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Nicaragua

U.S. Rulers Fan Flames of War



Michael Baumann/IP

150,000 marched in Managua, April 28, weapons in hand, to protest U.S.-organized aggression. Sign shows Reagan stepping on Nicaragua, warns, "You're going to slip."

***Students, Farmers, Shopkeepers Take to the Streets
Behind the Demonstrations in France***

U.S. war devastates Nicaragua

By Michael Baumann

"The Reagan administration is waging a war against Nicaragua that is no less real because it has not been officially declared." — Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, before United Nations Security Council emergency meeting May 9.

More than 500 Nicaraguans have been killed in the first four months this year in the U.S. war against the Sandinista revolution.

The war has also caused more than \$58 million in economic damage in the last 12 months.

To grasp the meaning of these statistics, they have to be set against Nicaragua's population and economy.

Five hundred dead in Nicaragua would be the equivalent of 38,000 in a country the size of the United States — nearly two-thirds as many deaths in just four months as U.S. forces suffered during the entire Vietnam War.

The \$58 million in damages is equivalent to all the goods and services it will take 20,000 Nicaraguan workers to turn out this year. It amounts to 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product and cancels out any overall economic gains this year.

The war is felt in many other ways as well.

Amputees a common sight

Nicaragua has no fleet of helicopters to speed the war wounded to hospitals, and few specially trained surgeons capable of carrying out delicate operations. For this reason serious wounds often tend to result in amputations — sacrificing an arm or leg to save a life. Battlefield amputees can be seen on the streets in every part of the country.

In the factories the workday is harder and often longer. Why? Because in some production units as much as 10 percent of the work force has been mobilized in the reserves or militia. In some cases extra efforts by the remaining workers manage to keep output levels near normal. In others, such as the gold mines in remote central Nicaragua, so many workers have had to be mobilized that production has dropped sharply.

In the cities there are increasing shortages of everyday necessities, such as milk, cooking oil, and laundry soap. In the past, it would have been possible to increase imports to cover the shortfalls. Today the extra expense of the war makes that impossible.

In the countryside, especially in the areas near the northern border with Honduras, crops often cannot be harvested completely or in time, resulting in lost income and less food.

Social programs hit hard

Road maintenance, building construction, and public works have had to be scaled down throughout most of the country. Four million dollars' worth of construction equipment has

been blown up by the counterrevolutionaries, and much of the remaining fleet of construction vehicles has had to be shifted to the north for military engineering projects.

Social programs have been hit hard too. A special target of counterrevolutionary attacks are those who are working to bring literacy, technical skills, and medical care to the countryside.

Among the civilians gunned down in the last year were 58 technicians, many of them agricultural specialists; 34 teachers; 23 engineers, architects, and other professionals; and 2 doctors.

The people of Nicaragua received a detailed explanation of these and other consequences of the war on May 4. Daniel Ortega, coordinator of the Sandinista Government of National Reconstruction, laid out the facts in a two-and-a-half-hour speech before the Council of State, the country's parliament.

The speech was broadcast live on national TV and radio, and the full text was published in the newspapers.

Severe economic impact

Most sectors of the economy have been set back by the war, Ortega reported. Over the last year "we have been compelled to mobilize resources to confront the aggression in all its forms. This has meant turning human, productive, and financial resources to the defense effort, and consequently to greater difficulties in the development of economic programs."

Production of lumber, for example, was cut by a third, as counterrevolutionaries set fire to nearly 100,000 acres of timber worth \$20 million.

The annual fish catch was down by nearly a

fifth, owing both to lack of spare parts for the aging fleet and attacks by counterrevolutionaries and Honduran naval vessels.

More than \$4 million worth of tobacco, coffee, and beef has been destroyed in raids on northern warehouses and ranches.

The country's workers and farmers have been spared the full economic impact of these losses through continuing subsidies on food, fuel, and transportation. Last year such subsidies amounted to more than \$120 million.

Nonetheless, the gross domestic product dropped 1.4 percent, inflation rose slightly to 24.8 percent, and unemployment rose four percentage points to 19.8 percent, with a total of 185,000 persons out of work.

Although the subsidies and expanding social services cushioned the impact of these declines, minimum-wage workers were still hit hard. According to government estimates, real wages at the minimum salary level dropped by 14.1 percent in the cities and 19.6 percent in the countryside. In short, the war is stripping Nicaragua of many of the economic gains the revolution made possible.

An example of how to respond has been set by the vanguard of the revolutionary process — the organized industrial workers.

In factory after factory, so many workers have volunteered to go to the front lines that the union has to decide who can be released. Those who have stayed behind to maintain production have tightened their belts another notch to contribute as much as a day's pay to the defense effort, to make sure their mobilized *compañeros* have the supplies and equipment they need.

The stakes are high. The sacrifices are great. Nicaragua deserves the support of working people everywhere in its fight to stop U.S. imperialism from overturning the advances in freedom, health care, education, and living standards that 50,000 men, women, and children gave their lives to make. □

'Day of protest' shakes Chile

The biggest single antigovernment protest in nearly a decade rocked Chile May 11. Tens of thousands of workers, students, and other Chileans participated in union-called actions to condemn the repressive and anti-working-class policies of the military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Protesters joined marches and demonstrations in the working-class neighborhoods of Santiago, the capital. Students stayed out of school, people banged pots and pans, drivers sounded their horns, and commercial activity was curtailed.

The day of protest was initiated by the Copper Workers Confederation (CTC). Other labor organizations backed the action. Eduardo Ríos, president of the Democratic Workers Union, said the turnout went "beyond what was expected." Absenteeism was at least 70 percent in some Santiago schools.

In the past the militant copper miners of the CTC have launched strikes and protests over specific points in the dictatorship's labor legislation. This time, however, the union blasted Pinochet's overall policies.

"It's a question of a complete economic, social, cultural, and political system," an April CTC statement declared, "which is surrounding and crushing us, which goes against our nature as Chileans and workers, which has tried to trap us ever more deeply with the weapons of fear and repression."

The May 11 action marked the first coordinated mass protest since the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende in 1973. In the aftermath of the bloody U.S.-backed coup, thousands of workers and political activists were murdered and "disappeared." The military regime jailed some 150,000 opponents of the dictatorship and outlawed union activity.

Pinochet's repressive apparatus retaliated against the May 11 actions with characteristic brutality.

On May 11 itself, two young men were shot to death by police and 350 persons were arrested. Following this, in an operation recalling the repression that followed the 1973 coup, police and army units staged mass arrests in the predawn hours of May 14.

Heavily armed combat units surrounded the working-class neighborhoods of San Miguel and La Granja in Santiago between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Loudspeakers ordered all men over the age of 14 out of their houses. Police then marched an estimated 2,000 to a soccer stadium for questioning and identity checks.

Several hundred of those detained were then arrested and taken away in buses to police barracks.

The Chilean workingclass is being pushed into action by the country's grave economic crisis. Battered by plunging copper prices on the world market, Chile suffered a 13 percent negative growth rate in 1982. Inflation is running at 30 percent a year, with nearly one-third of Chile's workers unemployed.

The country's faltering economy, together with Pinochet's antilabor policies, have driven real wages down by 16 percent.

Santiago's sidewalks have become crowded

with unemployed workers selling soap and other items to survive. Groups of unemployed have banded together to form communal soup kitchens.

While the most spectacular actions so far, the May 11 protests follow a series of other demonstrations around the country in recent months.

The Pinochet regime has responded to the increasing dissent by stepping up its repression. The Chilean Human Rights Commission documented 1,789 political arrests in 1982 — triple the figure for 1981. Reports of torture have doubled.

May 11 was originally called as a general strike by the CTC. But after the army sent tanks and troops to three large copper mines, the CTC switched to the call for demonstrations. Workers who go on strike, Pinochet recently warned, "will have to accept the consequences of such acts."

The massive participation in the May 11 protests are a convincing sign that the Chilean workers are willing to go into action despite the dictatorship's threats. The CTC statement summed up the combative mood of the Chilean working class: "The time has come to stand up and say enough." □

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U.S. pushes deal on Lebanon

Threatens Syria with new Israeli aggression

By David Frankel

"We have crossed an important threshold in the path to peace," President Reagan declared May 6, following Israeli approval of a deal on Lebanon worked out by Secretary of State George Shultz.

Similar statements about peace in the Middle East were issued several times by President Carter during the negotiations around the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt. But the Camp David treaty set the stage for the two Israeli invasions of Lebanon in March 1978 and June 1982 — the latter aggression resulting in the bloodiest Arab-Israeli war since 1948. The latest U.S.-engineered deal will once again lay the basis for new wars in the region.

"We have rejected the agreement in form and substance," Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam stated May 13.

The Shultz package, said a top Syrian official, "subjects Lebanon to Israeli and imperialist domination and constitutes a grave danger to Syria's security."

Although the Shultz deal is being presented as an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, it is actually an attempt to advance a broader political framework to guarantee imperialist interests in the Middle East. The framework that Shultz is proposing is in complete accord with Israeli aims, but is against the interests of the oppressed Arab peoples who are the vast majority of the population in the Middle East.

The editors of the *New York Times* spelled out their expectations May 10, saying that the Shultz deal "would come close to ending in a Greater Israel. A pro-American coalition of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Lebanon would then acquiesce in the destruction of the P.L.O. and Israel's absorption of the West Bank and Golan Heights."

The Israeli rulers, it should be recalled, had three basic objectives in their invasion of Lebanon last June. They hoped to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); they hoped to establish a rightist government in Beirut that would follow imperialist dictates; and they hoped to consolidate their grip on southern Lebanon. These aims also required the ouster of the Syrian army from Lebanon.

Washington supported the Israeli war aims, which coincided with its interests. U.S. military aid to Israel continued during the war. U.S. vetoes defended Israel in the UN Security Council. U.S. Marines are helping to consolidate the new Lebanese government installed under the guns of Israeli tanks. And now Shultz is doing his bit.

The immediate effect of the deal worked out by Shultz is to point a loaded gun at Syria and



Israeli troops in Lebanon: planning to stay.

at the PLO forces remaining in Lebanon. As Shultz put it, "I think there is no way the Israelis could be expected to withdraw" without a simultaneous pullout by Syrian and PLO forces.

But far from the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, the Shultz proposal would formalize a permanent Israeli military and political grip on southern Lebanon.

As part of the accords, a special brigade of the Lebanese army will be set up in southern Lebanon to act as a political police force against the Palestinian population and the workers and peasants of the region. This brigade will have what one official described as "very, very close contacts" with Israeli military personnel. Its "antiterrorist operations" — that is, its mission to smash all attempts by the working class and its allies to fight for their rights, and especially for their liberation from imperialist domination and national oppression — will be directed by Maj. Saad Haddad, who has been the chief of an Israeli puppet army in Lebanon for the past seven years.

Furthermore, Israeli intelligence agents will be allowed to operate freely in southern Lebanon, and Israeli troops will take part in armed patrols in the region. The process by which Israel has been extending its economic domination of southern Lebanon would also be perpetuated by the agreement.

Any big uprising by the workers and peasants in southern Lebanon attempting to throw off the Israeli yoke — and such uprisings are inevitable — would quickly pose the issue of a new Israeli invasion and a broader war in the region.

Although news reports were intentionally vague, it appears as if the Shultz deal may also include new secret agreements between Washington and Tel Aviv that could further involve the United States in any hostilities in the region. *New York Times* reporter David Shipler referred to "unspecified commitments to Israel by the United States."

Along with his announcement of the agreement with Israel, Shultz said that Washington would proceed with the delivery of 75 F-16 fighter planes to Israel. Reagan had said last year that delivery of the planes, which is scheduled for 1985, would be held up until Israeli troops were out of Lebanon. The message conveyed by the promise of more F-16s was certainly not missed in Syria.

In February, after the Soviet government had installed SA-5 anti-aircraft missiles on Syrian territory at the request of the Syrian government, Shultz called the presence of these defensive weapons "a sobering, destabilizing event." Pentagon chief Caspar Weinberger declared that Syria "is just another outpost of the Soviet empire."

"It is strange," Syria's *Al-Baath* newspaper commented, "that no one is asking the American administration, which arms Israel to the teeth, why Syria's possession of defensive weapons should pose a threat to Israel's security while the presence of the Israeli army in Lebanon and the American Sixth Fleet in Lebanese waters should not pose a threat to Syria's security."

Israeli armored brigades in Lebanon are poised about 20 miles west of the Syrian capital of Damascus, Israeli warplanes have been repeatedly flying over Syrian positions, and Israeli units in the occupied Golan Heights have carried out threatening maneuvers. Drew Middleton, meanwhile, reported in the April 25 *New York Times*:

"All intelligence reports indicate that the Israeli Army has strengthened its position in Lebanon to the point where the Israeli sector could be used as a staging area for offensive operations. . . .

"The main road toward the Syrian positions just north of Khirbet Ruba has been widened to accommodate Israeli tanks. . . .

"A major logistics base including helicopter pads and major radar communications systems has been constructed outside Merj 'Uyun. . . .

"In Arkuf and the lower Bekaa, intelligence sources reported, the Israelis have built a series of elaborate strongpoints, some of them protected by walls 20 feet high."

Middleton also noted that the Israelis have constructed another major base near Sidon and a military airfield south of Beirut.

This is the real face of Reagan's "path to peace" in the Middle East. □

Protests hit government austerity policies

Students, farmers, shopkeepers take to streets

[The following interview with Charles Michaloux, a member of the political bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, took place in New York on May 9. The interview, which was obtained by *Inter-continental Press*, was conducted in English.]

* * *

Question. In recent weeks there have been demonstrations by students, farmers, and small shopkeepers against President François Mitterrand's policies in France.

Some French commentators have said the country is going through a "reverse May 1968." At that time student demonstrations sparked a working-class general strike that nearly toppled the conservative government of General de Gaulle. Now Mitterrand's government — a coalition between his Socialist Party and the Communist Party — is under attack.

Is the initiative in French politics shifting to the right?

Answer. It is very fashionable in the French press now to talk about a "reverse May 1968." But we don't think that is what is really happening. A demonstration of about 2,000 small businessmen on May Day hardly constitutes a May 1968 in reverse.

That claim is part of the political agitation of the right-wing parties and press. But the reality is much more complicated.

Before specifically dealing with the character of these demonstrations, it would be useful to lay out the general context in which they take place.

The French political situation has gone through two big phases since the election of Mitterrand as the candidate of the Socialist Party in May 1981, and the parliamentary elections a month later, in which the Socialist and Communist parties won a large majority in the National Assembly.

The first period was, as Mitterrand himself characterized it, a "grace period." The workers had very big expectations of change following Mitterrand's election. His election was seen as a clear mandate against austerity, against unemployment, and against the continued rule of the right-wing bourgeois parties that had been in power for more than two decades.

There were big expectations following the elections, but people were also ready to accept Mitterrand's statement that everything could not be done at once and that it would take time to overcome the legacy of the past.

The workers were willing to let Mitterrand proceed at his own pace in carrying out the promised changes. But the changes did not come. Quite the contrary.

In late April and early May there were almost daily demonstrations in France by farmers protesting low prices for their produce, and students protesting a university reform law that will make higher education more selective.

In addition, residents and interns at university hospitals staged a strike from March 22 to May 2 protesting the fact that they are not guaranteed positions in those hospitals at the end of their residency period.

On a number of occasions farmers built bonfires on highways, seized trucks carrying imported agricultural produce, stopped express trains, and demonstrated at border crossing points. Protesting farmers battled police in several areas.

Student demonstrations also took place throughout France, although the largest were in Paris. On April 27, some 5,000 students marched in Paris against the university reform bill. The following day, 7,000 took to the streets in one part of Paris, while 6,000 medical students staged their own march in another part of the city. Another 2,500 medical students demonstrated in Marseilles that day. On May 5, some 8,000

students marched in the capital.

On several occasions protesting pharmacy students occupied highway toll plazas and, for hours at a time, waved drivers through without paying.

There have also been several demonstrations of small businessmen in Paris this spring. On March 30 several thousand travel agents staged a noisy protest against one measure in the government's austerity program that limited travellers to \$275 in foreign currency for vacations and banned use of credit cards outside France.

On May 1, about 2,000 members of the National Syndicate of Modern and Independent Employers held a protest march against price controls and high taxes.

Four days later, a much larger demonstration was organized by the General Confederation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. According to the Paris daily *Le Monde*, about 20,000 people took part in that march. The May 6 *New York Times* put the number at 10,000. Many stores in Parisian residential areas were closed on the afternoon of the demonstration.

The second phase opened in June 1982, when the government announced a shift in policy. At that point it switched its emphasis from "change" to imposition of an austerity policy designed to cut living standards and government spending.

This austerity policy has deepened dramatically after the municipal elections, held in March of this year.

The municipal elections are very important for understanding the current situation. A clear message was delivered in those elections.

As you know, French elections are organized in two rounds, one week apart.

In the first round, about 2 million workers who usually vote for the Socialist Party or Communist Party abstained because they were fed up with the government's policy. They did not see anything changing.

When the first round results became known, the bourgeois parties and the rightist newspapers began crowing about the defeat of the left and the voters' repudiation of socialism.

But in the second round there was a big change. A big majority of those who had abstained a week before, now went to the polls and voted for the SP or CP. They were still unhappy with the government's record, but they

did not want their discontent to be used to boost the political fortunes of the right and to pave the way for its return to power.

In the period between the rounds, many SP and CP leaders in the government said: "We have gotten the message the voters delivered in the first round. We know people are not satisfied."

This was only lip service to win votes in the second round, but many workers expected that the government's policies would change for the better after the election.

Instead, Mitterrand chose the opposite course. He implemented even deeper austerity measures that substantially cut the living standards and social benefits of workers.

Q. How has the workers movement reacted to the increased austerity?

A. The announcement took the workers by surprise. This was not what they had expected after the election.

Interestingly, inside the working class, in the SP, the CP, and the unions, everyone knows that this policy is bound to fail. They know this austerity package will not solve the

economic crisis.

There are two ways to deal with the crisis. One is by implementing a working-class program. The other is by implementing the program of the capitalists.

The government chose the second option. But in this context, it cannot solve the crisis without going even further and inflicting a big defeat on the working class that would give the bourgeoisie a free hand to do what it wants, starting with getting rid of a government that is mainly made up of SP and CP ministers.

Even spokespersons for the SP and CP openly acknowledge that the present measures will not be enough, and that further attacks on living standards will have to be made in six months or so.

The workers are very upset by these measures. But there was no organized response from the unions, or the big workers parties, since they are so deeply tied into the government.

So it is no surprise that the first layers to actively react have been layers that are not directly working class.

The most important of the recent mobilizations has been the student demonstrations. The thrust of their protest was, in our opinion, progressive. The students are opposing government reforms of the universities that would make admissions policies more restrictive and would make it harder for students to remain in the colleges until graduation.

The first contingent of students to go into action were from the medical schools, where the university reforms directly reflected the government's plans to cut back on social benefits.

The underlying claim is that France cannot afford the elaborate medical system it now has, and there are already too many doctors. The attacks on medical education are part and parcel of the government's attacks on social security and on reimbursement for hospital care.

Interns and residents in university hospitals and clinics also went on strike. They were protesting their lack of tenure at those institutions and the government's emphasis on boosting private practice at the expense of public health care.

The thrust of this struggle, too, was progressive. It cuts across the tendency toward establishment of a two-tiered health-care system, with quality care in private practice and poor care in public hospitals and clinics.

The right wing, of course, tried to make hay out of the student protests. But that does not mean the protests themselves were not progressive. And the right-wing student groups did not lead or control these movements.

Q. Were students who support the SP and CP involved in the strikes?

A. Although the SP and CP officially opposed the student strikes, claiming they were directed against the left, many students who vote for the SP or CP were leaders of the strike. And the left was the dominant trend in them. We in the LCR were also very much involved in these struggles.

It is true that in some university departments where the right is traditionally very strong, like in the law schools, rightists took the initiative to launch the struggles. But that was the exception, not the rule.

Q. What is the farmers struggle about?

A. The farmers, who in this case could more accurately be described as peasants, began demonstrating at the time of a meeting of the agricultural ministers from the governments in the European Economic Community (EEC).

They were protesting the EEC's agricultural pricing policy, which favors the most highly developed farmers, mostly in West Germany and Britain, at the expense of farmers on a lower technological level in France and Italy.

The current EEC prices do not allow the middle and small farmers to make an adequate return on their labor. They really cannot make a living. The demand to end the EEC pricing system has been a longstanding one in French agriculture.

We think that this demand too is progressive. But here we have to make a distinction between the progressive demand, and its exploitation by rightist political forces.

Of course there are very different layers in the countryside, from large-scale capitalist farmers (who have made big profits in the recent period), to small farmers, to the growing number of agricultural laborers.

This mobilization involved all these social layers, under the auspices of the National Federation of Landowners (FNSEA), which is directly led by the Gaullist party.

Given the present political situation in France, where the Socialist and Communist parties are in the government and refuse to carry out any activities against its policies, all movements have the potential of being exploited by the right. The bourgeois parties have an open field because the workers parties refuse to act.

You even have the spectacle of right-wing politicians giving impassioned speeches in parliament demanding an end to unemployment and the austerity program.

Q. How do the workers in the factories view these movements?

A. Some accept the government's claim that these are demonstrations by privileged layers in defense of those privileges.

Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy said in parliament that those who criticize the government, claiming that nothing has changed, should just look at who is demonstrating. Before Mitterrand's election, Mauroy said, workers demonstrated. Today the workers are not in the streets because they are satisfied. Now it is doctors, students, and farmers in the streets, upset because their privileges are being touched.

But that is not true. There has been a great deal of discontent among workers at least since the June 1982 austerity measures were announced. The discontent is not always ex-

pressed in action since the two big workers parties do everything they can to block working-class protests. But one place it was seen was in the municipal elections.

Q. Have there been more concrete expressions of the workers' discontent?

A. We have seen the first concrete signs in three things: the immigrant workers' strikes in the auto industry, opposition currents in the unions, and the united May Day demonstration.

The immigrant workers were the ones to take the lead. They pointed out that they wanted the changes that the Mitterrand government had promised. They wanted to see a change in their day-to-day conditions at work and at home.

The national unions argued that the immigrant workers were right to strike because they faced such difficult conditions. Since the rest of us don't face such bad conditions, we should not strike. We should have discussions with the government, which is now on "our" side, they said.

At any rate, the immigrant workers won big victories through their massive struggle. As a result of their battle, the whole atmosphere in the auto plants has changed. Many of the very harsh conditions they worked under, and the repression against them by the bosses and foremen, have been turned around. They showed that if you fight, you can win.

The question of immigrant workers is very important because there are millions of them in key sectors of the economy — in steel, auto, and other basic industries.

The immigrant workers strikes were, in a sense, battles by vanguard battalions that show the way for struggles that are brewing.

We now see other signs that things are starting to boil up in the workers movement.

The two largest union federations — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which is controlled by the Communist Party, and the French Democratic Labor Confederation (CFDT), which is controlled by the Socialist Party — have both actively supported the government's austerity policy. But in all the debates leading up to the conventions of their biggest components (such as the steelworkers federation), we have seen votes of 30 to 50 percent against the policy of backing the austerity program.

Bear in mind that most of the delegates to these conventions are not rank-and-file workers. In large part they are second-level bureaucrats or officials, who are more predisposed to support the leadership.

In some factories workers are now saying that we should start preparing so that if things don't change in a month or so, we can launch a struggle.

It is significant that over the past several weeks the national union leaders themselves have been forced to start organizing national protest actions.

They don't want these protests to come together on a single day or in a single place, and



Students demonstrating in Paris against policies of Mitterrand government.

they consciously keep them scattered — postal workers on one day, steelworkers on another, auto workers on a third. But they feel they have to organize these days of protest because the pressure is really mounting.

This year's May Day demonstration was also significant. For the first time since 1978, when the SP-CP alliance known as the Union of the Left broke up, the CGT, the CFDT, and the FEN (National Teachers Federation) called a joint May Day demonstration in Paris.

All three major union federations felt obliged to respond to the pressures of the ranks, who are fed up with the interbureaucratic squabbles that divide the workers.

Many workers were encouraged by the fact that a joint May Day demonstration had been called. They hoped it could accomplish something. But when they saw that the united demonstration was organized mainly around support for the government's policies, many saw no reason to take part. As a result, the demonstration was quite small — 15,000 to 20,000 in Paris.

There were, however, some very combative contingents, including about 2,000 people in the LCR's contingent.

Q. According to Le Monde the demonstration organizers claimed 100,000 participants and even the police said there were 40,000.

A. But a Socialist Party minister of the interior now heads up the police. The real figure was no more than 20,000.

Q. What is the reaction inside the CP and SP and in the unions to the government's policies?

A. We have a situation where a government made up of the two big workers parties, with a big majority in parliament, is carrying out an austerity policy against the workers.

Naturally this has an impact inside these parties and in the unions they bureaucratically control. Both government parties, and the unions, are losing members.

In the Socialist Party, preparations are now going on for a congress this summer. A number of SP officials openly say that "if we

continue with this policy we will be defeated. We won't keep the support of those who voted for us."

The debate inside the SP is reaching such proportions that we see the first signs of broad layers of SP activists, especially in the unions, openly opposing the government and saying they are ready to fight. This is also reflected in the debate inside the SP prior to its national convention.

The Communist Party is in a big crisis. In the whole last period, from its break with the SP in 1978 up to the 1981 election, the CP was denouncing the SP as a reformist party that simply wanted to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie.

This makes it especially difficult for many CP members to swallow what their party is doing now in the government. Many CP workers are devoted to the cause of their shopmates in the unions and are very upset by the government's actions.

When the government announced the austerity policy after the municipal elections, the CP leadership's first official reaction was to object and call for a discussion of the measures. The CP even warned that it would propose amendments in parliament and might vote against the package if the amendments did not pass. They even organized a public propaganda campaign around that theme.

This was just posturing, but at the time many CP members took it for good coin. They thought their party was now ready to differentiate itself from the Social Democrats and help mobilize the workers against the austerity.

When the CP leaders gave in and voted for the plan in parliament, thousands of CP members were bitterly disappointed.

As a result, our relationship with many of these activists in the factories is changing rapidly. They acknowledge that much of what we said in our municipal election campaign and in discussions on the shop floor has already been shown to be correct. We can have serious discussions with them, and work with them in the unions wherever possible.

Finally, and most important, there are changes taking place inside the unions them-

selves. As I mentioned, one small indication of what is happening is shown by the opposition in union conventions to acceptance of the austerity program.

The leader of the CFDT openly admitted that if a referendum were held among the CFDT's membership on the union's position toward the austerity plan, a majority of the ranks would disavow the policy.

On the other hand, thousands of workers are dropping out of the unions, seeing no reason to maintain their membership if the unions won't put up a fight. They feel the unions are useless at this point. Of course, we urge the workers to stay in the unions and fight the present policies.

With the turmoil at the union conventions, the discussions on the factory floor and in the union locals, and the worsening objective conditions, we are quite sure that new mass struggles are on the agenda in France.

Q. What is the LCR doing in the factories and elsewhere?

A. I already mentioned that we have been active in the student demonstrations. And we take part in the discussions and debates in the unions.

We have been pointing out that the only way to remain faithful to the working class and socialism, is to oppose the Mitterrand government's austerity program.

We point out that unless the working class takes the lead in the struggle against the austerity policy, the protests will be used by the right to erode the government, bring it down, and replace it with a rightist regime.

We say that if the government's present policy is pursued to the end, the right will return to power in the elections, as has happened in other countries after similar class-collaborationist governments, and conditions will be laid for a big counteroffensive by the capitalists, who want to go even further than this government against the workers.

People are beginning to understand that the only way to change the rightward tendency that the government is imposing on national politics is to struggle against it, to offer a real left alternative.

Broadly speaking, our policy is based on three main thrusts.

The first is that the workers parties and the different trade unions must join together to thwart the right and prevent a return to power by the bourgeois parties.

Second is that the best way to do this is for the workers movement to lead the struggle against the austerity policies, thereby bringing behind it the middle layers like the students and small farmers who have begun to demonstrate against the government.

And third, the LCR tries to explain in concrete terms how the economic crisis in France can be solved by the workers. We put forward a number of transitional demands to solve the crisis, such as the sliding scale of wages to protect against inflation, the 35-hour workweek

with no cut in pay, and so on.

Much of this centers on basic explanations of what a real workers government should do in the present situation: nationalization, under workers control, of the key industries that have not yet been nationalized; a break with the mechanisms of the European capitalist market in order to take another road; no to the French nuclear force and to the arms race undertaken by the French government; and so on.

Moreover, as soon as the government imposed its second wave of austerity measures after the municipal elections, we said that the

key thing now is to struggle to overturn them. It was time to go beyond simply discussing the character of the government or expressing opinions through elections. To get rid of the austerity program, there must be mass mobilizations in the streets and in the factories.

It was time, we said, to show the government that the working class opposes its policy of bending to the pressure of the bourgeoisie.

The national unions have already been forced, as I mentioned, to organize scattered national days of protest by different sectors of the working class on different days.

We say this is a first step, but is not the answer. Why struggle separately when we could have so much more impact struggling together?

So we have been arguing that the workers should begin to prepare now for a national 24-hour general strike that would warn the government that we want a change in its policy and are ready to struggle for that change.

We feel that the industrial workers are key to the coming struggles. That is why the LCR is continuing and accelerating its efforts to root itself in the big industrial plants and unions. □

Nicaragua

The deepening class polarization

Counterrevolutionaries seek mass base among most backward layers

By Michael Baumann

MANAGUA — Nicaragua is a small, poor country. Its population of 2.9 million is about the same as that of Los Angeles, Rome, or Berlin. In size, it's a little bigger than Florida. Its total export income last year was \$460 million, less than one-tenth of the profits declared by a single U.S. corporation — Exxon.

In the midst of a world economic slump, this tiny country is facing an escalating invasion organized by the world's strongest imperialist power. And in the midst of this war, it is still maintaining concrete improvements in the standard of living of the country's farmers and workers.

All basic food items are subsidized. Education is free. Medical care is free or low-cost (\$1 per doctor visit, prescriptions provided at no cost). In the cities, rent is gradually being abolished and the homeless are provided with free land to build their own houses. In the countryside, 500,000 acres of land has so far been distributed to land-poor peasants, and another 350,000 acres are scheduled for distribution this year.

Slice it however you will, such advances can only be carried out at the expense of the wealth, power, and privileges of the old ruling class — Somozaist and non-Somozaist alike. And carried out by increasingly restricting the operations of parasitic middlemen, who are still able to use the capitalist market to hoard and speculate, thus gouging the real producers of the country's wealth — the workers and farmers.

Rise in counterrevolutionary activity

The old exploiting classes are fighting back with all the weapons at their disposal. And they have clearly been given a shot in the arm by the U.S.-sponsored invasion that has been under way since February.

As fighting continues in the north, and as counterrevolutionaries prepare to open a new

front from Costa Rica in the south, there has been a shift among opponents of the revolution from relatively passive opposition or nonparticipation in the revolutionary process. More common today is open opposition, either carried out from abroad or from the still-safe channels left within Nicaragua, for example disguised as propaganda around religious themes.

But also increasingly common is clandestine counterrevolutionary activity. Its rise can be gauged from the visible results — increasing shortages of consumer items above and beyond those that can be explained by problems of distribution and production, and the wide circulation of "scare" stories.

Rightist leaders look for a base

It is no secret who is most actively involved in organizing these attempts to undermine the revolution. At the head of the pack are major big-business figures like the former owner of the country's Coca-Cola plant (now nationalized), who recently turned up as a leader of the counterrevolutionary forces based in Honduras; the Catholic church hierarchy; leaders of the right-wing political parties; and greedy, price-gouging capitalist merchants.

These are the social layers that have a material stake in the old order, those who will lose wealth and position if the workers and peasants continue to move forward in the construction of a new society. But in and of themselves, these privileged layers are a tiny minority. They confront a revolution that in less than four years has created a network of Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs) totaling more than 600,000 participants, a revolutionary union movement of more than 100,000, a peasantry organized in more than 4,000 cooperatives, a militia of 80,000 to 100,000, and an all-volunteer army of 20,000 to 25,000.

In these circumstances, the domestic counterrevolution has made the logical move. They

have increasingly turned their attention toward sectors of the population that, because of their economic and social circumstances, have the least political consciousness and have been the most difficult to integrate into the revolutionary process.

In the cities the counterrevolutionaries have sought to mobilize support from the least conscious elements among the unemployed, marginally employed, and small merchants, as well as utilizing the criminal and semicriminal elements found in all classes.

Since the capitalists still dominate all kinds of retail trade, as well as industry, they have a powerful lever to influence everyday life. Hoarding and speculation by the capitalists not only creates artificial shortages of consumer goods and anxiety and insecurity among consumers. It also forces thousands of small merchants to either join in with the black market operations organized by the capitalists or to lose their livelihood. But black market activities place the small merchants in conflict with the government.

In the countryside, the counterrevolutionaries have been able to influence a layer of peasants in the most isolated and backward areas. In the impoverished Atlantic Coast, they have made some progress among the Miskito Indians, historically oppressed under colonial and semicolonial rule and distrustful of the new "Spanish" government in Managua from the beginning.

These are the sectors most susceptible to anticommunist propaganda dressed up in religious rhetoric, to promises of a "quick fix" once the Sandinistas are removed, and to accepting and repeating scare stories about *contra* military victories or coming disastrous food shortages.

"Awakening the antipopular potential of these social layers is the main aim of counterrevolutionary propaganda today," FSLN delegate to the Council of State Onofre Guevara

pointed out recently. "They represent an unconscious reserve for their own class enemy."

Let us take a look at a few concrete examples to see how this and other forms of the growing class polarization are manifested in everyday life.

The war in the north and the workers

"How many of you here are farmers?" *Intercontinental Press* asked a group of militia members in the village of El Limón April 2. El Limón is located just five miles south of the Honduran border. Only hours before, the local militia unit had repelled a two-hour counter-revolutionary attack.

The three dozen or so men and one woman looked at each other and laughed.

"All of us," one of them said.

It is clear to anyone who visits the front lines along the northern border that defense of the revolution is overwhelmingly in the hands of the peasants and urban and rural workers.

"The problem we have in the factories," CST leader Alejandro Arrauz told us back in Managua, "is keeping enough people out of the militia to maintain production."

The CST, the Sandinista Workers Federation, is the country's main union federation, covering about four-fifths of the organized industrial work force. One of its main tasks with the step-up of the war has been to combine steady production with increased CST participation in the militia and reserve battalions.

We got a first-hand glimpse of what this means in practice later in April when we visited the Rolter shoe factory on the outskirts of Managua and asked for an old friend, Héctor Zúñiga, a leader of the CST local at the factory.

"Héctor's been mobilized," General Secretary Gregorio Pérez told us, "along with about a dozen others."

Rolter is predominantly privately owned. But it is the union, not the bosses, that decides which volunteers can be mobilized, another union official told us.

Misel Cardoza pointed to a large complicated-looking piece of stamping machinery to illustrate what he meant. "Operation of this machine is critical to production," he said. "Nicaragua needs the shoes we make and we can't let the few people who know how to run it be mobilized. We have to pick and choose," he said.

Every aspect of defense is voluntary — with one exception. That's the one that affects the bosses, who as a class are completely absent from the militia, the army, or the Sandinista Defense Committees. They are required by law to pay full salary and benefits to the family of any mobilized worker, for the duration of his or her military service.

Who guards the factories at night? Again, not the bosses, who would not be trusted even if they volunteered. The workers at Rolter decided at a recent meeting to follow the example of other factories and organize night-time defense of the plant themselves.

Starting at the end of April, each of Rolter's

150 or so production workers will take a turn every other week, remaining in the factory all night to assure that no sabotage is carried out.

Defense of the cities

This amounts to an extension to the factories of what workers are already doing in their neighborhoods, organized there through the Sandinista Defense Committees.

Vigilancia revolucionaria (revolutionary vigilance) is today a reality throughout the cities of Nicaragua. In Managua alone, more than 70,000 take part in the organized night-watch. In the country as a whole, the figure is about 140,000.

Organized in groups of two to three per block, CDS members patrol the streets from 11:00 p.m. to three or four in the morning. They keep an eye peeled for signs of counter-revolutionary activity — unfamiliar autos, suspicious-looking packages, unfamiliar faces — or ordinary street crime.

This has been so successful — Sandinista Police estimate that most crime, and probably most counterrevolutionary activity, now takes place between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. — that discussion is under way of how to extend it, in a modified form, to 24 hours a day.

"Now," says Commander Luis Carrión, vice-minister of the interior, "we want to improve the quality and not just the quantity of vigilance."

"We don't want just 'committees of informers.' We need active vigilance."

"If you see someone walking down the street listening to *15 September* [a counter-revolutionary radio station, based in Honduras] at full blast, what are you going to do? Go look for a policeman?"

"No!" was the booming reply from the audience, made up of CDS members from all over Managua.

"That's right," Carrión said. "Take care of it yourself."

"And if you think a suspicious meeting is taking place at somebody's house, put a team right in front. If there's nothing wrong going on, they won't mind. But the contras, we want them to know they're being watched 24 hours a day."

A clear differentiation in class forces is apparent in participation in vigilance. The more workers in a neighborhood, the more likely it is to have a smoothly functioning system of defense.

The meeting that Commander Carrión was speaking at, held to celebrate the second anniversary of the start of revolutionary vigilance, demonstrated this class polarization graphically. Of the dozen or so neighborhoods honored for exemplary performance and vigilance, virtually every one was predominantly working class.

Life at the border

What is the impact of the war on the border towns, constantly under threat of attack by counterrevolutionaries?

In Santa Clara, a small farming village 10

Reagan cuts Nicaragua's sugar quota

Striking another blow at the people of Nicaragua, the Reagan administration announced May 9 it would cut U.S. sugar purchases from that country by 90 percent.

The chief beneficiary of this decision will be Honduras, Nicaragua's northern neighbor, which serves as a base of U.S. operations against the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions. Honduras will receive 52 percent of Nicaragua's former share; Costa Rica, 30 percent; and El Salvador, 18 percent.

"This [cut in the sugar quota] is a weapon just like the weapons they use to train and direct the counterrevolutionary forces," pointed out Sergio Ramírez, a member of Nicaragua's Government of National Reconstruction.

Reagan's cut in the sugar quota is the latest step in the U.S. war against Nicaragua. Washington is not only financing, arming, and training counterrevolutionary forces fighting against the Sandinista government, it is also trying to strangle Nicaragua economically.

A similar step was taken last October, when Standard Fruit, working with the

U.S. State Department, broke its agreement to market Nicaraguan bananas.

Nicaragua was able to find other buyers for its bananas. But the sugar embargo, which could mean a loss of \$12 million a year in hard currency — 3 percent of Nicaragua's total exports — presents a much more difficult challenge.

In order to protect domestic sugar producers, the U.S. government sets import quotas and a price for sugar that is currently three times the free market price.

Nicaragua's Ministry of Foreign Commerce said it wasn't "surprised by the illegal and arbitrary decision of the U.S. government." Ministry officials said that for some time they had been seeking alternative markets in case of such a move.

At present, nearly a quarter of Nicaragua's foreign trade is with the United States. As Washington has escalated use of its economic leverage to try to undermine the revolution, the Sandinistas have expanded their trade with western Europe (now 22.9 percent) and the workers states (now 7.3 percent).

— Jane Harris

miles south of Honduras, *Intercontinental Press* asked Eliazar Hernández Díaz, a 73-year-old coffee farmer.

"For me," he said, "it means not having been able to get to my coffee *finca* for more than a year."

Hernández Díaz's farm is located right on the border, where snipers can shoot at coffee pickers without even crossing into Nicaraguan territory.

As he spoke, in early April, the 10 tons of coffee beans he had expected to harvest had already ripened, gone unpicked, and rotted on the ground. A total loss.

Hernández Díaz is remaining in Santa Clara. He spoke with pride of the revolution, of its meaning for his children and grandchildren, of the 150 of his neighbors who are members of the militia.

But not everyone has made the same decision.

Father Lucino Martínez Cuesta spoke of this, choosing his words very carefully. Father Martínez is the pastor of the main church in Jalapa, the largest town on the border and a repeated target of the contras. He is a leader of the prorevolutionary wing of the Catholic church, and his outspoken defense of the Sandinista revolution has earned him several death threats.

Are there people who have left Jalapa out of fear? he was asked.

"There are a few small capitalists, *burguesitos*, who have sold their things and left. But not many."

Do you know people who have gone over to the contras?

"Yes," he said, very quietly. "A number of cases. Including someone who used to give me a ride on his motorcycle from time to time — a good friend. I know a number of people like that."

Does that mean the contras have some support in the area?

"Yes, they do," Martínez Cuesta responded frankly. He explained the poverty of the area and the impact of the large quantity of U.S. dollars the contras appear to have to spread around.

"But they have lost a lot of support because of the barbarities they have committed."

Divisions among population

Sandinista Army Capt. Emerson Velásquez, chief of military operations in nearby Quilalí, told *Intercontinental Press* that perhaps as many as 20 percent of the counterrevolutionary "task forces" currently operating in the country are made up of peasant recruits. That is, perhaps as many as 400 of the total of about 2,000.

Some were kidnapped, Velásquez explained. Others were attracted by the pay or were victims of the contras' anticommunist propaganda. Many of these peasants have been convinced by the counterrevolutionaries that the Sandinista government is going to take away their land.

Historically, the poverty of this region has



Michael Baumann/IP

April 28 demonstration in Managua. Sign says, "Mr. Reagan, we don't have missiles, but we do have militia members with rifles."

produced two very different responses. It was the stronghold of Sandino's fight against the U.S. Marines in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But it was also a favored recruiting ground for Somoza's National Guard.

At times this division is reflected even in the same family. One of the contras captured in the attack on El Limón turned out to be a young *compesina* from the village. She had been identified by her sister, with whom *Intercontinental Press* spoke shortly after the attack. Yet two older brothers in the same family are members of the militia.

Pope's visit

In the border region, as in Nicaragua as a whole, the impact of the pope's visit in early March could still be felt more than a month later.

For weeks prior to the visit, the Sandinista daily *Barricada*, the mass organizations, and prorevolutionary priests like Father Martínez carried out an extensive educational campaign. They urged Nicaragua's majority Catholic population to appeal to the pope to help end the U.S.-backed war against them.

The pope refused. In the main mass in Managua he ignored the appeal by hundreds of thousands, voiced in the chant, "We want peace!"

This confrontation with the highest leader of the Catholic church helped many to understand more clearly the reactionary role of the church hierarchy. But at the same time the pope's silence on the war struck a double blow at the revolution. Father Martínez explained how.

"There have been problems since the pope's visit," he said. "Many people either didn't understand what was happening at the mass or didn't agree with chanting at the pope."

"These were mainly very religious people, people who see the pope almost as a god,

people who don't have a critical way of thinking," Father Martínez said. "And there are a lot of them."

"There are also those who are more conscious, more revolutionary, who understand the situation better." But for many of them the pope's refusal to speak out was a disheartening experience.

"It lowered morale, because they had expected the pope to say a prayer for peace, for those who had been kidnapped, for the young people who had been killed just a few days earlier."

'Revolution is necessary'

The wing of the church represented by people like Father Martínez, on the other hand, is quite clear about what happened, and blame local church officials as much as the pope.

"The hierarchy in Nicaragua," Father Martínez said, "are people with a bourgeois way of thinking. They are afraid of 'communism.'"

The extent to which the church has become a battlefield in the war between the counterrevolution and the revolution is reflected in the message from Father Martínez's pulpit. Just before leaving to say midnight mass, he summarized for *Intercontinental Press* his Easter message to the Catholics of Jalapa:

"On the one side, there are many poor people with little wealth," he said. "On the other, there are a few rich people with much wealth. This is a very serious contradiction, as Pope Paul VI pointed out. Therefore, capitalism is evil. Revolution is necessary."

"All the good things we have, the schools, the hospitals for everyone, the participation of people in the process, the fact that almost everybody now knows how to read and write — this is a victory won by the death of our heroes and martyrs." □

Military defends its bloody past

Massive rejection of report on the 'disappeared'

By Will Reissner

Argentina's military ruler, Gen. Reynaldo Bignone, went on nationwide television April 28 to present a report on the fate of up to 30,000 Argentines who disappeared at the hands of the military since it seized power in 1976.

But Bignone's report, prepared by the military, gave no accounting of any of the missing. Instead it stated that anyone on the list of the missing who is not currently in exile or living in Argentina under an assumed name will now be "for administrative and judicial purposes considered dead."

According to the report, "only history can judge with precision who is directly responsible for unjust methods and innocent deaths." Claiming that the abductions had been carried out under provisions of the state of siege passed in 1975 by the previous civilian government, the report maintained that the actions of the security forces were "acts of service."

An accompanying decree is expected to serve as the basis for a law that only military courts will have jurisdiction in any future prosecution of soldiers or police in connection with the disappeared.

No explanation for 1,500 corpses

Bignone also gave no explanation for the more than 1,500 unidentified bodies found in mass graves in Argentina in recent months.

The day of Gen. Bignone's televised address, 600 relatives of the disappeared demonstrated in front of the presidential palace in Buenos Aires demanding to know the fate of their loved ones.

Two weeks earlier, on April 15, about 15,000 demonstrators carrying petitions with 217,167 signatures, staged a march in the capital demanding that the military government account for the missing.

The military's report on the missing and the accompanying decree were an attempt by the high command to protect themselves from retribution for their crimes once they turn the reins of government over to civilian politicians. The military dictatorship — reeling under the combined blows of a deep economic crisis and popular outrage over the disgraceful performance of the Argentine officer corps in the Malvinas War with Britain last year — has announced that elections will take place October 30.

But the issue of the disappeared will not go away. The campaign for public disclosure has been spearheaded by a group known as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who have staged regular vigils in front of the presidential palace. That organization issued a statement charging that the military report "is nothing

more than a new and vain attempt to evade justice and assure impunity for the cowards responsible for the Argentine horror and tragedy in the past decade."

Court suits on the fate of 6,000 people last seen in the custody of state security forces are still pending.

Another group, Argentine Grandmothers of Disappeared Grandchildren, was formed in 1977 to press the cases of 117 disappeared children. Estela Carlotto, vice-president of the organization, estimates that as many as 400 children were seized with their parents and have never been heard from since.

The Argentine League for the Rights of Man pointed out that "if the report takes as a given that the detained-disappeared are dead, includ-

Turkey: elections and executions

By G. K. Newey

In a bid to improve his government's image, the head of Turkey's military junta, Gen. Kenan Evren, announced April 29 that general elections will be held in that country November 6. Turkey has been ruled by martial law since the military seized power on September 12, 1980, with U.S. backing.

The announcement of new elections follows a sweeping purge of the military's opponents from public life. Jonathan Randal pointed out in the April 25 *Washington Post*, "in recent months, Gen. Kenan Evren's government has weeded out leftist university professors, closed newspapers, tightened press censorship and moved forward with mass trials of labor leaders and other prominent Turks."

On April 24, the military regime passed a law allowing the formation of new political parties to contest the November elections. But under that law, no old parties may be revived, and about 100 leaders of political parties that were banned after the military coup are prohibited from taking part in politics for 10 years. Moreover, all new parties must be approved by the government.

The military government also passed new laws on May 6 prohibiting the trade unions in Turkey from taking part in political activity. The laws ban unions from having ties with political parties, advocacy of Marxism, or opposition to the Turkish government or the "unity of the nation." Strikes by public sector workers are also prohibited.

Since the imposition of martial law, 23 people have been executed for political offenses, 91 are awaiting execution, and 29,940 have been sentenced to terms of more than five

years, according to the government.

Among those facing death sentences are seven members of Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left), who were condemned to death April 7. They are Ahmet Erhan, Sadeccin Guven, Harun Kartal, Tayfun Ofkok, Baki Altin, Afan Zener Yildirim, and Ahmet Fazil. (In our May 16 issue, the seven were incorrectly identified as belonging to Dev-Yol [Revolutionary Path], another Turkish organization whose members have been subjected to fierce repression.)

U.S. Congressmen Ronald Dellums and Michael Barnes, and Seaside, California, City Councilman Mel Mason are among the U.S. elected officials who have sent protests to the Turkish government against these death sentences.

Congressman Dellums characterized the death sentences as an "insane action which is clearly in violation of human rights."

Amnesty International has launched an emergency campaign to save the lives of the seven. The French Socialist Party and members of the European parliament have also called on General Evren's government to commute the sentences.

Many Turkish activists fear that the seven will be executed soon in order to pave the way for a wave of future executions of other political prisoners.

The Reagan administration has been a strong backer of the Turkish military regime. The White House has called for an increase in U.S. military aid to Turkey from the 1983 level of \$465 million to \$755 million in 1984. □

The Palestinian struggle after Lebanon

Interview with PLO representative at the UN

[The following is an interview with Dr. Hatem Husseini, deputy UN observer for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was conducted by *Intercontinental Press* at the end of April.

[Dr. Husseini was born in Jerusalem. His family was forced to flee in 1948 from the part of the city occupied by Israeli military forces. Husseini grew up in refugee camps in Lebanon and Egypt. He was educated in Egypt and later in the United States.

[Before coming to New York, Dr. Husseini served as director of the PLO's Palestine Information Office in Washington.

["My involvement in the Palestinian cause is, of course, deeply personal," Dr. Husseini told *IP*. "I am concerned with my people, my relatives, my nation that has been scattered, amputated, and dispersed. I saw it and I have been living it for nearly 40 years.

["But my commitment to the Palestinian cause is not a nationalist one — it's more from an internationalist position. I believe that human beings should support the struggle of any people who are oppressed or persecuted."]

* * *

Question. Why did Israel invade Lebanon last year?

Answer. Well, historians will have to answer that question more accurately, but I can say now that it was an American war. The invasion was inevitable after the Camp David agreement. The American strategy all along has been to isolate Egypt as a military and political power, thereby giving Israel military superiority in the region.

Given the Iran-Iraq War, Syria was left as the only power confronting Israel. In these circumstances Israel felt free to strike at the PLO. The Israeli army served as [Washington's] tool to attack the PLO and the Lebanese progressive nationalist movement and to try to wipe them out.

As you know, in the official American view the PLO is characterized as a terrorist group, a tool of the Soviet Union to stir up trouble for American interests and the so-called moderate Arab states in the region. Therefore the PLO should be crushed.

You could see this reasoning, for example, in [Israeli Prime Minister Menachem] Begin's appeals over the past four years to the U.S. Congress and now the Reagan administration. He argued that Israel was America's best ally, that it is a military force that can move quickly and strike hard, thereby preserving American interests in the region.

I think this war had been planned for

perhaps three years, and that the 1978 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon was a dress rehearsal. In the Israeli view, by beating the PLO militarily you do away with the political problem of the Palestinian people.

They hoped to be able to push through treaties with Jordan and Lebanon along the lines of Israel's Camp David agreement with Egypt. They hoped for American hegemony, with little puppet states under Israeli military domination.

The PLO and the Lebanese National Movement stood up to the Israeli army, which was fully backed by American military power.

All reports indicate that parts of the 6th Fleet and other American war ships moved to the Mediterranean before June. There were joint Israeli-American military maneuvers five or six months before the war. The type of Israeli landings from the sea, the pinpoint aerial bombardments, all this means sophisticated technology of American origin.

It is amazing how the PLO and the Lebanese fighters, really with very limited resources, were able to put up a fight for three and a half months.

You may recall that [former Israeli Defense Minister Ariel] Sharon and other officials said it would take Israel two weeks and then they said well, maybe just one month. And then finally they were only able to take over West Beirut through treachery.

The Americans tore up the agreement reached when the PLO fighters left West Beirut. American troops were withdrawn, allowing Israel to go into West Beirut while the city was wide open, resulting in the massacres.

Q. Do you see any parallels between the U.S. role in the Middle East and its role in Central America?

A. It's clear that the Reagan administration is on the offensive militarily, using the big stick and declaring without shame that the United States has the right to use military means to change political situations it doesn't like. That is what UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick said recently about Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration is on the offensive in Nicaragua, in El Salvador, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Asia — supposedly to face up to a Soviet threat. That is nonsense because the real issue in the Third World is liberation, freedom, dignity, and social and economic change for billions of people who are going hungry. It is from this perspective that we should understand this war in Lebanon.

Q. What is the situation in Lebanon today? What conditions are the Palestinians remaining in Lebanon faced with?

A. What is happening in Lebanon now is an attempt by the American government to increase American military presence, to rearm the Lebanese army, and to have full American military control over Lebanon.

Remember in 1958 President Eisenhower sent the marines to Lebanon, but he withdrew them. The difference now is that the Reagan administration would like to keep the marines there.

It wants to rearm the Lebanese army and really establish a fascist state that would work hand in glove with the Israeli fascist establishment.

On the other hand there is a grave repression and mistreatment of the Palestinian-Lebanese population under Israeli rule, especially in southern Lebanon and near West Beirut. Mass arrests, shootings, killings, detentions, torture that are unreported in the media.

We get reports on a weekly basis of a family shot, an individual killed, someone found dead beside the road.

In Ansar concentration camp there are 9,000 Palestinians who have been detained for eight months without trial, without any charges. Many were doctors, nurses, teachers. We don't even have an accounting of their names. When the Israeli military authorities release a few of them, immediately the pro-Israeli armed Lebanese groups take them and execute them.

So on the one hand there is continued Israeli military repression and also Israeli mop-up-type operations; for example, the bombing of the Palestine Research Center, the bombing of the Palestine Economic Institute, attempts to assassinate some Palestinian leaders who have remained in Lebanon.

Those who suffer in Lebanon are the civilians — the men, women, children who were slaughtered. Even before [the massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps of] Sabra and Shatila, people were killed en masse in six refugee camps in southern Lebanon.

In addition to Al Ansar, there is another detention center in southern Lebanon. And then inside Israel there is a large concentration camp near Megiddo and in four other locations. There is also a special detention camp for Palestinian women, and the conditions they face are miserable.

Palestinians in those camps who have cancer, who have pneumonia, who need immediate surgery are being detained. Some have been shot and killed, some are punished

by being deprived of food or water for long periods of time.

And the International Red Cross is not publicizing this information because it wants to maintain its neutral relationship with the Israeli regime. Other groups are trying to put out this information. In the media, however, it is totally blacked out.

Sabra and Shatila was the height of what has happened in Lebanon. Sabra and Shatila, you see, is now our holocaust. The massacres had a political aim: terrorize the Palestinian people to make them lose faith and give up politically.

But we have to overcome the pain and agony and this is what the Palestinian people have done. In fact, right after the massacres the people of Sabra and Shatila wrote slogans on the walls like: "Sharon — we will never give up!"

In southern Lebanon, Palestinian women demonstrate against the Israeli army, even against tanks, without fear. So this is a strong people. The struggle for national liberation, the struggle for freedom all over the world requires great sacrifices.

The Vietnamese people went through this, the Black people in Africa. Look what Europe sacrificed to free itself from Nazi occupation, from fascism. The Algerians gave a million and a half martyrs to achieve their freedom. So it is with the Palestinians.

Q. How did the war in Lebanon affect the PLO?

A. The PLO came out of the war militarily stronger. It has regrouped its military forces. First of all, the Palestinian fighters have gained a vast experience in this war. You must remember that the PLO fought against one of the most advanced armies in the world, equipped with sophisticated American weapons.

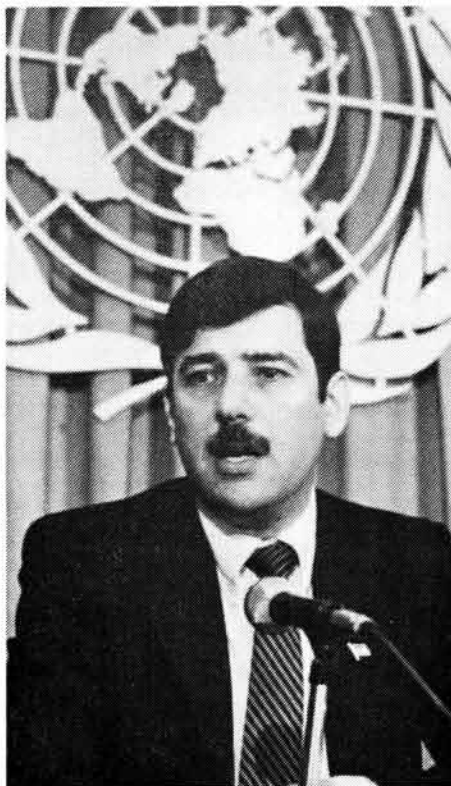
Israel is talking about sharing information gained in the war with the Pentagon. Well, the PLO has learned a lot, too. It has gained military experience and learned about Israeli military strategy and tactics and modern weapons. The PLO is still a military power inside Lebanon.

The PLO is continuing the struggle against the Israeli occupation forces — especially in southern Lebanon. There are almost daily military operations directed against the Israeli army.

Now I must say here that I think the Israeli military establishment does not understand anything but the language of force. I wish people could achieve their freedom without bloodshed. I wish we could have the Gandhi-type or Martin Luther King, Jr.-type of non-violent struggle.

But history teaches us that the colonizer, the colonial power, the oppressor does not understand anything but the language of force. You have to use armed struggle to strike back and deliver the message to him that he cannot get away with sheer military brute force.

You cannot deny people their freedom, you cannot deal with serious political issues through military might — this is the Reagan-



DR. HATEM HUSSEINI

Kirkpatrick logic that our people are answering through their struggle.

Politically, the PLO emerged stronger. The Palestinian people rallied around the PLO as it fought for survival. Chairman [Yassir] Arafat became a symbol to the Palestinian people: besieged, fighting, saying "I will never surrender." A Stalingrad of the Arab world.

The PLO among the Arab people gained more because the Arab people saw their governments totally unable to do anything. Some collaborated with the American government; others were just totally incapable of helping the Palestinian people. The Arab people are angry and they condemn their governments for this. I don't think some of these regimes will last for long.

Also, internationally the PLO gained support among the people of the United States and around the world. Therefore the PLO is continuing at the international level to prevent a Camp David-type agreement from going through.

Q. Was this generally positive view reflected at the recent meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algeria?

A. The Algeria meeting gave a vote of confidence to Chairman Arafat and the leadership of the PLO.

Actually, the press before the Algeria meeting kept saying that the PLO was going to split. I was at the Algeria meeting and perhaps there were 600 journalists from all over the world. The first two days they were thinking the PLO would split and they would come back

with sensational news. Well, that didn't happen. The PLO emerged more united and determined to continue the struggle.

There is no such thing as moderates and radicals in the PLO. That is American official wishful thinking. All the Palestinians are radicals in the sense that they are uprooted, stateless, in exile. That is true whether it is a businessman or a laborer or a peasant or a doctor or an intellectual. All the Palestinians are denied national identity, denied the right to regroup on their own land.

But the U.S. government wants to split the PLO. They could not destroy the PLO militarily in Lebanon, so they want to try to destroy it politically. But no one can split the PLO because it is the Palestinian people. It is the struggle of the Palestinian people to survive and achieve their full rights.

Behind the assassination of [Issam] Sartawi [Sartawi was gunned down at a meeting of the Socialist International in Portugal on April 10] is the Israeli Mossad and American intelligence. It came at a time when these forces were trying to convince the world, "Look, there is radical-moderate split in the PLO."

Within the PLO, of course, there are different currents because we are a people, and like all people we have communists and socialists and progressives and nationalists and conservatives. We don't deny that. We are human beings. And there is a debate and a discussion because we are a democratic people. We don't believe in assassinating people because of their political views or banning political parties.

Actually, the PLO is a coalition of people from different political parties and organizations. We are like the Vietnamese people, who were united in a nationalist struggle — maybe around 70 political parties united under the banner of a national liberation struggle — same with the PLO.

But in its main current the PLO is a progressive movement. Our national struggle is a progressive struggle because it clashes ultimately with U.S. imperialism and the lackeys of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

That is why the Lebanese people rallied around the PLO — the Lebanese poor, the Lebanese working people, the peasants, the educated classes who wanted social change. It wasn't that the PLO destroyed Lebanon. No. It was that in Lebanon there was a class contradiction and political contradictions. Therefore, the Lebanese democratic and progressive forces rallied around the PLO, while Israel supported the fascist Phalangists.

Q. Do you think the Israeli government will try to annex southern Lebanon in the same way it is trying to annex the West Bank and Gaza?

A. Israel is trying to use the Lebanese economy — to export to Lebanon Israeli-made goods, industrial and agricultural commodities, make a quick profit, and at the same time weaken the Lebanese economy.

I think this is one reason why the Israeli

strategy now is to waste time in negotiations. They want to present the world with a de facto situation in which Israel would remain in southern Lebanon to use the waters of the Litani River.

Q. What does it mean that on the one hand Reagan states that he wants the Israeli army out of Lebanon, but on the other he keeps increasing military aid to Israel?

A. It is clearly hypocritical. If he really wants the Israelis out of Lebanon he could implement it. He has the power. But in fact, his emissaries, [Morris] Draper and [Philip] Habib, are not doing that. There is a coordinated American-Israeli strategy to get concessions out of Lebanon — actually to force Lebanon to sign a Camp David-style treaty with Israel.

In fact, the U.S. government is using the Israeli military in Lebanon to get politically what it wants.

Q. One of the Israeli objectives in invading Lebanon was to try to break support for the PLO on the West Bank and defeat resistance on the West Bank to new Israeli settlements. What is the situation in West Bank and Gaza today?

A. First of all, I can tell you that no power on earth can destroy the PLO, because the PLO is the Palestinian people.

Of the 4 million Palestinians, nearly 1.5 million live in the West Bank and Gaza. For 16 years now they have lived under the most brutal Israeli military occupation. And it's amazing that for 16 years these people, totally unarmed, have put up a fight. The children, women, everyone putting up resistance.

Politically, the PLO is working to address the situation in the West Bank because the Israeli government is trying to evict the Palestinian people. The poisoning of Palestinian school children is part of that — trying to terrorize the Palestinians and have them leave their land. This goes hand in hand with the Israeli government's decision to build more settlements and turn many of the current settlements into exclusively Jewish towns.

Therefore the PLO is continuing to struggle to protect the Palestinian people on the West Bank and in Gaza, to struggle against the Israeli attempt to swallow up the occupied territories.

Q. Isn't one of the lessons of the war in Lebanon the fact that the heroic resistance of the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters helped spur a tremendous outpouring of antiwar sentiment inside Israel?

A. This is very true and that is why Chairman Arafat himself sent strong messages of support to the movement in Israel opposing the war in Lebanon. He even met with some of their leaders during the siege of Beirut.

If you remember he met with Uri Avneri and later on with other distinguished Israelis from the peace movement. And there has been con-

tinuing dialogue and even common work between Palestinians in the occupied territories and progressives from the Israeli peace movement — whether around opposing the war in Lebanon or opposing the building of more Israeli settlements.

We look with great admiration and great hope to the Israeli peace movement and other progressive forces in Israel. We hope they can unify their forces, because through unity they can have an impact on the system. And I think maybe in a historical sense they represent the right direction for the future. It is these forces, together with the Palestinians, that will realize the history of Palestine and establish there a truly secular, democratic, progressive society where Jews, Moslems, Christians, Palestinians, and Israelis can coexist with equal rights.

The PLO condemns persecution of the Jews. It is symbolic of this that our delegation in Warsaw laid a floral wreath during the recent memorial to the Jews who fought the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

It is not the U.S. or other superpowers who will determine or can determine the history of the Middle East. The Roman Empire, the British Empire, the French tried to do that and failed. It is the people who make the future. The progressive, democratic, Israeli forces, the Palestinian people, the Arab people — it is their struggle to make and shape the future of the region.

We know this from the past and that is why I am giving so much significance to these forces inside Israel. I personally have met, for example, with some leaders from the Israeli Black Panther party, Israeli-Arab Jews. I met with Charles Biton, who is one of the leaders and a great man, an important man.

That is why I am saying they should be united and they should struggle — on the one hand social and economic change to help underprivileged, persecuted Jewish classes in Israel, and on the other to rally with the Palestinians in struggle against the racial discrimination and the militarism of Zionism and the Zionist ruling circles.

Q. The U.S. press has been full of reports saying that the PLO missed a historic opportunity by not agreeing to Reagan's demand that the PLO give up its role as representative of the Palestinian people and agree to his plan. How do you answer this?

A. Well, as you know, this is total nonsense. What has been offered to the Palestinian people that they have missed an opportunity? Reagan offered them continued slavery.

Camp David said the Palestinians should remain under Israeli military rule, but they should have limited autonomy — meaning to run their own garbage collection and other minor affairs. But education, serious social and economic questions, political representation — that is all up to the Israeli army.

And what did Reagan offer in return? Nothing. He didn't even say that he recognized our right to self-determination and to sit down and negotiate with the Israelis. He said Jordan

should speak for the Palestinians. So he again was offering the Palestinians continued slavery. Denying them their national rights, their right to self-determination, their right to a Palestinian state. Denying them their rights to speak for themselves.

Hussein speaks for Jordan; Mubarak speaks for Egypt; Begin speaks for Israel — although I doubt he even speaks for Israel. But the Palestinians must speak for themselves, and their representative is the PLO.

So actually, the Reagan administration is using this argument to cover up for the reality that Reagan did not offer genuine peace to the Palestinians and to the region. What Reagan offered the Middle East was the big stick — the Israeli war in Lebanon, so that the Lebanese would have to sign on the dotted line, followed by Jordan. His idea was to bury the Palestine cause and to have little puppet American garrison-type states — Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt — under American hegemony and control to insure that oil keeps pumping dollars into the pockets of the multinational corporations.

The official American position up to now has nothing for peace in it, because peace rests on offering the Palestinians their self-determination, their statehood.

As you know even during the Geneva talks in 1972-73, Chairman Arafat said, "Where is the invitation for me to go to Geneva? Is the Palestinians's right to self-determination on the agenda?" So we did not miss an opportunity.

The Reagan policy has resulted in genocide and mass murder for the Palestinians. Sabra and Shatila. And the Reagan administration has even tried to prevent us from speaking up in protest of these atrocities.

For example, the chairman of the UN Security Council in April is U.S. ambassador Kirkpatrick. Under her chairmanship we could not go to the Security Council to discuss the poisoning of Palestinian children on the West Bank — an act of genocide.

Kirkpatrick says she agrees with freedom of speech. She says Nicaragua should allow democracy and freedom of speech. But she denies us the right to go to the Security Council to talk about increased Israeli military repression in the occupied territories.

The U.S. government is against freedom of speech for the Palestinian people. It denies leaders of the Palestinian people the right to come to this country and speak. It even denies the right of Palestinian poets, like Mahmoud Darwish, the right to come and read poetry.

The American government is an imperialist government. It has no morality. It committed war crimes in Vietnam, it will continue to commit them in South Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East. This is the U.S. government.

Q. Can you comment on the pressure the Reagan administration is putting on Jordan and other Arab governments?

A. Yes, even the *Wall Street Journal*

documented recently that the Reagan administration blackmailed Jordan and told Jordan, if you enter the negotiations we will increase military and financial aid to you.

So the U.S. government has used all forms of pressures and threats against the Jordanian government to force it to enter the negotiations and abandon the PLO and abandon the Palestinians.

Secretary of State [George] Shultz went on record recently as saying directly that the Arab states should abandon the PLO — as if the Arab states are American colonies who take orders from the State Department. The Arab states are not powerful, they are not united, they are not fully backing the PLO militarily and politically, but they are not American colonies and they are not going to take orders from Secretary of State Shultz.

There is a minimum amount of support for the PLO among the Arab states. We wanted more support. That is why Chairman Arafat said that the Arab decision that came out of Fez was a minimum Arab decision — it should be implemented hand-in-hand with an Arab military, political, and economic strategy. Because when you have a political platform you need to have the power to implement it.

So that is why the PLO is urging the Arab states to unify and to use their military and economic power to implement the Fez proposals.

Q. Do you see a shift in attitude on the part of the American people in their sympathy toward the Palestinians because of the war in Lebanon?

A. At the popular level, at the level of the American people, there was strong support for the PLO and Palestinian and Lebanese people. Actually, polls have indicated that around 65 percent of the American people were against Begin's war and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the misuse of American cluster bombs, etc.

So at the popular level the American people opposed the war and expressed views, although not at the level I would have wanted — at the level of opposition to the Vietnam War, for example. Ultimately American public opinion should influence the system, the government, the decision-making. Yet the U.S. Congress is now allocating more money to Israel, much more than the administration was even asking for.

This is against American public sentiment. This is supposed to be a democracy. How is it that American popular views and feelings are in one direction and the U.S. policy is in another? Therefore this is not a democracy.

It is run by an oligarchy — Reagan and a few people representing the multinational military-industrial complex make decisions that are not in the public interest. These American officials have no moral backbone.

The American people are something else. The American people were against the war in Vietnam; they are against apartheid and the

killing of Blacks in South Africa; they are opposed to the near-genocidal war against the peoples of Central America; and they are against the genocidal aspects of this war in the Middle East. They are for genuine peace where people can rule themselves and have control over their own destiny.

Angola

66 Czechoslovaks kidnapped

Right-wing UNITA terrorists take hostages

For more than two months, South African-backed terrorist forces in Angola have held captive 66 Czechoslovak citizens, among them 21 children.

On March 12, units of the South African-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) attacked a hydroelectric and paper mill complex in Alto Catumbela, in central Angola, as part of its efforts to weaken the Angolan economy and bring down the Angolan government. Dozens of Angolan militia members were killed by the attackers, and the paper mill, the largest in southern Africa, was destroyed.

The UNITA forces also seized the Czechoslovaks, most of whom were working at the mill as technicians.

The captives were then taken on a forced march to an UNITA base in southern Angola, a distance of some 800 miles. Alexander Ivan, one of the captives, told a reporter for the France-Inter radio station that the prisoners lacked enough food and medicine, and that some of them were very weak as a result of the long trek.

The UNITA has not replied to requests by the International Red Cross to drop food and medical supplies to the Czechoslovaks.

Jonas Savimbi, the central leader of UNITA, has indicated that his group is holding the captives in the hopes of exchanging them. "We want to exchange some of the Czechs for seven British mercenaries detained in Luanda, for the French doctor Philippe Augoyard detained in Kabul [Afghanistan], and for certain members of our movement imprisoned in Luanda," Savimbi told the France-Inter reporter.

The seven British mercenaries were captured by the Angolan government in 1976 and sentenced for their participation in the civil war on the side of the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA), another proimperialist group allied with the UNITA. Augoyard was captured by the Afghan authorities several months ago for assisting antigovernment guerrilla groups in that country.

The Czechoslovak government has requested assistance from the United Nations, the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity, and other

This is the gut feeling of the American worker, the working-class people who made this country. The Palestinian struggle is not over territory. It is a struggle for human dignity. And that makes it the struggle of every human being who is against exploitation, oppression, fascism, racism, and persecution. □

bodies. The Cuban government has likewise appealed for "coordinating measures to free the kidnapped individuals."

Rude Pravo, the newspaper of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, has given the case prominent coverage. It has blasted the imperialist news media for remaining virtually silent on the kidnapping.

"Those who support UNITA and are using it as a tool of their policy against the People's Republic of Angola are assuming a heavy responsibility," one issue declared. "There is no doubt that it is in their power to exert influence on the leadership of UNITA to protect the lives and health of the captives and secure their release."

Funded by the CIA during the 1975-76 civil war in Angola, the UNITA has since received considerable backing from the apartheid regime in South Africa. This has included the provision of money, arms, training, and base facilities in South African-occupied Namibia, as well as repeated South African military strikes into southern Angola.

Although UNITA initially denied such support, it has recently become much more open about its South African ties. In April, the UNITA's radio station declared, "We think that the solution to all southern Africa's problems, namely political, economic and military, has necessarily to come about through direct contact with South Africa."

Thanks to such positions, the UNITA's base of support within Angola has diminished considerably since the end of the civil war. As a result, it has moved increasingly toward sabotage and terrorist attacks against unarmed civilians. These terrorist actions, including the kidnapping of the Czechoslovaks, is a sign of its desperation. □

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Rally celebrates Vietnam's victory

Anniversary meeting denounces Washington's war in Central America

By Will Reissner

NEW YORK — Vietnam's victory against U.S. aggression would have been impossible without "the solidarity of millions of people around the world," Nguyen An told a meeting of more than 250 people here April 30, the eighth anniversary of the fall of the U.S.-backed Saigon regime.

An, who is first secretary of Vietnam's mission to the United Nations, addressed a rally sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party's Militant Labor Forum. The meeting was organized to answer Washington's renewed propaganda attacks against Vietnam and to protest new Vietnam-style wars in Central America and the Caribbean.

The successful event marked an important victory over a large and well-organized group of rightist Vietnamese exiles, whose attempt to physically break up the gathering failed.

Nguyen An told the audience that during the eight years since the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, "our people have had almost no days of peace." Right after the 1975 victory, he explained, Vietnam faced border attacks by Pol Pot's reactionary forces in Kampuchea, which continued until that regime was overthrown in 1979.

Following Pol Pot's ouster, however, the Peking regime mounted a large-scale invasion of Vietnam to punish the Vietnamese people for aiding the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship in Kampuchea.

Today, An added, Vietnam must still contend with an imperialist economic blockade and with a smear campaign aimed at isolating his country internationally.

Despite all these attacks, An stated, "we have reunified our country and have laid the basis for moving toward prosperity."

Vietnam's people, he said, stand with all the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America who are struggling against oppression and exploitation.

"If Reagan is crazy enough to launch another Vietnam" in Central America, there will also be another April 30 victory," An concluded, to sustained applause and cheers from the audience.

Chan Bun Han, a Kampuchean who is active in the Committee in Solidarity With Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, told the gathering that he looks forward to celebrating the victory of the Salvadoran revolution. "Vietnam won and El Salvador will win," Han stressed.

He pointed to the similarities between the counterrevolutionary attacks against Nicaragua mounted from bases in Honduras, and the actions of Pol Pot's forces from bases along

Kampuchea's border with Thailand. Han noted that four years after Pol Pot's overthrow, he still retains Kampuchea's UN seat.

Josefina Ellizander of Casa Nicaragua expressed her pleasure at "celebrating the anniversary of the glorious Vietnamese people, who fought imperialism as we are doing in Nicaragua today."

Guadalupe González, a representative of El Salvador's Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), told the audience that the task of mobilizing opposition in the United States to Washington's intervention in Central America has been made easier because "we have inherited the education that the American people received from Vietnam's struggle."

"Psychologists say that intelligence can be measured by the ability to learn from past experience," Wilma Reverón of the International Information Office for the Independence of Puerto Rico, told the crowd. "If it is true, the U.S. government must be suffering from mental retardation, because we are witnessing a repetition of the Vietnam experience."

Reverón reminded the rally that proportionally more men from Puerto Rico died in the U.S. forces in Vietnam than from any U.S. state.

Winning independence for Puerto Rico, she stressed, is of strategic importance to all progressive people, because Washington wants to use Puerto Rico as a springboard for interventions in Latin America.

The Pentagon, she pointed out, recently announced the reactivation of Ramey Air Force Base, on the part of the island closest to Cen-

tral America.

Trade unionist Bill Henning, second vice president of Local 1180 of the Communications Workers of America, reminded the audience that this "victory celebration was brought to you by three components" — the indomitable will of the Vietnamese people; the action of hundreds of thousands in the United States who took to the streets to protest the war; and the fact that as U.S. intervention in Vietnam deepened, most GIs did not want to fight.

While drawing parallels between U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Central America, Henning also stressed some differences.

Today, he explained, the organized U.S. labor movement is no longer monolithically lined up behind U.S. foreign policy aims.

Henning called on participants to work to bring the power of the American working class into the struggle against U.S. intervention in Central America. "People must be inside the unions raising this issue," Henning asserted.

Tod Ensign of Citizen Soldier told of the results of a large scientific conference held in Vietnam in January on the chemical defoliant Agent Orange, 54 million pounds of which were dropped on Vietnam. Agent Orange contains dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known.

Vietnamese researchers, Ensign reported, have found that women in northern Vietnam who were never exposed to Agent Orange but later married men exposed to it in the south, have shown elevated rates of miscarriage and genetic damage in their offspring.

Steve Clark, a member of the Socialist



Tod Ensign (speaking), and other participants in April 30 meeting.



Lou Howort/Militant

Nguyen An, first secretary of Vietnam's mission to the United Nations.

Workers Party National Committee and editor of *Intercontinental Press*, told the crowd that "what happened in Vietnam eight years ago was a victory for *all* of humanity" and inspired fighters for self-determination and socialism throughout the world.

Vietnam

Women gain from revolution

Big changes in villages and family

[The following is part of a paper on Vietnam presented by Kathleen Gough at a March 12-15 conference in Winnipeg, Canada, marking the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death. Gough, an anthropologist at the University of British Columbia, spent nine weeks in Vietnam and Kampuchea in early 1982.]

* * *

I would like to speak separately now about the position of women. I think that we must see Vietnamese women in the context of their recent history and of the present productive forces and objective circumstances of Vietnam.

It would be utopian and presumptuous of us to demand that they should have complete equality, as it is understood here, under Vietnam's conditions of economic backwardness and its stage of nation-state formation. For example, I think it would be foolish of us to demand that Vietnam disband its national army, which is chiefly although by no means entirely male, and replace it with local women's militias, as was suggested at one point in this conference, when Vietnam has half a million Chinese troops on its northern

"But," he added, "the American working class owes the biggest debt to the Vietnamese revolution," because the experience of Vietnam helped "transform the thinking of U.S. working people, and transformed U.S. politics."

The internationalism exhibited by the rally, Clark said, is a reminder that working people worldwide are fighting a common enemy and marching toward a common goal — governments of workers and farmers that can put an end to capitalist exploitation and oppression and open the road to socialism.

The people of Central America, the Caribbean, and Indochina have stood at the head of that international struggle, he said. And efforts today to mobilize opposition to U.S. military intervention abroad is key to advancing the U.S. working class and its allies along the road to a government that represents their class interests, instead of those of the capitalist class and its war machine.

Vietnam has been subjected to constant economic and military pressure by Washington since 1975, Clark said. The American people should demand that recognition and aid to Pol Pot's forces stop. We must call, he added, for reconstruction aid to Indochina and for full U.S. recognition of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean governments. □

border and has experienced two invasions, from north and south, since the revolutionary war ended in 1975.

We must also, I think, be careful to listen to what Vietnamese women want, what their aspirations are, rather than imposing our own demands on them. They do aspire to equality, but at present they do not mean what some of us mean by it.

Their "equality," for example, includes special rights to maintenance, health care, and leisure for menstruating and pregnant women and women nursing children under the age of two, *together with* daycare provisions and the right to education and choice of occupation along with men. It includes the right of women who wish it to retire from wage or salary work at 55 instead of 60, when men retire, because they want time to enjoy home pursuits and grandchildren after 40 years of war, in which they were often separated from their families. Vietnamese women's ideas of gender equality will change as their national circumstances change, just as ours will.

I want to emphasize the gains that the Vietnamese revolution has brought to women.

In the villages, where 80 percent of the

people live, land reform gave women private fields, as well as equal ownership in the jointly held communal lands. It gave equal pay for equal work, and the right of women to sell produce from their gardens to meet their private expenses and make personal savings.

The revolution ended debt slavery for women and children, rape, starvation, branding by landlords with red hot irons, whippings, and being at the mercy of employers' sexual demands.

In the home, the revolution ended polygyny, concubinage, arranged marriages, brideprice, the husband's right to rape his wife, and the sole male custody of children. It granted women the rights of divorce, abortion, and free birth control. It banned and ended pornography. It provided free health care and maternal care, education, equality before the law, and full rights to personal property.

Women received the right to vote and to run for the National Assembly and for all public offices. As a result, women today are prominent in people's councils and committees at the commune, city, district, and provincial levels and in the National Assembly and special government commissions. There is no bar to women's election to the Council of State and of ministers; there is one woman minister, of education, at present.

Women are well represented in medicine, engineering, architecture, physics, chemistry, and other formerly male preserves. It should be said that none of this would have been possible without more than 40 years' work by the Women's Union, a mass organization with about 10 million members.

In spite of their poverty, Vietnamese women are so far ahead of North American women in most respects that I don't think it is pertinent for us to criticize or feel disillusioned by their place in society, as some feminist speakers do when they discuss women in the socialist states. It is important to note and analyze where they differ from or fall short of our ideals, but it is not realistic to expect that they could attain them at this time.

The kinds of goals for which Vietnamese women are struggling now are, first, to produce more so that they will have more wealth and conveniences for themselves and their families. They are struggling to create what they call "new socialist families," where there is equal partnership in decision-making and sharing chores, and where there will be more time for women's higher education. They want gradually to become equally represented in the Communist Party and in government, and in all forms of occupation. □

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Labor movement debates El Salvador

Widespread discussion of war issue in union movement

By Geoff Mirelowitz

[The following article appeared in the May 6 issue of the *Militant*, a U.S. weekly reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party.]

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"I'm often asked by union people," American Federation of Teachers member Charlie Dee told the Milwaukee Central Labor Council recently, "'Why should trade unionists worry about El Salvador? We have enough problems at home protecting our jobs and the labor movement.'"

Dee's answer is that U.S. military aid to El Salvador "is a triple whammy against union people."

Dee explained: "First, it's our money that is being spent to buy bullets for a government and a military which serves the 14-family oligarchy that owns the vast majority of the land.

"Second, every dollar going to El Salvador could be spent here — on jobs or energy assistance or unemployment compensation or to prevent foreclosures.

"Third, that money is a subsidy and an incentive to big business to take jobs away from union workers here . . . and run away to countries where antiunion policies and starvation wages are enforced by machine guns and helicopters paid for by working people of the United States."

The Milwaukee labor council voted to endorse the resolution submitted by Dee calling for a cutoff in U.S. military aid to the Salvadoran regime and printed it on the front page of its newspaper, *Labor Press*. This symbolized something new and different that is going on in the American labor movement.

Throughout the labor movement, there is a debate and discussion about U.S. government policy in Central America and its connection to the government's anti-working-class policies here at home.

Opinions about this are by no means unanimous, but a lively discussion is taking place.

To some workers this may seem only natural. As Charlie Dee explained, the connection between the government's attacks on workers in the United States and the war it is supporting in El Salvador grows clearer and clearer every day. But the fact that it is being actively discussed within the union movement represents an important change.

1983 not 1965

When the first American "advisers" were sent to Vietnam in the early 1960s, it was not the topic of much discussion in the unions. In 1965, when Lyndon Johnson took the first big

steps to escalate the U.S. war there, the top union officials were right behind him. George Meany, then chief of the AFL-CIO [the U.S. labor federation], was one of the most die-hard supporters of the U.S. government's attempts to crush the Vietnamese people's battle for self-determination.

At the beginning, many workers were misled by officials like Meany into supporting the war as a necessary step in the "fight against communism." Those workers who did oppose the war were certainly not speaking out against it in large numbers. Debate or discussion about the Vietnam War in the unions at the time was the exception, not the rule.

Today, Washington is again escalating U.S. military intervention — this time in Central America. Once again, government spokespeople such as Secretary of State George Shultz are beating the drums about our "moral obligation" to oppose "Communist guerrillas" in El Salvador. He and others have revived the "domino theory," raising the specter that if the Salvadoran rebels win, others like them will fight and win elsewhere in Central America.

But in 1983 these arguments just do not cut as much ice with American workers. Opposition to a new Vietnam War is one of the most

deeply rooted sentiments among working people today. This is one of the reasons for the discussion in the unions.

More and more workers are aware that while billions of dollars are earmarked for the Pentagon, unemployment remains high, social services are slashed, and wage cuts are imposed on union after union. This awareness shows up more and more often in the signs that read "Jobs, not war" or "Bread, not bombs" at demonstrations like the March 15 rally of 2,000 unemployed workers at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., or the picket of 4,000 steelworkers and other unionists who greeted Reagan in depression-hit Pittsburgh on April 6.

'I was in Vietnam'

On top of this is the bitter memory of the Vietnam War itself. A machinist at the FMC plant in San Jose — a manufacturer of armored personnel carriers for the U.S. Army — spoke for many when he explained his decision to sign a petition opposing the U.S.-backed war in El Salvador. "Yeah, I was in Vietnam and there's no way my kid is going to go too," he said.

The mines, mills, refineries, and factories of American industry are filled with Vietnam

Union leaders oppose aid to Salvadoran regime

One measure of the opposition to U.S. government policy in El Salvador is the breadth of support for the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. It includes the following union officers as members:

Kenneth Brown, president, Graphic Arts International Union; William Bywater, president, International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (IUE); César Chavez, president, United Farm Workers of America; Murray Finley, president, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; Robert Goss, president, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW); Nicholas Gyory, president, United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers; Frank Martino, president, International Chemical Workers Union; Gerald McEntee, president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); Willard McGuire, president, National Education Association; and Charles Perlik, president, The Newspaper Guild.

The committee was set up on the following principles:

"Support of self-determination for El Salvador.

"Encouragement of a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

"Opposition to United States and any other military intervention.

"Affirmation of basic democratic rights for the people of El Salvador: the right to live and work; the right to free thought, expression and petition; the right to genuinely free and participatory elections; the right to organize and constitute trade unions with the right to strike."

The committee also explains:

"The American people are not willing to sacrifice their sons and daughters to prop up unpopular despots. Nor are they willing to finance military adventures when Federal budget cuts threaten essential social services. Continued American meddling can only escalate tensions in the area and place us at the threshold of a broader conflict."



Lou Howort/Militant

September 1981 "Solidarity Day" demonstration in Washington, D.C., called by AFL-CIO.

veterans who have not forgotten their experience. Tens of thousands of other workers, many of whom are not old enough to remember the Vietnam War much themselves, know relatives, friends, or neighbors who fought or died in the war.

The memory of Vietnam, the anger about the government's economic policies, and the widespread belief that the government never told the truth about the war in Vietnam and probably is not telling the truth about Central America today, all combine to deepen antiwar sentiment among American workers. And the signs are that this is provoking more and more discussion in the official bodies of the labor movement.

Of course there are still many narrow-minded officials who believe that discussion of U.S. policy in Central America is not appropriate "union business." This view is shared by some workers.

But the discussion goes on. As a group of Nebraska railroad workers and some of their union leaders recently explained in a letter to the *Lincoln Star*:

"First the government sends military aid and equipment, then it sends advisors, and last but not least it will be our sons in uniform. . . .

"We cannot stress strongly enough how important it is for all labor unions and workers who aren't in unions to voice their disgust and resentment concerning U.S. military aid to Central America. The Vietnam War would have ended much earlier than it did if organized labor had taken its rightful place in opposing it."

AFL-CIO opposes military aid

In a key change in policy earlier this year, the national AFL-CIO officialdom came out in opposition to further military aid to the Salva-

doran regime. Local AFL-CIO councils, like the one in Milwaukee, are also speaking out against the U.S.-backed war in increasing numbers.

Several leaders of large industrial unions have formed the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador. The committee is chaired by Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers (UAW); William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists (IAM); and Jacob Sheinkman, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

Another graphic example of the changing mood among workers and their unions has been the response to the tour of Salvadoran union leader Alejandro Molina Lara. Molina Lara is the organizational secretary of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers Unions (FENASTRAS).

For the past several months, Molina Lara has been traveling throughout the United States, describing the conditions of the Salvadoran working class and appealing to U.S. workers for solidarity in the fight against U.S. military intervention.

From one end of the country to the other he has gotten a warm reception, and his visits have provoked interest and discussion among workers. Many union locals, including a wide range of international unions, have invited him to address their meetings or, in some cases, have organized special meetings for him.

During his Minnesota tour, for example, Molina Lara spoke to union meetings of the UAW, IAM, ACTWU, United Steelworkers of America (USWA), Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), United Transportation Union (UTU), Minnesota Federation of Teachers (MFT), Minnesota Education Asso-

ciation (MEA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

Some of these meetings have been sizable — like the AFSCME state convention of 400, where more than \$500 was collected for imprisoned Salvadoran unionists, or the meeting of USWA Local 1938, where more than 200 iron ore miners heard Molina Lara's message.

In addition to these meetings, four other public gatherings were sponsored for him by central labor councils in Minneapolis, Virginia, Duluth, and St. Cloud.

A real discussion

Workers often use the discussion period at Molina Lara's meetings to get answers to questions that are posed by U.S. government propaganda and repeated to workers day after day by the big-business media. This was the case at one meeting organized by the UAW in Minnesota.

One worker wanted to know whether the rebels in El Salvador were receiving aid from Cuba or the Soviet Union. Another asked where the rebels got their guns. A third worker questioned Molina Lara about whether the "domino theory" had any validity.

Molina Lara replied:

"We don't believe in dominoes. The oppressive conditions of the people are similar throughout Central America. In Guatemala the people face the same conditions of malnutrition, hunger, and illiteracy. We believe in the people fighting for national liberation."

Later in the meeting Molina Lara told the auto workers:

"Real democracy will be won by the working class. We produce everything, not the capitalists. This is a democratic struggle of mass organizations."

What is new is not that workers are asking questions like this but that someone like Molina Lara — a revolutionary union leader and opponent of the Salvadoran regime and its U.S. backers — can answer them face to face with American workers in their union halls.

After answering these questions and others, Molina Lara received a standing ovation and \$300 in donations from the UAW and individual members.

Questions in a farm town

Molina Lara has not only been speaking before unionists. He has also taken his appeal for solidarity to allies of the working class.

In Minnesota he spoke at a meeting in the farm community of Montevideo. There about 25 people, including several working farmers and high school students, came to hear him. They were especially interested in the living and working conditions of the Salvadoran rural population.

One person asked, "Is the breaking down of the big estates and the redistribution of the land taking place at all today in El Salvador?"

Molina Lara explained that the land that has been "given" to the peasants was not free. They were forced to sign contracts that called

for 20 years of payments at high interest rates.

"Today," he said, "the peasants are in crisis because they can't meet the payments and they can't buy machinery to produce."

He said the peasant organizations that are able to function are demanding the government raise the price of crops and lower the interest rates as well as the original price that was charged for the land.

He summarized the situation today, saying, "The big landowners, after exploiting the land for 50 years, are now exploiting the labor of small farmers, farm laborers, and the landless . . . through the banks and the credit agencies."

Many of those at the meeting found Molina Lara's explanation of the crisis of the rural population somewhat familiar.

Molina Lara has also gone to the Black community. Blacks have been quick to extend a hand of friendship and solidarity to him. As one Black transit worker said in New York, "I fought in the last one and we don't need another war. We should be doing everything we can to keep our country from being involved in another Vietnam."

'Our struggles are similar'

Many Blacks respond favorably to the message Molina Lara brings. "Our struggles are similar," he told a meeting sponsored by the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP) in the Baltimore Black community of Pimlico. "We may not be Black, but imperialism oppresses us in the same way. . . . You are a people who have been denied participation in the political life of your own country. . . . So I make a call to you, to the Black people of the United States, to that section of the American working class who has struggled for your human rights in this country."

In Baltimore NBIPP was one of the principal sponsors of the tour. In addition to the Pimlico meeting, Molina Lara was the guest speaker at the regular NBIPP chapter meeting. Following that meeting 20 Black activists attended a reception for him at the home of NBIPP leader Ken Morgan.

The Tidewater area of Virginia is another spot where Molina Lara was welcomed by Blacks. Sixty students at Hampton Institute and 70 at Norfolk State University (two Black colleges) turned out to hear him. He also spoke at meetings at two area Black churches, Bethel AME and St. Mary's Catholic. His tour in Virginia was endorsed by the NAACP in Hampton and Newport News as well as the Tidewater chapter of NBIPP.

Where it has not been possible to arrange for Molina Lara to address official union meetings, he has sometimes taken his message directly to workers at plant gates and work sites. This was true in New York, where transit workers organized an informal meeting for him during a coffee break at a Bronx transit barn.

Part of the reason Molina Lara strikes a chord with American workers is because he is



Duane Hooker/Militant

Alejandro Molina Lara (right) talking to shipyard worker in Newport News, Virginia.

a worker talking to other workers.

This reaction was typified by a Puerto Rican transit worker in New York who said, "I know what they've been through. I've been there. I lived it. Having to suffer to make peanuts. Having to choose between paying the rent or buying food for my family."

Molina Lara is not the only Salvadoran unionist speaking to U.S. workers. In Racine, Wisconsin, exiled Salvadoran workers are receiving sanctuary in local churches because the U.S. government denies them political asylum. They have also begun to speak to audiences of local unionists.

The February issue of the *Allied Industrial Worker*, published by the Allied Industrial Workers (AIW) union, featured an interview with two of these Salvadorans.

Bill Lange, a member of Local 232 of the union, writes that the Salvadorans' story made a big impact on him. This happens "when you talk to the people personally — union brother to union brother and their families."

"We are all workers with similar interests," Juanita, one of the Salvadorans, told Lange. "But the blood of workers in El Salvador is running in the streets. We ask our union brothers and sisters in the United States to do what they can to stop the shipments of arms to the Salvadoran military."

"Stop the arms shipments and we will find peace on our own," said Roberto, the other exiled unionist. "If the arms shipments are not stopped, we will soon have another Vietnam in Central America."

This is the same message that Molina Lara brings to American workers. While he has received a warm response, some top AFL-CIO officials have reacted differently to his tour. These officials are not happy about the idea that a revolutionary Salvadoran unionist is addressing American workers and their unions.

The AFL-CIO leadership's recent change in position, to one of opposition to further military aid to El Salvador, is a step forward for antiwar forces. It demonstrates, in part, that these officials recognize the antiwar sentiment that exists among the union membership.

However, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and other top union officials are not in favor of labor adopting its own foreign policy, one that is independent of the State Department. They are opposed to local unions and rank-and-file unionists discussing and debating whether or not U.S. foreign policy is in the interests of the working class.

The AFL-CIO officialdom is disturbed by Molina Lara's appeal to American workers to actively oppose the government's new Vietnam. That too is what some of the debate and discussion is about.

This came out in a public way during Molina Lara's tour in Baltimore. Originally the Metropolitan Baltimore Council of AFL-CIO unions had voted to participate in Molina Lara's tour there. The Maryland State and Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO had sent out a letter urging union locals to invite Molina Lara to speak at local meetings during his visit. A traveling fund of \$100 was established and local unions

were invited to contribute.

However, the day before the tour was to begin, the local AFL-CIO pulled out. When he was questioned by a reporter from the Baltimore *Sun*, Baltimore labor council President Henry Koellein said of the situation in El Salvador:

"It's hard to tell who the good guys are and who the bad guys are. We were told by our national organization to back off."

Referring to Molina Lara, Koellein said the national AFL-CIO "told us that he represents the guerrilla movement. So we are backing away from this and withdrawing our resolution."

At a news conference the next day, Molina Lara explained that FENASTRAS is a federation including 26 national unions in El Salvador. It is affiliated to the Trade Union Unity Committee (CUS), which includes nine Salvadoran labor federations, representing the vast majority of organized labor in El Salvador. The press conference was widely covered.

The telephone call from AFL-CIO offices in Washington did not halt Molina Lara's tour in Baltimore. Three important union meetings heard him speak, including a meeting of 75 union representatives of District 1199E of the Hospital Workers Union; a special meeting of representatives of District 8 USWA locals convened by District Director Dave Wilson; and the regular business meeting of USWA Local 2609, representing workers at Bethlehem Steel's giant Sparrows Point plant.

Another highlight of the Baltimore tour was a citywide meeting held on March 25. Over 150 people attended, including steelworkers, machinists, garment workers, hospital workers, and others. Les Bayless, secretary-treasurer of 1199E, introduced Molina Lara to the meeting, which gave him a standing ovation.

One of the other speakers at the meeting was Philip Van Gelder, a retired international representative of the IAM. Van Gelder had introduced the original resolution to the central labor council endorsing the tour. He began his remarks by saying American workers "are not easily persuaded that President Reagan, who is an outspoken enemy of labor and working people in this country, has the best interests of the workers of El Salvador at heart."

He also commented on the controversy in the labor movement about the Molina Lara tour. "I don't know how you cancel a resolution," he said. Van Gelder explained that he had learned of this through the newspaper and that no vote had canceled the AFL-CIO's sponsorship of the tour. He went on to say that he believed the original decision expressed the general feelings of many in the local labor movement. This was echoed by warm greetings to Molina Lara that were sent to the meeting by Earl Kiehl, District 4 director of the United Furniture Workers Union, and by Octavia Roberts, chairperson of the local CLUW chapter and a member of USWA Local 2610.

Earlier in the week, Tom Murphy, USWA legislative representative, told the USWA dis-

trict meeting, "George Washington was called a terrorist because he led the fight against British tyranny. And if George Washington was a guerrilla, we should wear that name proudly."

While Molina Lara was touring Baltimore, a letter was issued by national AFL-CIO head Lane Kirkland. It was sent to principal officers of local central labor councils and said in part:

"It has come to our attention that individuals or groups purporting to represent organizations abroad are asking to address trade union meetings in the United States in behalf of various causes, such as El Salvador, Chile, South Africa, etc. . . .

"Recently an individual claiming to speak for the Salvadoran people has asked to address several central labor bodies. This individual does not represent a trade union organization with which the AFL-CIO is working and which is affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. I believe he has addressed some trade union meetings, presenting a position or policy contrary to that adopted by the AFL-CIO Convention. It is regrettable that this took place. Perhaps such things can be avoided in the future by following the procedure outlined in this letter."

The procedure requires checking with the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs before anyone is allowed to speak to any AFL-CIO body on an international matter.

At the same time the letter also states:

"In view of this lack of progress in prosecuting the murderers [of American Institute for Free Labor Development workers killed in El Salvador in 1981], the AFL-CIO favors a suspension of military aid until such time as those involved are brought to justice."

A similar letter has been sent out to locals of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) by CWA President Glenn Watts.

But, like the phone calls from AFL-CIO headquarters, such letters have not ended the debate, nor have they been accepted like papal edicts.

Some unionists agree with Kirkland. Others do not and they continue to speak out loudly against U.S. policy and welcome Molina Lara and others like him.

In fact, the Kirkland letter has led to more of the very debate and discussion it was aimed at closing.

David Ferris, a business agent for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was one of the organizers of Molina Lara's highly successful tour there last December.

Not the 1950s

"If this were the '50s and we all still believed what the government said," Ferris told the *Militant*, "Kirkland's letter might be more persuasive to those of us in the labor movement."

The letter, said Ferris, "may put a lot of people on the spot. But I firmly believe the labor movement has to take a stand."

He likened this disagreement to one that took place earlier that he and other Pennsylvania unionists remember quite well. Following

the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in 1979, many unionists spoke out against nuclear power and in favor of permanently shutting down the plant.

This did not jibe with national AFL-CIO policy. Pressure was brought to bear on many unionists to back off from speaking out on this issue too. Nevertheless, several union-organized protests were held, including a march of over 10,000 people in Harrisburg on March 28, 1981. This action was called by 11 international unions.

'Keep the discussion going'

"Around Three Mile Island there were major disagreements in the labor movement," said Ferris. The lesson he draws from that experience about the current disagreements on El Salvador is that "the important thing is to keep the discussion going and not allow it to be cut off. We have to keep the discussion going so the truth can get out. The American people will make the right decision if they know the truth."

Molina Lara arrived in Texas shortly after the Kirkland letter. In San Antonio, the central labor council had also voted to sponsor the visit. As a result of the Kirkland letter they withdrew their formal endorsement. However, the vice-president of the council, Jaime Martínez, an international representative of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), hosted the press conference that welcomed Molina Lara to town.

In Galveston County, Molina Lara spoke at a luncheon hosted by the central labor council. Those in attendance included 14 local union presidents. A collection was taken after Molina Lara's talk.

Council President Charles Delgado, who is business manager of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 527, also gave Molina Lara a letter encouraging other unionists to extend solidarity to him.

"Brother Lara deserves your support in whatever form that takes in his, and others', effort to resolve the terrible problems in his country through dialogue rather than by the terrible consequences of war," says Delgado's letter.

In Washington, D.C., another stop on Molina Lara's tour after the Kirkland letter was issued, Molina Lara spoke to workers at meetings of American Federation of Government Employees locals 41, 2607, and 12; AFSCME locals 1072 and 2477; and unit six of IBEW Local 1900. He also made another quick stop in Baltimore where he spoke to workers at a meeting of United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 120.

A citywide rally in Washington attracted over 100 people, including about 20 Salvadorans living in the city. Rick Ehrman, administrative organizer for Hospital Workers Union, District 1199E, in Washington, and Víctor Rivas of Casa El Salvador cochaired the meeting. Messages of support to the rally included one from Victor Reuther, retired international affairs director of the UAW.

The Kirkland letter has also had an impact in

California, Molina Lara's current tour stop. Some central labor councils have declined to endorse Molina Lara's tour or to give him an opportunity to address council meetings. Others rescinded their previous decision to participate in the tour after receiving the Kirkland letter.

But that has not been the only reaction. The Contra Costa County Labor Council will hear Molina Lara at a council meeting.

The Santa Clara County Labor Council has voted to endorse an April 29 meeting at the San Jose Labor Temple. Council Business Manager Peter Cervantes-Gautschi will join Molina Lara on the program.

In San Francisco, where the central labor council is not participating in the tour, a number of members of the council's executive body have lent their endorsement to a May 6 citywide meeting. These include Walter Johnson, president of Department Store Employees (RWDSU) Local 1100, and Stan Smith, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council.

Discussions among workers

The preparation for Molina Lara's tour in California has led to much discussion there as it has elsewhere. For example, UAW members at Teledyne Ryan in San Diego circulated a resolution for four weeks urging their local to invite Molina Lara to speak. Workers expressed different opinions about whether the union should play a role in opposing U.S. military intervention in El Salvador. Some workers thought it should not. Ultimately, however, the local approved the resolution by a wide margin.

Rail workers speak out

Nebraska unionists say no to new Vietnam

By Cheryl Porch

[The following article appeared in the May 6 issue of the *Militant*, a U.S. weekly reflecting the views of the Socialist Workers Party.]

* * *

LINCOLN, Nebraska — The March 12 issue of the daily paper here, the *Lincoln Star*, printed a letter to the editor opposing U.S. government policy in Central America. The letter was signed by 87 officers and members of seven different rail unions. (See below.)

The discussion and debate both on the job and in the unions about this letter said quite a lot about American politics and the thinking of U.S. workers.

The letter was read aloud at a meeting of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen Local 799. More than half of those attending the meeting signed it. "There's no way they're sending my kid down there," commented one woman at the meeting.

In United Transportation Union (UTU) Local 305, the letter was on the agenda of two

The discussion continues during and after Molina Lara's meetings. Following his presentation to the USWA Local 2609 meeting in Baltimore, Molina Lara was approached by one worker, a Vietnam veteran who had accused Molina Lara of being "used by communists." Molina Lara pointed out that whenever American workers fight back against the bosses' attacks, they will also be accused of being communists.

The Vietnam vet was not completely convinced. But it has to make you stop and think about what might have been different for working people — in Vietnam and the United States — if 20 years ago representatives of Vietnamese workers could have talked face to face with American unionists. The fact that Salvadoran unionists can do that today and have a dialogue and receive offers of solidarity says a great deal about the changes in working-class politics in the United States.

As the U.S. rulers press ahead to escalate U.S. military intervention in Central America, they must contend with this change.

More and more workers have a generalized understanding that the employers are on an offensive against the unions here and that somehow that is connected to U.S. policy in El Salvador. As this discussion continues and deepens, it leads to a closer examination by workers as to whether the real interests of the working class are represented by the foreign policy of the employing class.

This is a vital and necessary part of the process of American workers coming to the conclusion that labor needs its own foreign policy, one that is in the interests of workers here and abroad. □

business meetings. At the first, nearly 20 workers signed and it was agreed to post the letter on the union bulletin boards at the Burlington Northern rail yards here.

Posting the letter generated more discussion, including sharp disagreement by a few with what the letter said. Joe Swanson, a member of Local 305, reported that comments were written on it including, "This is communism" and "stuff like this shouldn't be allowed in the union meeting." Below this someone else had written, "This is why we should go to union meetings."

At the second UTU meeting, the local voted not to adopt the letter as an expression of union policy. "Nobody spoke for the United States being involved in El Salvador," explained Swanson. "In fact, most of those who voted against adopting the letter as union policy had already signed it as individuals."

The letter was also published in the newsletter of my union, Local 471 of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks.

While the letter was being circulated, Joe Casmer, vice-president of UTU Local 305, read it at a meeting of 75 people who had come to hear American Indian Movement leader Vernon Bellecourt. Bellecourt had recently returned from Nicaragua.

When Casmer read the letter he explained that it expressed his personal views and that they weren't those of his union. But, he added, "they should be."

The text of the letter follows.

* * *

We are writing this letter as concerned members of the laboring class of this country and as members of our unions. We shall try to relate our views and opinions on U.S. military involvement in El Salvador, and also the millions that are given to this dictatorship by the U.S. government.

It is a known fact that the government we now live and work under has for years turned a deaf ear to the wants and needs of the common working-class citizen, and catered to the demands of big business and those in control of the large corporations. These are the same corporations we are working for.

We need to use our power of unionization to speak out against an issue that is going to have an effect on our lives and the lives of our children for years to come.

The issue in point is our government's military aid to El Salvador and to counter-revolutionary terrorists trying to overthrow the government in Nicaragua. It is in fact the beginning of another Vietnam tragedy. What we must remember is the sequence of how it did happen, and will happen again if we allow it.

First the government sends military aid and equipment, then it sends advisors, and last but not least it will be our sons in uniform. Unless we use our strength to stop this dangerous sequence, history will repeat itself in less than one generation.

We would like to give our sons something more than a gun and a pair of Army fatigues for graduation from high school.

We cannot stress strongly enough how important it is for all labor unions and workers who aren't in unions to voice their disgust and resentment concerning U.S. military aid to Central America. The Vietnam War would have ended much earlier than it did if organized labor had taken its rightful place in opposing it. Let us not make the same mistake now. We must stop letting ourselves be patronized and pacified by this government and let it know we will be recognized. [Signed]

J.V. Casmer, Vice President, United Transportation Union Local 305

Paul Swanson, Local Chair, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Local 1320

Mike Carper, Vice President, Brotherhood of Railway Carmen Local 799

Mark Elsener, UTU Local 305

J.F. Bohlman, Legislative Representative UTU Local 305

[Plus 82 other signatures]

Adolfo Gilly's attack on the FMLN

Aftermath of deaths of two revolutionary leaders

By Larry Seigle

[The following article is from the May 30 issue of the U.S. socialist magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*.]

* * *

Following the deaths in April of two central leaders of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), enemies of the Salvadoran revolution intensified their efforts to discredit and divide the FMLN.

The disruption operation has taken the form of whisper campaigns and public articles in the capitalist newspapers, claiming to present the "inside story."

The themes of the campaign can be itemized as follows:

First, the FMLN is in crisis, racked by internal divisions that make the perspective of unification remote.

Second, the truth about the deaths is being covered up to conceal this crisis.

Third, thrown in for good measure: the rebels are a bloodthirsty lot, given to killing among themselves. The purpose of this is to picture the revolutionists as not superior from a moral point of view to the tyranny they seek to overthrow.

These themes, in endless variation, have been played by bourgeois journalists around the world.

Now, unfortunately, in at least one instance these tales have produced the desired effect: an echo amongst forces who present themselves as supporters of the Salvadoran revolution.

In an article that can only discredit him, Adolfo Gilly, a radical Argentine journalist, has attacked the FMLN for issuing "half-truths" and "pious lies" about the deaths of its two leaders. Gilly's article appeared April 22 in the Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno* to which he is a regular contributor. The text has just been received in New York. (See page 297 for the Gilly article.)

Demands 'public conference'

Gilly demands that the Salvadoran revolutionists hold a "public conference" to answer the "political questions" about the deaths. He claims that the "solidarity of friends . . ." has been put to an extremely hard test by this tragedy.

Gilly's political attack centers on the charge that the public accounts offered by the FMLN and by the Nicaraguan government of the suicide of Salvador Cayetano Carpio (Commander Marcial) are partly, if not completely, false. This is signalled by the article's title: "Before the Grave of Comrade Marcial —



Guazapa

COMMANDER ANA MARÍA

Only the Truth Is Revolutionary."

Rejecting the accounts published by the Salvadoran leadership, Gilly insists, "I say: compañeros, it is necessary to explain more. Nobody can ask the people to continue to believe on the basis of words. Those times are long past."

Despite the rhetoric, however, Gilly fails to point to a single fact that would contradict or even raise a question about the explanation of the tragic events that has been presented to the world workers movement by the FMLN and by the Nicaraguan government.

Details provided by Nicaragua

Carpio's suicide in Managua was made public April 20 by the Nicaraguan Ministry of the Interior, which provided the essential details surrounding the affair. (See *Intercontinental Press*, May 16, for complete details.)

Carpio took his own life after learning that the murder of Mélida Anaya Montes (Commander Ana María) had been masterminded by one of his own closest and most trusted comrades. Carpio and Ana María were central leaders of the People's Liberation Forces (FPL), one of the revolutionary groups in the FMLN.

As the official statement from the Nicaraguan government recounted, "Depressed and overwhelmed by the irrefutable proof of enemy activities carried out through a member in his confidence that culminated in the assassination of Compañera Ana María, Compañero Carpio made the tragic decision to take his own life Tuesday, April 12, at 9:30 p.m."

In a separate statement, the People's Liberation Forces confirmed the facts released by the Nicaraguans.

The FPL said that the mastermind of the assassination, known as Marcelo, "lent himself to diversionary maneuvers instigated by the CIA."

"To carry out such a shameful and odious crime through maneuvers and trickery," the FPL said, "this individual used various ex-compañeros. . . . With this treacherous and disgraceful action, Marcelo tried to resolve a resentment and alleged ideological and political divergence with Compañera Ana María."

This account — while certainly not making public every detail of the plot nor submitting to public scrutiny internal affairs that are the business of the members of the FPL to resolve — was a straightforward explanation.

Equally important was the political stance adopted by the entire FMLN. At this juncture, more than ever before, the process of unifying the component groups of the FMLN is a critical task, being pressed by the masses and led forward by the most conscious proletarian forces in all of the organizations belonging to the FMLN. A response to the loss of the two leaders that would minimize disruption of this unification process was essential. This has been, to a large degree, successfully achieved.

Accusations and innuendo

The facts presented to the world by the FMLN and the Nicaraguans, to be sure, did not prevent the imperialists' hired pens from doing what they get paid for.

The *New York Times*, for example, headlined its story on Carpio's suicide: "Top Rebel Chief Dies in Mystery." The "mystery" was entirely created by the *Times* reporter, who collected accusations and innuendos that Carpio had been done in by the Cubans, the Nicaraguans, the Salvadoran Communist Party, members of the FPL, or any and all of the above.

Endeavoring to keep the pot boiling, the *Times* featured a second story on May 8, headlined "Deaths of Two Chiefs Expose Rifts Among Salvador Rebels." In this version, Marlise Simons reported from Managua that U.S. diplomats "suggested to reporters" that Carpio's suicide was in reality "another mur-

der in a gang war or a Cuban or Nicaraguan ploy."

Seeking "independent" confirmation of the rumors the U.S. officials were spreading, Simons found "leftist supporters of the guerrillas" who expressed their doubts that "a man of Mr. Carpio's character, familiar with imprisonment, torture and the violent death of friends, would suddenly take his life."

One thing is clear. Despite the large-scale resources devoted to the task of discrediting the FMLN, no one has produced a single fact to cast doubt upon what they have publicly explained.

But that did not deter Gilly from a provocative leap into the breach.

The Salvadoran revolution, he writes, "now finds itself at a crossroads: the leadership of one of its most powerful organizations, the FPL, has killed among itself." In this situation, says Gilly, a public rendering of accounts must be made.

"This means to explain to the end:

"1. The political differences that existed as the basis of the crisis, so that people can know and decide for themselves;

"2. The reasons for the persistence of these methods: why and how is it possible that cadre in the leadership of an organization could have believed or accepted the belief that murder can resolve a political conflict;

"3. What must be done to uproot such methods."

The comrades of the FPL, and of the FMLN as a whole, are drawing the lessons from the treachery of Marcelo, who evidently was able to persuade others that a political difference could be settled by violence within the movement. They are to be forgiven if they decline Gilly's invitation to conduct their internal discussions in a public theater in Mexico City.

Threats and warnings

But Gilly doesn't stop there. In what can only be taken as a warning that if the explanations he demands are not forthcoming, solidarity with the Salvadoran struggle will be diminished, he writes:

"To the last woman who gave a peso for the purchase of weapons, to the last man who went to a demonstration, to the last child who carried a banner, they need and deserve an explanation. . . .

"What these people don't understand . . . is reticence, half-truths, pious lies, being treated like children by those in whom they have placed their confidence, receiving consolations or triumphalist explanations 'so that they do not lose heart.'"

Parallel from Cuba

Gilly's insistent demand for "an explanation" are strongly reminiscent of his conduct at the time of another "mystery" cooked up by enemies of the revolution in Latin America.

In 1965, Che Guevara left Cuba. His destination and the nature of his activity were not made public. In a letter to Fidel Castro, which Fidel read publicly, Che said only that "other

nations require my services and I must leave you. . . . I will take the spirit you inculcated in new fields of battle . . . in the fight against imperialism."

Outside Cuba, rumors began at once that Che had been silenced or even assassinated by Fidel. These were printed in the bourgeois press, and even repeated by sectarians who believed that the Castro leadership was "betraying" the Cuban revolution.

An article typical of this kind appeared in the U.S. radical magazine *Monthly Review*.

"Fidel Castro can say what he wants. But *what happened to Guevara?*" the author demanded in italics. "Fidel Castro is obliged to give a political explanation. . . . It is not imperialism, it is the revolutionaries of Latin America who are interested in knowing what they did with Guevara . . ."

Does the argument sound familiar? It should. The author is none other than Adolfo Gilly.

As today, Gilly didn't stop with the demand for "explanations." He claimed that the Cuban leadership was in a "crisis." And, in an odious slander that will never be forgotten, he claimed that the evidence showed that the Cuban leaders "have either assassinated Guevara or that they are restraining him by some means or other from expressing himself politically."

Gilly's own "political explanation" was that Fidel was moving to the right, adopting Moscow's foreign policy, and "cut[ting] his links with the Latin American revolution."

When Guevara gave his life to the cause of the revolution, in Bolivia, the world learned soon enough the truth about Che's departure from Cuba. Yet to this day Gilly has never withdrawn his slander.

Gilly and Guatemala guerrillas

Repudiating Gilly's scandalous attack on the FMLN is of special importance for our publication, since Adolfo Gilly's name is linked in the minds of many in Latin America with Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

It is well-known that in the mid-1960s Gilly was involved in an infamous operation conducted in Guatemala by an ultraleft and sectarian outfit claiming to be Trotskyist. This episode had the effect of misrepresenting Trotskyism and the Fourth International and discrediting them in the minds of many Latin American revolutionists.

In the 1960s, Gilly was a member of an international current led by one Juan Posadas. This grouping split from the Fourth International in the early 1960s because of its deep hostility to the Fourth International's support to the Cuban revolution and its leadership.

After the split, however, the Posadaists continued to claim the name "Fourth International." They went so far in this masquerade as to reproduce official publications of the Fourth International, faking them down to the very typeface. As a result of this swindle, the Posadaist "Fourth International" was taken by large numbers in Latin America to represent Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

Members of the Posadas group became part of a Guatemalan guerrilla organization known as MR-13, headed by Marco Antonio Yon Sosa. Gilly, who became well-known for his magazine articles on the MR-13, spent a considerable amount of time in Guatemala.

In addition to the ultraleft political line they promoted within the MR-13, the Posadas followers secretly siphoned off funds collected by MR-13 for shipment to Buenos Aires, where the Posadas "Fourth International" was based. When this swindle was found out, in 1966, they were tried and expelled from the organization, and condemned before the international workers movement. The Fourth International joined in this condemnation.

In reply to the charges, the Posadaists didn't deny the accusations. In fact, they defended their action on the grounds that a "revolutionary" organization should always seek to raise funds from the mass movement!

Following his involvement in the Guatemala scandal, Gilly was arrested by the Mexican police, who subjected him to brutal torture. Despite an international campaign to win his release, he spent six years in Mexican prisons.

By the early 1970s, Posadas' counterfeit group had largely passed out of existence. Gilly began to gravitate around the Fourth International. At the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International — held just six months after the triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua — Gilly was present.

Although he was not a delegate, he aligned himself with those at the congress who were most determined to block the Fourth International from adopting a resolution recognizing that a workers and farmers government had come to power in Nicaragua, headed by a revolutionary proletarian leadership, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). (The resolutions and reports debated at the 1979 World Congress are available for \$4.95 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.)

Unfortunately, Gilly's articles are often taken even today as representing the views of the Fourth International. In the case of his malicious attack on the FMLN this is not the case.

Whatever his intentions may have been, the result of his attack will be only to further discredit Gilly, not the FMLN, which has acted in the most responsible and politically conscious manner throughout. □

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The death of Comrade Marcial

Only the truth can be revolutionary

By Adolfo Gilly

[The following article appeared in the April 22 issue of the Mexico City daily *Uno más Uno* under the headline, "Before the grave of Comrade Marcial — Only the truth can be revolutionary." The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

The masses do not rise to rebellion or throw themselves into suffering the horrors of a civil war because their leaders are capable, or because they are saints or martyrs, but because they cannot stand the oppression, humiliation, misery, and infamy any longer.

A revolution cannot be explained or justified by what its chiefs do or don't do, but by that rebellion of the masses. They undoubtedly need leaders for that struggle and they need to believe and have confidence in them, as well as in the organizations which they head. But a revolution does not break out because of the will of leaders or organizations, but because the masses cannot endure any more and all other avenues have been closed to them.

The Salvadoran revolution is the biggest, the costliest, the most extraordinary revolution in Latin America in terms of the resistance and participation of the masses, at least since the insurrection of Hidalgo and Morelos [against Spain in 1810] and since the Mexican revolution. Such a revolution subjects its militants and leaders to implacable tests and difficulties. The measure of its magnitude is that the American empire, concentrating its strength on that small country, cannot bring the revolution to its knees.

But when that empire, its allies and its friends of all kinds, pledge their hatred in such a way against a small and unprotected country, each gun obtained by the revolutionaries, and every supply item they get, represents an incalculable utilization of forces. These efforts — which the other side does not have to make — plus the constant harassment by a better armed and more powerful enemy, plus the pressure of making decisions every day on which the life or death of many compañeros and the revolution itself depend, put revolutionaries to a hard and unrelenting test.

Those decisions should be and are discussed collectively. The ideal situation would be if the greatest possible number could participate in the discussions. But at the same time, that struggle to the death demands discretion and clandestinity; limiting participation in the discussion keeps the enemy from influencing it.

Each organization that has to conduct a revolutionary war lives with this everyday contradiction: while politics requires discussion, explanation, reasoning, and information, war

demands discretion, clandestinity, centralization of command.

It is an extremely difficult art to reach an equilibrium and prevent the closing or the poisoning of indispensable discussion with the argument, always fallacious, that discussion benefits the enemy.

To this must be added the fact that in any revolutionary war — from the Mexican revolution to the Spanish civil war — there appears inevitably the inclination to see in those who disagree with one's own politics within the revolutionary group, first an obstacle, then someone who is playing into the hands of the enemy and, finally, the enemy. And from there to the use of weapons to resolve those differences, there is only one step. The history of all revolutions testifies to this, from the English revolution of the 17th century and the French revolution of the 18th century. Nonetheless, revolutions continue to be necessary.

Under these terrible pressures, the Salvadoran revolution now finds itself at a crossroads: the leadership of one of its most powerful organizations, the FPL [People's Liberation Forces], has killed among itself.

According to the official version, a group of cadre and one leader killed Commander Ana María — and Marcial, upon finding what one of the men whom he trusted had done, committed suicide. The United Revolutionary Leadership [DRU], by signing the bare-bones communiqué, vouches for these facts and declares that it considers it "a duty and a responsibility of each and every one of our organizations, to always tell the truth before our people."

There is only one way to fulfill this commitment and to find a resolution to this heart-rending crisis: to inform, to explain, to reason, in order to be able to continue the struggle and to attenuate the effect of this blow. This means to explain to the end:

1. The political differences that existed as the basis of the crisis, so that people can know and decide for themselves;

2. The reasons for the persistence of these methods: why and how is it possible that cadre in the leadership of an organization could have believed or accepted the belief that murder can resolve a political conflict;

3. What must be done to uproot such methods. The truth, only the truth, can now open this sore, clean this wound and prepare the future of the struggle.

A leader of the FPL, Salvador Samayoa, sends us a message, reiterating that everything the communiqué says is the truth, that they affirm it, however severe the consequences may be for them, and that today more than ever the revolution and the Salvadoran people need solidarity.

While I take this request very seriously, I say: Compañeros, it is necessary to explain more. Nobody can ask the people to continue to believe on the basis of words. Those times are long past. It is necessary to explain, to demonstrate, to convince.

The Salvadoran revolution is not only those who fight arms in hand. It is an immense conjugation of wills and hopes far beyond El Salvador. To the last woman who gave a peso for the purchase of weapons, to the last man who went to a demonstration, to the last child who carried a banner, they need and deserve an explanation.

They have put in El Salvador much more than their efforts, they have deposited their beliefs and their hopes. It is to them that all of the truth must be explained, the whole truth. It is necessary to trust in them: the simple people, the everyday people. They understand all this, they understand the suffering, they understand the bitterest disputes, they understand suicide, they understand death better than anyone, because they understand life — that life where oppression sears their souls, hardens their will and sharpens their feelings of solidarity.

What these people don't understand, on the other hand, is reticence, half-truths, pious lies, being treated like children by those in whom they have placed their confidence, receiving consolations or triumphalist explanations "so that they do not lose heart."

To overcome this crisis, one of the toughest of the Salvadoran revolution, it is necessary to explain. Let the enemy, the allies of imperialism and its Salvadoran friends say what they want. The truth is always revolutionary. That truth must be thought out and explained.

The leadership of the FPL and the leadership of the DRU must now respond in a public conference to all of the political questions in order to disarm the slander and the poison of the enemies and strengthen the comprehension and solidarity of friends, which has been put to an extremely hard test by this tragedy. This request is my homage before the grave of Comrade Marcial. □

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Auto workers fight against austerity

Interview with LCR member at Flins Renault plant

[A major strike wave took place in the French automobile industry in January and February (see *IP*, February 28, p. 102). Led by immigrant workers, these strikes were a major challenge to the austerity policies carried out by French President François Mitterrand. Mitterrand's Socialist Party won a sweeping victory in the May 1981 elections and holds a majority in the French legislature as well as the presidency.

[The following interview with a member of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR — the French section of the Fourth International) who works at the government-owned Renault plant at Flins, was obtained by Penny Duggan in early March. It is reprinted from the April 18 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Question. Why have we seen these waves of strikes in the car industry?

Answer. To answer that question I'll just have to go back over what has happened in the car plants in the past few years.

There was a series of struggles and strikes as early as autumn 1981. These started in Renault Sandouville, continued in Renault Billancourt and Renault Maubeuge. A series of strikes broke out in Renault Flins itself in April 1982. This started among the fork-lift truck drivers. The main question was grading, which in effect meant wages.

The drivers went on strike, blocking the production lines with their trucks, and quite rapidly, within a week, these several hundred workers won their demands.

After this, the unskilled production workers, seeing that it was possible to win, also went on strike on the question of grading. Their strike lasted three weeks. They also blocked the production lines, and were locked out by the management. Nevertheless their strike ended in what they considered was victory. So, one after the other, the fork-lift drivers and the unskilled [OS] workers went on strike and won.

In large measure, they gained the confidence to do this from the victory of Mitterrand and the Socialists in the May 1981 elections. Up until that point the memory of the Flins workers was heavily marked by their last strike in 1978, which ended in failure. This was a strike in the press shop which was ended by the intervention of the police. Forty-eight workers were sacked as a result.

From that point up until 1981, there were a few fragmented and sporadic struggles, but

nothing much. But after the May 10 election victory the workers felt they could go on strike without the CRS [militarized police] immediately appearing in the factory.

After the Flins strikes in April 1982, there was a series of strikes at Citroen and Talbot. These strikes were to deal with an old problem that these workers had: the presence of a fascist union, the CSL [Confederation of Free Trade Unions]. For years this had prevented any real organization of the workers, and thus any struggles against the bosses on work conditions or wages.

The strike by the OS workers at Flins, who were mainly immigrants — while the fork-lift drivers, and the workers involved in struggles the previous autumn, were mainly French — had given the immigrant OS at Citroen and Talbot the confidence to go into struggle.

After these strikes, the CSL lost considerable support and the CGT [General Confederation of Labor — CP dominated union federation] grew rapidly, with thousands of workers joining. Thus the power of the employers in the factory, who work hand in glove with the CSL, was considerably weakened.

I would say that in these first strikes in 1982 the aspect of workers dignity vis-à-vis the bosses was crucial. After the May-June strikes at Citroen and Talbot the situation was quite confused — with the employers attempting to go back on the gains the workers had won. At Flins the situation returned almost to normal, although there were small sectoral conflicts involving a few dozens or hundreds of workers.

Q. Then what happened in January this year?

A. This relates to the wages policy of the government and management. Austerity measures have been in force since 1982 that have driven down the buying power of the workers. The Renault management planned to limit wage rises to 7 percent for 1983, with another 1.5 percent eventually if the company made a profit — which in effect was an antistrike clause. And 7 percent as everyone knows is below inflation.

That was one aspect. The other was that after the April 1982 strikes the management undertook to set up training programs that would enable the workers to reach higher grades, which would mean higher wages. Very little was done on this, which created an atmosphere of discontent, expressed in the sectoral struggles I mentioned earlier.

This discontent was to be expressed with greatest force in the strike that broke out in the paintshop at the beginning of January. Just before that there was a dispute in the R5 body

shop. That could have extended, but the workers there decided to stop.

The next day the paintshop went on strike around two essential demands: 300 francs wage rise for all, and regrading, which would also have meant wage increases. The demand was for almost all the workers to be moved to the top OS grade, and those already in it to be moved up — in effect that meant the creation of a new grade. There were also minor demands on working conditions, provision of showers, replacements so that workers on the line could go and piss, etc.

These demands challenged both the management's wages policy, and the whole career system in the Renault company, which is very complicated. Everybody knew that if the spray painters won these demands, then one after the other every other section would come out for the same demands.

The workers settled into the strike, and the management quickly responded with a lockout. This took us by surprise, that it was done so quickly. Then we were faced with the classic problem of a struggle at Flins. It is an enormous plant, with 18,000 workers, and many sections are miles apart. So the workers don't know each other. To extend and generalize struggles is very difficult, although this is of course very important, particularly when, as in this case, the demands are those that can unify the workers.

So, despite the fact that the demands concerned all the OS workers, that is, the majority in the plant, a large majority found themselves simply spectators. This situation of course was not helped by the rapid lockout.

There is another difficulty. The workers can live as far as 70 miles from the plant. Therefore, to propose, for example, an occupation has been impossible up till now. We did so in April 1982 — the idea seemed to the other workers to come from another planet.

The management locked out not the whole factory, but the key sections most likely to join the dispute — some 11,000 workers found themselves outside the plant.

But the painters continued their strike. Management offered an increase of 140 francs per month, but this was massively rejected. During January the paintshop at Renault Billancourt went on strike for essentially the same demand — 300 francs for all. Most of their demands were granted quite rapidly and they were back at work within a week. Then the trim shop at Billancourt went out for the 300 francs.

The management were getting really worried! They knew that if the demand and the



Workers — mainly immigrants — at Renault Flins plant march through production area to raise their demands. Banner says "No to layoffs."

strikes began to spread they would be in real trouble. So, after the massive rejection of their first offer by the paintshop at Flins they decided to try and maneuver to get the spray painters back to work and stop the flames spreading.

Their final offer was accepted. This gave between 190 and 275 francs according to category. The fact that this differential offer was accepted shows that there are still divisions among the workers according to grade. But the struggle was a real success. Some of the workers got very nearly 300 francs. And they had to give all the workers in the company 120 francs raise per month. This broke their wages policy of 7 percent for 1983. It probably represented between 8 and 11 percent according to grade.

These raises were won by the struggle. All the previous negotiations had got nothing — and not even the most bureaucratic trade-union leadership could have accepted 7 percent. Not only has this frightened the car industry employers, but all the big employers. They see it as a "bad example" for other workers who are facing attacks on their buying power — and have the example of Renault before their eyes.

I should just add that at the same time as the paintshop strike, there were two other smaller ones involving a few dozen workers. These were in the plating and delivery sections. They also took up the demand for 300 francs for all.

But in the plating section it was also a bit like April 1982, on the question of workers' right to self-organization. This section has not had a strike for 15 years. Traditionally the supervisory personnel are fascist inclined, and

working conditions are very harsh. In these rather particular conditions the strike ended more or less in defeat. The delivery section won a half-victory.

It was very difficult to link up these three sections that were in struggle at the same time. The CFDT [French Democratic Confederation of Labor] tried to make links a little bit. But the CGT tried not at all.

There are some particular problems in organizing struggles at Flins. The first is the tradition of blocking the line — that is, to physically block the production line which runs like a serpent through the factory.

What then happens is that those workers who come after that particular section have no work — no cars are passing in front of them. So they say — why come out on strike? We're not working, it would just mean losing wages. It's not a wrong tactic in principle, but it's not a very good one — it creates enormous problems in extending a strike.

The workers on strike either spend their time in their own section — or parading throughout the factory all day long calling on the other workers to come out on strike. With a plant as enormous as Renault Flins, and sections that are so spread out, the only way to keep up solidarity, and reach the other workers is in this way — staying together and moving round the whole plant. It is a bit surprising when you're used to another plant, pickets on the gates, etc.

Then there's another problem. The immigrant workers in particular are very reluctant to meet, have discussions about what to do, and vote. Because they feel to vote is to divide. So the only time they will vote is when they're

sure there's almost total agreement — like when the first offer was rejected, or the second accepted.

Q. Which union has the majority in the plant? And can you tell us a bit about how they organize?

A. Until last year it was the CGT which had the support of the majority of the workers. But in April 1982 the CFDT clearly advanced, and the relationship of forces changed. This was confirmed in the elections for the Comité d'Entreprise,* which took place just after the paintshop strike. There the CFDT got 47 percent and the CGT 43 percent. In the previous elections two years ago the CGT got 56 percent and the CFDT around 30 percent.

I should explain that this strength is not reflected in actual union membership. The rate of actual union membership in Renault Flins is less than 10 percent. But, as it is the unions who put forward the lists for candidates to be elected both to the CE, and as the equivalent of what you would call shop stewards, their influence is much stronger than it appears.

The low rate of unionization is partly explained by a distrust of the unions. And that many workers identify the workers representatives almost as part of the institution of the factory rather than their own. So there is a tendency at Flins that negotiations there are a direct negotiation between direct shopfloor representatives and the management, rather than it going through the structures.

This helps the tendency towards self-organization, though it is underdeveloped. For example, the strike committee in April 1982 was not elected, but it was the workers who are accepted as leaders by the others who came forward and constituted it.

The shift between the CGT and the CFDT took place because in April 1982 it was the CFDT that seemed closest to the workers, that basically supported the struggle through and through. It was also the most unitary. The section of the CFDT at Flins is a bit particular — it is known as left wing, and oppositional to the leadership. In April it supported the moves towards self-organization by the workers — the formation of a strike committee and so on.

These attempts were quite limited, and were not taken up again in the paintshop strike. That was largely due to the fact that there were fewer workers in struggle. The whole factory was not on strike so, the need for a strike committee appeared less clearly. And then you had the two unions who each did their own thing and didn't try to get together — there was absolutely no attempt at unity. That's worrying, but it is an old problem at Flins.

Q. The press talked a lot about the fact that it was immigrant workers on strike. What ef-

* Comité d'Entreprise (CE): a parity body between workers and management which is supposed to discuss questions of the organization of the plant and work force. —IV

fect did this have among the work force?

A. The media have presented the strikes of both last April and this January as simply strikes by immigrant workers. This is not exactly true — there were French workers involved in the strikes. But it is undoubtedly true that the bulk of the workers, and the most combative, were immigrants.

But the question was a revolt by the unskilled workers against their conditions — and the majority of the unskilled car workers in the Paris region are immigrants. It's as simple as that.

The racist campaign against the striking workers, particularly the speech by Prime Minister [Pierre] Mauroy, was disgusting and sheer madness. The attempt to denounce the strikes as a plot by Islamic fundamentalists to destabilize the French car industry is just crazy.

At Renault Flins those who were most taken aback by this attack were the militant immigrant workers themselves, who have nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. Moreover, Mauroy talked about Shi'ite fundamentalism. Which is an absurdity because there aren't any Shi'ites in Morocco, and most of the immigrant workers are Moroccans.

It's just the same old trick as the right-wing government used to use every time there was a workers struggle to play it down. To say it was a plot hatched in Moscow or something. It's exactly the same system — every workers struggle is a plot maneuvered by I don't know who or what.

Of course the immigrant workers do have their cultural traditions, and most of them are believers. But that has nothing to do with why they strike for better wages!

But all this is a very serious problem. It had a very precise purpose — to intimidate the immigrant workers, and sow divisions between them and the French workers. And it is worrying because it is not clear it did not succeed. Obviously there were divisions before, and this campaign has increased them.

Q. What do you think will happen now?

A. It's difficult to say. The French and immigrant workers do not have the same level of consciousness, do not have the same attitude towards the government.

The immigrant workers were overjoyed by May 10, 1981, the promise of change. Of course, they hadn't been able to express their opinion because they don't have votes.

The first governmental measures, the halt on expulsions, the regularization of the status of those without papers, gave confidence to them, and a favorable impression of the government.

They felt as if an additional major obstacle that they faced, of continuous police harassment, the risk of being expelled if they so much as opened their mouths or went into struggle, had disappeared. So they felt more confident about going into struggle.

And they saw for example that in April

1982, when there were strikes, and the production lines were blocked, that the CRS did not immediately appear in the factory as they had every other time, like in 1978. So, the April 1982 strikes and the victory they won increased their confidence.

Among the French workers today it's a bit different. There's a widespread feeling that it's not normal to go on strike when you have a left government. There is the idea that this government, elected by a majority of the working class, should satisfy their demands. Thus, lots of workers have the feeling that to go on strike puts the government in the wrong, and it's better to avoid it.

Some workers have gone beyond that and explain that it is not strikes that hurt the left, but the government's policies, and we should struggle to have our demands met. But the vast majority of French workers are not on this level today — and this creates a sharp division between French and immigrant workers which is very dangerous.

Obviously the ministerial speech, the racist campaign, struck a chord among the workers, and the effects are still unfolding. But I can see the effects every day on my line.

The Moroccan comrades were completely shocked by these sort of statements, and don't understand them. They say they would rather deal with the CRS than this sort of thing — which is so pernicious it's much worse than the CRS whom you can confront physically. Many of the immigrant workers are very angry, quite justifiably.

But what is worrying is that some of the immigrant workers are tending to say, "We're fed up with being the ones who fight first, and fight for all, when the French workers do nothing or much less. We're the ones who bear the brunt of the attacks. We're fed up and we're not going to move unless the French workers do first." I hear this every day.

Doesn't it just sound like what the government is aiming for? To produce a situation of passivity and division among the workers. It's extremely worrying.

Q. But do you think this will last? You have also said that the workers are full of confidence in their ability to struggle and win.

A. Well, this is a new situation. On the one hand there is the confidence and mobilization among the workers. On the other hand there are these elements of division, which have grown. The combativity of the French workers could grow, and it remains to be seen how far the immigrant workers refuse to move.

From this point of view the response to the attempts to sack elected workers representatives after the strikes at both Citroen Aulnay and Renault Flins was very important. At Citroen the CGT responded weakly. But in Flins the CFDT reacted immediately and called a strike — it was CFDT members who were threatened.

The CFDT felt in a strong position given the elections which had just been held, as I men-

tioned earlier. The strike was a big success, 2,500 workers. It's years since there was such a big strike at Renault Flins. This reaction forced the CFDT leadership to vote to support the Renault Flins section.

Q. Were there any women workers involved in the struggle?

A. Very, very few. There are very few women workers at Renault, it's very much a man's world, so that already makes it difficult for women to get involved, and they are in marginal or auxiliary sections, not production. There is one woman trade-union militant who is a shop steward but it took years for her to become accepted.

Of course, the trade union could do a lot more in the way of education and encouragement. Particularly among the Muslim immigrant workers who of course have a particular traditional view of women. There are Spanish and Portuguese immigrant women workers here but very few others.

Q. Finally can you just tell us what intervention the comrades of the LCR have in Flins?

A. Really, we've only been present again over the last two years. At first, our intervention was from the outside through leaflets and so on. Now we have comrades working in Flins.

We're known as trade-union militants to the mass of the workers, and as members of the LCR within the union. We've shown that we're there in the struggles and we have ideas to offer about how they can be carried forward. We're undoubtedly a recognizable political force with our own ideas. I would say we have as much weight as the other Trotskyist organization, Lutte Ouvrière [LO], who have been in the plant for years.

This is a favorable situation for us because the workers are asking political questions and want answers. For example, we're just coming up to the municipal elections, and they're saying, "We voted in 1981 and we're still waiting for change. I'm not going to go out on Sunday to vote."

Whether they would be ready to vote for the sort of alternative we offer in Workers Against Austerity [joint list presented by the LO and LCR, see *IP*, February 28, p. 104] is another thing. We were not able to do much about the electoral campaign during the strike — it would have seemed a diversion from the struggle. Anyway, the workers live in such dispersed areas we couldn't tell what effect it would have.

But the outcome of the elections will have an effect — if the right come out well, the bosses and the foremen will feel themselves much stronger, more arrogant. They'll be stricter on the line, and the workers will feel demoralized. The workers feel deceived by this government and they're looking for an answer. □

'Solidarity Today'

Declaration of Polish union movement

[The following programmatic declaration was issued on January 22 by the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) of Solidarity, the Polish union's main underground leadership body. It was signed by Zbigniew Bujak, Wladyslaw Hardek, Bogdan Lis, Eugeniusz Szumiejko, and Jozef Pinior.

[The text of the document is taken from the February 9 issue of the Paris Polish-language fortnightly *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, published by the Coordinating Office of Solidarity Abroad. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*. The subheads are from the original document; the footnotes are by *IP*.]

* * *

After a year of the state of war and now its formal suspension, there is no longer any doubt that the December 13, 1981, coup against civil and workers' rights was the beginning of a new stage in the process of trying to "pacify" the nation.

The government's aim is to stifle the demands for democracy, break up society's unity, and establish a reign of force and generalized terror such as has not been known since the Stalinist era. It has set up a totalitarian dictatorship. The basis of its rule has become the shooting of defenseless workers, the imprisonment of thousands of people for their social activities, and the undiminished searches for Solidarity activists.

This dictatorship has sanctioned a system of terror, introducing legislation that is contrary to the international conventions and commitments approved by the Polish People's Republic. Illegality has become the law.

Democratic reforms designed to improve Poland's social and economic position are a deadly threat to the present system. Ruling with the help of fear, the government itself is condemned to live in fear of an explosion of social hatred. Today, our readiness to concede to the authorities would only be considered a sign of weakness and would lead to a continuation of the repressive system. Society has no choice. Its only path is that of resistance, of struggle against the dictatorship.

Our goal is to fight for the implementation of the program adopted at Solidarity's First National Congress, a program of democratic reforms that are indispensable for lifting the country out of its crisis. It is a program that points toward the building of a *self-governed republic*:

- in which the authorities would be subject to social control and the factories would be run by workers self-management bodies, the local and provincial administrations by regional self-government councils, and the country by a

democratically elected Sejm [parliament],

- in which the rule of law would be safeguarded by independent courts,
- in which the means of production would be genuinely socially owned, assuring the workers' authentic participation in the allocation of the wealth produced,
- in which culture, education, and the mass media would serve society.

This program assumes, on the one hand, that a rebuilt republic will require a deep reform of social, economic, and political life and, on the other, that Poland's geopolitical situation means that these reforms must be carried out gradually, without upsetting the fundamental equilibrium in Europe.

This vision of a self-governed republic is not contrary to the ideas of socialism. Its realization must not clash with the existing international order. Poland's alliances cannot mean the existence of dictatorial regimes that are universally hated and that do not give those countries any perspective of progress, since such a situation threatens peace in Europe.

The realization of this program requires the creation of a situation in which the authorities are compelled to seek a compromise with society. Only then will it be possible to begin the process of reform and guarantee conditions for the open activity of independent trade unions, organizations, and associations representing various social interests. For the system of authority in Poland to be able to make concessions, for the perspective of reform to become a reality, it is necessary to act to bring down the present dictatorship.

Today, the resistance and the fight against the dictatorship are marked by the following general features:

- A rejection front.
- An economic struggle.
- A struggle to develop an independent social consciousness.
- Preparations for a general strike.

Undertaking them is a task of a self-organized society.

Our main weapon in this struggle is social solidarity. It was thanks to this solidarity that we were victorious in August 1980¹ and that we survived the repression under the state of war. This solidarity was reborn in the interment camps and prisons, in the factories and churches, in the daily activity of our movement, in the mass demonstrations. Our strength was and is our consciousness that we are together, that each of us must defend others and needs them to defend us.

1. A reference to the Lenin Shipyard strike in Gdansk, which led to the rise of Solidarity.

Therefore, no one who faces repression — whether they have been imprisoned, beaten, or thrown out of work — can be left without protection or help. That is the moral responsibility of every one of us. Every means should be found to demand freedom for those imprisoned for their social activities and political views. Everyone who participates in repression must meet with our condemnation.

A rejection front

Refusing to participate in lies, illegality and the use of force is a daily form of struggle against the dictatorship that is available to each of us.

By carrying out a universal boycott of the fake trade unions set up by the government, we have achieved a common political victory. This boycott became a referendum that showed, on a daily basis, that society rejects the existing rule of force and terror. It also demonstrates that the place left behind by the independent union movement remains vacant until it is again legalized, that Solidarity persists and will regain its rights.

During the state of war, a boycott was launched of all organizations, institutions, and associations that support the present dictatorial system, collaborate in the repression, serve as substitutes for the outlawed social organizations, or try to present a facade of social and political life (the party, PRON, OKON, FJN,² etc.). This boycott should become a permanent feature.

In this way, we will demonstrate our attachment to the gains of August 1980, our aspirations for truth and dignity, and our rejection of lies and illegality in social life.

We will not agree to participate in the farce of elections to the Sejm and People's Councils.³ We will not take part in rallies, official demonstrations, and anniversary actions organized by the authorities. We will oppose the efforts to use us to create the fiction of a social mandate for the current dictatorial system. Let the government be left in a political vacuum.

We should utilize the boycott principle selectively. We can and must take advantage of opportunities to carry out independent activities through those official institutions that seek to fulfill genuine social needs. But care must be taken so that such activity does not give credibility to the lies or end up supporting the dictatorship. It is necessary to establish a code of conduct that combines a selective boycott with expressions of dignified and honest activity in the social and professional spheres.

The rejection front is also a front of active

2. The Patriotic Movement for National Revival (PRON) and the Citizens' Committees for National Revival (OKON) are bodies set up by the government in an effort to rally political support for its policies. The National Unity Front (FJN) is the electoral front of the ruling Polish United Workers Party and its two satellites, the Democratic and United Peasants parties.

3. The People's Councils are municipal and regional governmental bodies.

struggle. The government will certainly try to break it through blackmail and bribery. Our response is to fight back collectively. Every instance of blackmail should be widely publicized. That will weaken its impact and make it more difficult to use it again in the future.

Taking up collections, creating social aid committees, and insisting on the existence of workers' vacation and loan funds that are independent of fake trade unions will also be forms of defense against bribery. We cannot allow the workers' difficult financial position to force them into shamefully joining the pro-government unions in order to meet their genuine needs.

An economic struggle

After 38 years of the existence of the Polish People's Republic, Polish society has been led to the brink of destitution. Besides the rationing of food and the shortages of medicines and clothing, we have been pushed into virtual bankruptcy; the \$30 billion in debts will weigh on us for many years to come.

Enormous wealth is being squandered through factories that remain idle and investments that have been interrupted. Technological backwardness is growing. The method of utilizing Poland's economic potential takes on features of colonial exploitation. Wasteful management of the mining industry has led to dozens of deaths, devastation of the mines, and squandering of Poland's material resources. Shortages of agricultural equipment make it impossible to feed the nation. Devastation of the natural environment threatens the nation's health.

The only program carried out by the martial law dictatorship has been an enormous increase in prices, without any perspective of an improvement in the economic situation. This program, divorced from other market and organizational mechanisms, has over the past year led to a drastic drop in the standard of living, a drop of more than 36 percent. Today, a significant proportion of working-class families live at the edge of poverty.

At the same time, society has to shoulder the burden of maintaining a gigantically expanded repressive apparatus: hundreds of thousands of Security Service personnel, police, ZOMO,⁴ soldiers, and party functionaries who use terror to keep the country under submission.

The next price increase has already been announced. It will cause a further impoverishment of society, increase want, and threaten to push people below the subsistence level.

The state of war and the laws adopted under it have eliminated any chance for overcoming the crisis. They have brought some superficial changes in the compromised former system of command management — through reforms based on self-dependence, self-management, and self-financing — but they have also brought militarization of the main branches of

the economy.

Drastic restrictions on workers' rights have created semislave working conditions: compulsory labor, the tying of workers to a particular workplace, and threats to dismiss workers for political reasons. Under such circumstances, a self-management reform of the economy becomes fictitious. Self-management bodies cannot carry out their duties.

Thus we cannot take responsibility for the state of the economy. But we have to be sure to maintain it at a level that will assure the best conditions for its future revival. We cannot agree to any further decline in living standards. In the program to defend the basic interests of society and the workers, the most important point is the struggle for survival. It will unfold in every factory and on every farm. We encourage farmers to organize every possible initiative to safeguard their interests.

In the workplaces, we will carry out this struggle through all possible forms of pressure, including:

- Utilizing appropriate legal regulations to ensure rigorous compliance with the labor code and adherence to employment and wage guidelines, health and safety regulations, technological norms, proper social conditions, etc.

- Demanding accurate information about production decisions and results, the allocation of wages and bonuses, the activities of the social services, etc.; the publishing of news (kept hidden by the management) about erroneous decisions, unpopular orders, and examples of waste, incompetence, and repression.

- Organizing collective protests, petitions, refusals to work overtime, boycotts of orders limiting workers' rights or creating internal divisions. The strongest and most effective form of collective protest is the economic strike.

- Utilizing workers self-management where the possibility exists of employing it to protect workers' living conditions and to defend them from repression. However, the inability of the self-management bodies to function in this period is a signal to members of the workers councils to resign and to call on the workers to boycott them.

For an independent social consciousness

Solidarity arose from a general protest, from the collective efforts and struggle of various social milieus. In building it, we overcame the divisions that the authorities consciously and intentionally fostered. The durability of the collaboration among workers, farmers, and intellectuals is a guarantee of victory. We strengthened this unity after August 1980, and it has been the basis of our resistance since December 13, 1981.

By threatening social and political consciousness, national education and culture, social morality, and civil conduct, the totalitarian government may prevent society from thinking politically, knowing its own history, and appreciating an authentic culture free from ideological manipulation.

Therefore, a central task today is to propagate independent thought and to break the state monopoly over the printed and transmitted word, information and learning, culture and scientific research, and political and social reflection.

The intellectual and creative communities will play a special role here; society expects them to work for the common good. We will support every independent initiative; we will establish social funds and stipends to allow them to function independently of the dictatorship.

All social circles should be united within a common front to attain intellectual independence and a genuine development of various communities. The undertaking of self-government initiatives and the extension of the network of factory bulletins, libraries, and independent publishing houses should aim to stimulate social reflection among groups of workers and disseminate their views, opinions, and analyses.

All of us have a duty of social solidarity to oppose the totalitarian dictatorship's efforts to eliminate from public life those layers and individuals it does not like.

Independent institutions and initiatives should include: publishing and artistic fairs, press and radio, and independent education. They serve our common welfare. It is necessary to support and protect the existence and development of this current, which aims toward an independent society and prepares it for life in a democratic and self-governed republic.

Preparations for a general strike

The general strike is the most powerful weapon in our struggle. Massive participation in the above-mentioned activities will be an important stage in its preparation. A successful strike will depend on many factors, of which the most basic are:

- the degree of social self-organization and determination,
- the general consciousness and acceptance of its aims,
- the international political situation.

These same factors will also influence the dictatorship's readiness to try to put down the workers. So far, the government — politically prepared to use all means in its struggle with society — has been able to muster enough force to break strikes.

But it will not be able to maintain such a degree of readiness for too much longer, since it also entails enormous political and social costs. The time is approaching when the strike weapon will again become a realistic means of struggle, when the use of force against striking workers would seriously threaten the very survival of the dictatorship.

The perspective of a general strike — which is inevitable in our opinion — does not rule out a program of evolutionary reform of the system. It only points to the means for bringing down the current dictatorship and creating the conditions for a solution along the road of de-

4. A heavily armed and motorized police unit, which is the bureaucracy's main instrument for breaking strikes and demonstrations.

mocratic reform.

In the course of preparing for a general strike, we have to formulate and work out a minimum social program — a set of strike demands that will, on the one hand, guarantee a further unfolding of the reform process and, on the other, take into account the limitations resulting from domestic and international political realities.

* * *

The Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) of Solidarity is presenting the declaration "Solidarity Today" as a program of action for our union in the current political and social circumstances. We are drawing upon the legacy of Solidarity's First National Congress, its program for a self-governed republic. The state of war and the outlawing of Solidarity have created a new situation that places new responsibilities before us.

The programmatic discussion has been carried out in various milieus and in the columns of the independent press. The TKK and the regional leaderships initiated working groups to examine programmatic questions. During the course of this discussion, the concept of an Independent Society was crystallized. We presented it in the founding program for an "Underground Society,"⁵ as well as in previous TKK declarations on the ongoing struggle.

We address the program "Solidarity Today" to society as a whole. Implementing it is a responsibility of the TKK and the regional and factory structures. But it does not take the place of a broader vision of what Poland's future should look like. A separate social and political program has to be drawn up. We will support initiatives toward that end.

Our wish is that the program "Solidarity Today" will contribute to a consolidation of the already emerging front of social self-defense, a front of resistance and struggle against the dictatorship; for the simplest and most basic values in the life of an individual, society, and nation; for the right to truth, dignity and hope.

Its aim is to rally together all people of goodwill — regardless of their political views and ideological opinions — and all democratic forces of the nation. Pluralism and openness is the aim of Solidarity, the movement that was born out of August 1980. We hope to achieve understanding and collaboration with everyone who is close to the aims of our movement, with all groups of social activists that strive for the ideal of a free and democratic Poland. □

5. See *Intercontinental Press*, September 20, 1982, p. 714.

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DOCUMENTS

'Another face of Camp David'

PLO statement on Reagan plan

[The following statement was issued April 12 by the official Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) news agency, Wafa, following the breaking off of talks between PLO leader Yassir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein.]

* * *

In light of the recent political development and the decisions taken by the Palestinian leadership in their latest meetings in Amman and Kuwait, we would like to clarify the following points:

1. The PLO positions have always stemmed from adherence to PNC resolutions, especially [those of] the last session in Algiers and the Fez summit resolutions unanimously adopted by all the Arabs as the basis for their political action on the international level.

2. The PLO has always affirmed that it refused to consider U.S. President Reagan's plan as a suitable basis for a just and lasting peace for the Palestinian cause and for the Arab-Zionist conflict. It considers the plan in essence and intent as falling short of fulfilling the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people and calls on the Arabs to make basic concessions on these rights, without securing the minimum guarantees to restore the Arab and Palestinian occupied land or enabling our people to achieve their right of self-determination on national soil. The PLO expressed its position frankly to its Arab brothers, especially the brothers in Jordan during negotiations in the past months.

3. The Palestinian revolution, in adhering to the full and independent representation through the PLO, affirms dealing with the Palestinian cause as a national issue for a people who have the full right to liberation, independence and sovereignty on national soil. Any alienation or belittling of this representation transforms the Palestinian cause and the fate of the occupied land into a border problem and [whose solution would be a] regional compromise, leading to the liquidation of the Palestinian people's rights. On this basis, the Palestinian position has always placed the issue of saving Palestinian land at the top of the list of priorities as the central aim of the Palestinian national struggle.

4. Through the last PNC resolutions, the PLO affirmed the special relationship with Jordan on the basis of vital and joint interests between the two brotherly peoples. The PLO has never looked at future relations from a tactical point of view and as a bridge to the Reagan plan but it considered confederal relations as a strategic aim which organizes and consolidates the ties between the two peoples on a firm basis after the establishment of the independent Palestinian state. The PLO sees that the Fez

summit resolutions provide the means for political action through the UN Security Council, while the Reagan plan is another face of the Camp David accords, which were rejected by all the Arabs at the Baghdad summit as a partial and unilateral settlement which contradicts Arab interests and comprehensive national rights.

5. The PLO has affirmed that any political action for the cause of Palestine must stem from, and be guaranteed and safeguarded by, Arab summit resolutions within an Arab framework in order to mobilize all Arab efforts and capabilities. Such an Arab framework can develop the international position in the interest of our patriotic and national rights.

6. During the negotiations conducted by the PLO delegations in Amman, it was clear that there was a joint understanding of the lack of seriousness and honesty of the American position, especially as indicated by what is going on in Lebanon and by the criminal Zionist practices in the occupied territories which are supported by the U.S. administration.

While stating these facts, which were already recorded in the documents presented during the negotiations with our brothers in Jordan, the PLO affirms the importance of continuing dialogue and relations in the interest of our joint national aims in facing the Zionist enemy's plans in the occupied territories, and the enemy's threat to the security and sovereignty of brotherly Jordan and other Arab countries. □

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More U.S. arms to rightists

Reagan seeks to bleed Soviet forces

By Ernest Harsch

Washington has significantly stepped up its aid to rightist guerrilla forces in Afghanistan, Reagan administration officials have acknowledged.

In a front-page article in the May 4 *New York Times*, Leslie Gelb reported that both "the quantity and quality of covert military support" for the rightist bands has been increased.

"Beginning last December, the officials said, the Central Intelligence Agency was ordered to provide the Afghan insurgents for the first time with bazookas, mortars, grenade launchers, mines and recoilless rifles," Gelb reported. "One official said shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles were also being supplied. Almost all the arms were said to be of Soviet manufacture."

According to Gelb, "The officials said that a large portion of the arms came from old Egyptian stockpiles of Soviet weapons and that the Saudis and the United States were paying the bills. The total cost of the operation is estimated to have been between \$30 million and \$50 million a year for the last three years, with the United States paying about half."

Pakistani dictator Gen. Zia ul-Haq is also involved in the operation. The arms are first brought to Pakistan by ship and aircraft, and then trucked to the mountainous areas along the Afghan border, where they are given to the various proimperialist guerrilla groups and then smuggled into Afghanistan.

New escalation of U.S. intervention

This was one of the few times that administration officials have admitted assisting the Afghan rebels, although such backing has previously been reported in the big-business news media.

The decision to step up the arms aid — and to leak the news to the press — marks a further escalation of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, coming at a time when the Reagan administration is moving ever deeper into Central America as well.

Although Washington tries to justify its backing for the rightist rebels by pointing to the Soviet military role in Afghanistan, the U.S. intervention began well before Moscow dispatched its troops in December 1979. With the active collaboration of the Pakistani dictatorship, it sent money and arms to various Afghan counterrevolutionary groups and provided training in camps in Pakistan. Following the Soviet intervention, U.S. assistance increased sharply.

Taking advantage of the Afghan government's arbitrary policies — which alienated sections of the peasantry — the rebel bands

were able to operate throughout large parts of the countryside and even to launch attacks into Kabul, the capital. According to Afghan Prime Minister Sultan Ali Kistmand, more than half the country's schools and hospitals and three-quarters of its communications lines have been destroyed by the rightist forces since late 1979.

Rightist forces make no headway

But overall, the counterrevolutionaries have not been able to make any significant military advances over the past three years. The numerous groups remain divided and sometimes fight each other.

U.S. intelligence officials have admitted that the position of the Soviet and Afghan government forces has, in the meantime, improved somewhat. "Afghan War Isn't Over but Soviets Seem to Be Winning," the headline of an article by military analyst Drew Middleton declared in the May 1 *New York Times*.

The May 11 *Washington Post* reported the heaviest Soviet air and ground attacks against rebel positions in the Shomali region north of Kabul since 1979. According to unnamed "western diplomatic sources in Kabul," the *Post* reported that "the resistance forces were 'reeling' from the intensity of the Soviet and Afghan army summer offensive in the Shomali area, and had become dispirited by the flight of thousands of local residents upon whom they rely for shelter and logistical support."

As the war in Afghanistan has dragged on, the pressures against the proimperialist regime in neighboring Pakistan have also increased. Zia has expressed concern about the political repercussions of the prolonged instability next door, and about the costs of harboring hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees.

As a result, the Pakistani regime has shown a greater readiness to engage in negotiations for a resolution of the conflict. Zia met with Soviet Communist Party chief Yuri Andropov in November to discuss the Afghan situation. Pakistani officials have also engaged in indirect talks with the Afghan authorities, with United Nations Undersecretary General Diego Cordovez acting as an intermediary.

In early April, the Pakistani government issued a directive to the Afghan guerrilla groups to move their headquarters out of Peshawar (the capital of the Northwest Frontier Province) and disperse throughout the region. It remains to be seen whether Zia will enforce this edict. At the same time, it ordered five Afghan newspapers published in Peshawar to submit their articles to government censorship or close down. They stopped publishing.

It is in this context that Washington has now decided to increase its direct backing to the rightists. According to Gelb, the administra-

tion officials said Reagan had made the decision to step up arms shipments "with the purpose of forcing Moscow to pay a higher price for its more than three-year-old effort to assert control over Afghanistan."

'Keep the Soviets bogged down'

One Pakistani foreign ministry official told *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent Mary Anne Weaver, in a report in the May 10 issue, "It's the quagmire theory. Keep the Soviets bogged down in Afghanistan, and profit from their loss of credibility in the nonaligned world. . . . 'Bleed them,' as we've heard it said in the White House, so they'll never do it again."

Weaver also reported that some Pakistani officials were uncomfortable with the escalation of arms shipments, stating that there has been "a long-time suspicion among some ranking Pakistani officials that the Reagan administration was not interested in moving the UN negotiations along, and was tempted to overlook instability in the region, in favor of larger, geopolitical concerns."

Some U.S. State Department officials were also concerned that the leaking of information on Washington's aid could backfire. According to a report in the May 16 *Time* magazine, "They were worried that the revelation would embarrass the Pakistanis into cracking down on the arms shipments. 'Successful covert actions must be kept quiet,' snapped one official. 'That's why they're covert.'" □

Release Liu San Qing!

Liu San Qing, a Hong Kong socialist active in the movement in solidarity with Chinese fighters for democratic rights, has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment by a Chinese court, his family recently learned.

Liu had travelled to Canton on December 24, 1981, to visit the families of activists arrested there following a government crackdown on the Chinese democracy movement.

When Liu failed to return to Hong Kong, his family began trying to learn of his fate. In March 1982 a family member went to the Public Security Bureau in Canton to ask about Liu's whereabouts. There a secret police officer stated that Liu had been arrested and was being held while an investigation took place.

In March of this year, Liu's father was told by top officials of the Intermediary Court of Guangzhou (Canton) that his son had been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. The time of the trial and the charges against him were not disclosed.

The Committee for the Release of Liu San Qing is asking that messages of protest be sent to the government of the People's Republic of China and to Chinese embassies around the world. Copies of protest messages should be sent to the committee at P.O. Box 89278, Kowloon City Post Office, Hong Kong. □