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Korean Jet Uproar: U.S. Launches Anti-Soviet Propaganda Barrage

Philippines

**Huge
Crowds
Protest
Marcos'
Rule**



Hundreds of thousands take to streets after assassination of Benigno Aquino.

Korean jet uproar: U.S. launches anti-Soviet propaganda barrage

By Steve Wattenmaker

Washington has seized on the September 1 downing of a Korean Air Lines jet as a pretext for a new round of prowar and anti-Soviet propaganda. Brushing aside unanswered questions surrounding the incident, the White House instantly blamed Moscow for downing the airliner in a "horrifying act of violence."

Behind a hypocritical mask of moral outrage and sorrow, U.S. officials, in fact, are manipulating the air disaster to bolster their campaign to move public opinion more in line with imperialism's war plans. From Washington's point of view, the incident could not have happened at a better time. It served to cover up the U.S. military buildup along the Nicaraguan border and divert attention from the September 1 announcement that an additional 2,000 Marines were being deployed off the Lebanese coast.

London, Paris, Tokyo, and other imperialist capitals joined in the anti-Soviet tirade, repeating without hesitation the U.S. assertion that Soviet fighters destroyed the South Korean jet, knowing it was a passenger plane.

Democrats flay Moscow

Within hours of the tragedy it was apparent that Washington was preparing to milk the event for every possible drop of anticommunist propaganda. Before even the barest facts became known, President Reagan kicked off the campaign from his Santa Barbara ranch:

"I speak for all Americans and for people everywhere who cherish civilized values in protesting the Soviet attack on an unarmed, civilian passenger plane." His September 1 statement expressed "revulsion" at this "appalling and wanton misdeed."

Democratic and Republican politicians quickly followed the White House lead. Walter Mondale, front-running Democratic Party candidate for president, termed the incident "a murderous deed." Sen. Edward Kennedy blasted it as "an act of barbarism" and a "cowardly" attack by the Soviet Union. He called for the suspension of all commercial airline flights to the Soviet Union.

The *New York Times* rushed into print with a September 2 editorial, "Murder in the Air." The front-page headline of the September 2 *New York Post* screamed, "Soviet Day of Infamy — Slaughter in the Sky," emblazoned with red ink. An editorial cartoon in the *Post* depicted a menacing Russian bear, its claws dripping with blood, swatting the airliner into the sea. Similar cartoons were displayed in other daily newspapers.

South Korean government agents and local politicians in the United States used the tragedy to whip elements of the South Korean

community into a frenzy. New York City Mayor Ed Koch led several thousand demonstrators to the United Nations and then to the Soviet Mission.

Some right-wing politicians even claimed the Soviet Union had intentionally shot down the jet to kill Rep. Larry McDonald, a virulently anticommunist Georgia congressman who was aboard the flight. McDonald headed the right-wing John Birch Society.

Reaction in Europe

Other imperialist governments also took their cue from Washington. A West German government spokesman called the incident "an incomprehensible act of insurpassable brutality." The Green Party in West Germany, known for its opposition to nuclear power and weapons, dubbed it "a cold-blooded mass murder carried out with military precision."

In Paris, a spokesman for President François Mitterrand called the "destruction" of the plane a "cruel act exceptional in the annals of civil aviation." The left-wing French newspaper *Libération* called the incident "an act of sovereign contempt for the rest of the world."

Facts begin to emerge

The hallmark of the worldwide propaganda avalanche was the unqualified acceptance of the White House claim — supposedly based on U.S. intelligence reports — that Moscow knew it was a commercial airliner and shot it down without warning after it had "strayed" over sensitive Soviet military installations. The facts, Washington brusquely maintained, were not in question — Moscow had committed an act of premeditated, cold-blooded murder.

However, it was precisely the facts that began to undermine Washington's case against the Kremlin. Even the *New York Times* was forced to admit September 5 that the actual story as it unfolded "raised new questions about an already confusing episode."

Korean Air Lines officials explained, for example, that the KAL Boeing 747 was equipped with what is known as a triple-redundant navigational system that made it virtually impossible for the plane accidentally to stray more than 300 miles off course for more than two hours.

An account of the incident provided by the Soviet news agency Tass September 3 also threw some question marks over Washington's "facts." Tass stated that the jet had been flying without navigational lights and refused to respond to radio contacts from Soviet ground controllers.

"Soviet anti-air defense aircraft were ordered aloft which repeatedly tried to establish contacts with the plane using generally ac-

cepted signals and to take it to the nearest airfield in the territory of the Soviet Union. The intruder plane, however, ignored all this. Over the Sakhalin Island, a Soviet aircraft fired warning shots and tracer shells along the flying route of the plane."

"In light of these facts," Tass concluded, "the intrusion into the air space by the mentioned plane cannot be regarded in any other way than a preplanned act. It was obviously thought possible to attain special intelligence aims without hindrance using civilian planes as cover."

Although U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz dismissed the Soviet explanation as a "brazen and elaborate cover-up," the White House was forced to admit September 4 that a U.S. spy plane was in the vicinity at the time of the crash.

A U.S. Air Force RC-135 reconnaissance plane (which is a converted Boeing 707) flew "close to" the Korean Air Lines flight off the coast of the Soviet Union and at one point "crossed paths" with the passenger jet, according to a report in the September 5 *Washington Post*.

Tied to U.S. war plans

Washington's strategy in launching such an unrestrained public relations offensive is to further chip away at U.S. working people's deep-seated opposition to a new Vietnam. The same goal underlies the imperialists' ongoing propaganda campaigns around the Soviet army's intervention in Afghanistan and the events in Poland.

Similarly, the Carter administration tried to manipulate public opinion around the taking of hostages at the U.S. embassy in Iran, and used that situation and Afghanistan as an excuse to reinstitute draft registration.

Reagan has repeatedly portrayed the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," and asserts that a "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis" is threatening U.S. security in Central America and the Caribbean.

The September 3 *New York Times* reported, "Congressional liberals as well as conservatives [said] that the brutality of the Soviet attack would lend more credibility to President Reagan's basic contention as one aide put it 'that the only kind of persuasion the Russians understand is force.'"

The *New York Post* editorialized the same day that in light of the overnight shift "in the mood of Congressional leaders towards a tough defense stand," the lawmakers might be even more favorable to "President Reagan's policy of carrying a big stick" in Central America.

However, a poll in the September 12 *Newsweek* pointed up the administration's continuing difficulty selling its aggressive policies to the U.S. population. In the survey conducted at the end of August, 53 percent said that U.S. Marines should be pulled out of the international "peacekeeping force" in Lebanon.

The U.S. government's feigned outrage and grief over the tragic loss of life aboard the airliner is nothing more than a hypocritical sham.

CIA agents orchestrate counterrevolutionary attacks that have killed more than 600 Nicaraguans in the last year. At the same time U.S. advisers oversee the slaughter of civilians in El Salvador.

Washington clearly demonstrated its "humanity" in Indochina, a war that killed millions of people. An irony of U.S. imperialism's pretended concern is that the Korean jet went down in a part of the world where Washington carried out one of the bloodiest acts in history — the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

When terrorists trained by the CIA blew up a Cuban jet over Barbados in 1976, taking 73 lives, Washington said hardly a word. The U.S. press also did its best to cover up U.S. responsibility for the incident. Even after the right-wing Cuban exiles who planted the bomb had been arrested in Latin America and claimed credit for the attack, the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote, "It is far from certain foul play was involved."

Washington and the big-business news media also remained virtually mute on the Israeli downing of a Libyan commercial airline flight over the Sinai in 1973. The press simply parroted the Israeli government's lies that the Libyan jet had ignored orders to land and warning shots fired by Israeli fighters. The airliner's flight recorder later revealed that it had been shot down with no warning at all. Throughout the incident the imperialist press failed to question either the Israeli regime's morality or truthfulness.

Paranoia?

Editorials since the South Korean jet liner was shot down have suggested that the Soviet Union might have overreacted.

"Whatever they have discovered about the affair," the *New York Times* wrote in an editorial September 4, "the Soviet leaders are admitting an unhealthy paranoia about their borders, displaying the aggressiveness born of their insecurity...."

According to the September 3 *New York Daily News*, the Soviet Union has always been "afflicted by demented insecurity . . ." that in a period of tension like the Cuban missile crisis "could destroy us all."

To the degree that the Soviet Union reacts to intrusions across its borders, it is because it is threatened by an encircling U.S. military noose.

Land and sea-based nuclear missiles surround the Soviet Union, and the Pentagon maintains thousands of U.S. troops in Western Europe and South Korea. This fall Washington is going ahead with plans to station Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe.

The Far Eastern area where the Korean jet went down is a particularly important military target for U.S. imperialism and the site of unrelenting U.S. and South Korean air and sea provocations.

The presence of the RC-135 spy plane in the area was no isolated incident. U.S. military officials admit that Air Force planes routinely fly along the Soviet border near the strategic

Soviet military bases on the Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island.

The South Korean government staged a major provocation August 13 by firing on and sinking a North Korean fishing boat in international waters off Japan. Several crew members aboard the fishing boat were killed in the unprovoked attack.

As part of bolstering its military presence in Japan, the Pentagon regularly holds large-scale military maneuvers in the region. Moreover, the Pentagon recently announced that it is planning to move a squadron of F-16 fighters to northern Japan — just a few minutes' flying time from Sakhalin Island.

In a televised speech to the nation Sep-

tember 5, President Reagan announced that Washington would work with other governments to restrict the landing rights of the Soviet airline Aeroflot. He also announced the suspension of bilateral talks on cultural exchange and other minor questions.

But the heart of his speech was a pitch for Congress to vote more money for war. He urged the lawmakers "to ponder long and hard the Soviets' aggression as they consider the security and safety of our people, indeed, of all people who believe in freedom."

Two key arms bills Congress will take up when it returns from summer recess are military aid to the Salvadoan dictatorship and funds for the MX missile. □

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Massive march for jobs, peace, freedom

Largest Black-led demonstration in U.S. history

By Malik Miah

[The following article is excerpted from the September 9 issue of the U.S. socialist news-weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

In sweltering heat close to half a million people from around the nation stretched from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial in the largest Black-initiated protest in the history of the United States.

The march was organized by the New Coalition of Conscience, launched by Coretta Scott King, head of the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change, and Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

The march won the endorsement of over 700 organizations, including the AFL-CIO [U.S. trade union federation] Executive Council, National Organization for Women (NOW), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and most of the major civil rights organizations.

The hundreds of thousands of Blacks, Latinos, Asian-Americans, and whites — most of them working people — came here demanding jobs, peace, and freedom and national recognition for the central figure in the historic March on Washington held in 1963 — Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

They came demanding that King's birthday, January 15, become a national holiday.

They came demanding that King's famous "I have a dream" speech become a reality.

They came demanding that the government end its racist, sexist, antilabor, and prowar policies.

They carried signs and banners — some professionally done and many hand-lettered — making demands on the government against its policies of war at home and abroad.

Blacks and whites carried signs demanding "Affirmative action now," "Jobs now," "Equal rights for all," and others in support of union rights, striking telephone workers, the Equal Rights Amendment, and gay rights, and against apartheid in South Africa and Israeli domination of Palestine and Lebanon, and more.

As expected, some of the largest contingents were all or predominantly Black.

But the large presence of other oppressed nationalities and whites in the march was striking to all present, especially to veterans of the 1963 march.

Large union contingents

In 1963 George Meany, then president of



Yvonne Hayes/Militant

Part of crowd at August 27 march on Washington.

the AFL-CIO, and virtually the entire leadership of the federation refused to endorse the march. Only the United Auto Workers (UAW) as a whole backed the march, and UAW President Walter Reuther spoke at the demonstration.

While giving lip-service to civil rights, the top trade union officials refused to actively build the movement because of their support to the Democratic Party, in which the racist Dixiecrats were a powerful component.

Twenty years later the organized labor movement is more Black, Latino, and female, and — white workers included — is more supportive of civil rights. The common suffering caused by the employers' attacks is leading to broader unity on many issues — economic, social, and political.

Thus at the march at least one-third of the marchers were members of trade unions, while the majority were working people.

The largest union contingents were the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU); American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); International Association of Machinists (IAM); Communications Workers of America (CWA); Service Employees International Union (SEIU); and 1199 National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees.

Other contingents included: United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); United

Steelworkers of America (USWA); United Mine Workers of America (UMWA); American Federation of Teachers; United Electrical Workers; International Union of Electrical Workers; National Education Association (NEA); and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE).

The IAM printed up hundreds of placards calling for "Jobs not bombs." Most unions made signs with the slogan "Jobs, Peace, and Freedom" or "The dream lives on."

There were also union signs on peace and war. "Reagan wanted for murder in Central America," read a Carpenters Local 1846 sign.

Howard Samuel, president of the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Department, spoke at the morning rally. He kept his remarks brief, general, and expressed solidarity with the march and its call for jobs. "The organized labor movement," Samuel said, "is proud to join its natural allies" in the fight for jobs and justice.

Other labor leaders who spoke were William Winpisinger, president of the IAM; Owen Beiber, president of the UAW; William Lucy, secretary-treasurer of AFSCME and president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; Cleveland Robinson, District 65, UAW; Addie Wyatt, vice-president, UFCW; Mary Futrell, president of the NEA; Kenneth Blaylock, president of AFGE; Henry Nicholas, president of 1199; and Robert White, president of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Workers.

Another noteworthy advance since the 1963 march was the active participation of women's groups in the march.

Judy Goldsmith, president of NOW; Dorothy Height, National Council of Negro Women; Bella Abzug, Women USA; Kathy Wilson, National Women's Political Caucus; and Dorothy Riding, president of the League of Women Voters, all spoke.

Height made special mention of the role that Black women have played in the fight for civil rights — particularly noting that Black women have historically served in leadership roles in the struggle.

Goldsmith said, "Women are, and have always been central to the civil rights movement. Women are peace activists. Women are union organizers and supporters. Women are committed to protecting the environment. We are represented in every movement here, and we come in all colors."

'U.S. out of Central America'

Although the issues of peace and U.S. wars abroad were not the dominant theme of the march, there was a solidarity contingent with signs and banners hitting U.S. policy in Central America. Antiwar signs were visible in other contingents as well. A number of speakers also discussed the war issue.

Before the march a number of individuals who had backed the 1963 march refused to endorse this one on the grounds that the demands were too broad. They particularly objected to the peace demand as an unwarranted concession to those opposed to U.S. support to reactionary dictatorships.

Notable in the attacks on the march were several pro-Zionist Jewish organizations (a number of others did march); Bayard Rustin, head of the A. Philip Randolph Institute and a central organizer of the 1963 march; and the Social Democrats, USA.

Although many top officials of the AFL-CIO opposed inclusion of the peace demand in the coalition because of their general support to U.S. foreign policy including in Central America (Lane Kirkland's participation on Kissinger's war commission reflects that fact), they maintained their support for the march.

Rustin and company, however, could not even give lip service to the march or its demands. They claimed it was not in the interests of Blacks to "confuse" civil rights with foreign policy questions since doing so, in their view, would undermine the fight of Blacks for equality.

Significantly, the march organizers stood firm and strongly rebutted these criticisms. At the morning rally, for instance, Coretta Scott King commented, "We must demand justice in Harlem and in the Bronx . . . but also in the Philippines. We must demand justice in the barrios of Los Angeles . . . but also in El Salvador."

In that context the march organizers invited a number of speakers who are freedom fighters and opponents of U.S. nuclear weapons here and abroad.

For example, a U.S. representative of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), Alberto Arene, spoke at the morning rally before the march began. He was given a warm welcome, including some chants of "U.S. out of El Salvador."

Arene first told the massive rally that he was speaking in place of Rubén Zamora, a leader of the FMLN-FDR, because the State Department refused Zamora a visa on the spurious grounds that he applied for it too late.

Arene then explained the aims of the FMLN-FDR: "Here today we confirm our commitment to achieve peace. Here today we denounce the presence of troops and warships in Central America that are an obstacle to a political solution. Here today we join the people and governments of the world in demanding the suspension of the 'Big Pine II' military maneuvers and the immediate withdrawal of the fleet from Central American territorial waters.

"The Reagan administration is committed to another Vietnam in Central America. The North American people must say 'No!' to Reagan's war. Your war is at home — a war for jobs, a war for peace, a war for freedom."

In the afternoon rally South African freedom fighter Dr. Allan Boesak, a leader of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, spoke. He also received a loud ovation.

Vernon Bellecourt, a leader of the American Indian Movement, then described the struggle of Indians for freedom. He was the only speaker to hit the Zionist state of Israel for its support of the Guatemalan dictatorship and its murder of Indians there.

James Abourezk, founder of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee also spoke, as did Margaret Kuhn of the Grey Panthers, who criticized the government's plans to deploy the MX missile, and Lynne Jones, a representative of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Encampment in Great Britain, who spoke against the U.S. plans to place cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe.

The banners and signs reflected the peace and antiwar sentiments of the predominantly working-class crowd: "Nicaragua wants peace, U.S. people want peace too"; "Condemn Israeli arms sales to South Africa"; "End U.S. support for Israeli occupation of Lebanon and Palestine"; "Cubans vs. U.S. intervention in Latin America" — Antonio Maceo Brigade; "No U.S. arms to Morocco" — Western Sahara Working Group; and three large yellow banners that said: "Arab-Americans marching for Jobs, Peace, and Freedom."

Anti-Reaganism

Reagan was on "vacation" in California while the march took place. Most of the speeches attacked Reagan and urged marchers to help in a massive voter registration drive to dump Reagan in 1984.

The breadth of the march — with all sections of the working population represented — reflects a potential to build a new coalition of

struggle against the policies of the government, the employers, and their two parties — the Democrats and Republicans.

It was the growing anger among Blacks especially — the hardest hit by the employers' racist, antilabor policies — that the march organizers were mobilizing. Their hope and aim is to guide this anger to advance their own agenda within the capitalist parties.

This includes the objective of registering several million more Blacks to vote by the 1984 elections. Despite the intentions of many Black rights leaders and Black Democrats, the voter registration drive is an important campaign. The democratic rights of Blacks, including their right to vote, are constantly coming under attack from the government.

Nevertheless the organizers of the New Coalition of Conscience have made it clear from the outset of the march that their strategy to win jobs, peace, and freedom primarily means dumping Reagan in 1984 by any means and passing new "progressive" legislation in the Congress around a "people's platform."

Although the crowd responded favorably to the anti-Reaganism, it wasn't an adequate answer for many participants. They wanted a perspective of change — not the same old thing.

Thus there was a genuine excitement when Jesse Jackson came up to the podium to speak. Jackson's proposal that a Black run for president appeared to many to be such a bold move and alternative perspective. Many people felt such a step should be taken whether Jackson did so as a Democrat or as an independent. (Jackson strongly opposes running as an independent.)

Jackson was the only major speaker to give an analysis of the changes since 1963 and outline a course for the new Coalition of Conscience to travel in order to fulfill King's "dream."

"Twenty years ago we came to these hallowed grounds as a rainbow coalition to demand our freedom," Jackson stated. "Twenty years later we have our freedom — our civil rights. The apartheid of legal segregation is over. But 20 years later we do not have equality. We have moved in, now we must move up."

"Twenty years ago there were no Blacks in Congress or in statewide offices in nine southern states, where 53 percent of all Blacks live. Twenty years later we still do not have one Black in the Congress in those nine southern states because the Voting Rights Act has been sabotaged.

"The Democratic Party is violating the law." Jackson said, "The Republican Party is not enforcing the law."

"We must choose the human race over the nuclear race. El Salvador and Nicaragua are our neighbors, not our nemesis. They are our next-door neighbor, not a back-door threat.

"Black America, Hispanics, women, change your mind," Jackson concluded. "Our day has come. From the outhouse, to the state house, to the courthouse, to the White House

we will march on, march on."

Before Jackson could leave the podium, chants throughout the massive crowd began, "Run, Jesse, run."

Jackson's proposal that the "rainbow coalition" that built the march should continue and should strengthen the political position of Blacks and their allies was clearly the highlight of the day's events. It led to many discussions among participants on political strategy — including whether Blacks should break with the Democratic Party.

1983 is not 1963

The discussion on the speakers platform and in the crowd over the differences between 1963 and 1983 was a thread that ran through the march.

In 1963, as Jackson explained, Blacks didn't even have legal equality. The smashing of Jim Crow segregation in the South was essential to lay the basis for the broader unity we now are beginning to see between working people today in this period of greater economic dislocation and instability.

That victory and the formation of industrial unions with the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930s were the greatest advances for Blacks and other working people in the United States in the 20th century.

Without the overthrow of the dual-race system in the South, which was the law of the land, the gains Blacks have made and the potential unity we now see developing would be impossible. The employers would be in a stronger position than they are.

Moreover, that victory helped to break down anticommunism in the working class and the many other divisions imposed among workers by the employers.

That's why there was so much excitement, especially among Blacks, to see so many other oppressed nationalities and whites at the march. It is why there was so much enthusiasm for the international speakers too. The new coalition is not just of the Black groups, but it seeks to include all working people — here and abroad.

That's also a big change from the 1963 march. It bodes well for future unity. That's a point that Jackson and the other Black Democrats clearly see as they seek more legitimacy inside the capitalist parties.

The march furthermore confirmed another aspect of U.S. politics — the vanguard social and political role of the oppressed Black nationality is playing. It was Blacks that pulled together this broad coalition and raised the social demands that won it so much support.

And it's the Black civil rights leaders who are taking the lead to say that working people should have a foreign policy independent of the State Department. That's the significance of Coretta Scott King's speech and the inclusion of Arene and the South African freedom fighter on the platform.

Many of the civil rights leaders, including some of the Black elected Democratic Party

officials, also made a point that reflects a deeper process of discussions in the Black nationality: "progressive" legislation can't be won without street protests. Until this march, besides leaders of SCLC and PUSH, few others talked about taking to the streets to press their demands.

The blows of the employers and government on Blacks and other workers is causing many of these Black procapitalist politicians to move

in this direction of participating in and even initiating street demonstrations.

But mass protests can have their own dynamic — particularly in their impact on those in the marches. The fact that layers of Black capitalist politicians feel the need to support such actions reflects how deep the capitalist crisis is. They know most Blacks and other workers marching on August 27 did so to fight the status quo, not to improve it. □

Philippines

Huge crowds denounce Marcos

Aquino murder spurs antidictatorial protests

By Fred Murphy

Unprecedented demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of Filipinos during the ten days following the August 21 assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino have revealed the breadth of the developing mass movement against the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship.

Crowds numbering in the hundreds of thousands gathered repeatedly in the capital, Manila, and along the highways between there and Aquino's home province, Tarlac, to pay tribute to the slain leader and to voice their opposition to the Marcos regime.

More than one million participated in Aquino's funeral procession on August 31 — the biggest public protest in Philippine history. The procession was led by a contingent of 3,000 students chanting "Marcos — killer, dictator, dog!"

Fifty thousand trade unionists from the May 1 Movement (KMU), a militant independent federation with 1 million members, served as monitors for the funeral procession at the request of the Aquino family.

Between August 22 and 25, more than 100,000 Filipinos had streamed through Aquino's Manila home to view his bloodstained body.

Half a million people then accompanied Aquino's body from his home to a nearby church. Marchers chanted, "Confront them!" and sang songs about their "enslaved country."

Two days later, another 500,000 turned out as the body was taken to Tarlac, north of Manila. Chants of "Free our country" and "Fight, fight, fight!" rang out from the crowds in cities and towns along the route.

Meanwhile, thousands of students held protest rallies at two Manila universities. One million persons again lined the capital's streets on August 29 when Aquino's body was returned for burial.

All questions point to Marcos

The massive turnout points up dictator Ferdinand Marcos' utter failure to convince Filipinos of his regime's innocence in the murder of Aquino. To the contrary: all the facts

point to the government as the assassin.

Aquino was shot dead from point-blank range seconds after soldiers had taken him into custody aboard the plane he had arrived on at Manila's international airport. The man Marcos asserts was the killer was immediately riddled with bullets by soldiers. Marcos later said this alleged assassin was Rolando Galman y Dawang, a "notorious killer" used in the past by organized crime and "subversive elements." Marcos has repeatedly accused "communists" of plotting Aquino's murder so as to discredit the regime.

But Aquino ally Sen. Salvador Laurel has raised a series of questions regarding the mur-



der, all of which point to Marcos and his henchmen:

- A coroner's report indicated that the bullet entered behind Aquino's left ear and traveled *downward*. How could Galman, who was six inches *shorter* than Aquino, have made such a shot?

- How did the alleged assassin know exactly where to wait for Aquino, when not even the opposition leader's family knew which of several planes he was to arrive on?

- How could someone carrying an eight-inch, .357 Magnum pistol — the alleged murder weapon — enter the airport unchallenged and get right next to Aquino when the place was saturated with troops and security personnel?

- Why did the soldiers who arrested Aquino take him down the plane's steps to the runway instead of through the enclosed landing platform to the terminal?

- Why was Galman killed on the spot instead of kept alive for questioning, if indeed he was the assassin?

Another opposition leader, ex-Sen. Eva Estrada Kalaw, has pointed out how the Aquino murder fits a pattern:

"It's easy to get hold of some poor guy in the slums or in prison, and make a killer out of him by promising him this or that after the murder. The regime's political crimes follow a kind of scenario. All the killings of opponents resemble each other and this one is no different. The killers are themselves killed or never found, and no case is ever brought to justice" (*Le Monde*, August 24).

Marcos has appointed a commission that he claims will conduct an "independent" investigation of the crime. But all five of its members are Marcos-appointed judges and loyalists.

Aquino's widow has denounced the commission as "Marcos' men." The Catholic archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin, refused to serve on it, saying he would be only "a voice in the wilderness" on such a body.

Whoever pulled the trigger, Cardinal Sin said, "one fact remains clear and unmistakable: Ninoy [Aquino's nickname] was killed while he was in the custody of government security men. And there is no way that the government can wash its hands clean and disclaim total responsibility for the killing."

Crisis of bourgeois opposition

Benigno Aquino was the central figure in the bourgeois opposition to Marcos. He headed a layer of politicians Marcos and his cronies had shoved aside after declaring martial law in 1972. Aquino was immediately jailed and after several years' imprisonment framed up on murder charges and sentenced to death. Widespread protests saved his life, and in 1980 Marcos allowed him to leave the Philippines for heart surgery in the United States.

Aquino's aim in returning to the Philippines after three years in exile was to rejuvenate the bourgeois opposition forces grouped in the United Nationalist Democratic Organization



Aquino on plane just before his assassination at Manila airport.

(UNIDO). He hoped to lead UNIDO in an electoral campaign against Marcos' New Society Movement (KBL). The dictator had indicated he might call parliamentary elections for May 1984.

UNIDO has been losing ground in recent years to the National Democratic Front (NDF), a coalition of trade unions (including the KMU), peasant organizations, and organizations of women, students, health workers, teachers, lawyers, and journalists. Unlike UNIDO, which looks to Washington for support, the NDF is based on an anti-imperialist, antidictatorial platform.

The NDF in turn has close ties to the New People's Army (NPA), a guerrilla force of thousands of fighters that is confronting Marcos' army in wide areas of the Philippine countryside.

When Marcos orchestrated his own reelection as president in 1981, the NDF initiated a campaign of mass actions that culminated in a widespread boycott of the voting. UNIDO hesitated for several months between fielding a candidate and abstaining, then finally got behind the NDF-led boycott.

It was in hope of recovering popular support that UNIDO registered in June to present candidates in the 1984 elections and appealed to the NDF and NPA "to give democratic processes a last chance."

But Aquino was the only UNIDO leader with a genuine mass following among Filipinos. His martyrdom not only reduces

UNIDO's chances to gain support but also renders less convincing its arguments about "democratic processes" under continued Marcos rule.

UNIDO leader Salvador Laurel warned August 23 that what he termed the nonviolent opposition is "thinning out." UNIDO represents "only 30 percent of the opposition," Laurel lamented. "Seventy percent is in the hills" — a reference to the NPA fighters. Laurel declared September 1 that unless Marcos resigns and a caretaker government organizes "free, orderly, and honest" voting, UNIDO would refuse to take part in future elections.

Reagan's dilemma

The assassination of Aquino also presents the Reagan administration with an acute dilemma. Reagan was already scheduled before the killing to visit Manila in November. The White House has stated repeatedly since Aquino's death that the trip is on. However, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it August 31, Reagan must now "figure out how to reiterate support for Mr. Marcos' economically troubled and strategically important regime without appearing to condone the murder of an anticommunist politician who was widely admired both in the Philippines and the U.S."

Administration officials have begun asserting that Reagan will dissociate himself from Marcos if the regime's guilt should be proven. But they also acknowledge that if Marcos or other top figures were involved in the Aquino killing, the investigating commission is bound to cover this up.

Reagan aides also emphasize "the strategic and historic relationship" between the United States and the Philippines.

"Specifically," the *New York Times* reported August 25, "officials said that regardless of whether the Philippine authorities had a role in the Aquino killing, the United States must try to insure that it retains air and naval bases in the Philippines and that the Philippine Government is not overthrown by the continuing insurgency of the New People's Army."

The Philippines has been a bastion of U.S. imperialism in Asia ever since the country was seized from Spain in 1898 and converted into the first U.S. colony. The two largest U.S. military bases in the world, outside the United States, are Clark air base and Subic Bay naval base in the Philippines. These are key to Washington's plans to counter the advancing revolutionary struggles in Asia, from Indochina to Iran.

U.S. corporations have some \$3 billion invested in the Philippines, and U.S. banks hold much of the Marcos regime's \$22 billion foreign debt.

Washington has propped up the Marcos dictatorship since its inception in 1972. Under Reagan, this backing became still more open, expressed most shamelessly by Vice-president George Bush's praise of Marcos in Manila in 1981: "We love your adherence to democratic principles."

While the murder of Aquino makes U.S.

support to Marcos more politically costly, it also makes it more necessary. The dictatorship faces a rising challenge from the Philippine masses, while the pro-U.S. sector of the op-

position has been severely weakened. And the Philippine people are becoming more conscious that behind Marcos stands their most powerful enemy, U.S. imperialism itself. □

France

Mitterrand opts for war

Liberals justify intervention in Chad

By Verveine Angeli

[The following article appeared in the August 19-25 issue of *Rouge*, the weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

French imperialism has struck for the second time since May 1981 [when the present government was elected].

The sending of troops to Beirut last summer was wrapped up in humanitarian bombast about protecting the orderly retreat of the Palestinian fighters.

Now the government is sending the French army into action in Chad.

Yesterday's anti-imperialists — Yves Montand, André Glucksmann, Bernard Kouchner, Jacques Lebas, and Jean-Paul Escande* — are doing the dirty work by assuring the government of the support of "French public opinion." They egg it on, and even find that it has not gone far enough: "Yesterday, an intervention by the French air force still sufficed to keep Libyan planes out of Chadian airspace. . . ."

Nor are they far from anticommunist hysteria: "Behind the Libyan invasion, the Soviet presence is evident. As everyone knows, this has already been seen in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, etc."

They have clearly chosen their camp, that of imperialism. In their statement published in the August 12 issue of *Libération*, they add their voices to those of the U.S. rulers, who called for French intervention since the region is part of France's "sphere of influence."

[French Defense Minister] Charles Hernu, not satisfied with such propagandists, simply lies: "We are there as instructors, as the trainers of the Chadian army."

Let's be serious: What role do such instructors and trainers have when there are 700 of them — soon to be more, undoubtedly — for an army of several thousand men at most? What does training amount to when fighting is under way? The troops sent to Chad are not only specialists in training but also belong to

*French artists and intellectuals who published a statement in the August 12 issue of the Paris daily *Libération* supporting the government's intervention in Chad. — IP

elite fighting units.

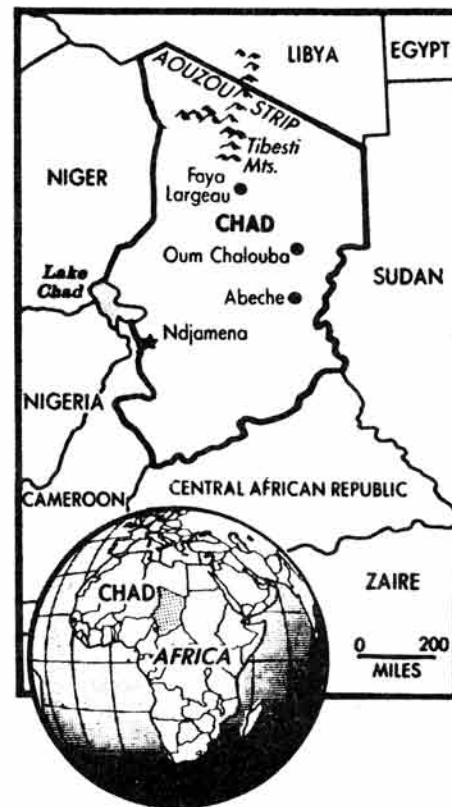
Setting up the Rapid Action and Assistance Forces (FAR) was one of three priorities set forth in the military planning law adopted in June. The law established French military policy for the next four years. One of three priorities, which means that the French army is to be reorganized with the FAR forces as a central pillar, explicitly designed for action abroad, either in Africa or as part of the forces of NATO.

The FAR come on top of forces already in existence, elite corps like the Sixth Light Armored Division and the Fourth Airborne Division, totalling 47,000 men with tanks and combat helicopters. Just when the FAR is being set up, the government shows by its intervention in Chad what kind of priority it is talking about.

The permanent presence of more than 20,000 troops on African soil and in the so-called overseas territories and departments no longer suffices. The FAR must fill the gap by providing a standing threat against the African peoples and against growing pressure in France.

So a decisive task for the entire working-class and democratic movement is to respond without delay against the French paratroops in Chad. They are a foretaste of what is in the works regarding reinforcement of France's imperialist presence in Africa.

We are not surprised at this: François Mitterrand was minister of the interior at the beginning of the Algerian War. As for the Com-



unist Party, it sang the praises of the French Union at the start of the first Indochinese War. They are showing that they live up to their past in an exemplary fashion.

Those who support this policy today, in the name of mythical Soviet meddling through Libya or in the name of solidarity with the government, will find all kinds of reasons to support other such interventions in the future. Perhaps they will soon assert that, after the Malvinas and Central America, the moment is evidently not right for "North-South dialogue." By announcing the halt in arms sales, however symbolic, to threatened Nicaragua, [French Foreign Minister] Claude Cheysson shows us what camp the government proclaims itself part of when the tensions mount.

LCR: French troops out of Chad!

[The following statement was issued August 10 by the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation by *Intercontinental Press* is from the August 19-25 issue of the LCR's weekly, *Rouge*.]

* * *

The sending of a contingent of troops to Chad demonstrates that the current government does not intend to allow the U.S. administration to challenge its role as the gendarme of Africa. All the continent's dic-

tators, who keep their peoples in poverty and oppression for the greater profit of imperialist interests, including French ones, will take heart from this.

Let the French workers well understand that the military adventure in Ndjamena is being and will be paid for through still greater sacrifices on their part and through suffering by the peoples of Chad.

Their response can only be to denounce and condemn it. Together with all their organizations, they must demand the immediate withdrawal of the French paratroops from Chad!

13 socialists victimized for views

Firings an attack on union movement

The management of British Leyland (BL), Britain's large government-owned auto firm, announced on August 10 that it had fired 13 employees at its Cowley plant in Oxfordshire.

Although all 13 are active in the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and express socialist views, the management attempted to cover up the obvious fact that the sackings were political. It said they had been fired on technical grounds, for falsifying references on their job applications.

But the capitalist press in Britain made little effort to conceal the political character of the dismissals. For days the story of the firings was front-page news, replete with red-baiting smears about supposed "moles" and "plots" by socialists to "infiltrate" British industry. "Amazing red mole plot to seize BL," screamed a headline in the *Daily Mirror*. "Car giant foils the red wreckers," proclaimed the *Daily Express*.

British Leyland itself stressed to journalists "off the record" that the 13 were members of the International Marxist Group, the forerunner of the Socialist League, the British section of the Fourth International.

The Confederation of British Industry urged that a general witch-hunt against socialist activists in industry be carried out.

On August 15, *Socialist Action*, the weekly newspaper that supports the Socialist League, organized a press conference at which the featured speaker was Stephanie Grant, one of the 13 fired workers. She slammed the British Leyland and press campaign being waged against the 13.

That same night, appearing on the British Broadcasting Corporation current affairs program "Newsnight," Grant declared, "I wasn't part of a conspiracy, it is British Leyland who are conspiring to destroy the unions."

Socialist Action, in its August 18 issue, placed the firing of the 13 in the context of the broader and on-going witch-hunt by British industry and the Tory government to victimize political and trade union activists as part of their offensive against the British union movement.

British Leyland itself has been in the forefront of this drive. In 1979, it fired Derek Robinson, a member of the Communist Party and long-time union activist in BL's Longbridge plant.

The following year, BL sacked six left-wing shop stewards for alleged misconduct. And in 1982 it fired Alan Thornett, a leader of the Workers Socialist League, who was a shop steward at the Cowley plant.

"The latest victimisations represent both a

continuation and a stepping up of the campaign by BL and other employers to smash up rank and file trade union organisation in industry," Pat Hickey commented in *Socialist Action*.

Despite the earlier firings, the workers at Cowley had shown that they were still ready to fight management, including through a four-and-a-half-week strike in April. This combativity was evident as well among new workers who had been hired for a recently opened line in the plant. Four of the fired 13 had been elected shop stewards on the new line.

In a report issued by a joint management-union investigating team, the management complained that "there are clear signs that the political views of some of the stewards work against constitutional trade unionism in the plant."

In an effort to impose "constitutional" — that is, house-broken — trade unionism on the Leyland workers, the management hired a firm of "security specialists" to review the job applications of its employees.

Other British employers do the same thing. The personnel director of Shell Oil told a reporter, "We are interested in identifying overt opponents of the system to which we are com-

mitted. The last thing we want to do is have political subversives on our pay roll or on sites in which we have an interest."

This latest attack on British workers' political and union rights has elicited protests by prominent figures in the labor movement.

Dennis Skinner, a Labour Party member of Parliament, called the sackings "an industrial scandal." He affirmed, "We must draw a halt to these witch hunts, defend the right of activists to work, and defend the organisations that truly represent the interests of the workers."

"This is the thin end of the wedge," Peter Tatchell, a Labour Party activist declared. "It's tantamount to denying political activists the right to a job. If it's not resisted at Cowley it's likely to be taken up by other employers and it could lead to a West German-style *Berufsverbot* [political blacklist]."

Brian Mathers, a regional organizer of the Transport and General Workers Union, said that what worried him was "the development that people are denied work because of their political views. This is a development which every democrat has to oppose." □

Socialist League: Stop the witch-hunt

[The following press statement on the firing of the 13 socialists from British Leyland's Cowley plant was issued on August 15 by the Socialist League, British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

British Leyland is a company with a long record of sacking workers for their political and trade union activities. The dismissals of Derek Robinson and Alan Thornett, senior and deputy senior shop stewards in the Longbridge and Cowley car plants are the most well known examples of such victimisation.

No one believes that Robinson and Thornett were sacked for the technical charges made against them. They were victimised for their political and trade union views and activities. And there have been numerous other less publicised sackings.

BL is lying when it says it does not dismiss workers on political grounds, or that it would hire workers in spite of their union record or socialist beliefs. Methods of political victimisation and exclusion are systematic in BL and large British companies.

This can be proved simply. If BL does not

sack or prevent people from gaining employment for reasons of their political views or trade union activities, why does it, like most large companies, operate a system of blacklists?

Why does it employ organisations to check the trade union and political backgrounds of its workers or those applying for jobs?

The use of such methods is known to all those involved in trade unions and industrial relations, and the press; if BL denies this state of affairs it is merely falsifying its own, and other companies', practices.

The facts are obvious. The BL management has not one single complaint against the work record of the 13 dismissed during the entire time they were at Cowley. Everyone knows that the company would be taking no action against the 13 if they were not suspected of having strong socialist views.

The real facts of the BL case were stated in the *Financial Times* on August 13, 1983: "BL has been careful to stress officially the constitutionality of its procedure. . . . In effect however its central concern was their suspected revolutionary affiliations."

Accusations of "left-wing conspiracy" are

merely stupid. If BL did not victimise people for their political and trade union views in the first place no one at all would bother to hide their views from the management.

BL in fact operates a political ban on recruitment to the company and that is the reason for the sackings. Accepting the sacking of the 13 workers in Cowley is to accept the right of managements to operate political bans on recruitment, to supervise the political views of workers, and to practice victimisation for political and trade union activities.

It should be opposed as such by the labour movement, the trade unions, and all those concerned in defending democratic rights.

The sackings should also be strongly opposed by the women's movement who will have seen the way in which the press particularly singled out for attack women workers at Cowley.

While parading women's bodies like meat on their inside pages *The Sun*, and other newspapers, particularly emphasise for attack women seeking to gain jobs normally "reserved" for men.

The Socialist League supports, and will continue to support, all attempts by women to gain jobs on a basis of equality with men.

The charge that anyone with socialist views can instigate workers to go on strike, or are "infiltrating" the trade unions is a conscious invention by the press.

Workers going on strike lose hundreds of pounds of their income and risk their jobs. They will not strike unless propelled to do so by deep seated and genuine grievances against the company. It is the activities of BL management, not any political group, which leads to workers striking in BL or in any other company.

As far as the trade unions are concerned the Socialist League has and will defend the right of all workers, whatever their political views, to stand for election in the trade unions and to elect whoever they wish as their union representatives. We fight for that ourselves and would defend it just as strongly for any members of a trade union whatever their political views.

In reality the stated motivations of both the press and the Conservative Party in their witch hunt show the real issues at stake in the sacking of the 13 Cowley workers.

The press consciously and clearly states that those with political views they disagree with should be excluded from employment in major companies and factories. They openly justify political victimisations and exclusions.

The exclusion of the 13 workers from Cowley should be opposed by the entire labour, trade union and women's movement as an attempt by the company to enforce a political ban on recruitment and employment.

If a policy of systematic exclusions from employment, and use of victimisation, by companies is continued and strengthened there will be a further major erosion of democratic rights to add to the many already carried out by this government and the BL management. □

Lebanon

First U.S. Marines killed

While defending Gemayel dictatorship

By David Frankel

[The following article is taken from the September 9 issue of the U.S. socialist news-weekly *Militant*.]

* * *

For the past year U.S. combat forces have been intervening in a civil war in Lebanon. The death of two marines August 29 and the wounding of 14 others was a sharp reminder of that fact.

As in Central America, the Philippines, and elsewhere around the world, Washington's role in Lebanon has been to back the defenders of social reaction and privilege.

Hiding behind a cloak of legality, the State Department insists that U.S. forces in Lebanon are only there to support the legitimate government of that country. But Lebanese President Amin Gemayel was installed in office by vote of the Israeli army, not of the Lebanese people.

Gemayel rules with the support of the Israeli and U.S. governments and with the backing of the ultrarightist Phalangist militia. The Phalangists are the same gang that carried out the savage massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps one year ago. The majority of the Lebanese people reject this imperialist-imposed government.

The Lebanese government provides no public housing, no health care, no unemployment insurance, and no disability benefits for the working people. But its soldiers — armed and trained by Washington — have been busy evicting homeless people from the buildings that they have settled in. They break up demonstrations, kidnap political opponents of the government, and collaborate with rightist gangs in hopes of terrorizing the majority of the Lebanese people.

These social tensions are the same that led to the civil war of 1975-76. They are heightened by the political and economic discrimination against Lebanon's Muslim and Druse population, which together make up some 60 percent of the total. Gemayel's Phalangist government is based primarily on the Christian minority in Lebanon, particularly on the Maronite sect, which accounts for less than a quarter of the population.

The latest fighting in Beirut erupted as a result of an offensive by the Lebanese army, which sought to take over some of West Beirut's poorest Shi'ite Muslim neighborhoods and disarm the population there. But Shi'ite and Druse militia forces, unwilling to leave their people at the mercy of the murderers of Sabra and Shatila, fought back.

Responding in typical fashion, White House officials promptly blamed Syria and the Soviet Union for the confrontation. Syria, one top

Reagan deputy claimed, is playing the "spoiler role" in Lebanon "with encouragement from the Soviets."

U.S. Marine contingents, which have acted as an army of occupation in West Beirut in conjunction with the rightist forces, joined in the August 29 battle, using artillery, mortars, and helicopter gunships.

There are 1,200 marines deployed in West Beirut and another 600 with amphibious boats in Beirut harbor. But these are just the tip of the iceberg, since they are a detachment from the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

Commenting on the possibility of escalated fighting in Lebanon in the August 30 *New York Times*, Drew Middleton noted that "the Marines, drawing on their reserves afloat, appear to have enough men and weapons to launch an attack against the guerrillas in the hills. Such an attack is unlikely at the moment, Pentagon sources said, but given the explosive uncertainties of the situation in Lebanon, the contingency must be considered."

Middleton added that "a Marine Corps source noted that the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower is 'around' in the Mediterranean and that in the event of further attacks on the marines in Beirut the Eisenhower and its 84 aircraft would be available for support."

Meanwhile, the editors of the *New York Times* suggested that the marines in Beirut "may . . . need some reinforcing."

It is clear that as long as U.S. forces remain in Lebanon, there is a real danger of their involvement in a wider war. It is also clear that what Washington is doing there is against the interests and wishes of the majority of the Lebanese people. The marines and the Sixth Fleet should get out of Lebanon and stay out.

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Thousands rally for Solidarity

'We do not want to ruin socialism'

By Ernest Harsch

Tens of thousands of Polish workers and their supporters demonstrated in cities across Poland August 31. They came out to mark the third anniversary of the accords that led to the rise of the Solidarity union movement.

The rallies and marches — held in face of government opposition and police repression — symbolized the continued support for the ideas of Solidarity among wide layers of the Polish working class, more than a year and a half after the union was suppressed with the imposition of martial law in December 1981.

"No freedom without Solidarity!" demonstrators chanted in Gdansk, the Baltic port city that has been a bastion of union support since the historic August 1980 strike at the Lenin Shipyard.

Although police allowed Lech Walesa, the central leader of Solidarity, to place a wreath at a monument to slain workers just outside the shipyard gates, they barred others from approaching the monument. Later in the evening, nearly 10,000 Poles left a commemorative mass shouting, "Solidarity!" and flashing V-for-victory signs. They were charged by police with truncheons.

The largest reported anniversary action took place in Nowa Huta, east of Krakow. Some 10,000 workers from the Lenin steelworks, one of the largest plants in the country, attempted to march from the factory gates into the town. They were attacked by ZOMO, Poland's militarized riot police, who fired tear gas, concussion grenades, and water cannon into the crowds of workers. Some of the demonstrators responded by throwing back stones, leading to several hours of street fighting. Scores of protesters were detained, and some injured.

In Warsaw, many residents heeded a call by the Solidarity underground to boycott public transportation during the afternoon rush hour. Several thousand people gathered in Constitution Square. They marched several blocks, chanting, "Solidarity!" and, "Lech Walesa!", before they were dispersed by riot police.

According to initial reports, actions were also held in Wroclaw, Poznan, Czestochowa, Lubin, and Gdynia.

New restrictions for old

The next day, the official press portrayed the anniversary actions as a flop, reporting on the demonstrations simply as "unsuccessful attempts to disturb order in some Polish cities."

While the authorities consistently underplay the size and extent of antigovernment actions, it is clear that the August 31 demonstrations were significantly smaller than similar ones a year ago, when several hundred thousand

people took to the streets in more than 60 cities.

This reflects the blows the workers movement has suffered since then. In October 1982, the government formally outlawed Solidarity, shattering the widespread hopes that the union would be able to resume its legal functioning. This, combined with the lack of a clear political perspective on the part of those who sought to lead the underground Solidarity committees, led to demoralization among a layer of union activists and supporters.

The repression also took a heavy toll. While clandestine union committees still exist and function in many factories and cities around the country (and still publish hundreds of underground bulletins), they have been weakened by the arrests of key activists. Coordination among them remains haphazard, and the authority of the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK), the leading underground Solidarity body, is limited.

Just days before the August 31 actions, Wladyslaw Hardek, the TKK representative from Krakow, fell into the hands of the police and was persuaded to make a televised recantation.

In this context, the bureaucrats who govern Poland felt secure enough to announce the formal lifting of martial law on July 22. Most of the remaining political prisoners were released, or had their sentences reduced. However, several dozen leading Solidarity officials and supporters remain in prison or detention, including Andrzej Gwiazda, Marian Jurczyk, Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, and Zbigniew Romaszewski.

In lifting martial law and proclaiming a partial amnesty, the government of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski hopes to defuse some of the opposition to bureaucratic rule. But, to prevent Solidarity supporters from taking advantage of this move to reorganize the union, new repressive restrictions were written into the regular penal code (giving the authorities many of the same powers they had under martial law). These include:

- Penalties of up to three years in jail for circulating "false information" or participating in banned organizations, like Solidarity.
- Expanded censorship rules.
- A curbing of the prerogatives of workers self-management councils in the factories.
- Powers to forbid any assemblies deemed "threats to public order."
- A curb on enterprises awarding new material benefits to workers.
- An arbitrary extension of the workweek.
- Powers to dismiss or expell teachers and students for breaching "public order" or acting

against "the interests of the People's Republic of Poland."

Just a few weeks after the adoption of these measures, the authorities officially dissolved the Polish Writers Union, one of the country's most prestigious cultural organizations, which had been sympathetic to Solidarity.

Face-to-face in Gdansk

Such continued controls and repression expose the bureaucrats' nervousness over the lifting of martial law. They know that an ebb in organized opposition does not mean that workers have given up their support for the struggle against bureaucratic privilege and mismanagement that was waged by Solidarity.

That is evident in the continued popularity of the union and its leaders — and the unpopularity of the government. During the pope's visit to Poland in June, millions of Poles throughout the country took advantage of the occasion to chant Solidarity slogans and raise union banners. Again in mid-August, Solidarity banners were unfurled in Czestochowa as some 300,000 people gathered for a religious ceremony.

On August 25, Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski went to the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk to address a group of about 500 workers. He sought to justify the crackdown on Solidarity, using the same slanderous accusations the bureaucrats have long employed to cover up their anti-working-class policies.

"Solidarity was not a trade union," Rakowski claimed, "but a political organization aimed at the destruction of socialism in Poland."

According to the official Polish press agency, "Every three to four minutes his speech was interrupted and booed with tasteless shouts and epithets. . . ."

At one point Rakowski declared, "Solidarity no longer exists in the life of this country."

The crowd responded, "It exists right here!"

Lech Walesa, who was among the workers in the hall, took the floor during the discussion period to answer some of Rakowski's charges.

"I am of the opinion," Walesa declared, "that there were mistakes on the part of Solidarity, but there were still greater ones, in my view, on the part of the Government."

"Instead of understanding us, you insult us, dissolve everything and send over tanks and batons against us.

"We do not want to take over power, we are not undermining alliances. We would like you to be seated at a table with us to have talks on errors. We will jointly find solutions and safeguard ourselves against more distortions for the benefit of a better future of our fatherland."

After the meeting, the workers enthusiastically hoisted Walesa on their shoulders. About 2,000 then marched to the monument outside the shipyard gates for a brief rally, amid chants of "Solidarity! Solidarity!" □

Deep radicalization among farmers

Protests mount as economic crisis sweeps rural areas

By Steve Wattenmaker

Working farmers in the United States are in the midst of a deep economic and social crisis. Debts that farmers owe banks and government lending agencies skyrocketed to an all-time high in 1983. Bankruptcy is driving thousands of farm families off their land.

"It doesn't make any sense, but American farmers are going broke producing too much food in a world of hungry people," a Nebraska farmer explains.

The desperate plight of working farmers caught world attention in 1981 when Missouri farmer Wayne Cryts took the law in his own hands. Cryts, with the support of 3,000 other farmers, defied a line of federal marshals and forcibly repossessed his soybean crop from a bankrupt grain storage elevator company. A federal judge had ruled that because the elevator company went out of business, the beans Cryts was storing there were no longer his. But without his crop Cryts faced ruin.

Overnight Wayne Cryts became a national hero to tens of thousands of exploited farmers. He was hauled into court and a federal judge jailed him for refusing to name the farmers that helped him.

The grave economic conditions that drove Cryts to action have worsened since 1981. The recession pushed farm income down to a level as low as that during the depression of the 1930s. Nearly one-quarter of all farmers were living below the officially designated poverty line in 1982.

Turning to the Democrats and Republicans in Washington for relief, working farmers instead have been met with hostility. Government loan guidelines have been tightened, not eased, especially for farmers who are considered "bad risks." The Reagan administration joined with Democrats in Congress this summer in an attempt to freeze or cut back federal subsidies to farmers.

Confronted with the worst crisis in half a century, more small farmers have followed in the footsteps of Wayne Cryts. They have been driven to adopt militant tactics, band together in new organizations, and seek alliances with nonfarm sectors of the population — especially the labor movement. Farmer protests have concentrated on demanding changes in Washington's agriculture policies and on direct actions to prevent farm mortgage foreclosures.

Farm laborers have been hit particularly hard. Even in the best of times they are among the most mercilessly exploited members of the working class, many averaging wages well below \$20 a day. Large corporate farmers took advantage of the economic downturn to attack

the rights of farm workers and weaken their unions.

While family farmers fight to salvage their livelihoods, the crisis has spurred the United Farm Workers (UFW) in California and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in the Midwest to step up their organizing efforts.

Alliance of workers and farmers

The economic and social turmoil sweeping the U.S. countryside has stirred up a wide-ranging discussion among working farmers. Revolutionary socialists have seized every opportunity to join that discussion, finding farmers eager to consider radical and anticapitalist solutions to the crisis.

How can working farmers and farm laborers defend their livelihoods and jobs? How can small farmers get a fair price for their crops without being permanently buried in debt? What kind of trade union leadership will it take to organize the vast majority of farm workers? And what kind of government is it that hoards food to use as a weapon in a world racked by starvation?

Those questions are in the air today throughout the rural areas of the United States. The answers lie in understanding how U.S. capitalists organize food production and distribution on a "for profit" basis. And they lie in revolutionary workers advancing a program of action founded on an alliance between U.S. workers and working farmers in a struggle to break the power of their exploiters.

Breadbasket of the world

U.S. agriculture exerts a powerful impact on the economy of the United States and the economies of countries throughout the world. *The production, processing, and distribution of food and fiber is the biggest U.S. industry.* It employs some 20 million people either directly or indirectly.

Farm income alone was \$61 billion in 1981. Combined with food processing, the figure reaches \$100 billion. And that doesn't count other industries closely allied with agriculture — transportation and storage, textile production, packaging, retailing, etc. By comparison, all forms of mining generated \$45 billion in 1981; automobile sales, \$25 billion; steel and other primary metals, \$43 billion.

The overall productivity of U.S. agriculture has taken a giant leap in the last 40 years. Crop yields per acre continue to rise, primarily due to factors such as increasing mechanization, crop specialization, the expansion of land under irrigation, and improvements in seed and fertilizer.

Twenty years ago one U.S. farm worker or

farmer produced enough farm products for 26 people; today one farm producer raises enough for 65.

Agricultural products are the number one U.S. export, accounting for 20 to 25 percent of all export earnings. One out of three acres planted in the United States is planted for export. The United States and Canada have become the breadbasket of the world, with more than 100 countries dependent on North American grain for food and fodder.

As a consequence, food has come to play a powerful role in U.S. foreign policy. Not only do grain merchants realize enormous profits, but U.S. imperialism uses food as a weapon to starve its enemies and reward its friends. For example, Washington recently restricted food relief to famine-ravaged Ethiopia in an effort to punish that country's government for its anti-imperialist policies. UN officials estimate that 50 to 100 children are dying daily and 3 million are affected by the drought-caused food shortage there.

Who works the land?

Those who produce food and fiber in the United States represent not one, but a set of social classes with competing interests. Included in this diverse mix are capitalist farmers, who exploit labor for profit, and working farmers, who are themselves exploited. Family farmers — those who utilize the labor of family members rather than hired labor — are among the exploited.

The organization of U.S. agriculture has undergone tremendous changes since the end of World War II. While the total amount of land devoted to agriculture has remained fairly constant, the number of farms has been reduced from 5 million in 1950 to just above 2 million today. During those 30 years millions of acres were bought up by corporate and individual capitalist farmers.

This dramatic shift in land ownership has led to a popular misconception that for all practical purposes the advance of agribusiness has wiped out the working farmer. The reality is more complex.

Despite the concentration of vast acreages in a few hands, *family farmers still account for more than half the farm output in the United States.* Family farms are the primary producers of wheat, corn, soybeans, tobacco, milk, and pork. They also produce substantial shares of beef, poultry, and eggs. These are not only key commodities on the U.S. market, but represent a valuable portion of the country's agricultural exports.

Yet working farmers spend their lives as "debt slaves," never able to get out of the red.



Part of 1979 national farmers' demonstration in Washington, D.C.

The costs of operating even an average-size farm of 400 or 500 acres are astounding.

Equipment corporations like John Deere or International Harvester charge monopoly-rigged prices for farm machinery. A small wheat combine or tractor can cost as much as \$100,000. Corporations like Dow and Dupont monopolize the market for pesticides and fertilizers. All the monopolies that sell farmers what they need to produce their crops exploit them.

To finance their operating costs and remain competitive farmers are forced to borrow heavily from government lending institutions or banks that charge high commercial interest rates. In order to secure those loans, the bankers demand that working farmers put up their land, buildings, and equipment as collateral.

Banks and landlords also reap a handsome profit directly from the land itself. Today about 13 percent of all farmers are tenants who rent all of the land they farm. However, a majority of all farmers rent some of the land they farm and the percentage is growing.

Most family farmers who own all or part of their land have it heavily mortgaged and are always one step away from foreclosure. Holding a deed to a piece of farmland today is no guarantee to a working farmer that he or she will be able to use it for a lifetime and hand it down to their children.

"It's a deadly serious situation," explained Merle Hansen, a Nebraska grain farmer and a leader of the newly formed North American Farm Alliance (NAFA). "Fifty years ago we raised our own energy on the farm, oats for the horses. We used manure for fertilizer. My mother raised chickens to eat. We had our own

vegetable garden, fruits, canning operation. It's hard to put a self-sufficient operation like that out of business.

"But now we have to buy fertilizer from the oil companies at their prices, seed corn at \$65 a bushel, and my electric bill for the grain dryers for one month was \$390."

Paul Fehrman, a working farmer in Minnesota, was forced to sell all but 120 acres of his farm and watch his farm equipment repossessed. He now has to work on a neighbor's farm in return for use of the neighbor's machinery. "Every day I go out in the field and I say, 'What am I doing here? I've got all these debts and I'm up against all these big companies.' All I want to do is to be a good farmer, but I'm so scared I'm going to go under," Fehrman told the *New York Times*.

At the other end of the debt cycle, small farmers are squeezed by the food processors, merchandizing trusts, and commodity speculators. These financial interests keep the prices they pay farmers as low as possible. For example, two corporations, Cargill and Continental, monopolize the purchase and shipping of most of the grain exported from the United States. Giant processors, like Beatrice Foods and Campbell Soup Company, are conglomerates generating billions of dollars in annual sales. Farmers have no choice but to accept the prices they are offered.

Always in debt, family farmers are forced to supplement their income with jobs off the farm. About two-thirds of U.S. farmers get more than half their income from nonfarm sources, often an outside job in a mine, factory, packinghouse, railroad, or other industrial workplace. While this is another form of exploitation farmers suffer, it is an important

point of contact between industrial wage workers and small farmers.

Capitalist farmers

Another category of producers on the land are small capitalist farmers. They see themselves as family farmers and use the labor of their families, but they also hire either full- or part-time farm laborers. For example, it is common for family-owned fruit and vegetable farms in New York and New Jersey to hire crews of migrant workers — usually Black agricultural workers from Florida — to harvest for several weeks each fall.

These small capitalist farmers represent a middle layer. They are hostile to efforts by farm laborers to organize and fight for decent wages, but, on the other hand, they in turn are exploited by the banks, processors, and distributors.

At the top of the economic pyramid are the large capitalist farmers and agribusiness monopolies. Today ownership of about 45 percent of all U.S. farmland is concentrated in their hands. Some are individual capitalists who farm several thousand acres, relying to a large degree on hired labor.

Other farms are owned and operated by large corporations like Tenneco, Del Monte, and Superior Oil. These contract for their labor and then process and market the produce themselves. This type of corporate farm accounts for a large proportion of fruits and vegetables grown in the Southwest, California, Florida, and Hawaii.

At the bottom of the U.S. agricultural pyramid are the three million or more agricultural workers. They are brutally exploited and form an integral part of the working class. Although the United Farm Workers Union grew during the 1970s and won a number of key contracts, the overwhelming majority of farm laborers are still unorganized.

Unable to adequately defend themselves, farm workers suffer inhuman conditions. The worst conditions are faced by migrant workers who follow the harvests from one part of the country to another. Farm owners provide squalid shelter, little or no health care, and unsafe working conditions. The children of migrant workers have little chance for an education.

Bitter harvest

The economic catastrophe facing tens of thousands of family farmers was triggered by the current world recession. But its roots lie in the profit drive of U.S. monopolies and the anarchy of the capitalist marketplace.

Throughout the 1970s Washington exhorted farmers to greatly increase production so that conglomerates and commodity speculators could take advantage of world food shortages and a strong domestic market. Record harvests filled silos and grain elevators beyond capacity.

From 1975 to 1980 the average value of U.S. farm property doubled. Farmers borrowed heavily and plowed their incomes back

into modernizing their production and into buying or renting more land. Inflation pushed the cost of land to new highs.

Nonetheless, throughout the last decade of record harvests small farmers were barely able to keep their heads above water. Production costs stayed well above their incomes. For example, a bushel of wheat sold for about \$2.40 in 1977, well below the \$4 to \$5 a bushel farmers needed to keep from falling behind.

Farmers' debt burden has quadrupled since 1970, reaching a record \$215 billion in 1983. The world recession exploded like a bombshell in rural America. Tens of millions of U.S. workers and their families were forced to cut back their food budgets to match unemployment or welfare checks. U.S. food exports declined for the first time in 13 years.

Rather than distribute its massive grain surplus to alleviate world starvation caused by the recession, Washington locked the doors of its granaries until capitalist market conditions improved.

The average U.S. farm in 1982 netted less than \$8,000 — the smallest income since depression-gripped 1933. *For the first time in U.S. history, farmers cleared less money than they paid out in interest to bankers.*

The drop in farm income also pushed down the value of farmland. Land value dropped by as much as 20 percent in some areas in 1982. In just six months 103,000 small farmers in Minnesota, an important farm state, lost nearly \$4 billion in equity and collateral.

Bankers and government lending agencies like the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) — who had encouraged small farmers to borrow heavily on the basis of increasing land values in the 1970s — began to call in their loans.

"It's like a city dweller who bought a \$50,000 house," explained Charles Hannan, an Iowa lawyer representing bankrupt farmers. "He puts down \$10,000 of his own money and gets a \$40,000 mortgage and never misses a payment. Then suddenly the bank comes along and says: 'I'm sorry, your house is now worth only \$25,000. Our \$40,000 loan is unsecured. Pay us everything now or lose it.'"

To compound the farmers' problems, the corn-producing states of Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio are suffering the worst drought in 35 years. Facing the loss of their 1983 crop, 2,500 corn farmers rallied August 25 in Bloomfield, Iowa, to demand federal disaster assistance.

The deep economic crisis faced by U.S. working farmers is having a devastating effect on the fabric of life in rural communities. Other small businesses that serve farmers — hardware stores, small feed and seed distributors, farm equipment dealers — are also going under.

An indication of the impact can be seen in Tama County, Iowa, where the suicide rate is 23 per 100,000 population — twice the na-



Val Libby/Militant

Alvin Jenkins, leader of American Agriculture Movement.

tional average. The six Iowa counties with the highest suicide rate are all rural.

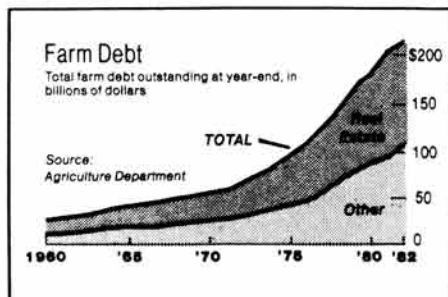
Black farmers wiped out

The economic crisis has hit the most exploited sectors of the agricultural population with the greatest ferocity.

Black farmers, many of them tenant farmers spread across the South, are on their way to being completely wiped out. A 1982 Civil Rights Commission report concluded that there would be "virtually no Blacks operating farms" in 20 years.

In 1920 about half the Black population earned its living by farming — about one million families. Today the number is 40,000. Since the end of World War II, land speculators have been responsible for driving Black farmers off the land using fraud and legal trickery. Other Black farm-owners are going under as their debts pile up and their land value sinks.

Agribusiness interests in California are taking advantage of the recession to rip apart the Agricultural Labor Relations Act — a measure that represented a major victory for the UFW



when it was passed in 1975. Although weak, the law for the first time recognized the right of farm workers to organize and bargain collectively.

California Gov. George Deukmejian and the state legislature have taken steps to weaken the act, which they consider unfair to California's \$1.4 billion-a-year agribusiness industry. Farm worker union president Cesar Chávez announced at the end of May that attempts to gut the law amounted to a declaration of "all-out war" against the union.

At the same time, growers are already widely ignoring other provisions of the 1975 California law that gave farm workers a measure of health and safety protection in the fields. For example, the April 8, 1983, *Los Angeles Times* reported that the short-handled hoe, outlawed since 1975, is still in wide use. Growers favor this tool for cultivation, although it forces farm laborers into a stooped position that causes permanent back injury.

With farm foreclosures mushrooming and misery mounting in rural areas, President Reagan announced January 11 that "help is on the way."

The centerpiece of the administration's policy was a plan to get farmers to reduce production in order to drive up the prices of farm commodities. (See box.) In practice the program has provided a windfall for capitalist farmers, while working farmers have gained little or nothing.

Meanwhile, both the White House and Congress are pressing forward to freeze, or even cut back, inadequate price support subsidies farmers are entitled to under a variety of government programs.

Working farmers fight back

Most of the problems family farmers face today are not new. Throughout U.S. history farmers have banded together in associations and political movements to fight for survival. Among the most powerful of these were the Grange, Greenback, and Populist movements of the last century, the Non-Partisan League before World War I, and the Farm Holiday movement of the 1930s.

Another attempt by farmers to protect themselves came with the founding of the National Farmers Organization (NFO) in the 1950s. The NFO tried to force processors into signing collective-bargaining agreements on prices to guarantee farmers a living income.

During the 1960s the NFO organized farmers to withhold their crops from market until the processors signed better contracts. The striking farmers threw up picket lines to prevent "scab" products from reaching the market, and several farmers were killed in pitched battles.

The American Agriculture Movement (AAM) was born out of a 1977 national farmers strike. The action was initiated as a response to the inadequate farm bill Congress adopted that year to cope with the worsening situation of farmers.

The strike was kicked off by rallies and

"tractorcades" in state capitals around the country. An estimated 300,000 farmers, ranchers, and their supporters demonstrated on December 10, 1977. Farmers set up picket lines at grain elevators and warehouses to stop the distribution of food. Strikers in many states got the agreement of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to respect their picket lines.

But the government didn't even implement the minimal price supports mandated by the 1977 farm bill. To protest, the AAM organized a nationwide tractorcade to converge on Washington, D.C., in early 1979. But even with tens of thousands of farmers camped out for a month on the Capitol Mall, farmers were unable to win any relief from Congress or the Carter administration.

Then Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland dismissed the desperate and angry farmers as motivated by "just old-fashioned greed."

New wave of farm protest

The sharp economic downturn that began in 1981 spawned an explosive revival of militant tactics farmers had used in the depression of the 1930s. Farmers organized "penny auc-

tions" to block farm foreclosures. Hundreds of sympathetic farmers gather when officials try to auction off a foreclosed farm. Using "friendly persuasion" they try to prevent anyone but the farmer who is being foreclosed from bidding more than a few pennies.

"What we are doing now with farm foreclosures is just like what the Blacks did awhile back," American Agriculture Movement leader Alvin Jenkins told the revolutionary socialist weekly the *Militant* earlier this year.

"They were always told to move to the back of the bus. Then they said, 'No!' and were clubbed, tear-gassed, and killed. But they just kept piling on front and went to raising hell. It was only then that the politicians said, 'Hey they're right. It's not in the Constitution that Blacks have to sit in the back.' They won something."

Activists in the AAM play an important part in many of these actions, but the mushrooming protests have also thrown up new farmer organizations to fight against the bankers and the government.

• On January 4, 1983, 500 farmers converged on Springfield, Colorado, to protest the foreclosure of a farmer who had missed two in-

terest payments. The farmers were clubbed and tear-gassed in front of the county courthouse by a sheriff's posse. Two farmers were arrested.

• On January 14 the Production Credit Association (PCA), a nationwide farm lending agency, attempted to sell a 191-acre farm in London, Ohio, at auction. Chanting "No sale! No sale!" 1,000 angry farmers, organized by the Family Farmers Movement, tried to drown out the auctioneer's words. Despite the protest the farm was sold.

• On February 5 the Kentucky Farm Survival Association organized more than 100 farmers to show up at the farm of Duane and Ruth Copass in south-central Kentucky. When the auctioneer asked for bids, the Copass family was the only one to speak up. After waiting in silence for 15 minutes the auctioneer gave the farm back to the Copass family.

• In Indiana, Kentucky, Iowa, and other states similar militant farmer organizations have sprung up. Citizens Organization Acting Together (COACT) demonstrated and briefly occupied the Minnesota governor's office in May to push for the enactment of a statewide moratorium on mortgage foreclosures.

Reaching out for allies

One result of these and hundreds of similar protests has been the birth of a new coalition of farmers' organizations, the North American Farm Alliance (NAFA). Founded at an April 1983 conference in Des Moines, Iowa, NAFA brought together AAM activists and representatives from the many new militant farmer organizations. Joining them were Canadian farmers associated with the Canadian Farmers Survival Association.

From the outset NAFA made clear that an important part of its strategy was reaching out to other exploited and oppressed parts of the population — especially the labor movement, Blacks, and women. For example, at a May meeting NAFA enthusiastically endorsed the massive civil rights march for jobs, peace, and freedom August 27 in Washington, D.C. The meeting also extended support to striking meatpackers at Wilson Foods in Iowa who were fighting to beat back a union-busting campaign.

Recent attempts by working farmers to build bridges to industrial workers and other exploited producers reach back a number of years. During a bitter nationwide coal miners strike in 1977-78, Midwest farmers convoyed food to the miners in a conscious attempt to begin forging an alliance with a powerful sector of the working class.

In the last several years farmers have demonstrated support for striking independent truckers and locomotive engineers. In return, trade unionists on a local level have begun to help working farmers hang onto their farms.

A crowd of 200 greeted a bankruptcy auctioneer at a farm near Des Moines last winter. Well organized, wearing windbreakers and baseball caps, the protesters shouted down the auctioneer with chants of "No sale!" When the

PIK: Windfall for rich farmers

The heart of the Reagan administration's farm subsidy program this year is a plan to get farmers to take land out of production in order to drive up the prices of farm commodities.

Under the Payment in Kind (PIK) program, surplus corn, wheat, sorghum, rice, and cotton, now stored by the government, is to be turned over to farmers in proportion to how many acres they take out of production in 1983. Farmers are then free to use these "payments in kind" to feed livestock or sell on the open market.

In theory, farmers participating in the program are saving operating costs by purchasing less seed, fertilizer, fuel, etc.

The program, in fact, assures that the worst-off farmers will continue to be driven off their land. Working farmers who desperately need cash or a moratorium on their debts, are instead being given surplus commodities that they may or may not be able to sell on the open market at a decent price.

In the "corn-belt" states of the Midwest, where farmers are suffering the worst drought in 35 years, PIK is doing relatively little to cushion small farmers from economic ruin. At the same time, higher market prices for corn — the combined result of PIK and the unexpected drought — are causing financial hardship among hog farmers who buy corn as feed.

For cotton farmers PIK turned into a cruel joke. After these farmers planted their cotton crop this spring, leaving as much as

50 percent of their acreage barren, the Agriculture Department revealed that it had "overestimated" the amount of government-held cotton it had available for the PIK program.

To make up for the shortfall, Washington announced that it was commandeering part of the 1983 crop from farmers enrolled in the PIK program.

However, farmers who already signed private contracts to sell their entire cotton harvest this fall will have none left to be "commandeered." To meet the government's demands, they actually will have to buy cotton on the open market to turn over to the Agriculture Department at lower 1982 prices!

Rather than helping him out of debt, Texas cotton farmer Fred Klosterman estimated that the government's farm "relief" efforts will cause him to lose \$100 to \$200 an acre on his 1983 crop.

The real effect of the PIK program is to provide a giant subsidy for capitalist farmers. In California's San Joaquin Valley, 50 cotton farms owned by corporations like Bangor Punta, Shell Oil, Chevron USA, and private capitalists will each receive more than \$1 million in surplus cotton.

A small cotton farmer in Firebaugh, California, who idled 91 acres stands to get only 98 bales of government cotton. "The rich just get richer in this program," he complained.

auctioneer left his rostrum in hopes of selling off the farmer's equipment piece by piece, he was quickly surrounded by an angry throng and pinned against the platform. The sheriff canceled the sale.

What made this "penny auction" different from some others was that many of the 200 people that showed up at Randall Carson's farm that day were members of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) who had come to show their solidarity with a farm family they had never met. A similar action forced the Farm Home Mortgage Association to cancel a farm liquidation sale in Colchester, Illinois.

Commenting on the UAW's actions, the June 5, 1983, *New York Times* wrote:

"That unlikely alliance of independent farmers and organized factory workers is no longer an isolated incident. Driven by a common sense of economic oppression and flying in the face of their historic inability to unite, urban unions and rural farmers from Ohio to Colorado, and up to the Dakotas are daily forging new organizational links and personal bonds."

Recognizing the historic significance of that development, revolutionary socialists in the labor movement have taken a special interest in pushing forward these first steps toward an alliance of workers and exploited farmers.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance are participating in farmer protest meetings and "penny auctions" from Colorado to Minnesota. During the 1982 Congressional and local elections, party candidates spoke before groups of farmer activists and traveled to migrant farm worker

camp. Socialist workers exchanged ideas with small farmers at both the AAM and NAPA conventions this year.

The *Militant* newspaper is gaining a modest but important readership among leaders of the farm protest movement and even wider layers of the rural population, as excerpts from a recent letter to the *Militant* suggest:

"I am enclosing a couple of articles from the *Daily Register* in Portage, Wisconsin, where I am currently a reporter and farm editor. The information on the meeting of the North American Farm Alliance, the connection of the strike at Wilson Foods, and the problems of hog farmers was taken from the *Militant* . . .

"I'm certain that without facts such as the *Militant* provided about the reasons for the Wilson strike, farmers would blame the workers."

Right wing courts farmers

Rubbing shoulders with industrial workers also undoubtedly has played a part in encouraging leaders of the NAFA and AAM to take a strong stand against anti-Black and anti-Semitic ideology which has penetrated some sections of the farmers movement. At its May meeting, NAFA leaders urged members to turn their backs on outfits like the *Spotlight* newspaper that try to appeal to farmers by using fascist demagoguery.

The so-called National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC) is another ultraright group trying to make inroads into the farmers movement. Formerly known as the National Caucus

of Labor Committees (NCLC), the organization has a history of violent anticommunism, racism, and fascist rhetoric. On several occasions the group's leader, Lyndon LaRouche, has spoken on platforms with representatives of the AAM.

The big-business news media has used right-wing efforts to build a base among farmers to smear the farmers movement as violent and subversive. A Denver newspaper recently accused leaders of the AAM of attending a secret bomb-making school. Other farmer activists are branded as having ties to a right-wing, paramilitary organization based in the Midwest called Posse Comitatus.

Mounting numbers of working farmers, it is true, are beginning to explore radical solutions in an effort to save their lives as farmers. In the battles ahead, working-class revolutionary fighters will be forced to contend with neofascists of all stripes to win the allegiance of farmers rebelling against an intolerable status quo.

What will ultimately win small farmers to the side of the working class is a program that guarantees farm families a fair income for their labor, an end to economic uncertainty and ruin, and a lifting of their staggering debt burden — a program that frees them from the stranglehold of banks, grain cartels, and price-rigging monopolies.

Defending small farmers

What are the most important points in such a program? Above all else it must declare "up front" and in no uncertain terms that the catastrophe facing small producers on the land is a direct result of capitalist rule.

A working-class program must explain to small farmers that big political battles are shaping up on the horizon — battles that will compel workers to abandon the Democratic and Republican parties in favor of a political party of their own. Working farmers will look to a fighting labor party for leadership. Militant farmers will be included on its slates for public office.

The same burning social questions that confront workers also confront small farmers. They come face-to-face with U.S. imperialism's war policies as their sons are drafted. Farm women suffer sexist oppression. And racism is used as a weapon both against the rural Black population and undocumented Mexican and Caribbean farm laborers.

Revolutionary workers must convince farmers that the U.S. industrial working class will be in the leadership of the epic social struggle to replace capitalist rule with a workers and farmers government that can begin to organize a society that eliminates oppression, ends war, and provides for human needs.

The class-struggle leadership of a labor party also needs to make it clear at the outset that it puts a premium on defending and organizing the most exploited sectors of the farm population. Such a leadership would do everything possible to rapidly unionize all three million agricultural laborers. Farm workers would be assured union-scale wages, full unemploy-

Farmers back striking truckers

[Earlier this year independent truckers went on strike across the United States to protest a back-breaking jump in federal road-use taxes. The following news release in solidarity with the strike was issued January 29 by the Colorado chapter of the American Agriculture Movement.]

* * *

The American farmers, the labor movement, and the independent truckers face a common problem and a common enemy. Our government is insensitive to our needs and is serving the interests of the banks and big corporations.

The economic crisis is costing us our jobs and our means of livelihood. We had no part in creating the crisis, yet we are expected to pay for it through higher taxes, wage cuts, and sky-high interest rates.

The farmer today receives less for a bushel of wheat than in the 1940s, yet our costs have skyrocketed. We only ask for 100-percent parity in the marketplace. [Parity refers to a demand by farmers for a guaranteed income to meet their production costs.] American agriculture is the world's

largest industry. We export record ton-nages. At the same time we are facing record numbers of foreclosures. When the farmer suffers, the entire economy suffers.

The working person is facing the biggest unemployment since the Great Depression. Our factories are idle, our wages are being slashed, and the government is trying to crush our unions.

We would like to extend our support to the independent truckers. Recent legislation in Washington increased their taxes 800 percent per year.

The farmer needs the trucker. The working person needs the farmer. We all need to cooperate together. We pledge to work together.

We are the productive people in this society. We know the problems, and together we have a solution.

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

ment compensation, decent housing and education, and protection in the fields from pesticides and other health and safety dangers.

In addition, undocumented farm workers would be granted all the protections of citizenship in order to help end the discrimination and brutal treatment they suffer.

Another point in a fighting program would be to guarantee small farmers a living income. A step toward that goal would be the formation of committees of family farmers that, in partnership with committees of workers, could demand to see all the financial records of the banks and big industrial and food processing corporations that exploit both small farmers and workers.

The struggle by farmers and workers to get control over pricing policies and credit practices of the banks and industrial monopolies that squeeze them leads in the direction of eventually taking full control of these capitalist enterprises, transforming them into state holdings under workers management.

Revolutionary workers must also propose a fight to do away with the back-breaking sums farmers pay bankers and landlords for their land.

Farmers in several states recently won a fight to force the state to declare a partial moratorium on mortgage payments until the economy improves. Similar demands have already won wide sympathy in the labor movement.

The fight to win a moratorium on debts points toward an even bigger struggle to free farmers from the system of rents and mortgages that menaces and ruins small farmers every time the capitalist system plunges into a downturn.

The system of rents and mortgages is rooted in the private ownership of the land. The only solution is the abolition of private land ownership. Putting all land under the protection and stewardship of a government of workers and farmers would guarantee that no farmer could again be driven off his or her land.

Abolishing private ownership of the land in the United States would mean that land could no longer be bought or sold as a speculative commodity. No more rent could be collected by landlords, and bankers would have no right to use farm land as collateral for loans. The threat of foreclosure would be ended.

At the same time working farmers would have access to low-interest loans and government insurance in the event they lose their crops or livestock in a disaster.

Family farmers would then be free to decide for themselves whether to pool their resources with other farmers in cooperatives, keep farming individually, or leave agriculture entirely to pursue other lines of work.

A victorious struggle by workers and farmers to wrest political power from the capitalist class would benefit not only working farmers in the United States, but the great mass of humanity as well. For the first time farmers would be free to produce bountiful harvests

without the fear of "going broke in a world full of hungry people." U.S. farm producers could turn their magnificent productive capacities to help the oppressed of the world.

That inspiring vision will go a long way in convincing working farmers that a fight

against capitalist exploitation and monopoly control of land and food is a fight worth waging. A labor leadership with a class-struggle program will convince working farmers that by welding an unbreakable bond with U.S. workers, it is a fight that can be won. □

Pakistan

Zia regime faces mass protests

Tens of thousands demand democratic rights

By Fred Murphy

Pakistani dictator Gen. Zia ul-Haq's repressive moves and election promises failed to head off mass protests against his rule that began August 14. Called by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), an eight-party coalition, the civil-disobedience actions involved tens of thousands of persons and openly defied the U.S.-backed regime's martial-law regulations.

The campaign was launched with a rally of 20,000 persons in the city of Karachi in Sind Province on August 14, Pakistani independence day. Despite attacks by police firing tear gas and by club-swinging pro-Zia thugs, the action was a success. Rallies were also held that day in Lahore and Sukkur; police in Peshawar broke up an attempt to hold a rally there.

In subsequent days the campaign spread to smaller towns and villages throughout Sind Province. Crowds of thousands repeatedly attacked government buildings, police stations, and other symbols of oppression. A general strike August 24 shut down the city of Dadu in Sind.

The largest of these actions involved some 50,000 protesters. According to an August 22 Reuters dispatch from Karachi: "The demonstrators . . . stormed through the town of Khairpur, attacking Government buildings, including courts, municipal offices, banks, post and tax offices and an armory."

Zia has deployed army troops in Sind in an effort to halt the protests. Five towns were reported surrounded by the army on August 25 with the aim of blocking protesters from entering.

Nonetheless, the actions in Sind were continuing as of August 25, when MRD leaders announced the campaign would go on and urged residents of Punjab, the country's most populous province, to join in.

In the cities, student demonstrations have taken place, and lawyers have also held protests. The city council of Larkana resigned en masse to protest the flogging of political prisoners.

At least 60 persons had been killed by the regime's forces as of August 28. Several thousand demonstrators were reported arrested during the first two weeks of protests; scores of

these were sentenced by military courts to be flogged and held in prison for up to one year.

The MRD's campaign reflects a new level of unity and militancy among the political opponents of the Zia dictatorship. It is noteworthy that the MRD comprises both the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, president of Pakistan from 1971 to 1977, and the bulk of the former components of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), which led mass protests against Bhutto's regime in 1977. That upsurge was ended by the military coup that brought Zia to power.

Zia claims to have installed an "Islamic" government, but the recent protests have also been supported by local religious leaders in the rural areas of Sind Province.

This upsurge is the biggest since a wave of strikes and protests in mid-1979 inspired by the Iranian and Afghan revolutions. At that time, Zia beat back the mass movement by outlawing all political parties, banning strikes, and closing opposition newspapers. He also indefinitely postponed elections that had been set for November of that year.

Scheduling elections and then calling them off has been a favorite ploy of Zia ever since he seized power in July 1977. At that time he promised elections within 90 days, but they have still not been held.

Fresh promises were offered by Zia on August 12 with the aim of deflating the MRD's campaign. The dictator said local elections would be held in September and October of this year, followed by provincial and then national ones. An elected government would be installed by March 1985, he said. An amended version of the 1973 constitution would be put into effect, providing for enhanced presidential powers at the expense of the parliament.

But martial law will remain in effect throughout this electoral process. No political parties will participate, nor will individual candidates be allowed to campaign for office. Parties and campaigning are "contrary to Islamic principles," Zia asserted.

The MRD responded to this ploy by going ahead with the protest campaign. It said it would organize a boycott of the local elections, and it called for immediate restoration of the 1973 constitution without amendments. The MRD denounced Zia's plan as a scheme to perpetuate the dictatorship. □

'This is a revolution of working people'

A conversation with Commander Tomás Borge

[A group of Canadians, including a number of trade unionists, took part in a tour of Nicaragua last June that was organized by the Toronto-based Latin America Working Group. The tour was sponsored by the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). In the course of the tour, its members had the opportunity to meet with Commander Tomás Borge, a founder of the FSLN and a member of its National Directorate, as well as Nicaragua's minister of the interior. The following transcript of the discussion with Borge was prepared by the tour group, which translated it from the original Spanish.]

* * *

Tomás Borge. I'm very sorry I can't speak English — but I haven't lost hope that some day I'll learn, so that I'll be able to communicate more directly with our friends in the U.S. and Canada, and even England, because we have friends in Britain. But I don't have any friendship with the Lady Thatcher.

We have received much solidarity from the people of Canada. For us, it is very satisfying to receive a group from Canada; but it is even more satisfying if these Canadians are workers. As you know, I was going to visit Canada very recently, a little while back . . . and also there were plans to have meetings with some government officials, including Mr. Trudeau . . . but more than anything, we wished to express our feelings to the people of Canada. But there were a few problems related to my security. And the lack of certain security precautions prevented my visit at the time — although this will not prevent my visit on a future occasion.

However, let's see this as a kind of prologue, a beginning, of a relation with the people of Canada, through your people, with a view to a future visit to your country, and a visit of other Canadians to Nicaragua.

First of all, aside from giving you greetings in the name of the National Directorate of the FSLN and of the people of Nicaragua, I would like to ask you, where have you been?

Tour member. To Chinandega, to Estelí, visits to the CST and other workers organizations, hospitals, etc.

Borge. Have you been to the sea, aside from you meetings?

Tour member. Yes.

Borge. Were you at the revolutionary museum? Did you like it? Have you been in the barrios in Managua?

Tour member. Yes. Via Venezuela.

Borge. Sunday, where are you going?

Tour member. To Canada.

Borge. At what time? Because we are having a meeting on Sunday. We're going to be handing a park over to the youth at 10:00. It's too bad you can't be there.

Tour member. No, we can't.

Borge. Maybe I'll have to prohibit your leaving. (Laughter.) But I imagine you are all working on Monday morning. That's too bad. So now that I've asked you a few questions, maybe you have a few questions for me. . . . Do you mind if I smoke a cigar? I smoke cigars so I don't have to smoke cigarettes — they're less harmful.

Tour member. First of all, we would like to thank you for your visit, because we feel very privileged, and actually, I'm personally very happy, that the visit to Canada which I missed, actually we both missed



Michael Baumann/IP

Borge speaking at 1982 May Day rally in Managua.

. . . it can happen here. In the past two weeks, we have learned to love Nicaragua and its people, and as a group and individuals, we are committed to spread the word about the people of Nicaragua when we return. Thank you.

Tour member. We have met with a lot of groups since we arrived in Nicaragua. And many of these groups refer to the FSLN as their vanguard. We know that you will be entering into the electoral process in the next two years. We wonder if we might get some sense of your guiding principles in this respect?

Borge. Obviously, an electoral process is essentially a political act. Our desire is that this electoral process be as broad-based and democratic as is possible — much more broadly based and democratic than the majority of the electoral processes which take place in Latin America, or in the Americas in general.

Just limiting my comments to the Latin American continent obviously you already realize that all the electoral processes in this region for the most part are simply electoral processes already pre-cooked, pre-fabricated that bring to the leadership groups, minority groups, that control the privileges in the country. That is why the largest parties in Latin America are the parties of those who have abstained from voting. And I think we can also include the United States in that.

Here, our people will, through a formal electoral process, determine what they have already decided through their blood. Our people have already voted. They didn't vote with ballots and ballot boxes. They voted through the trenches. And the largest vote that our people cast for the process was the number of martyrs they gave to the revolution. Perhaps at the time of voting, when the electoral process actually takes place, we

should add 50,000 martyrs and heroes who fell at the time of the insurrection. However, I can assure you that the majority of the working people in this country completely support the National Liberation Front.

What maintains this revolutionary process at an ideological level? Our revolution, like all revolutions, has its own roots. Sandino, as a thinker, was way ahead of his time. The thinking and ideas of Sandino are like an encyclopedia for the Sandinistas of today. After that follows the thinking of Carlos Fonseca. Carlos' thinking enriches Sandino's thinking, putting it in the context of his time, putting it into the reality he was living. But rather than use ideological names or categories, it is the content that is important.

All revolutions throughout history are revolutions whose subjects come from a particular social class. I will not give names to the revolutions. However, I will say of this revolution, that it is a revolution of the working people. It is not a revolution of the bourgeoisie. It is a revolution of the poor. It is a revolution of the workers and the campesinos.

To this revolution of workers, campesinos and peasants — you can give it any name you want, you can brand it any way you want — it will always be a revolution of the workers and campesinos. Regardless of the outcome of the electoral process, we are sure it will be the outcome that the workers and campesinos want.

A famous German writer asked me, "well, what would happen if the FSLN didn't win the elections? Would you hand over power to another political party?" "Why should we discuss things that are impossible," I said.

Tour member. We are aware that the aggressions in the country have been escalating in the past while. Could you give us an overview of the military situation at the present time? We are also wondering if you might share some of the Frente's reflections on what the possible options are in the light of these increased aggressions?

Borge. First of all, we would have to say that the situation is becoming more serious every day. There is a lot of talk about the possibility of peace. And we have made substantial efforts to prevent war. Such efforts as we have not allowed ourselves to be provoked. Such provocations are being carried out from Honduras, and there have been other provocations. We have had limitless patience in order to prevent a confrontation. But from a pragmatic point of view the efforts we have undertaken, and also the efforts of other countries in seeking peace, have not been realized, given the unwillingness of the U.S. to answer for peace.

What is the point of continuing to struggle for peace if the U.S. is committed to fighting a war? The tremendous military might represented by the U.S. must be limited or it will be fatal. What can we do to limit or at least postpone a war?

The only thing we have is pressure — by all peoples of the world. And I think particularly of the North American people.

The pressures of the governments of the world . . . there are many

The largest vote that our people cast was the number of martyrs they gave to the revolution . . .

congressmen . . . the problem is that there are many congressmen, in other countries as well, who want to do as much as they can to prevent the war. But what are they faced with? They are not acting energetically enough to prevent a war in Central America because they are afraid that Reagan will use their efforts to seek peace in Central America and accuse them of being Communist. This is in view of the fact that the U.S. is moving into an electoral process. So they are not being energetic enough. They are afraid. And there are pressures. This is unfortunately the situation.

However, we see that the peoples of the world, through their own organizations, trade unions, political parties, and other associations, the populations of Latin America, North America, Europe, can apply pressure so that the demented mind of Reagan — can put certain limitations on his desire to inflame all Central America.

We have to do a logical analysis of Central America. Reagan wants peace for Central America? It's obvious he doesn't want peace.

He wants peace on the basis of us turning ourselves in. He wants peace, as long as we don't carry out our revolution. He wants peace on the basis of turning the Nicaraguan people into slaves. He wants peace, as long as we go down on our knees. That is to say, he doesn't want peace. Because we are not going to go down on our knees. We are not going to stop the revolutionary process. And we are not going to stop being in solidarity with other peoples of the world. And we will not allow imperialism to dominate our countries again. So, he doesn't want peace.

He sent Mr. Stone here. Stone? What the hell is he doing here anyway? Has he come with a peaceful banner? No, he comes as a judge. He

Regardless of the outcome of the electoral process, we are sure it will be the outcome the workers and campesinos want . . .

doesn't even come as an intermediary. He comes as if he doesn't see any of the problems in Central America — he's above all the local problems — as if it wasn't the United States who started all these problems in the first place. He comes as an arbitrator.

We are prepared to speak to Mr. Stone as many times as is necessary. But he must understand, and the U.S. government who sent him must understand, that he is an intermediary. He is not a judge. Because if we were to be strictly realistic, he should come as the accused rather than as a judge.

There is absolutely no way that the U.S. government is going to solve the problem in Central America . . . only international solidarity of the people. The position of certain open-minded governments that can pressure the U.S. government *may* avoid the war.

We are not saying the prospects for peace are totally negative. But solidarity doesn't yet have the dimensions, the magnitude and force necessary, to pressure the U.S. government.

Personally, I believe there will be a serious increase in U.S. aggression. It wouldn't be surprising if in the next few days there was a serious provocation. We're not sure what form this provocation will take against Nicaragua. It would not be strange if this war, which we have tried to avoid, were to happen.

OK. So the counterrevolutionary bands have penetrated. They have their own strategic plan. First of all, they are trying to test the military might of the revolution. First, they speculated, they thought these penetrations would weaken our defense lines. And it was a surprise to them to learn that they did not weaken our other defense lines. In fact, they strengthened them.

They have also been trying to carry out an analysis of the correlation of forces. They have been doing their own calculations. They say, "well, they have so many tanks, so much artillery, so much infantry, so many planes." So they have done their own calculations of how much we have, and how much they have, how many soldiers, etc. They have done a mathematical calculation of the correlation of forces.

But the idiots don't know that this kind of calculation is useless, that there are other factors that go beyond questions of how many munitions we have, how many meters of cannons. What they have forgotten is the will, the commitment, the morale, the combativity, of a revolutionary people.

How many people could we put under arms? We could put as many people under arms as we have arms. Here we don't lack people. We lack guns. How many people can the Honduran people arm? Several tens of thousands, but can they arm the people of Honduras? If they arm the people of Honduras then the problem between Honduras and Nicaragua is over.

What is the most serious aspect of this problem? First of all, the military advice that is being given to the Salvadoran, Honduran and Guatemalan armies doesn't concern us. We're not particularly opposed

to the advice they give to the Salvadoran army — I'm speaking about the U.S.

We haven't opposed their military advisers to the Guatemalan army. Nor to the Honduran government. Because, after all, they advise and train the Salvadoran army, and that army is being beaten. After all, they advised and trained the Somoza army, and we defeated it. So we're not too concerned about that. Because they are destined by history to be advisers to military defeat.

Reagan wants peace on the basis of turning the Nicaraguan people into slaves. That is to say, he doesn't want peace . . .

But, there is quite a difference between their military advisers and the fact that they are building a military base in Honduras. That is no longer just military advice. That is the installation of a different kind of military support. What would they say if we placed a Soviet military installation here?

So, we're not so concerned about sending military advisers to train the Central American armies, but we are seriously concerned about their establishing a military base in the territory. The military base in Honduras is aimed against El Salvador and against Nicaragua. This is a qualitative step in the aggression against Nicaragua. This is the most dangerous situation that has happened so far.

What is going to happen? They are going to increase the activities against Teotecacinte and Jalapa, that's one thing we are certain of. If they try . . . they are going to try to create some kind of international provocation between the Honduran army and ourselves in that area. Because they have artillery set up there and they are using it. And Honduran troops have entered into that part of the territory.

Now we don't have any notion about the nature of that provocation that's going to take place. But we know they are planning the provocation to inflame some kind of war.

Also, in the area of Zelaya Norte there are counterrevolutionary forces, however these forces don't have combativity, they aren't as cohesive, they don't have the moral strength that the ex-National Guardsmen have who are attacking the Jalapa area.

In the southern border, the characteristics are similar. There is not much of a possibility that the aggressions on the southern border will have the characteristics of that in the Jalapa area. They don't have the same constituency, the same moral support in the south.

The supposed increase in aggressions in the southern border is mostly something being promoted in the newspaper *La Nación* of Costa Rica, and other media. What has happened there, the Costa Ricans who are our brothers, our neighbors, through those newspapers, through that media, they believe that Managua is going to fall any day. Or León, or Rivas. It's quite a surprise for the Costa Ricans to come here and they see that things are pretty quiet . . . and yet these towns are supposed to be taken over. And nothing is happening here.

I'm not optimistic in regards to peace. But I am absolutely optimistic in terms of victory.

Tour member. We understand that up to 80 percent of the economy is still in private hands. We were wondering, how do you see class conflict, particularly in terms of the popular classes and their needs and those who still privately own businesses?

Borge. I expect that you got quite a technical explanation at MIPLAN [Ministry of Planning]. Perhaps they forgot to tell you that a mixed economy in Nicaragua is not the same as a mixed economy in Costa Rica, or in Uruguay and other countries of Latin America. This is a mixed economy within the revolution. In other words, a mixed economy at the service of the workers. Because in other countries it is a mixed economy at the service of the bourgeoisie.

It's certain that most of the land is still in private hands, but the productive part of the agricultural economy is in the APP [People's Property Sector] area. And the mechanism for export and trade is in the

hands of the state. And the banks are in the hands of the state.

There is not so much of a problem in what you would call the industrial, manufacturing area. Perhaps the most serious difficulty is in the commercial area, because this is where speculation takes place, hoarding, artificial shortages of consumer goods.

But perhaps the most important problem is that Nicaragua is very backward. It's not just that we received an obsolete and noncompetitive industry, but also the monstrous decapitalization, capital flight. . . . Not only have we inherited tremendously heavy debt, but we are also victims of the international economic crisis.

And that we are victims of, what you would say, tremendous, brutal unequal exchange between first world and third world. In this sense, there are common interests among all third world countries, and specifically all peoples of Latin America suffer from this unequal exchange. And all the people of Central America.

We have won the right to transform this reality.

We have to pull ourselves out of this dependence. And in some ways the U.S. is helping us do this because they are closing off their markets to us. And we will now be obligated to find other countries to carry out trade with. Although our problem is not fundamentally that of markets. Really, the cotton we produce, there's more countries that could buy it than we can produce. And really, most of our agro-export production, cash crops, there's more countries to buy it than we can produce. Our problems are not our buyers. Our problem is production and technological dependence.

Our main strategic line of development in the economic sector is agro-export and production of food. And of course, our problems have been aggravated by the military problems we have been undergoing. The aggressions.

And really, it is virtually a miracle when you think of it, that despite the debt we have inherited, despite the obsolescence, the dependence, the aggressions, etc., we are living better than any other Central American country.

I'm going to give you some examples. I could give you examples, very nearby, or others. I could give you some examples. . . . In other countries, very nearby countries, consumer prices are much higher. Large unemployment, services cut back, tremendous inflation (inflation . . . like a woman about to give birth). It's a very serious and painful

What they have forgotten is the will, the commitment, the morale, the combativity of a revolutionary people . . .

situation. Here there are no social disturbances.

If you go to other countries nearby they'll say of course there are all these problems. They have a dictatorship, a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship, which prevents workers from striking. That's what they say. But here, the workers haven't the least fear of the police. What worker here is going to be afraid of the police? The only fear we would have is that the police would join the workers. (laughter)

It's not for fear, but for commitment, that people aren't striking. Because the working class here is the most revolutionary class, which has gained consciousness tremendously rapidly, because of its own history. And how could it be that the Nicaraguan working class would not develop a revolutionary consciousness? It's not only that they are the ones who struggle, but they also triumph.

And I don't remember who said it, that the people learn more in one minute of revolutionary experience than they can in a decade or more of other kinds of experience: Maybe somebody here knows who said that?

Tour member. During our last two weeks here, we have had the opportunity to meet and talk with representatives and members of many of the mass organizations, including AMNLAE [Luisa Amanda Espinoza Nicaraguan Women's Association], CSN [Nicaraguan Trade Union Coordinating Committee], UNAG [National Union of Farmers and Ranchers], CDSs [Sandinista Defense Committees]. Since we haven't had the privilege of living in a revolutionary society, or have experience



U.S. adviser in Honduras. Imperialists lost in Vietnam, lost in Nicaragua, and will lose in El Salvador.

with a revolutionary vanguard, I think some of us are having difficulty understanding what the relationship is between the FSLN and these mass organizations, and what the interaction is between the two.

Borge. The mass organizations have their own life. And the natural leaders of these mass organizations are the people who have been the best. People who lead these organizations are people who these mass organizations, perhaps, have given birth to. These are the best people. And the best people in this country, the greatest people, happen to be members of the Sandinista Liberation Front.

And so, the mass organizations are led by the best of the people in the country, who have emerged out of their own organizations. And because they are people who have given such sacrifice, they are members of the Frente. But they have their own autonomy as mass organizations, they have their own capacity to struggle, their own demands. They struggle, they push, they carry out their own activities. But neither am I saying that the FSLN is apart from this.

We are not an organization that is blind. We are always listening to the desires, the will, the cries of the people. We also have an obligation to help orient the mass organizations. There is a dialectical relationship between the mass organizations and the vanguard. There is a coming and going. The FSLN learns from the masses. And the FSLN also teaches the masses.

We're not too concerned about U.S. advisers, because they are destined by history to be advisers to defeat . . .

And that is why there is such a close interrelationship between the Frente and the mass organizations, although large numbers of people in the mass organizations are not necessarily members of the FSLN. But those people who have emerged as natural leaders of the mass organizations, for the most part, are FSLN people. But there is this constant dialogue between the mass organizations. This is what gives life to the FSLN.

What would the FSLN do without the mass organizations? What would the masses do without the FSLN?

That's why once we said the FSLN is the people, and the people became the Frente Sandinista. Was it me who said that once? (laughter)

Tour member. Just a follow-up on that question. Can we ask how one becomes a member of the FSLN?

Borge. In the case of . . . those who are not Nicaraguans, it has to come from the National Directorate. And they have to come and live in Nicaragua, and be here for quite some time.

And those who are Nicaraguans are people who have had to go through a very difficult stage. First of all, card-carrying members of the FSLN, if you like — we don't want these people to have privileges. It represents a large packsack, that has been carried over a big mountain — a

This is a mixed economy within the revolution, a mixed economy at the service of the workers . . .

packsack filled with many, many duties and responsibilities. With more responsibilities than rights and privileges.

How should a Sandinista be? A person who must forget themselves. Capable of loving profoundly, other human beings. Could a Sandinista be an egotistical person? First of all, a Sandinista must be generous. He must be courageous, happy, very brave. He has to be the best, and not wait for someone to recognize these values. Sandinistas must be prepared to give up their lives, but must be prepared to defend their life. But most important, to be prepared to defend the lives of others.

Can a Sandinista be a thief? An assassin? A coward? Servile? A Sandinista that's afraid of imperialism? A Sandinista that begins to shake like a wet dog in the rain? (laughter)

No, the Sandinista has to be the opposite of these. But at the same time a Sandinista must be simple and humble. He has to be a good father, a good mother and father, a good friend, and a good lover. Can a Sandinista be useless? (laughter) A Sandinista has to be the best in everything.

Tour member. We qualify in all of them except one — we're not Nicaraguan. (laughter)

Borge. A Sandinista has to be a Sandinista in their own country. Struggling for their own people. Identifying themselves with the in-

The FSLN learns from the masses. And the FSLN also teaches the masses . . .

terests of the workers in their own countries. And courageously opposing all injustices. Fighting against the corrupt, discrimination, consumption, being in solidarity with all the peoples of the world, struggling for their liberation, because these are also victims of imperialism.

Perhaps the Sandinistas in Uruguay, they might be called Tupamaros. It doesn't matter what they are called. The Sandinistas in Canada, I don't know what they are called . . . (laughter) . . . it doesn't matter. The Sandinistas in Peru . . . the Sandinistas in El Salvador are the revolutionaries fighting there. At one time, we were the Tupamaros of Nicaragua.

So you could be Sandinistas, too. And we could take your spirit of struggle and solidarity in your own country, we could learn from your experiences so we could become better revolutionaries in our own country. Solidarity is the most elevated expression of the revolution.

If you want to know if someone is really a revolutionary or not, ask them if they are in solidarity with other people? If we just wanted to do our revolution here and forget about the problems of other peoples around the world, we would not be revolutionaries. We are not prepared to negotiate with anybody, our feelings of solidarity towards our brothers in El Salvador . . . and many other things.

Many things we are doing here are for the peoples trying to liberate themselves in Latin America. And we have paid a high price because of this solidarity. I say this to you, if all the Nicaraguans would have to die, as a price for the solidarity that we feel for the Central American, for the Latin American revolutions, we would, without vacillating, give our lives. Imperialism doesn't understand that. And how is this Mr. Stone

ever going to understand that?

Tour member. We wondered if the FSLN was aligned to any international bodies, and if so, what countries, ideologically, or geographically.

Borge. We are nonaligned. We are aligned to just causes. We have expressed our nonalignment in different fashions. But some people have such a narrow way of looking at the international questions. And their way of looking at it is that to be nonaligned means you have to be

If we forget about the problems of other peoples around the world, we would not be revolutionaries . . .

aligned to the United States.

Of course, the United States is not a country that is aligned. But they want everybody aligned to them. And so that when all the countries that they want . . . when the countries that are aligned with them, are aligned with them, then they say, "these countries are nonaligned." Because "we are not aligned, right."

We maintain friendship with the Soviet Union, and with Mexico, to give you two examples. We have friendship with Cuba, and we feel proud to be friends with Cuba. Because Cuba has been extraordinarily generous with Nicaragua. A generosity with no conditions attached.

We would be demagogues, hypocrites, if we didn't tell you that we were very true friends with Cuba and we are very grateful to Cuba. In the most difficult moments we have faced, Cuba has given us a great deal of support. And perhaps one of the qualities I failed to mention in terms of qualities of Sandinistas . . . is gratitude.

But the fact that we have this special friendship with Cuba, and that we are also friends with the Soviet Union, does that mean we are aligned? We take our own decisions. Sometimes the decisions we take may not please our brothers and sisters in Cuba. Other times, we agree. And so what we have here is more a coincidence of interests. They are not things that are imposed on us. In any case, we have been accused of being a satellite.

First they said we were a satellite of Cuba, which, in turn, was a satellite of the Soviet Union. So we were a satellite of a satellite. This was the accusation. So now we're the satellite of the Soviet Union.

I've always asked myself, do we have satellite faces? (laughter) Do we have faces of pets? Pet dogs? Because if we want to be pet dogs and if we accepted the very undignified position of being a satellite, it would be much easier for us to decide to be a satellite of that cowboy, Ronald Reagan. We would be saving 200,000 headaches. Because after all, one thing is clear, if we decided to become a satellite of this cowboy, we would not only save these headaches but we would also have saved ourselves all the aggressions from the National Guard. Because the U.S. wouldn't have bothered to arm them and create aggressions against us.

We feel proud to be friends with Cuba, because Cuba has been extraordinarily generous with Nicaragua . . .

And these aggressions they are carrying out against us are precisely because we are not satellites of anyone.

Even if we wanted to be a satellite, we couldn't. We couldn't because of geographical impediments. But we do not want to be a satellite. But we do have friends. And our friends are our friends, and our enemies are our enemies.

A U.S. congressman was telling me — I had just seen his face, and he told me finally he had found the excuse, the reason, the proof to show that Nicaragua was a satellite of the Soviet Union. And this proof was regarding the declaration by Andropov, who had made a statement in respect of national sovereignty of Nicaragua — the right of Nicaragua to self-determination — congratulating Nicaragua for its reconstruction ef-

forts, etc. And reiterated, reemphasized, that the Soviet Union was going to continue to help Nicaragua in the economic field. So the congressman told me, "there's the proof."

So I said, "let's do something. Let's take this statement and let's take where it says the Soviet Union, and we'll say the United States. And where it says Andropov, we'll say Reagan." And we would be absolutely delighted that Reagan would say that he is going to respect our national sovereignty, that he identifies with our desire for peace, and that he expresses his desire to help us in the development of our country. What Nicaraguan is going to oppose that?

However, if this statement that was said was a U.S. statement, would that then mean we would be accused of being a U.S. satellite? Why? Why would we be accused of being a satellite of the U.S.? On the contrary, we would be delighted if every country in the world would have these same desires towards Nicaragua, respecting our national sovereignty, or wanting to help in the economic development of the country. What has Reagan said exactly? And the situation in that sense is very sad.

Well, then, welcome to Nicaragua, happy trip. We are very sorry that you are leaving so soon. And it would be unforgivable if you didn't come back to Nicaragua later.

Tour member. Comandante. We are first very honored that you would come and speak to us. It was very unexpected. We'd like to give you a

I am not optimistic in regards to peace. But I am absolutely optimistic in terms of victory . . .

little momento from the group — to the FSLN from the Ontario group. I know that you are in a hurry, but I only want to make one comment.

When we first came here, as you know we had been reading the press of the United States and they put a label on the revolution. One of the things that they say, Comandante, is that this is a totalitarian state. The second day we were here we visited the Victoria Breweries, and they were very proud to show us their arsenal of rifles. And we had a great problem immediately. We could never figure why the authorities of a totalitarian state would give the workers arms.

Borge. You have learned the essence of the problem. (Applause) □



"My cause is the cause of my people, the cause of America, the cause of all oppressed peoples."

Regime in dread of a social explosion

As Workers Party debates political perspectives

By Daniel Jebrac

[The following article is taken from the August 1 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The introduction and footnotes are from the original.]

* * *

Social tensions have been rising very rapidly in Brazil since the start of the year when the government, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund [IMF], launched a new austerity offensive.

In April the desperation of masses of people condemned to long unemployment and deepening hopelessness exploded in São Paulo.

A crowd tried to break into the mansion of the state governor, ironically a representative of the "liberal" bourgeois opposition to the dictatorship. Furious crowds smashed store windows and clashed with police for three days running.

In May the IMF refused to grant Brazil a \$400 million installment on a loan that the country was counting on to pay back short-term credits. The refinancing of the massive Brazilian foreign debt of around \$90 billion seemed to be getting shakier and shakier. Throughout the following months the international financial bodies have threatened repeatedly to withhold loan payments unless the Brazilian government squeezed harder to get the money owed to the imperialist banks.

In early July strikes of engineering workers started to grow in São Paulo against the government's austerity plans. The walkouts started with a strike by workers at three state-owned refineries who feared that the government would order big layoffs as part of its program for cutting state expenses, as demanded by the IMF.

The leadership of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT), a class-struggle formation that came out of the rise of militant workers' struggles, is centered in São Paulo, the country's key industrial center.

The rise of tensions and polarization is a crucial test for the Workers Party and the trade-union leaders who are its principal figures.

Elements in the Workers Party, particularly among its elected representatives, have shown signs of wanting to pursue a parliamentarist course and follow in the footsteps of the liberal bourgeois oppositionists who are becoming so quickly discredited by their complicity with the government's austerity policies.

These tendencies have been opposed by the

historic leadership of the PT, which argues that the party should take the lead in the growing mass struggles against austerity.

The following article describes the rise of social and political tensions in Brazil and the debate in the Workers Party.

The results of the November 1982 elections ended up giving cause for satisfaction in a lot of quarters.¹ The bourgeois liberal opposition could rejoice because it won a clear victory in terms of the number of votes it got. Moreover, it gained control of the government of the country's most important states (with the exception of Rio Grande do Sul and Pernambuco).

The regime, on the other hand, could take comfort in the fact that it had avoided the electoral rout it so much feared, and thus retained the means for designating the next president in 1985.

What is more, despite the electoral defeat of the government party, the Democratic Social Party (PDS), the regime gained an appearance of legitimacy that it very much needed at a time when it had to face difficult international negotiations.

Recourse to IMF

In fact, with a foreign debt now exceeding \$90 billion, of which nearly one fifth is in short-term credits, and with its foreign currency reserves vanishing, the Brazilian government had to recognize that it was in a situation of insolvency and turn to the International Monetary Fund to negotiate new credits and a rescheduling of payments on its debt. In the press, this unavoidable move by the chairman of the Brazilian central bank, Carlos Langoni, was portrayed as national humiliation.

In December 1982, the IMF granted a whiff of oxygen and a respite for Brazilian finance. The most cynical, or the most frank, of the Brazilian bankers did not make any bones about saying that their American colleagues scarcely had any choice. Given the volume of the debt to American banks, a financial crash in Brazil would threaten to set off a chain reac-

tion, to say nothing of the political repercussions in the region.

In exchange for its concessions, the IMF put on pressure to get the regime to reconsider the system of semiannual wage adjustments and to tighten up on public spending. State expenditures were immediately cut by 20 percent. Thus, in early January 1983, the government announced that it was suspending indefinitely the construction of the Iguape I and II nuclear reactors on the coast near São Paulo. The wage adjustment system became the target of several attacks aimed at imposing an outright wage freeze.

Several state governments arbitrarily set the annual wage increases for public employees on the basis of the expected rate of inflation. At the same time, the cost-of-living indexes began to be doctored by taking out certain items whose prices had risen particularly sharply. This was to justify a slowdown in wage increases and cover up the decline in buying power, which has been quite spectacular since the early 1970s.

Finally, on February 18, the government announced a major devaluation of the cruzeiro against the dollar, cutting the exchange value of the Brazilian currency by 30 percent. This had the effect immediately of increasing the cost of service on the debt, which had been \$12.5 billion. The economics bosses, on the other hand, estimated that there would be a trade surplus of \$6 billion in the current year instead of \$1 billion last year.

Nonetheless, by March and April, it was becoming clear that the steps taken were insufficient and that the government would have to go back into negotiations with the representatives of imperialist finance.

For the first time, President João Baptista Figueiredo admitted publicly that the perspective for this year is a 3 to 4 percent recession. In March the inflation rate was 10 percent and created fears that the annual inflation rate would exceed 150 percent. What is more, an official of the Brazilian Institute for Economic and Statistical Analysis presented a scarcely optimistic outlook for the Brazilian financial situation.

"Supposing that we achieve a \$6 billion trade surplus this year, we will need \$15 billion in credits to meet the obligations falling due. But as of now only \$11 billion are assured . . . If the missing \$4 billion are made up by revolving credits, we will find ourselves facing the same problem next year."²

But, in the first quarter of 1983, the foreign trade surplus was only half what it would have

1. The November 14, 1982, Brazilian elections brought a clear defeat of the governmental party, the PDS [Democratic Social Party], which won only about a dozen state governorships, while the governorships of the more important states fell to the liberal opposition parties, the PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party] and the PDT [Democratic Labor Party]. As for the PT, it got relatively modest scores, a national average of 3 percent, except in São Paulo, where it got 10 percent.

2. *Le Monde*, May 3, 1983.

to be to reach the \$6 billion surplus for the year that the Brazilians are counting on.

At the very time when the failure of the measures taken at the beginning of the year started to become clear, the rebellions of unemployed people in the Santo Amaro neighborhood in São Paulo in early April started ringing alarm bells for the government.

According to a poll taken in the first quarter of the year among the bosses' organizations in 620 companies, São Paulo lost close to 4 percent of its industrial jobs in that period of time, and 19 percent in the last 27 months.

In order to promote exports, average per capita beef consumption was cut from 17 kilograms per year to 12. And finally the withdrawal of subsidies from certain agricultural products (such as cereals and sugar) is going to lead to an increase in the price of bread.

So, the government and the governors of the big states are living in dread of a social explosion. For the moment, they are putting through more and more little "packages" of measures, the famous "*pacotes*," on a week-to-week basis, trying to meet the demands of the creditors without driving the mass movement to desperation. But there is less and less room for maneuvering.

Liberals to regime's rescue

In this situation, it only took a few months for the bourgeois opposition parties, which head such state governments as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Minas Gerais, to show their true face.

When President Figueiredo appealed for a national truce in March, they all fell into line. The Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), led by Iveta Vargas, daughter of the former dictator Getúlio Vargas; and by former president Jânio Quadros, went so far as to make an open parliamentary pact with the PDS.

With the 13 PTB deputies providing the margin, this coalition has a majority of 248 seats out of a total of 479, as against 231 for the opposition as a whole.

The PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party], the main liberal opposition party, ducked its head and put the wraps on its demand for direct election of the president. Tancredo Neves, one of its main leaders and governor of the state of Minas Gerais, talked about the imperative needs of dealing with the crisis: "The crisis today is graver than the one in 1964 [when the dictatorship was established]. In 1964, there was a crisis of government and not of the system. There were economic problems. But we did not have the sort of international context filled with apprehension that we do today."

Leonel Brizola himself, who, on the eve of his election as governor of Rio, was being portrayed as a wild-eyed trouble maker, declared after a meeting with Figueiredo: "The important thing now is not to look for differences but to look for what can unite us."

Brizola's party, the Democratic Labor Party (PDT), voted with the PDS in Rio Grande do Sul and concluded a national pact with it. This

was not without ulterior motives. Brizola has presidential ambitions and is favored in the polls, but he thinks it would be premature to make his move in the 1985 presidential elections. So, he has proposed prolonging Figueiredo's mandate by two years (until 1987). In exchange for that, he wants direct election of the president at that time on the basis of universal suffrage.

If the form and date of the election are not changed, the next president will be chosen in 1985 by the vote of an electoral college, which would assure an automatic majority for the PDS, unless this organization goes into such a deep crisis that it starts to break up, which cannot be excluded.

More concretely than the conciliation at the top, the policy of the opposition parties in the states they govern is unmasking them in the eyes of the workers.

The state of São Paulo alone has a public debt of \$4 billion. In São Paulo, as in Rio, the promises of social reform made in the election campaign, the promises to create jobs, are being put on the long finger, while the governors of these states — Franco Montoro and Leonel Brizola — are working hand in glove with the big employers' organizations. In São Paulo, Montoro sent the cops against the rebelling unemployed in Santo Amaro.

Only the Workers Party (PT), in conformity with its basic options, firmly rejected the proposal for a truce made by Figueiredo, just as it refused (although this was not without hesitations on the part of some of its deputies) to participate in the "opposition" governments in Rio and São Paulo.

The PT was formed during an upsurge of the mass movement, based on the big strikes of engineering workers in 1979 and 1980 in the São Paulo suburbs. This momentum enabled it to win legal status in 1981 and to build its membership to more than 300,000. At that point, it went directly into an election campaign without having been able to consolidate itself as an activists' party nor to root itself in real mass work.

PT right pushes parliamentarism

The November 1982 election results put an end to this period of euphoria. Outside its birthplace, the state of São Paulo, where it got 10 percent of the vote, the PT remained a small party. The disappointment did not fail to have an effect. In certain states where the party was least well established, it has practically disappeared. Even in São Paulo, the local units have had problems in functioning, and the congresses held in recent months have indicated a general difficulty in assembling a quorum for the meetings preparatory to these congresses. Only roughly half the local units were able to do this.

There is an obvious danger that the PT may be reduced to the currents and activists already organized in the far-left groups and lose its mass character. While this threat is real, it has been used mainly as a pretext in the recent period for an offensive by the moderate right in

the party, which is aiming to transform the PT into a mere parliamentary machine. This offensive has come, mainly, from certain PT deputies who are tempted by the idea of coalition with the bourgeois parties and participation in the "opposition" state governments, especially in Rio.

This operation is reflected in the proposal that in the future votes at PT congresses should be calculated not on the basis of the number of members but of votes won in elections! When you realize how much the electoral system promotes patronage relationships and how unequal the means of the candidates are, it is clear that accepting such a proposal would put the PT into the mold of the organic law decreed by the dictatorship to control the political parties.

This attempt seems, however, to have been stopped by resistance from two quarters — from the activist base of the party, which made its feelings known at the congresses in the big states such as São Paulo, Rio, and Minas Gerais; and from the historic leading nucleus of the PT, trade union leaders such as the chairperson, Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula"), and the general secretary, Jacó Bittar.

At a meeting of the national leadership of the party on April 16, "Lula" said, in fact: "Our party cannot be content to trail after the church and the trade-union movement and wave its colorful banners in demonstrations. We have to reach directly into the masses, without any intermediaries and organize and lead the struggles. We have to organize nuclei in the neighborhoods and in the various categories of workers. We also need to put forward our own proposals for action and get out of the role of bystander that we have fallen into at the moment."

This reaction against a parliamentarist drift has been reflected in real steps forward in organizing the party's trade-union activity around the perspective of a general strike against the government's measures. A circular from the party secretariat reminding the elected representatives of their obligations with respect to party discipline raised a big furor. ("Lula" explains his view of it in the following interview). It even got its author, Jacó Bittar, denounced in the bourgeois press as a Stalinist. So finally, the PT managed, despite the temptations of some of its elected representatives, to maintain its independence from the bourgeois "opposition" governments.

Ambiguities of leadership response

However, in the course of this healthy defense of the party's original principles, the leading nucleus tended to elevate itself into a faction above the battle. Certain signs give cause for concern that a false balancing between the various trends in the PT could lead to a restriction of democratic life inside the party to the disadvantage of the left currents that have helped actively to build it.

The first such sign was the heavy-handed operation of the national leadership in the municipality of Diademe. Winning control of

the government in this working-class city of 300,000 inhabitants was the PT's major electoral success. What is more, the PT leadership in Diademe was known to be combative and radical, in the image of the new mayor, Gilson Luis Correia de Menezes, an engineering worker who pledged to organize a broad network of people's councils to support the new municipal council.

When it came time to name the new municipal executive, however, Gilson pulled a slate of designates out of his hat, who had been backed behind the scenes by the PT national leadership against the will of the local majority. Since the January 4 operation, the conflict has not died down, and Gilson was again outvoted in the recent local congress of the party.

The second sign was the launching in early June of a manifesto signed by 113 PT personalities from São Paulo, including "Lula," Djalma Bom (a federal deputy), Irma Passoni (a state deputy), and Gilson. This manifesto had the merit of reaffirming the fidelity of the PT to its origins and its program ("Jobs, Land, and Liberty").³

The statement also confirmed the decision that the party is to be an activist party, a fighting party, and a class party, and thereby rebuffed any parliamentarist temptations. But it made a dangerous equation between the "individualist behavior" of some deputies and activists who "subordinate themselves to parallel leaderships and give priority to propagating their own political proposals over those of the party."

This was not the most convincing accusation coming from leaders who often themselves function as an informal network, parallel to the elected leading bodies, and who backed an operation running roughshod over the regular local bodies. But this manifesto indicates, nonetheless, the desire to consolidate a leadership nucleus differentiated on the right from the deputies who are making googoo eyes at Brizola and on its left from the politically more clearly defined revolutionary currents on the local and national levels.

The weakness of this organizational operation lies precisely in its lack of political perspectives. While it reaffirms the past gains of the PT, the manifesto is notable for the weaknesses of the proposals it offers.

However, once you go deeper than the combinations at the top to real choices in action, you find the active force of the whole body of components that make up the richness and vitality of the PT. The unfolding of the PT congresses in every state tend to show that it would be difficult to divert this force by any kind of an apparatus operation, as long as the party remains rooted in mass mobilization, in the unions, and in the fightback against the government's measures.

In fact, under the impact of the crisis, unemployment, and the attempts to freeze wages, the process of recomposition is continuing in

the unions, and a strong campaign is taking form against the various moves to impose wage freezes. It is by remaining faithful to its

origins that the PT will be able to gather new forces and move on to a higher stage in building a party of the working class. □

'There must be protests'

Interview with PT leader 'Lula'



Fred Murphy/IP

LUÍS INÁCIO DA SILVA

[The following is an interview with Luís Inácio da Silva ("Lula"), the central leader of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT). It was conducted in São Paulo by Flávio Andrade, the editor of *Em Tempo*, and originally appeared in the June 2 issue of that newspaper. Major excerpts were subsequently reprinted in the July 18 issue of *Inprecor*, a French-language fortnightly published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, from which we have taken the following text. The translation from the French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Question. How do you analyze the period the Workers Party is now going through?

Answer. We are now in a period of new elections of leaders, and this process is reinvigorating the party. In various municipalities I have seen comrades ready for struggle. I therefore believe that the trend is toward emerging from the situation we find ourselves in with a stronger PT engaged in mass struggles, in the streets, the factories, and the neighborhoods. Therefore, organization in rank-and-file nuclei is indispensable.

It is clear today that we cannot be content with a party that would depend solely on discussions at the national and parliamentary levels. These discussions do not reflect, from the working-class point of view, the crisis the country is going through. We need mass action.

Q. You speak of mass policies and you suggest mobilizations. But this deals more with

methods of action than with a political outlook as such.

In your opinion what political orientation is needed today for the Workers Party?

A. For me, there is no doubt that this combative position is what we must adopt. At this point, the problems that mobilize the working class are unemployment, housing, the wage [freeze] policy. The party's activity must be oriented around these.

Moreover, this is also the time for the PT to take up the campaign for the direct election of the president of the republic. This is how we will be able to counterpose ourselves to this collection of "potential presidents" who are going to monopolize this process: through mass street actions calling for direct election, along with the other themes I mentioned. For us, right now the important thing is not throwing out a name, our candidate, which is in contrast to the conception of the comrades of the PDT [Democratic Labor Party].

Q. To return to the question of the social struggle, there is the question of the general strike as a form of struggle against the dictatorship's economic policy. How do you view this perspective in relation to the PT's tasks?

A. I believe that not only the union movement, but also other sectors of society are concerned with the question of unemployment, and it could hardly be otherwise. But in the short run there is no proposal capable of giving an impetus to mobilization. So, that's how you get a climate created in São Paulo, for example, in which every demonstration of unemployed is considered a challenge to the democracy of Mister [Franco] Montoro [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) governor of the state]. Here you already have an initial obstacle to the action of the masses. Others would very much like the question of unemployment to be resolved at the level of discussions, commissions, plans, or parliament alone. I have participated in several union meetings where many people explained that we cannot do "x" because it will embarrass the Montoro government, and we cannot do "y" because it will be destabilizing, etc.

This attitude inhibits any broad working-class action. For me, it is clear that the problem today is not coming up with proposals. The union movement has already made proposals till they are coming out of our ears: cutting the work week, eliminating overtime, job stability, agrarian reform, public investments, etc.

What people are asking now is "how do we

3. This was the electoral platform of the PT for the November 1982 elections. It has since become the programmatic reference point for the PT.

do it?" This is where the general strike comes in. I believe that this is the class response that is on the agenda, one that makes it possible to unite in action those who are working and those who are unemployed.

The difficulty lies less in the state of mind of the working class than in the state of mind of certain trade-union leaders. The strike is possible, even if it does not apply in exactly the same way to all job categories. But certain fundamental sectors can go out. In São Paulo, if you stop the banking sector, the subways, the buses, and several other important categories, the whole state of São Paulo is paralyzed.

What is lacking is the consciousness of the leaders on this subject. A strike does not take place just like that, spontaneously, when all the workers decide to stop work. It is important and decisive that the leaders take the initiative and set the time for the walk-out.

I think therefore that the general strike is on the agenda. Right now it is not up to the PT to "make" the general strike. It must be in solidarity with it, it must help build the consciousness of the working class, it must take part in its unfolding, and it must give its support to whatever extent is necessary.

There is also the problem of the unemployed. The difficulty today when you bring together a mass of unemployed is that they ask for a job, a house, running water, electricity, food, and there is no way to immediately resolve these questions. So, what do we want them to do? Should we tell them to wait? Should we preach patience to them?

It is important not to try to take charge of these movements. It is important that they act freely to see if they can sensitize the government, not only on the municipal and state levels but on the federal level as well. There are people who think that we must encourage the workers to tap into the water and electrical systems themselves as the way to counteract the cut-offs for nonpayment in the houses of the unemployed. But wouldn't it be easier for us to focus on the demand for tax exemptions and unemployment compensation for the jobless? I think that is the direction we must go.

But all this does not solve the question. There must be protests and public demonstrations. I don't know exactly under what form, but one thing is clear: there must be protests. So that the people and the authorities are sensitized to a policy of creating jobs. Or at least to make it understood that if nothing is done, perhaps the working class itself will have to make things happen.

Q. Regarding the political struggle, you spoke of direct elections for the presidency. But if one ties this demand to the repeal of the National Security Law, to the right to strike, to the abolition of the present trade-union structure, what you have is not only direct elections, but a totality of democratic demands. When all is said and done, isn't this basically a shamefaced way of putting forward the de-

mand for a constituent assembly, which you have always objected to thus far? Moreover, doesn't the relevance of the question of direct elections underscore the urgency for the party to revise its position on the constituent assembly?

A. Well, I think that we must get involved in struggle against the type of governmental succession that has been laid out. We must also choose the banner that brings together the largest possible number of social sectors in the opposition. Today, for example, you don't have unity in the ranks of the PT on the question of the constituent assembly. There is unity on direct elections. Therefore that's the way we have to go. Now, if the pre-congress meetings of the party come out for the constituent assembly, then we should get involved, in a united way, behind that banner.

Q. Moving now to internal questions, what is your assessment of the unfolding struggle taking place within the PT, principally waged by certain members of parliament who have made statements to the big press containing fierce criticisms against the party or against members?

A. In this pre-electoral period, I have made

it my rule within the party to bite my tongue in order not to make things worse. But these leaks to the press reflect bad faith because they tend to give the impression of a grave and tumultuous crisis leading to the end of the party, which has nothing to do with our reality. This behavior does not aim to build the party. It doesn't help anything.

The aim of the circular we sent out, which caused such a hullabaloo, was to ask that no leadership body on the municipal, state, or federal level put its signature on any document that runs contrary to the party's program. It in no way aimed to prevent members from being able to defend the position of their choice, whatever it might be, inside the party.

What is not acceptable is that, following a convention where one or another decision has just been democratically approved, party members, especially those in the leadership, begin to issue documents or make statements opposed to the party's program. These comrades must maintain a minimum sense of their responsibilities. They, more than anyone, must apply what was decided.

Once one has chosen a specific party, one must respect the decisions of its ranks and bodies. □

'For a workers and people's bloc'

Proposal on strategy for PT

By Raul Pont

[The following article originally appeared in the June 23 issue of *Em Tempo*, a Brazilian socialist newspaper that supports the Workers Party (PT). The text is taken from the July 18 *Inprecor*, and the translation from the French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Six months after last November's elections, we can make a more precise assessment of the results and of the changes in the country's political and economic situation. Historical facts are always clearer than triumphalist analyses or hazy election promises.

During the elections the Workers Party was called divisive, ultraleft, and adventurist for refusing to boost the bandwagon of the liberal opposition and for not propagating the myth of casting a "useful vote."

During the campaign we maintained that any liberal victory, however sweeping it might be, would not profoundly change the character of the regime, given the hidebound and moderate character of the "broad front" formed by the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB).

Today we could point to numerous examples of cases in which the new state governments that have passed into the hands of the opposition are practicing conciliation with the regime in managing the crisis.

Suffice it to recall, however, the recent significant criticisms made by the progressive sector of the church hierarchy in São Paulo, as expressed by Bishop Dom Evaristo Arns, against the [São Paulo state] government of Franco Montoro. The progressive bishops drew attention to the gap between the promises made during the election campaign and the concrete positions adopted thus far. To run down the list of compromises and betrayals would only repeat the obvious.

Millions of workers were in a state of euphoria because they had "won the elections." Since then, however, they have been perplexed by the absence of change, and now feel frustrated and disoriented. They are skeptical of the new plans and new solutions proposed, as well as of the politicians and parties that fooled them once again.

Meanwhile the military regime has lost no time winning back lost ground. Counting on their sure allies in the main states, the military vigorously went back on the offensive: submission to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Decree Law 2012 modifying the wage readjustments, plus additional decrees issued on an almost weekly basis that end up making the life of the wage-earner and worker more and more intolerable.

Undoubtedly the most extreme expression of the conciliationism of the governors elected by the opposition was their zealous assumption of the role of "law and order" parties, by pro-

hibiting demonstrations of unemployed in São Paulo as well as in Minas Gerais.

But these respectful oppositionists cannot drop their mask so rapidly without incurring a danger. Worried about their own inability to stick to their promises, they are already beginning to look for subterfuges that can save their oppositional prestige among the masses, without compromising their posts and their commitments in the joint administration of the crisis of the capitalist system and the military regime in Brazil.

If those responsible for the crisis are the regime, Gen. [João] Figueiredo, and his successive ministers of the economy, why don't the opposition parties commit their hundreds of parliamentary deputies and mayors, the weight of the big states they govern, and their thousands of municipal leaders to turn the hopelessness of the mass of unemployed against the real enemy?

The big maneuver of the potential presidential candidates

The regime, for its part, has launched its big diversionary maneuver with the presentation of the "potential presidential" candidates.

While [minister of planning and the economy] Delfim Neto and Company turn over to imperialism what still remains of the country and crush the exploited with their economic measures, a dozen (more or less) "potential presidential" candidates are travelling to the four corners of the country seeking supporters, press coverage, and alliances.

The ludicrous result of all this agitation is to see the bankruptcy of the party in power, the Democratic Social Party (PDS), which, negating its own role as a party, delegates to the reigning president the power to designate its candidate in the presidential elections. This pathetic situation is only matched by the "lumpen" character of the Brazilian big bourgeoisie.

What does the opposition propose to do regarding this charade? Struggle for direct presidential elections, the leadership of the PMDB tells us. And, so that nothing should happen, it forms a "body" responsible for "carrying out the struggle," meaning to prevent any mobilization.

In order to leave no doubt whatsoever, [Rio de Janeiro Governor Lionel] Brizola becomes more royalist than the king and proposes extending Gen. Figueiredo's term for two more years if in return the regime promises that complete democracy will be instituted at that time, with direct elections to all levels, from the mayorships to the presidency of the republic.

There is nothing sadder than this absence of real alternative proposals in the midst of a crisis that becomes deeper and more intolerable every day.

A free and sovereign constituent assembly without Figueiredo

For there to be consistency between what we said about the regime during the election campaign and our policy in the present situation,

the PT cannot be content with getting swept behind a slogan of the "immediate direct elections" type. Defense of direct elections is part of our program, and obviously we put it forward. But it is insufficient at a time of growing collaboration between the liberal oppositionists and the regime.

To count on elections as a political solution to the crisis is precisely to play the regime's game. The regime's sole aim is to perpetuate itself at the head of the state under another guise. What would change for the country if a civilian like Tancredo Magalhães Pinto or even Ulisses Guimarães [two bourgeois figures from the PMDB] became president, with an executive branch that would concentrate in its hands the powers that Gen. Figueiredo has today? This is not what interests the great majority of society that voted for the oppositions in November.

Today, joining forces with the liberals around the single theme of direct elections would mean being dragged along behind these sectors. What the PT needs to do is to adopt an overall orientation, one that is not focused on individual figures but rather directly confronts the regime and its whole judicial and institutional apparatus. We won't get rid of the labor code, the strike law, the National Security Law, and all the legislative power concentrated in the presidency today by using direct elections.

What the people's sectors need is a party, a political organization that resolutely presents a worked out, rounded alternative to the regime, i.e., the convocation of a free and sovereign constituent assembly, without Figueiredo, and with total freedom of organization for parties.

Frame-up of Danish dock workers leader

An international campaign has been launched to free imprisoned Danish dock worker leader Karl Jørgensen. He has been jailed since May on trumped-up arson charges that carry a possible life sentence. Jørgensen's trial is scheduled to begin in early September.

The charges stem from Jørgensen's participation in a 10-week dock strike last winter. Dock workers around the country walked off the job to protest plans by the Danish government to slash unemployment compensation and other social programs as part of a sweeping austerity drive.

The strike was a bitter one. Police attacked strikers with clubs and dogs. One striker was killed. The dock workers were eventually forced back to work without winning their major demands.

Toward the end of the strike a storehouse at Esbjerg harbor was set on fire. Two dock workers were arrested by police and charged with the crime. While being held in solitary confinement, the police forced them to name Jørgensen, who had been a leader of the walk-out.

Although one of the dock workers later repudiated his accusation, Danish authorities re-

It is obvious that the PT will not have a monopoly on this question. But grabbing hold of this question could be decisive in drawing toward the PT leftwing sectors of the PMDB or the PDT [Democratic Labor Party], who have no interest in remaining any longer under the tutelage of liberals and caudillos while they call themselves communists and socialists.

For a new workers and people's bloc

From the vantage point of the workers and the exploited, the present situation necessitates the formation of a new bloc of forces, in which our party will no longer be the only one faithfully committed to the side of the exploited and people's classes.

The formation of this front, of a new political bloc including socialists, communists, the left sectors of the church — in a word all those who really want a social transformation — will create a new situation.

While we remain a small isolated party, while the Communist Party and the [originally Maoist, now pro-Albanian] PC do Brasil remain under the hegemony of bourgeois politicians, while the socialists within the PDT continue to hope to convert to socialism a caudillo borne by the cult of the personality, nothing will change in the situation and we will fritter away the potential for a rapid change.

We reaffirm that the PT can play an important role in this regard to the extent that it becomes a serious partner in discussions with other opposition sectors, while working for the establishment of a workers and people's bloc that pushes aside the liberals and conciliators from the leadership of the opposition to the regime. □

fused to drop the charges against Jørgensen. They are pushing ahead with the frame-up, hoping that a stiff jail term for Jørgensen will frighten other militant workers into giving up the fight against government austerity.

A nationwide campaign to free Jørgensen is being coordinated by the shop stewards in the four big harbors, Copenhagen, Århus, Ålborg and Esbjerg. Jørgensen's union, the Federation of Unskilled Workers (SID) — the largest in Denmark with 320,000 members — has demanded that he be freed.

In the last month leading up to his trial, the campaign is attempting to collect 100,000 signatures demanding Jørgensen's release. More than 30,000 have already been gathered, many at work places and trade unions.

Urgent international protests are needed to aid this campaign. Demands for Jørgensen's immediate release should be addressed to: Justice Minister Erik Ninn-Hansen, Folketinget, DK-1218, København K, Denmark.

Copies of protest messages or solidarity statements should be forwarded to the dock workers in Esbjerg. Their address is: Havnearbejdernes Klub, Mønstringshuset, Cort Adlersgade, DK-6700 Esbjerg, Denmark. □

Elections set stage for Tory offensive

Labour Party debates strategy in wake of electoral defeat

By Davy Jones

LONDON — The British general election on June 9 resulted in a massive parliamentary majority for Margaret Thatcher's Tory Party. Within days, the leaders of both the defeated Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Michael Foot and Roy Jenkins, had resigned. And already the Thatcher government has unveiled a draconian package of anti-working-class measures designed to attack the unions and undermine living standards.

How was Thatcher able to win the election after four years of Tory rule, which had seen unemployment mushroom to over three million officially and four million in reality? What is the significance of the election result, and what is the debate inside the labor movement on the way forward?

The outcome of the election

First, let us look at the election facts themselves.

The Tories' parliamentary landslide is misleading. Because of Britain's "first past the post" electoral system, they won 61% of the seats in Parliament on only 42% of the vote, a drop of almost 2% on the 1979 election result. While such a result is no mean feat for a government that opinion polls 18 months ago showed to be the most unpopular in British history, nevertheless it in no way implies any resurgence in mass popular support for the Tories. The Tory vote has been declining for fifty years and Thatcher was unable to halt the process.

Indeed, in some areas it slipped disastrously: in Scotland, to its lowest level in 115 years, and in Glasgow to a staggering 19%. It was the same story in the inner cities of Merseyside, Manchester, South Yorkshire, and London. And for the first time ever fewer women voted for the Tories than did men.

In short, the "Tory landslide" in Parliament masks a clear majority (58%) of the votes being cast against Thatcher.

But if the election results were not quite as good as they were cracked up to be for the Tories, for Labour they were truly a disaster. Its 27.6% of the vote was the lowest in 60 years, confirming the continuing decline of the Labour vote during the last 30 years.

Worse, among some layers that might have been reasonably expected to support Labour, its support was dreadful. Fewer than half the unemployed voted Labour, for example, and among first-time voters between 18-22 years old, Labour came a disastrous third behind both the Tories and the SDP/Liberal Alliance. It is significant that Labour did nothing to ap-

peal to youth during the election, while the Young Tories organized a major showbiz jamboree, which gained notoriety after TV star Kenny Everett joked: "Let's go and bomb Russia, let's kick Michael Foot's walking stick away" to a delirious audience.

Even among those sections of the working class that traditionally back Labour, its vote declined massively: only 32% of skilled workers voted Labour this time compared to 49% in 1974; only 38% of all manual workers this year as opposed to 62% in 1959. Perhaps the most shocking of all, Labour won only 39% of the vote among trade-union members: in other words over 60% of trade unionists voted against Labour, their "own" political party, despite an unprecedented call by the Trades Union Congress itself for a Labour vote.

Despite the undoubted enthusiasm and involvement of a minority of the working class in the Labour campaign, it is clear that the traditional anti-Tory vote was split politically. The exceptional strength of the organized union movement in Britain graphically revealed its severe political limitations in the weakness of its positive identification with Labour and its left reformist policies.

While the SDP/Liberal Alliance only won 23 seats in Parliament compared to the Tories' 397 and Labour's 209, its 25% of the poll was a triumph. It represented the highest "third party" vote since 1923 and it only just failed by 700,000 votes to overtake Labour in second place.

In fact the Alliance was able to successfully insert itself into a process that has been continuing since 1945: the North/Labour versus South/Tory divide. The Alliance came second in two-thirds of all Tory seats and more so in the southern half of the country where the Tories had a staggering 39% lead over Labour. At the same time it was able to overtake the Tories for second place behind Labour in many northern areas. In Scotland, too, the Alliance did surprisingly well, taking votes from Labour, the Scottish National Party (SNP), and the Tories in that order.

The Alliance has proved itself to be an effective instrument to prevent the Labour Party from hegemonizing the anti-Tory vote, thereby keeping it from winning a majority for government. Furthermore, that its 25% vote was translated into a mere three and one half percent of the seats provides powerful ideological ammunition for its campaign for a proportional-representation electoral system.

In Ireland the election was bad news for British imperialism. Provisional Sinn Féin scored a remarkable success in winning over

100,000 votes, some 42% of the nationalist vote, and one member of Parliament, Gerry Adams, who ousted Gerry Fitt, a long-term ally of British imperialism within the nationalist community. Sinn Féin is now poised to become the majority party in the nationalist community. The Sinn Féin success, coupled with the good results for the Official Unionists in the North of Ireland who are lukewarm about the Tories' Northern Ireland Assembly, puts that body's future into doubt.

The Thatcher project

There is no doubt that the Thatcher government elected in 1979 had a very specific and vital project for the ruling class. It was to play on the political weaknesses of the working class to inflict a series of political defeats, alongside the creation of mass unemployment, to tame the workers' militancy. This was to culminate in a head-on confrontation with a weakened labor movement that would fundamentally reverse the relationship of forces between the ruling class and the working class. Only on such a basis could there be any serious qualitative improvement in British capitalism's chronic economic decline.

The Tories scored very modest successes in this project from 1979 to 1982 and had become an extremely unpopular government in the process. During this same period the Labour Party swung left and important left-wing policies became widely supported in the labor movement, such as unilateral nuclear disarmament and opposition to the European Economic Community (EEC) and to incomes policy.

The prospect of such a party replacing the unpopular Tories as the next government sounded alarm bells in the ruling class. A new party had to be created that could pick up some of the anti-Tory vote and replace Labour as the alternative to the Tories, or at least prevent Labour from ever being able to form a government on its own. That party was the Social Democratic Party, formed by former Labour right wingers, which linked up with the Liberals to form the Alliance. The ruling class has promoted the Alliance as a fallback in case their preferred Thatcherite option fails.

While Thatcher was able in 1982 to spectacularly reverse the declining popularity of the Tories through her "resolute" stand on the Malvinas (Falklands) war, nevertheless Thatcher's original project had still not been completed by 1983. The economic situation was far from resolved and the power of the organized labor movement remained unbroken. Indeed the latest figures confirm that despite the decline in union membership, proportion-

ate to the growth in unemployment, union membership remains at 52% of the work force. Thatcher used the evidence of a small economic upturn to call an election, seeking another mandate "to finish the job."

The economic situation

Superficially the economic situation did seem brighter. Inflation was down to 3.7%, the lowest in 15 years, and the gross domestic product registered a 2% per year raise in the first three months of the year. A number of key sectors of the economy reported an upturn: electrical engineering output up 5.4% in the first quarter of 1983 compared to the same period in 1982, construction similarly up 4.3%, and chemicals up 2.7%.

But these indices mask the real crisis of the British economy, which continues to worsen. Even the consumer boom in the year up to the election this June was triggered by the Tories increasing the money supply by 15%. The real extent of the crisis, which the ruling class understood, can be shown by a few qualitative statistics. In 1981 Britain had a £6 billion surplus on the balance of payments [£1 = US\$1.50]. The treasury prediction for 1983 was £1.5 billion, but after five months of the year it was at an annual rate of just £80 million. In 1978 Britain had a surplus balance of £5,066 million on manufactured goods; for the first three months of 1983 this was running at an annual rate of a £2,700 million deficit. As has been widely reported, for the first time in British history more manufactured goods were imported than exported in the first three months of 1983. Indeed, manufacturing output has fallen by 17.5% since Thatcher came into office in May 1979, and gross manufacturing investment has fallen by 34% in the same period. Despite modest gains in productivity, the competitive position of British industry has declined by 28% under Thatcher and remains just half that of West Germany.

The ruling class therefore drastically requires a major defeat of the working class to enable it to change the relationship of class forces through savage cuts in living standards. Tinkering with the economy really is not good enough any more.

For that reason the ruling class gave its overwhelming backing to a second term of office for Thatcher. Almost all the bourgeois papers and establishment figures supported the Tories, just as her main imperialist allies like Reagan and Kohl offered tacit support to ensure Thatcher's continued role in the main imperialist alliances.

But that is not the whole story. Precisely because the ruling class recognizes the vulnerability of the Tory Party and the difficulty of its project, it also undertook a second task in the election: to try to build up the Alliance sufficiently to enable it to replace the Labour Party as the second runner behind the Tories.

The *Financial Times* urged its readers to ensure that the Alliance scored a healthy vote, while the *Economist* explained, "Tory voters in Labour seats which have good Alliance can-

didates should vote Alliance to get Labour out. It is important that there should still be a believable and democratic left-of-Tory force in Parliament towards which by-elections and a future general election can then swing. It is desirable that it should be a sort that can form an effective parliamentary force with right-of-Foot Labour. The worse Labour does in this election, and the better the Alliance does, the more possible such a desirable coalition of the left (and the dismantling of the Labour Party under its present constitution) will become."

This project of taking votes from Labour, particularly from skilled workers, was the line pushed with some success by the Alliance in the second half of their election campaign. It led to the leadership change in the SDP after the election, with Roy Jenkins' replacement by Dr. David Owen, the architect of the "replace Labour" strategy.

Notwithstanding the ruling class's support for Thatcher, it will continue to give considerable backing to the Alliance's project to replace the Labour Party as the non-Tory "alternative," which will put continuing pressure on the Labour Party to adapt its policies to possible electoral coalitions with the Alliance.

The Tories in office

Immediately after her election triumph, Thatcher moved to strengthen her cabinet team and to eliminate any opposition before embarking on the difficult tasks ahead. Out went cabinet "wet" Francis Pym as foreign secretary, and hard-line Thatcherites were moved into place in the key jobs at the Home Office, Treasury, Foreign Office, and Employment.

The extent of the Tories' plans were soon revealed. Within days there were leaks of plans to reduce social security benefits for the unemployed, which have already declined by 25% in real terms under Thatcher. When challenged on this fact, Thatcher replied that the unemployed should "eat cheaper food," a remark which aptly sums up the real meaning of Thatcher's election pledge of a "return to Victorian values."

Already there have been cuts of £1 billion in public expenditures. But this was not enough for the City of London where share prices fell, so now there are threats of another £5 billion in cuts in the next budget, or rises in taxation.

When the Tories' legislative program for this year was introduced to the House of Commons by the queen it included:

- The introduction of compulsory secret ballots before a strike can be declared official, otherwise unions will lose their legal immunity.

- The "reform" of the unions, including the introduction at least once every ten years of a compulsory secret ballot of the whole union membership to determine whether to have any "political funds," which is the financial link between the unions and the Labour Party; and also the compulsory use of secret ballots for the election of all union leaders.

- The abolition of the Greater London Council and the other metropolitan county

councils, which are currently controlled by the Labour Party, particularly the Labour Left, and which could act as potential centers of resistance to Tory policies.

- The introduction of private finance into nationalized industries, selling off British Telecom to the highest private bidder, and the sale of parts of British Rail, British Airways, North Sea Oil, the National Bus Company and other nationalized services. Alongside this goes the expansion of private health care, education, and services in general.

And of course the Tories are also committed to stationing cruise, Pershing, and Trident missiles in Britain as part of NATO's imperialist war drive. They are committed to running down the welfare state and to increasing unemployment through further "rationalization" of British industry. They plan further attacks on the unions through undermining the "closed shop" agreements that are widespread in Britain. And they aim to strengthen the state and undermine democratic rights through a new bill on police powers, a widening of the already draconian powers under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and possible moves towards undermining Britain's relatively liberal abortion rights legislation.

In short, the Tories have comprehensive plans for attacking the strength and rights of the labor movement and the oppressed, spearheaded by an attack on the capacity of the trade union movement to resist the Tories' onslaught on living standards. Having divided the labor movement through mass unemployment and poverty for a minority of the working class, the Tories now have to go for those sections of the working class whose standard of living held up or even improved under the Thatcher government of 1979-83.

This is the awful reality facing the labor movement in Britain as it tries to grapple with the reasons for Labour's crushing election defeat.

Why Labour lost

There are three basic reasons why Labour lost the recent general election.

First, and most importantly, the historic failure of the Labour Party is to build a strong socialist or Marxist tradition of support for socialist policies and ideas finally told in this election. Successive Labour governments had been elected on simple anti-Toryism, and then carried out right wing, anti-working-class measures. Living standards fell more rapidly than at any other time this century under the last Labour government, as its "Social Contract" incomes policy was used to hold down wages. This measure alone was responsible for losing Labour the support of the skilled workers, many of whom deserted in 1979 and 1983 to the Tories and the Alliance.

The net result was to disillusion many working-class and young people into seeing "no difference" between the Tories and the Labour Party in practice. Even when Labour did adopt some radical policies at this election such as unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal

from the EEC, the weakness of the working class's attachment to them became apparent as soon as the Tories unleashed an ideological barrage against them.

Winning genuine support for socialist policies among the mass of the working class has never been Labour's strong point. Faced with a genuinely deep social, economic, and political crisis where only radical socialist or reactionary capitalist solutions will suffice, Labour's political weakness had profound effects.

Nowhere was this demonstrated more clearly than in the second major reason for Labour's defeat — last year's war over the Malvinas (Falklands). The failure of the Labour leadership to oppose Thatcher's imperialist adventure was not only an abandonment of any socialist foreign policy and a brazen capitulation to British imperialism, it also handed Thatcher 15% in the opinion polls, from which Labour never subsequently recovered.

The whole episode was turned into grisly farce during the later stages of the election campaign when leading Labour figures lashed out at Thatcher's bloodthirsty actions during the war. The media were not slow to point out that this criticism one year after the events that they had fully supported at the time was the height of hypocrisy.

Thirdly, there is no doubt that the right wing of the labor bureaucracy showed before and during the election campaign that it is perfectly prepared to let Labour lose an election rather than allow a Labour Party into office committed to any radical policies that are unacceptable to the ruling class. In the months running up to the election, the Labour Party and union right-wing leaders systematically attacked the party's left-wing policies and the left wing itself. They echoed the accusations made by former Labour members in the SDP that the Labour Party had been taken over in many areas by "Trotskyist space invaders." Five members of the editorial board of the *Militant* newspaper were expelled by the National Executive of the Labour Party. And a proposed left-wing candidate in a parliamentary by-election, Peter Tatchell, who had the temerity to argue for extra-parliamentary action, was subject to a campaign of vilification and abuse by the Labour leadership before being finally accepted as a candidate.

During the election itself prominent Labour right wingers queued up to attack official Labour policy on the questions of unilateral nuclear disarmament, incomes policy, and the EEC. The confusion over Labour's policy on nuclear weapons became farcical with daily press statements from different Labour leaders giving contradictory positions. Former Prime Minister James Callaghan played a prominent role in leading the attack, making keynote speeches against Labour policies on nuclear weapons and incomes policy.

Some Labour and union right-wing leaders went so far as to join in the press speculation over "tactical voting." The TUC [Trades

Union Congress] chairman, Frank Chapple, a notorious right-wing leader of the electricians union, publicly endorsed an old friend standing for the SDP against an official Labour Party candidate in North London. Roy Grantham of the white collar union APEX called in his union journal for his members in some areas to vote "tactically" for the Alliance rather than Labour "to keep the Tories out."

Other union leaders like Bill Sirs from the steelworkers and Terry Duffy from the engineers explained their opposition to Labour's left policies on the grounds that they would prevent any possible anti-Thatcher coalition of Labour and the Alliance.

This right-wing sabotage before and during the election undoubtedly undermined the credibility of Labour's campaign. It also reinforced Thatcher's image as someone who at least knew what she wanted to do with a united party around her to do it, while the Labour Party came across as a complete shambles.

Debate in the labor movement

Labour's election defeat and the scale of the Tories' planned attacks have stunned the labor movement and led to a profound inquest on what went wrong.

The right wing has taken the offensive: most succinctly in the manifesto put out by the main right-wing candidate for the Labour Party leadership contest, Roy Hattersley. He quite specifically singles out the need for Labour to support incomes policy, to end its opposition to the EEC, and to develop a "more convincing" defense policy, i.e., to drop unilateral nuclear disarmament. At the same time, he has called, along with another right-wing challenger, Peter Shore, for secret ballots to be introduced within the Labour Party for party leadership elections in order to weaken the power of the left-wing constituencies and to bolster the power of the media to determine internal Labour Party affairs.

The right wing is also continuing its internal witch-hunt against the left. A number of left-wing local parties are under threat for not implementing the national party leadership's decision to expel the *Militant* editorial board. Others face suspension after refusing to select right-wing councillors for election, or for otherwise treading on the right-wing National Executive Committee's toes.

All of these moves by the right wing on policy and the witch-hunt are justified by the need to "be more in touch" with the ordinary Labour supporter. Translated, this means that the Labour Party has to be more in tune with the interests of British imperialism and its ruling class. Fortunately, this current emerged from the election weaker in the new parliament and in the trade-union leaderships, and somewhat discredited for its election campaign sabotage.

For the center-left party and union bureaucrats the election defeat may have demonstrated the futility of their line of "party unity" at all costs, but they have nevertheless emerged from the election in a stronger posi-

tion against both the right and left wings of the party.

This is clear in relation to the party leadership election where their candidate Neil Kinnock looks likely to win comfortably. Kinnock is a younger version of Michael Foot in many ways — a charismatic South Wales MP, part of the traditionalist party left wing, but moving rightwards sufficiently quickly to inspire confidence in many a moderate trade-union leader. Furthermore, he also has shown his preparedness to deal ruthlessly with the party's new left wing, both in his support of the expulsions of the *Militant* editorial board members, and in his effective ditching of Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign two years ago where Kinnock's and his close supporters' abstentions just gave victory to the right wing candidate Denis Healey.

There is every sign that Kinnock and the center-left will continue to fudge the major internal disagreements on policy, and to witch-hunt the left in the name of "party unity," in the same way as Michael Foot over the last two years. A good example of this approach was this year's annual conference of the railway workers union, the NUR, which moved left on some policy questions, but on the witch-hunt issue voted against overturning either the existing expulsions or any future such witch-hunts.

Ideally, this layer of the bureaucracy would like to see Neil Kinnock elected party leader and a right winger, Roy Hattersley, as his deputy. This has become known as the "dream ticket," because it would prevent the "nightmare" for the bureaucracy of a left victory. In reality a Kinnock-Hattersley leadership team would be almost identical to the Foot-Healey team that lost Labour the election.

The Labour left suffered a major defeat in the election. Not only was Tony Benn's seat lost, and Ken Livingstone, the left-wing leader of the Greater London Council, prevented from even standing as a candidate by the party leadership, but it was also a major defeat of the left's political line going into the election. This had been summed up by Benn as "uniting the party around the existing policies, the existing leadership, and the existing membership," i.e., unity around the left manifesto and the Foot/Healey leadership in return for an end to internal party witch-hunts.

What really happened before and during the election was that the existing leadership organized to dump the existing policies and the existing membership! What is more, the leading lefts failed to challenge the routinist electoralist campaign of the Labour leadership, and its failure to link up with important extra-parliamentary mass actions during the election period, such as the Glasgow-to-London People's March for Jobs, or the international women's day for disarmament action on May 24, which saw thousands of women across the country taking action, including some strike action, for peace. Nor did the lefts ever challenge the right wing's sabotage of the election campaign itself with their continual attacks on party policies.

As a result the left is weaker after this election inside the Labour Party. Its candidates for the party leadership contest, Eric Heffer for leader and Michael Meacher for deputy, in no way inspire the same enthusiasm among rank-and-file activists as did Tony Benn's campaign two years ago. Indeed, while Meacher has an outside chance of winning the deputy leadership contest, which would be a big blow against the right wing of the labor movement, Eric Heffer is likely to get a derisory vote.

The impact of Labour's election debacle has hastened the recomposition of the Bennite left in the Labour Party and the unions. One section, particularly the Labour Coordinating Committee whose supporters include Meacher and which still enjoys the sponsorship of Tony Benn, is shifting to the right under the impact of Labour's defeat. Even among some of the lefts there are signs of backsliding over withdrawal from the EEC, and over the centrality of campaigning for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Though outside the Labour Party, the tiny British Communist Party is even further to the right, openly discussing a similar orientation to sections of the right-wing union and Labour bureaucracy, that of an anti-Thatcher coalition with the Alliance — a latter-day popular front.

But importantly inside the unions the shift to the left of the last few years has continued. Another major industrial union, the railway workers, at this year's annual conference, declared for unilateral nuclear disarmament, a position that was reaffirmed at many other union conferences this summer, sometimes against the advice of the right-wing leadership, as in the steelworkers union. One of the main unions that has been central to the right-wing offensive inside the party over the last few years, the post office engineers, swung left at this year's conference. The Broad Left current won a majority on the executive, and one of its first acts was to remove its union nominee to the Labour Party National Executive, John Golding, who was a central figure in the last two years behind the scenes for the party's right wing. Broad Left currents are now developing in a number of unions with varying degrees of rank-and-file support and independence from the left bureaucracy. They organize around left policies and greater union democracy and all have a tendency to see their struggle within the unions as increasingly interlinked with that of the Labour left.

Others on the left wing of the labor movement have drawn a more radical balance sheet of the election. Ken Livingstone of the Greater London Council immediately called for mass extra-parliamentary action to defeat the Tories, and for the party to adopt more radical and socialist policies to deal with the economic crisis. Miners' leader Arthur Scargill has provoked a major row within the union leaderships both for his insistence on the futility of entering any talks with the Thatcher government, and for his support for extra-parliamentary action. TUC leader Len Murray denounced his remarks as "plain daft." Scargill

replied: "In order to resist this government's policies we will undoubtedly need to take extra-parliamentary action that includes the possibility of political strikes to prevent the massacre of our health, education, housing, and social services."

The miners will be among the first to face the Tories' job-cutting plans, with up to 70,000 jobs reported to be at risk through pit closures. Already action is being taken in Scotland against the first closure and Scargill has appealed to the miners to support a national strike to stop the Tories' plans. Whether the miners will follow his lead is uncertain: twice recently they have voted against an all-out strike against the advice of Scargill and the union leaders.

There is a new factor now in labor movement politics in Britain — the growth of the centrist *Militant* tendency inside the Labour Party and the unions. There are two *Militant* supporters as Labour members of Parliament, Dave Nellist and Terry Fields, both of whom have not been slow to use Parliament to make effective appeals for extra-parliamentary action. *Militant* supporters now occupy a number of leading positions within the unions; they are the dominant force within the Labour Party Young Socialists; and they claim some 5,000 supporters, making them easily the largest and most influential current on the far left in Britain.

Crisis in the antimissiles movement

The failure of the Labour Party in the election has thrown the antimissiles movement in Britain into crisis. With cruise missiles due to be stationed here later in the year and another five years of Thatcher looming, the leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) has begun to rethink its strategy and priorities. In short, it is moving to the right.

The pattern has been set by the Scottish CND, a powerful section of the movement, which has adopted a bilateral nuclear freeze as its main campaigning priority in an attempt to "broaden" its appeal in the light of Thatcher's victory. The national CND leadership is adopting a similar stance and is playing down its unilateralist position.

The direct action current within the CND has found its most eloquent expression in the Greenham Common women's peace camp. Here too there is a crisis of perspective. In early July the women called a week-long blockade of the U.S. air force base at Greenham Common, similar to a blockade in May of the Upper Heyford base. Both events led to mass arrests, despite the nonviolent character of the protests, and at Greenham the Tories ordered in the army to "protect" the base against the women protesters.

Increasingly it is dawning on this current that simple nonviolent direct action is not enough to stop the missiles. Socialists supporting the Greenham Common women have been trying to link the direct-action current up with the minority within the CND movement who understand the importance of labor movement

action as the only way to stop the missiles. This wing includes the Labour CND and Youth CND currents, both of whom are committed to labor movement mass action and defense of the unilateral nuclear disarmament position of the CND. Already this stance by the Labour CND has brought down the wrath of the CND leadership, which is attempting to gag the Labour CND in the interests of the "unity" of the movement.

The prospects against Thatcher

It is clear that the labor movement is entering momentous times. The next few years will see significant tests of strength between the Thatcher government and the working class.

The Tories aim to qualitatively weaken the links between the unions and the Labour Party, and to further undermine the possibility of Labour forming an alternative government. They aim to increase unemployment, lower living standards, and undermine the welfare state. At the same time they plan to reduce democratic rights across the board and to strengthen their powers of repression to deal with resistance.

Failure to roll back these attacks would mean a serious defeat of major proportions for the organized labor movement. Those are the stakes in the conflict.

On the other hand it is likely that the Tories will face mounting unpopularity as the disastrous state of the British economy becomes more transparent. The basis will exist for organizing widespread opposition to the Tories; major defensive struggles by the labor movement are likely over the next few years. Development of and solidarity with these struggles will be a decisive factor in determining the outcome of the class battles under Thatcher. These battles will closely interlink with the debate within the labor movement on the way forward under Thatcher.

Millions of workers are asking two questions: how can we resist Thatcher's attacks and how can we ever get another Labour government to replace the Tories? There are two coherent answers to these questions that form the heart of the debate wracking the labor movement from top to bottom.

One response is for the labor movement to form an "anti-Thatcher" bloc with the SDP/Liberal Alliance that entails dropping the left-wing policies adopted by the labor movement in recent years and waiting five years for the parliamentary opportunity to dump Thatcher. Such a perspective rules out the use of mass action or industrial power, and endorses the weakening of the links between the Labour Party and the trade-union movement. Such a right-wing coalitionist perspective has powerful supporters both in the Labour Party and in the unions. Its implementation would lead to major defeats for the working class at the hands of the Tories and to a historic weakening of the strength of the labor movement.

Revolutionary Marxists draw the opposite conclusion. The very depth of the economic, social, and political crisis in Britain and the

Tories' offensive will deepen the trend of the most advanced workers turning to their traditional organizations, both the Labour Party and the unions, to seek methods of resisting the Tories and rebuilding a new leadership of the labor movement committed to a class-struggle perspective.

For that reason, revolutionary Marxists in Britain place themselves right at the center of the recomposition of the left currents within the Labour Party, the LPYS [Labour Party

Young Socialists], and the unions to fight for a line of rebuilding the Labour Party and the unions on a class-struggle perspective. That means building the "hard left" current in the Labour Party around the *Labour Briefing* journal, which enjoys wide support among constituency activists, the Broad Lefts and their Broad Left Organising Committee within the unions, and building the Labour Party Young Socialists. It means turning these currents to the important industrial struggles that will re-

sist the Tory onslaught, to the Irish liberation struggle, to support of the Black youth fighting for their rights, and to the building of the mass movement against the missiles and its next major initiative, the CND demonstration on October 22.

The whole future of the labor movement and its mass party, the Labour Party, will be fought out around these struggles against the Tories in the next few years and inside the debates within the Labour Party and the unions. □

Uruguay

Protests defy military rule

Tens of thousands follow Chilean example

By Fred Murphy

Sidestepping a ban on all public political activity decreed three weeks earlier by the military dictatorship, tens of thousands of Uruguayans participated August 25 in a national day of protest called by the country's three legal political parties.

The action was consciously modeled on the monthly protests that have challenged the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile since May. It was described as follows in a dispatch from the Uruguayan capital, Montevideo, in the August 26 *Miami Herald*:

"Citizens appeared to heed an opposition call to stay at home during early evening Thursday, the country's independence day. In contrast to the usual holiday crowds, movies played in empty theaters, waiters stood by vacant tables, and the city's Atlantic beach drive, usually clogged with cruising teenagers, was virtually deserted.

"At 8 p.m. residents obeyed a call for a 15-minute blackout, but added an unscheduled element — a thundering din of banging pots and pans. People stood on house tops and balconies setting off firecrackers and, in some cases, chanting 'Out, out,' against the country's military government."

Organizers said that, as in Chile, the protests will be repeated once a month to demand the restoration of democratic rights and an end to military rule.

"We know we are not going to send the generals back to the barracks in 15 minutes," one organizer told the *Herald*. "But with this timid action, one neighbor will see that his neighbor also turned out the lights, and when they meet on the street tomorrow they will speak with greater ease."

The Uruguayan dictatorship, in power since a 1973 military coup, has been one of the most repressive in Latin America. According to Amnesty International, one out of every 500 Uruguayans has been jailed on political

charges in the last ten years. Up to 400,000 have been driven into exile. All adults are classified by police on an A-B-C scale, and those in category "C" are denied passports and barred from public employment. All leftist parties are banned, as are trade-union organizations above the factory level. Torture of political prisoners is routine.

Dictatorship on defensive

Nonetheless, the regime has been on the defensive during the past three years in face of rising mass discontent.

In November 1980, the dictatorship held a plebiscite on a repressive new constitution. To the military's evident surprise and embarrassment, 58 percent of Uruguayan voters rejected the constitution, despite a massive propaganda blitz and tight limits on public debate before the vote.

Since then the regime has tried to draw the country's three main bourgeois parties into collaboration with it by allowing them to organize legally. But in internal party elections held in November 1982, candidates backed by the military went down to defeat, losing by margins of roughly 80 to 20.

Mass opposition to the regime has been spurred by a deepening economic crisis. Uruguay's gross national product declined by 10 percent in 1982. Unemployment stands near 17 percent. Workers' buying power has dropped by half since the 1973 military coup.

Trade-union activity has revived since a labor law was decreed in 1981 allowing organization at the factory level. Forty-seven local unions have joined together in a semilegal bloc known as the Inter-Union Workers Plenary (PIT).

Massive May Day rally

On May Day this year, the PIT sponsored a rally of between 100,000 and 200,000 workers in Montevideo to demand "freedom, amnesty, and the right to strike." The action was sup-

ported by the three legal parties, and the regime refrained from any attempt to repress it.

The legal bourgeois parties are feeling the pressure of the masses. Their representatives walked out of constitutional negotiations with the military on July 5, in protest against the regime's insistence that a new constitution include a National Security Council with power to decree martial law and suspend individual rights without consulting the parliament. Such a clause in the earlier draft constitution was a key factor in the massive "no" vote in the 1980 plebiscite.

On August 2 the dictatorship tried to choke off the political opening it had begun by decreeing a new ban on all public political activity and on "publication of news of a political character." The regime vowed to impose a new constitution whether the politicians liked it or not and to proceed with plans for elections in November 1984. How such elections could be held without political activity was left unexplained.

The new ban failed to turn back the developing popular movement for democratic rights. Some 5,000 students and youth took to the streets of Montevideo on August 6 and battled the police until near dawn the following day. Smaller demonstrations have been taking place since July in the capital and other cities, combined with weekly pot-banging in some Montevideo neighborhoods.

Imaginative editors have circumvented the ban on political coverage by devoting major attention to the upsurge for democratic rights unfolding in Chile. Uruguayan newsweeklies have carried banner headlines such as "It's absurd to want to keep the dictatorship," adding small subheads like "In Pinochet's Chile."

The August 25 national day of protest shows that the Uruguayan people are joining their sisters and brothers in Chile and Argentina in the fight to put an end to military dictatorship throughout South America's Southern Cone. □