritual production. In other words, education was converted into a monopoly of the exploiters. The schools that arose projected the philosophical ideas of the time. Science began to take its first steps and art began to develop — all to assure the dominance of the masters over the slaves.

The slaveowners' philosophy was designed to legally and morally justify slavery. Art and culture were intended to satisfy refinement, man's natural appetite for beauty, but always with the slaveholders' interests in mind.

Courses in history usually take note of Athenian democracy, philosophical dialogues, beautiful oratory, the creation of beautiful sculpture, broad discussions of the political problems of the times, and the development of sport in the famous Olympics. Rarely, however, is it pointed out that all this was the exclusive property of the nobles.

When currents arose that contradicted the Athenian aristocracy's interests — such as the sophists, who did not recognize the existence of the gods and who attacked the basis of that aristocratic democracy — they were persecuted! Their books were burned in the agora, or public plaza.

Of course slaves, peasants, artisans, plebeians, helots, and the exploited were exiled from education. At that time, the development of the means of production didn't require workers to be specially trained, and the ruling social classes' only interest was to make use of men's physical capacity for work. Unlike what has occurred in other epochs of social development, they had no interest whatsoever in developing, for the sake of exploitation, the intellectual capacity of the exploited.

The feudal church

By feudal times there was growing interest on the part of the landowners in ideologically

influencing the serfs under their rule. A double coercion, physical and spiritual, was exercised against workers. The use of physical force as a coercive means was accompanied by the use of the church's ideological influence to keep the peasant serfs subjected to feudal society.

Of course, the church was the educational vehicle of the times. It trained the aristocracy in the art of administering its domains. It transmitted scientific knowledge to kings and emperors, and it transmitted to the great masses of serfs the ideology of resignation, dressed up in prayers, solemn rites, and a constant pounding away at docility and promises of a better life after death.

The medieval church promised the poor a paradise after death, while helping to build them an inferno on earth. Of course, it justified the paradise of the rich in this life, while selling them, with endless indulgences, paradise after death as well.

In general, education in feudal times was monopolized by the church. It exercised control over philosophic wisdom and dominated a certain kind of science, which was really more of a fraud than anything else. To block the development of true science, already incubating in the minds of some men, the power of the Inquisition was used.

Everybody is familiar with the story of Giordano Bruno, a pioneer of science near the end of feudal times.¹ Everyone is familiar with the practice of burning people at the stake. The scientists of the time were condemned to death, accused of being heretics or witches. The feudal epoch was a struggle of the ruling classes against scientific development and for the imposition, at all costs, of the most primitive concepts from the point of view of philosophy.

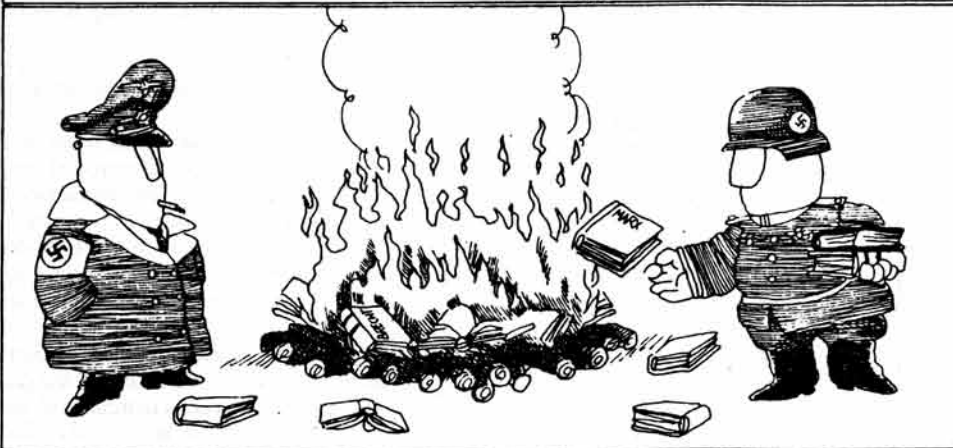
The liberal revolution, or the bourgeois revolution, gave education a new content. It pushed science and technology to levels heretofore unknown.

The industrial revolution gave birth to an

The bourgeoisie returns desperately to the church when its world is at the point of collapse . . .

important leap in the development of productive forces. Machinery became complex. Technology in the service of production became complex. Moreover, the bourgeoisie not only required the exploitation of physical labor, which acquired brutal forms during this period, but also demanded that broad layers of workers acquire skill and knowledge in the technology linked to production. So the

1. Giordano Bruno was driven from the Dominican order and eventually burned at the stake in the 16th century for his unorthodox ideas, especially his championing of the Copernican view that the earth is not the center of the universe, but instead revolves around the sun. — *IP*.



In bottom panel, "G.N." are initials for Somoza's National Guard.

Barricada

bourgeoisie gave an important push to education, stimulating to some extent the need for workers to learn to read and write.

In the early part of the bourgeois revolution, in order to confront the tremendous backwardness imposed by feudalism, the bourgeoisie fought religion, ignorance, and superstition. In its struggle against the dogmatism of feudal ideology, it raised the banner of science. That is, economic requirements and political necessity compelled it to give general education a certain development, but always within limits that would not endanger its class interests.

But science and critical thinking have a tendency to spread, preventing the bourgeoisie from being able to control their overall scope. This enables workers to accumulate knowl-

edge and experience that facilitate new forms of organization. When the working class acquires class consciousness and initiates its struggles to confront exploitation, the bourgeoisie acquires a reactionary character, not only in content but in form as well.

The bourgeoisie tries to manipulate science in its favor; organizing higher education in such a manner that it remains far out of workers' reach. With time, the bourgeoisie seeks to utilize religion, which had been cast aside during the struggle against feudalism, as an instrument of ideological domination.

At one and the same time it uses physical repression as well as a new level of spiritual repression, creating an ideological apparatus far more refined but hardly less brutal than that

of the feudal epoch. Just like the feudal lords, the bourgeoisie uses religion as an instrument to preach conformity, resignation, and the conciliation of classes.

It is interesting to note how the bourgeoisie returns desperately to the church when its world is at the point of collapse or has collapsed, when it looks around and sees with terror and fright that the "natural order" it invented in its consciousness was only an illusion. It is interesting to see how irritated the bourgeoisie get with Jesus Christ dressed in rags, demanding that he return to wearing the shining sequins that adorned his old altars.

It is inside capitalist society that the sector of educators is developed. It is inside capitalism that they are going to acquire consciousness of their condition as wage workers and, in many cases, consciousness of being utilized as a tool of ideological domination in the educational programs of the capitalist regime.

The subjection of Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, at the time it was incorporated into the capitalist world market, at the end of the last century, when massive coffee production began, the oligarchy's vehicle of ideological domination was fundamentally the church. The great masses of urban and rural workers, the so-called marginal sectors, and the great mass of the peasantry were denied access to education at any level.

This paved the way for an almost blood-curdling illiteracy in our country. It was the rich coffee growers and landlords, the political sectors that controlled the government, and the rich merchants who sent their sons to the national and foreign universities.

There were no teachers colleges. It wasn't until 1938 that the first teachers college was founded. This explains why in 1929, of the 745 primary grade teachers, barely 107 had teaching degrees. That first teachers college, significantly, bore the name of an American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and produced teachers with an eyedropper.

In 1950, according to Miguel De Castilla's data, a little more than 68,000 students were enrolled in primary school, a figure that grew to a little more than 164,000 in 1960. In the same epoch, the number of students enrolled in higher education rose to 1,441.

This was logical. Cotton production demanded that the bourgeoisie not only proletarianize the peasants, but also that it develop a certain number of trained personnel to administer technology and accounting in capitalist cotton production. For the same reason efforts were made to create an ideological educational apparatus and, at the initiative of the U.S. government, the Cooperative Inter-American Public Education Service was formed.

Between 1952 and 1961 more than 2,000 teachers were trained as unconscious instruments of imperialism and the local bourgeoisie's ideological plans. After that the Nicaraguan-American Organization of Technical Cooperation was founded, along with the

so-called First National Education Development Plan. In operation from 1972 to 1980, it was developed by staff members from the Southwest Alliance for Latin America, who were sent by AID [a unit of the U.S. State Department].

Teachers began in 1947 to confront this entire plan of ideological domination through education. In that year they founded their first embryonic organization — the Union Federation of Nicaraguan Teachers — which logically enough emerged bearing characteristics of its origin as a vehicle for economic demands.

From that point on, collective activity and political consciousness began to grow among teachers. This was reflected in a teachers' struggle in 1967, coinciding with the FSLN's armed struggle in Pancasán. Teachers began to identify with the views and program of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

In 1970–71 the teachers' struggle drew Somozaist repression. It seemed during these years that the teachers had been overwhelmed by the tyranny, which tried to turn them into ideological repressors of the population.

But in 1977 there was a renewal of organized struggle among Nicaraguan teachers. This culminated in the founding congress of ANDEN exactly four years ago. At that Congress ANDEN became part of the United People's Movement [MPU — a broad anti-Somoza coalition led politically by the FSLN] and entered a determined and decisive struggle against the dictatorship.

A great number of teachers began to participate in the clandestine and armed struggle, as well as in the ideological struggle, laying the basis for the formidable strength that today's teachers represent. The teachers helped liquidate the material means of coercion of Somozaist rule. These means were liquidated forever. But the enemies of our people, the reactionaries and those nostalgic for imperialism, did not give up their spiritual means of coercion, nor their ability to manipulate consciousness back to darkness and ignorance.

'Weapons that kill consciousness'

The enemies of our people still hold onto some weapons — the most dangerous weapons — weapons that can kill consciousness.

After victory in the war of liberation against all the material means of domination, all our people and you teachers in particular opened up a second battle, just as important, in the field of ideological liberation. I am referring to the National Literacy Crusade.

However, other battles remain to be opened, perhaps some of the most difficult battles and confrontations, battles in the sphere of ideological formation. And you, teachers, you who can carry in your knapsacks the reproduction of ideology, science, and culture should be part of the vanguard in this battle for the new education and the formation of the new man.

This battle is going to complete the liberation of Nicaragua. It will open the way for the

formation of a society where man can unleash all his physical, spiritual, scientific, and artistic faculties, that is, a society that develops man's freedom to create, construct, and fabricate beauty and culture, to master science.

A society where a new morality will be born, a society of abundance of man's material and spiritual needs. A society that ends ignorance, a society that halts the degradation of man, a society that ends competition between individuals, a society that does not put aside social interests for individual interests, a society without robots and mental slaves.

A society where education is not an obligation but rather a vital necessity. We are going to create a new education so that men will be masters of machinery instead of machines mastering men — a new education to establish the reign of freedom, a paradise on earth.

Workers must take over the productive forces and means of production to create this new society, so that one day, relatively soon, the resources our people need to construct this paradise will burst forth like water from an uncontrollable spring.

Economic development alone will not be enough. It is the basis, but the infrastructure will not develop spontaneously. It's necessary to construct it in a conscious manner. Man's realization as an individual cannot be simply a mechanical product of economic determinism; it must be developed in a concrete manner, and in the ideological arena as well.

You teachers are the main workers in the ideological construction of our people. You ideological workers are directly responsible for the creative capacity, the critical spirit, the banishment of selfishness, the political strength, and the audacity of our new generations.

But to educate new generations you have to begin by educating yourselves. You have to blow away the clouds of ideological and political confusion. You have to confront the ideas of the past that contaminate the beautiful ideas of the present. You have to confront negative habits, the totality of soiled ideological remnants that imperialism and the exploiting classes imposed on us and whose presence still has not been entirely eliminated in the realm of ideas.

You have to use the weapon of criticism to confront the old world, the old altars, the dogmas that are directly responsible for obscuring man's consciousness. You teachers must raise the banner of science, so that science can become the property of the entire people.

You teachers must be bearers of people's participation in education itself, as well as in the various aspects of government and administration. You should be examples of participation and should teach participation. You must be bearers of collectivist ideas and enemies of bureaucracy.

Interests of workers and peasants

As was indicated in the document "Aims and Objectives of the New Education," you should teach all those who enter your area of

influence to be patriots, revolutionaries, exemplars of solidarity, dedicated to the interests of the workers and peasants and of all the toiling masses. You should teach them to be anti-imperialist, to fight discrimination and oppression, and encourage love for justice, liberty, and defense of the homeland.

You should help create a new man who is responsible, disciplined, creative, cooperative, an efficient worker, with high moral, civic, and spiritual principles, endowed with a critical and self-critical capacity, and with a scientific view of the world and society.

Teachers should help to create a new man who will know how to appreciate beauty and who will recognize and value the dignity of sweat and daily labor, to create a new man who is profoundly humanitarian, reliable, and selfless, a man ready to fight in the quest for the great joining together of individual and collective interests.

And what does it mean to be honest, selfless, truthful, humanitarian, and objective? It means being prepared to defend the new society, which is being attacked with knives, threats, and menace.

The qualities cited in the document "Aims and Objectives of the New Education" are linked to the forging of a patriotic and anti-imperialist spirit. They are linked to forming men who love creative work, to forging workers who fully possess discipline and love for labor.

These principles are linked to the necessity to form specific values in the new generations, not abstract or general values but rather the values of the Sandinista People's Revolution, the values of a new democracy — not of democracy in the abstract but workers democracy. These principles are destined to forge a new man in the likeness of the great men of humanity, of Latin America, and of our own Nicaragua.

The lines of action proposed for the expansion of educational services to the entire population, even if they develop gradually, should give preference above all to workers and peasants. The courses of those who receive education should have a revolutionary content.

We are building a society that ends ignorance, without robots and mental slaves . . .

And within this framework it is necessary to encourage, with more than just verbal declarations, a continuing recognition of the moral, social, economic, and professional value of teaching, and it should be made clear how these values are to be recognized. We cannot remain at the level of just talking about an increase in educational, scientific, and technological research. What is required is the immediate creation of serious centers of research.

We must go much farther than good wishes for the development of sports and physical

education. This is the only way to do away with anatomical underdevelopment, physical weakness, and get out of last place in sports competitions.

Our youth should participate in sports not as spectators but rather as players. We should fight the tendency to create sports fetishes and promote instead a policy of creating sports championships on a mass level. We're not interested in being world champions in commercial extravaganzas. We're not interested in being champions so we can return as millionaires and enemies of our homeland. We aren't interested in our people producing champions to give glory to Nicaragua.

We are in absolute agreement with the creation of all necessary mechanisms to assure ongoing coordination between all state institutions and the mass organizations. That is, we cannot conceive of education without the organized participation of the masses. Education cannot be created systematically if the working masses are only objects of education and are not leading in creating it.

At this point the importance of the links between education and work is perhaps all too obvious. One time we put it this way: We should create a society where all students work and all workers study.

In Nicaragua there are new social classes in power. These new social classes are responsible for ideological reproduction in the new Nicaragua — not only for interpreting social phenomena but also for instilling values, opinions, and morals in these new social classes, the workers and peasants.

This obliges the revolution to create a new methodology in the organization and structure of the educational system. This obliges the revolution to forge in teachers the ideological point of view of the workers and farmers. Educational institutions play a most important role in the struggle to raise the level of consciousness of our people.

On what, if not the new education, depends the attainment of the necessary link between theoretical and practical knowledge, on the one hand, and economic necessity and the general development of the country, on the other?

Transforming an educational system is a long, difficult, complex, and contradictory task. It is precisely for this reason that we cannot continue to postpone for even one more day this transformation that has so much to do with the very destiny of the revolution.

Confront the old, build the new

We must confront with audacity, decisiveness, courage, and strength the remnants of the old teaching system, elements that remain bearers of reaction and imperialism. From now on we must fight teaching deformations that turn students into machines that repeat lessons learned by rote, instead of beings with a critical spirit, endowed with imaginative and creative ways of thinking.

We must develop scientific and technical knowledge in general, and political science in particular, without letting ourselves be pres-

sured by prejudices and influences that come from the centers of imperialist domination. Through education we must promote revolutionary strength, hatred of man's exploitation by man, loyalty to the revolutionary principles

Open the floodgates of science so fantasies and superstition can be washed away . . .

that sustain our vanguard, the FSLN, and open the floodgates of science so that man's beliefs in fantasies and superstitions, accumulated over centuries, can be washed away.

Whose responsibility is this? This responsibility is the exclusive property of the revolution. It is up to the revolutionary state to organize and direct the new education without a single concession, to determine its aims, its objectives, and all its future plans.

It isn't possible to conceive of an education that can go in two separate directions. There must be one single process for the entire country. We cannot limit our education to scientific and technical teachings. It must also be the prime factor in the search for answers to the scientific and social problems posed by the new revolutionary development.

All this means it's necessary to elaborate and execute a plan of action to increase the pedagogical and political-ideological capacity of the teachers, to make this task a priority in the teachers colleges. This means it is necessary to develop new texts and educational programs that are guided by revolutionary principles, and to create adequate means of control to assure that the educational programs of the revolution are not slighted or deformed in the private high schools.

To create a new education we must create a new teacher. What should this new teacher be like? He should:

1. Be revolutionary — that is, master of the new morality, archetype of the new man.
2. Have a high degree of commitment.
3. Identify with the interests of the workers.
4. Be a bearer of critical and self-critical attitudes.
5. Be capable of teaching and capable of learning.
6. Give each student the same love he would give his own children.
7. Be responsible and disciplined.
8. Be a teacher in the classroom and in the community.
9. Participate in defense of the homeland.
10. Participate and bring participation from the community into all decision-making.

These are principles that cannot be negotiated. Sovereignty of the homeland cannot be negotiated. The arms that defend this sovereignty are not negotiable.

And what are these arms? The cannons, the tanks, the rifles. We don't ever want to use them, and it is to be hoped that we won't have

to. The violent fire of these arms will only be used to defend ourselves. We are sure that one day, when the ferocious fangs of imperialism have been pulled, we are not going to need these arms any more.

But there are other arms, ideological arms, that also defend the sovereignty of our homeland. The main ideological arm our people possess is the new education. This is an arm that cannot be laid down. They [the imperialists] can shout all they want. Even if they shout their heads off we will hold tight to our ideological arms with the same tenacity that we hang on to our rifles.

There are those who seek to go back to the times of Torquemada [leader of the Spanish Inquisition]. There are those who want to return to the Inquisition. There are those who want to condemn Galileo all over again, and burn Giordano Bruno at the stake. There are some who want to return our educational system to the feudal epoch. There are those who are building gallows and sharpening their knives to kill the dreams turned reality of education of the people, by the people, for the people.

We are not going to retreat an inch in the decision to forge a new people's education, a democratic and anti-imperialist education, a scientific education. We will confront without vacillation those who would like to return to the Inquisition.

You teachers, who have a calling for the rifle and the trenches, are pledging here to clench the powerful arm of revolutionary ideology, so that you will fire without pity on ideas that stink of the decaying carcass of a past that will never return.

Teachers, we would like to extend public recognition, an elemental expression of gratitude — because people who aren't grateful cease to be revolutionary — to all the internationalists who are setting an extraordinary example of solidarity and who have shared the heroic effort of bringing the illuminating energy of education to our people, especially to the internationalist teachers of the unyielding, strong, and combative sister republic of Cuba.

Teachers, march with new fire in the conquest of the new man, to defend the homeland in the units of military combat, and to defend the homeland in the ideological battalions. Teachers, we have deep confidence in and respect for all of you.

Teachers, march with Ricardo Morales,² who had windows in his eyes and violent and sweet rivers in his fists. March with Ricardo Morales Aviles at the head of this invincible army of new educators of the new Nicaragua.

Long live the National Association of Nicaraguan Educators!

Long live the new education!

May the immortal heroes of the homeland live forever!

Free homeland or death!

2. Ricardo Morales Aviles, a university professor and national leader of the FSLN, was killed by the National Guard in 1973. — *IP*.

Palestine National Council decisions

PLO reaffirms its anti-imperialist course

[The following is the full text of the resolutions adopted at the end of the 16th session of the Palestine National Council meeting, held in Algiers from February 14 through February 22. The text is from a February 23 dispatch by Wafa, the Palestinian news agency.]

* * *

ALGIERS, Feb. 23rd, (Wafa) — The Palestinian National Council's 16th session concluded its meetings yesterday evening in Algiers and adopted the following resolutions on the basis of the Palestinian national charter, the political programme and the resolutions of previous P.N.C. sessions:

On the Palestinian level

A. Palestinian national unity

The P.N.C. stresses the strengthening of national unity between the Palestinian revolution's detachments within the P.L.O. framework. It also called for raising standards of organisational relations in all P.L.O. bodies and institutions on the basis of front action and collective leadership on the basis of the organisational and political programme endorsed by the P.N.C.'s 14th session.

B. Independent national decision-making

The P.N.C. stresses adherence to independent Palestinian national decision-making, protecting it and resisting the pressures aimed against this independence, from whatever quarter they may come.

C. Palestinian armed struggle

The P.N.C. affirms the need to develop and escalate armed struggle against the Zionist enemy. It also stresses the right of the Palestinian revolution's forces to conduct military action against the Zionist enemy from all the Arab fronts. The P.N.C. stressed the need to unify all the Palestinian revolution's forces within the framework of a unified national liberation army.

D. The occupied homeland

1. The P.N.C. hails our steadfast masses in the occupied territories in confronting occupation, settlement schemes and uprooting. It also hails their national consensus and complete rallying around the P.L.O., the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative inside and outside the occupied homeland.

2. The P.N.C. denounces all suspicious Israeli-American attempts aimed at harming the Palestinian national consensus, and calls upon the Palestinian people to resist and confront these attempts.

3. The P.N.C. stresses the need to consolidate the unity of national, social, trade union and popular institutions. It also stresses the need to establish and develop the Patriotic

Front inside the occupied homeland.

4. The P.N.C. asserts the need to multiply efforts to strengthen our people's steadfastness inside the occupied homeland, and to provide all requirements for this steadfastness, in order to put an end to forced emigration and land confiscation and to develop the national economy.

5. The P.N.C. hails the steadfastness of our people inside the areas occupied since 1948, and expresses pride in their struggle against racist Zionism in order to assert their national identity as part of the Palestinian people.

6. The P.N.C. hails the Palestinian detainees in enemy prisons inside the occupied homeland and in south Lebanon with pride and appreciation.

E. To our people outside Palestine

The P.N.C. stresses the need to mobilize our people's potentials in all places they may be outside our occupied homeland, and strengthen their adherence to the P.L.O. as their sole legitimate representative.

The P.N.C. recommends the executive committee act in order to protect their social and economic interests and to defend their acquired rights and basic freedoms in conformity with Resolution 14 of the political declaration of the P.N.C.'s 13th session.

On the Arab level

A. The P.N.C. calls for strengthening the alliance between the Palestinian revolution and national liberation movements in the Arab world, in order actively to confront all Zionist-imperialist conspiracies and liquidation plans, especially the Camp David accords and to end the Israeli occupation of Arab territories.

B. The P.N.C. defines relations between the P.L.O. and the Arab states on the following basis:

1. Commitment to the causes of the Arab struggle, foremost of which is the Palestinian cause and struggle.

2. Commitment to the Palestinian people's rights, including their rights to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of their independent state under P.L.O. leadership. These rights have been affirmed by Arab summit resolutions.

3. Care for the uniqueness of Palestinian representation, Palestinian national unity and independent Palestinian national decision-making.

4. Rejecting all schemes which harm the P.L.O.'s right as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, in the form of delegation of, or partnership in, the right of representation.

5. The P.N.C. calls for the achievement of Arab solidarity on the basis of Arab summit

resolutions and the above principles.

C. Fez summit resolutions—the Arab peace plan

The P.N.C. regards the Fez summit resolutions as the minimum for Arab political action. This should be complemented by military action in order to alter the balance of power in favour of Palestinian rights and struggle. The council stresses that its understanding of these resolutions does not contradict its commitment to the P.L.O. political programme and resolutions.

D. Relations with Jordan

1. The P.N.C. affirms the special and distinctive relations which link the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples. It stresses the need to develop these relations in conformity with the national interests of both peoples and the Arab nation and in order to achieve the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of their independent Palestinian state.

2. Adherence to the P.N.C.'s resolutions relating to relations with Jordan, and on the basis that the P.L.O. is the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative inside and outside the occupied territories.

The P.N.C. considers that future relations with Jordan may be established on the basis of a confederation between two independent states.

E. Regarding relations with Lebanon

The P.N.C. calls for:

1. Strengthening the relations with the Lebanese people and their patriotic forces, and offering full support for these forces in their courageous struggle to resist the Zionist occupation and its instruments.

2. Placing the Palestinian revolution's cooperation with Lebanese masses and their patriotic and democratic forces in fighting the Zionist occupation at the head of the revolution's current tasks.

3. The executive committee to conduct talks with the Lebanese government in order to safeguard the security of the Palestinians living in Lebanon and secure their rights to residence, freedom of movement and political and social activities.

4. Action to end the arbitrary mass and individual arrests which are carried out on a political basis, and to release the Palestinian prisoners detained in the Lebanese authorities' prisons.

F. Regarding relations with Syria

Relations with fraternal Syria are based on the P.N.C.'s resolutions of different sessions. These affirm the strategic relations between the P.L.O. and Syria to serve national aims related to the struggle, and to confront the Zionist imperialist enemy. The P.L.O. and

Syria are on the front line in facing the common danger.

G. Steadfastness and Confrontation Front

The P.N.C. entrusts the P.L.O. executive committee with conducting talks with the parties of the National Front for Steadfastness and Confrontation on the means to revive it on a new effective and clear basis. The P.N.C. noticed that the front did not live up to the standard of the required duties during the Zionist invasion of Lebanon.

H. Relations with Egypt

The P.N.C. affirms rejection of the Camp David accords and their subsequent schemes of autonomy and civil administration. The P.N.C. on the basis of the firm belief in the role of Egypt and its people in the Arab struggle, affirms the stand on the side of the struggle of the Egyptian people and their patriotic forces to end the Camp David policy and have Egypt return to its militant position in our Arab nation.

The P.N.C. calls on the executive committee to strengthen the P.L.O.'s relations with the national democratic and popular Egyptian forces which struggle against the normalization of relations with the Zionist enemy.

The P.N.C. calls on the executive committee to define the relations with the Egyptian regime on the basis of the latter's abandoning of the Camp David policy.

I. Iraq-Iran war

The P.N.C. appreciates the efforts exerted by the P.L.O. executive committee to put an end to the war between Iraq and Iran. It calls upon the executive committee to continue these efforts.

On the international level

A. The Brezhnev plan

The P.N.C. expresses appreciation and support for the proposals included in President Brezhnev's plan of September 16, 1981. The plan affirmed the inalienable national rights of our people. The council also expresses appreciation for the stands of the bloc of socialist countries towards our people's just cause.



These stands were affirmed in the Prague communique on the Middle East issued on January 3rd, 1983.

B. Reagan plan

The Reagan plan in its procedure and contents does not respond to the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights. The Reagan plan negates the Palestinian rights to repatriation, self-determination and the establishment of the independent Palestinian state. It also ignores the P.L.O. as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative and contradicts international legitimacy. The P.N.C. declares its refusal to consider the plan as a sound basis for a just and permanent settlement to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Zionist conflict.

C. Regarding international relations

The P.N.C. calls for:

1. Developing and strengthening friendly relations between the P.L.O. and the socialist countries, foremost of which is the Soviet Union, and with other countries which oppose imperialism, Zionism, colonialism and racism.
2. Strengthening relations with the Non-aligned, Islamic and African states for the interest of the Palestinian cause and other liberation causes.
3. Strengthening relations with friendly countries in Latin America, and action to widen the circle of friends in these countries.
4. Stepping up political action with Western European countries and Japan in order to develop their positions and widen the international recognition of the P.L.O. and the Pales-

tinian people's right to establish their independent state.

The P.N.C. hails all democratic forces in West European countries which oppose imperialism, Zionism and racial discrimination, and considers these forces as main allies in these countries. The P.N.C. calls on the executive committee to co-operate with these forces, to secure their countries' recognition of Palestinian national rights and the P.L.O.

5. Continuing the struggle in order to isolate the Zionist entity in the United Nations and the various forums.

6. Confronting U.S. imperialism and its policy and considering it at the head of the camp hostile to our just cause and the causes of struggling peoples.

7. The P.N.C. stresses the importance of continuing the struggle against racial discrimination still practised in South Africa, which has strong ties with the Zionist enemy. The council hails the Namibian people's struggle under the leadership of S.W.A.P.O., and the struggle of the peoples of South Africa against racism and oppression.

8. The P.N.C. strongly denounces terrorism, especially the systematic and official American and Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people, the P.L.O., the Lebanese people, the Arab nation and all other liberation movements in the world.

9. The P.N.C. affirms its adherence to the U.N. principles, charter and resolutions which affirmed the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights and those of all peoples subject to occupation to engage in all forms of struggle for their liberation and national independence.

The P.N.C. reaffirms its strong denunciation of all Israeli and imperialist practices which violate international law, the universal declaration of human rights and the U.N. charter and resolutions.

10. The P.N.C. appreciates the activities and achievements of the U.N. committee to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights in Palestine. The P.N.C. hails the efforts of the committee's members and the U.N. General Assembly decision to organise an international conference in the summer of 1983 to support the Palestinian people's rights.

Finally the P.N.C. thanked the Algerian president, government, party and people for their efforts to make this session successful. It also hailed the international support for our revolution.

The P.N.C. pledged to continue the struggle in all its military and political forms until our people's national aspirations are achieved.

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Teachers battle union-busting

Lévesque forced to begin talks, strike suspended

By Will Reissner

The battle by Quebec's 80,000 teachers against the provincial government's union-busting drive has temporarily moved from the picket lines to the negotiating table.

The teachers — locked in one of the most important union struggles in recent decades in North America — had been on strike since January 27. Under Quebec law, public employee strikes are banned until 1985.

The teachers voted to suspend their walkout for three weeks beginning February 21 to try to force the provincial government to come to the bargaining table.

The outcome of the battle between Quebec's teachers and the Parti Québécois (PQ) government of Prime Minister René Lévesque is not yet decided. As in any war, there are advances and retreats as first one side, then the other, takes the offensive or falls back.

Unless a settlement is reached, the Quebec Teachers Federation (CEQ) is scheduled to resume its strike on March 14.

Union-busting laws

The confrontation between the Quebec government and its employees began in late December when the government passed a special law gutting existing public sector union contracts until 1985.

The law took away government employees' right to strike for three years. It ripped up the existing contracts and imposed wage cuts of up to 20 percent. Work rules were changed arbitrarily, and about 11,000 teaching positions would be eliminated.

Union federations representing more than 200,000 provincial workers set up a Common Front to resist this union-busting law. A public sector general strike began January 26. At its high point, January 31, more than 150,000 workers were out. Some 40,000 trade unionists participated in a Common Front demonstration against the law on January 29 in Quebec City, the provincial capital.

The government moved to break the strike by imposing fines of \$25 to \$100 per day for each individual, \$1,000 to \$10,000 per day against union officials, and \$5,000 to \$50,000 per day for each union.

By February 8, only the teachers remained on the picket lines. To force them back to work, on February 17 the Lévesque government passed an even harsher law against strikers. Daily fines were doubled. Strikers face the loss of three years' seniority for every day they remain off the job. Unions lose their dues check-off for six months for every day the strike continues. And teachers can be fired permanently at the stroke of a pen.

To enforce these measures against the

80,000 teachers, the February 17 law also suspended the Quebec Charter of Rights and Liberties. All strikers are now presumed to be guilty unless they can concretely prove their innocence.

Resistance continues

By suspending their strike for three weeks, teachers hope to put the government on the spot because Lévesque had claimed he could not negotiate while teachers were off the job. The government has now been forced to the bargaining table, although it still demands that the teachers accept its antiunion measures.

The return to work has not meant an end to the resistance to the government's onslaught. In approving the three-week strike suspension, Montreal teachers voted to use their classes to explain the issues in the strike. The CEQ is also building meetings of parents and teachers throughout Quebec on March 9 to protest the government's attempts to gut public education.

Quebec's main labor federations — the National Trade Union Federation (CSN) and the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ) — have called on their affiliates to stage support activities if the teachers resume their strike on March 14. Among the suggestions are work stoppages, collections for the CEQ strike fund, and rallies and demonstrations.

In an important show of solidarity from the labor movement in English Canada, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is conducting a membership referendum on a proposal that all CUPW members donate \$5 per paycheck to the teachers' strike fund.

Lasting impact

The Parti Québécois government's war on the unions could have a lasting impact on political developments in Quebec. Public service workers, including the teachers, were among the strongest supporters of the PQ in its rise to power.

The overwhelming majority of Quebec's 6.3 million inhabitants speak French as their native language. But Quebec society has been dominated by English Canada. French-speakers suffer severe discrimination in employment. Their standard of living, medical care, and educational levels lag far behind those of English Canada and of English-speaking residents of Quebec.

In the 1960s, a powerful nationalist movement arose, whose aim was to reassert the right of the French-speaking majority to control the destiny of Quebec. Many favored total independence from Canada.

The PQ came to power in 1976, riding the twin waves of the growth of the nationalist movement in the 1960s and the explosion of

trade union strength in the early 1970s. The PQ's promise to make the Québécois "masters in our own house" was especially appealing to workers, who bore the weight of the domination of Quebec's economy by foreign-owned capital.

Many French-speaking workers, for example, had to know English to hold a job.

Lévesque himself claimed to have a special feeling for Quebec's workers, and describes himself as a social democrat. The PQ has even applied for membership in the Socialist International.

In an attempt to combat sympathy for the public sector strike, the PQ government has tried to turn Quebec's 475,000 unemployed against the government workers. Describing the government workers as "privileged," Lévesque accuses them of refusing to make the sacrifices needed to allow Quebec's limited resources to be used to create jobs.

Imperialist-imposed cutbacks

Despite its rhetoric, the PQ leadership never had any intention of challenging foreign capitalist domination of Quebec's economy. Today Lévesque is implementing the austerity programs demanded by the big bankers in Toronto and New York. The foreign banks have warned that no more loans will be made unless the province's budget deficit is cut sharply.

Any savings in public-sector wages will go to pay off these foreign bankers, not to create jobs.

The disillusionment with the PQ among Quebec's workers runs especially deep among teachers, who are the government's special target. Many teachers have turned in their PQ membership cards and some have resigned from party posts. Several locals have expelled members who were elected to the provincial parliament on the PQ ticket.

The 80,000 teachers face a very powerful enemy — a government that has the power to write whatever laws it needs to break their struggle.

But they also have a major source of strength — the democratic participation of the mass of union members in deciding how their struggle should be waged.

The Quebec teachers have waged an exemplary fight based on a mobilized membership, mass pickets, regular mass meetings to decide policy, demonstrations, strike bulletins, and daily ads explaining their struggle to the rest of the population.

At stake in this struggle, the CEQ has pointed out, is the future of public education in Quebec. Until 1964 Quebec did not even have a ministry of education. All schools were church-run.

The tremendous growth in public education since the 1960s has begun to reduce the huge gap in educational standards between French-speaking and English-speaking residents. But the gap remains large.

As Montreal Teachers Alliance president Rodrigue Dubé emphasized, no one elected the PQ to destroy the gains Quebec workers have won through two decades of struggle. □