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Lebanon: Reagan and Allies Step Up Military Intervention



U.S. Marines land in Lebanon.

Nicaraguan Working People Make Gains While Mobilizing to Defend Revolution

Imperialist build-up in Lebanon grows despite 'cease-fire'

By Mohammed Oliver

Washington and its imperialist allies in Europe continue to build up their military strength in Lebanon. On September 25 the joint imperialist force was augmented with the arrival of the U.S. battleship *New Jersey*. The U.S., French, British, and Italian governments have mustered their joint combat force to shore up the embattled proimperialist regime of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, who faces opposition from Lebanon's Muslim, Druse, and Palestinian population.

The massive firepower being mobilized by world imperialism shows that it intends to continue to intervene in Lebanon's civil war — a war that threatens to broaden into an imperialist war against Syria.

This new escalation of imperialist intervention came as a cease-fire went into effect. The cease-fire, which began on September 25, is the 179th since the civil war in 1975-76. There is widespread skepticism about how long it will hold. Meetings between Gemayel's ultrarightist government and opposition forces to discuss "national reconciliation" have yet to take place, while on October 3 heavy fighting flared up in the Beirut suburbs of Shiya, Shatila, and Tayyounieh.

Meanwhile, Washington and its allies continue to train their guns on Gemayel's opposition. In addition to the *New Jersey*, the Pentagon has 13 other ships from its Sixth Fleet stationed off the Lebanese coast. The White House has deployed some 14,000 sailors, pilots, and marines in its combat force.

A bipartisan green light

Washington's war in Lebanon was endorsed by the U.S. Congress on September 29. The Senate passed a resolution, approved the day before in the House of Representatives, supporting the maintenance of U.S. combat forces in Lebanon for another 18 months. By invoking the War Powers Act, the Congress essentially declared the United States to be at war.

Passage of the measure shows broad bipartisan support for Washington's war in the Middle East. Liberal Democrats were at the head of the pack in pushing for the resolution. Legislators who voted for the bill included Congressman Stephen Solarz of Brooklyn, Michael Barnes of Maryland, and Howard Wolpe of Michigan, all of whom have criticized some of the Reagan administration's policies in Central America.

After Congress passed the bill, the White House released a statement saying the vote showed "America stands united, we speak with one voice, and we fulfill our responsibilities as a trustee of freedom, peace, and self-determination."

While Democratic politicians claim the resolution placed an 18-month *limit* on the marines' stay, White House officials continue to say the troops will remain until Washington's goals are met. That could be considerably longer than 18 months.

For now, though, Reagan has the green light from Congress to press forward in the imperialist war against the Lebanese and Palestinian people.

Allies in step

Washington is getting increasing help in this war from its allies in Europe, who are escalating their own involvement in step with the growing U.S. intervention.

The French component of the imperialist force will be beefed up soon with the arrival of the aircraft carrier *Foch*, which has been dispatched to the Mediterranean by French President François Mitterrand. French aircraft have already been used in combat; on September 22 French Super Etendard fighter-bombers strafed rebel positions in the Shuf Mountains.

In addition, Paris has 2,100 ground troops stationed in Lebanon.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has sent all three of her navy's aircraft carriers to the Mediterranean — including the *Hermes*, which last saw combat in the Malvinas War against Argentina. London has some 100 ground troops in Lebanon. British jets based in Cyprus have flown menacingly over Beirut.

Italian military commanders have had discussions with British officials about the use of Britain's Cyprus air base to give air support to the Italian troops in Beirut. Rome has 2,050 troops stationed there, an increase of 600 since the beginning of the current civil war.

Israel is the imperialist country with the largest number of troops in Lebanon. The Zionist government's 15,000 troops occupy southern Lebanon. The Israeli armed forces supposedly withdrew from the Shuf Mountains to below the Awali River on September 3-4, but Israeli military patrols have been spotted on the coastal highway near Beirut.

When the Israelis withdrew from the Shuf Mountains, the Lebanese Army and the militia of the Phalange party tried to take up their positions.

The Gemayel government is dominated by the Phalange, an ultrarightist group that models itself after the European fascist movements of the 1930s. It is based on the Maronite Christian population, a privileged minority in Lebanon. A discriminatory political system guarantees dominance to the Maronites. Lebanese Muslims, who are the majority of the population, and Druse face political and religious discrimination in this setup. They have been

fighting to alter the regime to give increased political representation to the Muslim and Druse communities.

So, when Gemayel's regime sought to move its army into the Shuf Mountains — the traditional homeland of the Lebanese Druse — the Druse rose up to expel them. Within the first several weeks of the civil war, the Druse militia had secured some 80 percent of the Shuf region. The Lebanese Army and Phalangists controlled only the town of Suk al-Gharb. Fierce fighting for control of this town marked the last week of combat before the cease-fire. Without the U.S. naval shelling and French air strikes the Lebanese Army could not have held Suk al-Gharb.

The five-nation imperialist combat force in Lebanon is aimed at buttressing Gemayel's shaky regime. Reagan and his European counterparts hope to force the Lebanese Muslims and Druse to accept its proimperialist character. The imperialists' current tack is to try to foist the rightist regime on the Lebanese people at the negotiating table. But the U.S. Sixth Fleet and other imperialist combat forces are ready to attack again if the talks fail to accomplish this aim.

Druse consolidate gains

Imposing this solution will not be easy for the imperialists. The Lebanese Druse have already begun to consolidate their gains in the Shuf Mountains.

Walid Jumblatt, head of the Progressive Socialist Party and the central Druse leader, announced on October 1 that a "civilian administration" was being set up in the Shuf regions controlled by the Druse militia. Jumblatt told a group of Druse leaders that this administration would handle civilian affairs "during the extraordinary conditions the country is now living through."

Gemayel immediately denounced this action calling it a move to partition the country.

Gemayel's outrage at the alleged partitioning of Lebanon by the Druse is completely hypocritical. Gemayel's Phalangist militia have run a virtual ministate of their own since the 1975-76 civil war.

What actually concerns Gemayel and his imperialist backers is the limited domain of Lebanon's rightist government. Gemayel's rule does not extend beyond Beirut. Even there the Lebanese government's hold on West Beirut, where the city's Muslim population is concentrated, is tenuous.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Army faces problems. Hundreds of Druse soldiers have refused to fight their brothers and sisters in the Shuf Mountains. These soldiers have issued a list of demands that includes a call for the entire army to return to the barracks until peace is achieved. The soldiers also called for a review of the army's command structure to block its use in internal affairs and "its bias in favor of one faction, which is now the case."

Additionally, the Druse and Muslim militia are being backed by Syria, which has 40,000 troops in Lebanon. In a political campaign to

prepare for a war against Syria, military assistance to Syria from the Soviet Union is pointed to by the imperialists to claim Soviet meddling in the country. President Reagan told a group of broadcasters that the Lebanese civil war is "Soviet-sponsored aggression against Lebanon."

Driving Syria's armed forces out of Lebanon is a major aim of the imperialist intervention in the civil war.

The imperialists, however, will be unable to take on the Syrian forces without committing more ground troops.

The Reagan administration and its allies also want to drive the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters out of Lebanon. The imperialists, through their military threats and other means, are pressuring the bourgeois-nationalist regime of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to aid them in this effort.

On September 23 the Syrian army forced 1,200 PLO fighters deployed in the Bekaa Valley to move to the far northeast of Lebanon. These liberation fighters are members of Fatah, the PLO guerrilla force headed by Yasser Arafat. In addition, the Syrian army ordered units of the Palestine Liberation Army, which had been fighting alongside Druse militia, to withdraw from the Shuf Mountains.

According to the September 29 *New York Times*, PLO chairman Arafat felt "Syria's decision to order his men out of the central Bekaa was a condition for the cease-fire agreement between Syria and Lebanon, which was announced two days later. He suggested that the Lebanese and Americans demanded that as part of any cease-fire the Syrians rein in the pro-Arafat forces because they were the most numerous and the only 'independent' Palestinian guerrillas in the area."

This move against the PLO by the Syrian government plays into the hands of Washington and its allies. By hampering the PLO's ability to function as an independent, revolutionary-nationalist organization, the Damascus regime is weakening the entire Arab fight against imperialism.

Still, the PLO has some 10,000 to 15,000 fighters in Lebanon. They have a big stake in toppling Gemayel's proimperialist regime. Such an event would be a boost to their struggle to liberate their homeland from Israeli occupation.

Opposition in U.S. and France

The stakes are big also for world imperialism. Since the 1975-76 civil war, Lebanon has been in a state of political chaos. Imposing a stable, proimperialist regime in Beirut is essential to maintaining imperialism's domination of the region. That they have failed to achieve this goal in eight years shows the difficulty of the task. The current confrontation threatens to become a broader war between imperialism and the oppressed Arab nations.

But for imperialism to wage such a war means committing even more U.S., French, Italian, British, and Israeli troops. It means deeper involvement in combat. It means, in the imperialist countries themselves, taking on

workers and farmers who oppose their governments' involvement in a war against Arab toilers.

In a recent *New York Times*/CBS News Poll, for example, the majority of Americans expressed opposition to the U.S. government supporting Gemayel's regime. By a nearly 3-to-1 margin they also felt that the U.S. Marines should be withdrawn from Lebanon rather than be reinforced.

These sentiments are shared by working people elsewhere too. A poll taken in France showed that 56 percent of those questioned "disapproved of President Mitterrand's deci-

sion to send troops to Lebanon." Fifty-two percent disapproved of his sending troops to the North African country of Chad, where the French government is also trying to bolster a proimperialist regime. In these two wars Paris has committed more troops than in any conflict since its colonial war in Algeria.

Whether the imperialist rulers can carry out their war in the Middle East without creating too costly political problems at home is being debated by capitalist politicians around the world. One thing is sure — with the step-up in imperialist involvement, the already widespread opposition can only increase. □

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Imperialist troops target Arab revolution

U.S.-led intervention part of global offensive

[The following appeared as an editorial in the October 7 issue of the U.S. revolutionary socialist newsweekly *Militant*.]

* * *

There are big stakes for working people in the current civil war in Lebanon. Fundamentally, the war is a conflict between world imperialism, led by the United States, and the Arab revolution. The imperialists have assembled a formidable military force that they are using in this battle.

Lebanon is one of three fronts where imperialism is waging open war today against oppressed nations and exploited workers and farmers. The others are Central America and northern Africa, in Chad.

In Lebanon, the objectives of the U.S., French, British, Italian, and Israeli military forces are to defend and stabilize the proimperialist Gemayel regime and to deal a blow to those in the front lines opposing imperialist aggression — the Muslims and Druse in Lebanon and the Syrian and Palestinian people.

The joint military action by the imperialist countries also indicates a new stage in their struggle against the toilers of the world. Not since the Korean War has Washington been able to organize such a massive *joint* imperialist move to crush a struggle for national and social liberation. In Korea, imperialist forces under the guise of a United Nations "police action" propped up a puppet regime. Although the bulk of the troops in that war came from the United States, they were joined by imperialist forces from Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the Netherlands.

Despite its attempts, Washington was unable to accomplish something similar during the Vietnam War.

Today there are thousands of U.S., French, British, and Italian troops in and off the coast of Lebanon, as well as a big force of naval warships and aircraft.

Until the recent, and shaky, ceasefire agreement, the U.S. Navy was shelling the Lebanese Shuf mountains at will. The U.S. battleship *New Jersey*, which has the firepower to level Beirut, arrived to bolster Washington's armada.

The French air force was strafing Lebanese Druse, Syrian, and Palestinian targets.

The British naval task force, used last year against Argentina in the Malvinas war, is being rushed from the south Atlantic to Lebanon's coast. British jet fighters have also flown sorties over the Shuf mountains. Italy has sent a destroyer to back up its 2,050 troops.



U.S. howitzer overlooking Beirut.

The Israeli regime still occupies southern Lebanon, where it has confined thousands of Palestinians in prison camps. It continues to organize patrols near Beirut and provocatively flies fighter jets over the city.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 set the stage for the current joint imperialist intervention. The main objective of Israel's invasion — as with the current imperialist assault — was to impose a proimperialist regime and to crush the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In that effort Israel was backed by the major imperialist powers.

Although Israel was able to drive the PLO from Beirut and impose the Phalangist-Christian Gemayel regime on Lebanon, it was unable to crush the Palestinian struggle or bring stability.

It also failed to get the reactionary Gemayel regime to sign a "peace" agreement like the 1978 Camp David Accord between Israel, the United States, and Egypt, which legitimized the existence of the Israeli state and its dispossession of the Palestinians.

Moreover, the Israeli regime's murderous siege of Beirut sparked worldwide outrage, increasing support for the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and for the PLO. It also exposed to the world Israel's nature as a colonial outpost for imperialist domination of the Arab peoples.

The September 1982 massacres of defenseless Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila by the rightist Phalangists politically isolated Israel still more. The antiwar campaign inside Israel won even wider support.

In this context, Israel pulled back from Beirut, and imperialist troops from the United States, France, Britain, and Italy began to more directly help shore up the Phalangist-dominated Gemayel regime. It was no longer possible for world imperialism to rely in the same way on its main gendarme in the Middle East to oppose the Arab revolution.

Yet, Israel remains one of world imperialism's most important tools of counter-revolution in the Arab world. As a colonial-settler state based on the expropriation and expulsion of the Palestinian people from their land, it survives through terror, violence, and domination of the Arab peoples.

After World War I, Greater Syria — current day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel — was carved up by the French and British imperialists as a way to divide the Arab peoples and undermine their struggle for national freedom from colonial plunder. Jordan and Palestine were placed under British control; Syria and what became Lebanon, under French domination.

Every rise of Arab nationalism and opposition to imperialist oppression was met by brute

force. The 1956 joint Israeli, French, and British invasion of Egypt to counter the nationalization of the Suez Canal was an example of that policy.

Imperialism must respond aggressively to every attempt by oppressed nations and the working class to advance their struggles.

That's why the French ruling class has sent troops to Lebanon and is also providing Super Etendard fighters — capable of firing Exocet missiles — to Iraq to be used in its war against Iran, aimed at reversing the 1979 Iranian revolution.

The Reagan administration — as part of its propaganda campaign labeling the Soviet Union as the "evil empire" — falsely claims that Moscow is fomenting the civil war in Lebanon, the same charge it levels against the USSR and Cuba in regard to the revolutions in Central America. Reagan, in his campaign against the "evil empire," is utilizing the provocation of the South Korean plane flying over strategic Soviet military installations as the basis to build up even more imperialism's military forces in the Middle East and in Central America.

Reagan demanded that the Soviet Union curtail its aid to the Syrian, Palestinian, and anti-Gemayel Lebanese forces. When Moscow refused, Washington stepped up its anti-Soviet campaign another notch.

As these imperialist war moves have unfolded in the Middle East over the last month, the U.S. government has escalated its war in Central America against the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan peoples. There has been a substantial escalation in counterrevolutionary military actions against the Sandinista-led revolution. U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries have launched a series of air attacks, including on the Managua airport and a major port.

Washington has announced plans to construct new roads and military bases in both Honduras and Costa Rica. Thousands of U.S. marines are already in Honduras. And U.S. military and economic support to the Salvadoran military regime is continuing to mount.

Washington is also backing French imperialism's intervention in the northern African country of Chad. It has sent military aid to the proimperialist regime and made new threats against Libya.

The French Mitterrand government, following a long tradition of Socialist Party policy of supporting French imperialism's wars against colonial peoples — from Indochina to Algeria — maintains more than 2,000 troops in Chad in order to prop up the proimperialist regime there. Like the United States, France aims to deal a blow to the Libyan government, which is backing the Chad rebels as well as the anti-Gemayel Lebanese forces.

Imperialist aggression in Lebanon, Central America, and northern Africa is further confirmation that wars today are a result of imperialist plunder and domination of working people who rise up to fight for their emancipation.

It is Washington and its allies that are attempting to defeat and crush national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, Central America, and the Middle East.

It is the U.S. government that has 300 land, air, and naval bases around the world and approximately 2,000 more military facilities in areas under its control or influence on all continents. It has one-half million troops stationed in countries outside of U.S. borders.

It is U.S. imperialism and its allies that engineer anti-Soviet provocations like the South Korean spy plane, which place innocent air travelers in jeopardy, and that are placing Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe later this year aimed at the Soviet Union.

This stepped-up imperialist aggression in Lebanon, Central America, and northern Africa is receiving bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress. Both Democrats and Republicans have gone out of their way, in response to the downing of the South Korean spy plane, to issue anti-Soviet and prowar speeches. Some have tried to outdo Reagan.

At the same time, there is a charade over the War Powers Act. Just as during the Vietnam War, when the "doves" spoke for "peace" and the need to control the actions of the Pentagon

and White House but then voted for every bill to finance the war effort, the "liberals" today are joining hands with the "conservatives" in supporting a major U.S. military presence in Lebanon. Their only criticism of the Reagan administration is its refusal to accept the right of Congress to jointly conduct imperialist war.

Few top Democrat or Republican leaders said a word when Secretary of State Shultz announced the United States would stay in Lebanon as long as necessary to achieve its aims. Congress, he said, could not dictate the administration's foreign policy.

These facts are why working people, particularly in the imperialist countries, must join together in an international solidarity campaign in defense of the oppressed and exploited peoples throughout the world.

Such a campaign led by working people through their trade unions and mass political parties is urgently needed. We must mobilize the majority antiwar sentiment that is opposed to new Vietnam-style wars in the world.

In particular, we must demand:

U.S., French, British, Italian, and Israeli troops out of Lebanon!

U.S. out of Central America!

France out of Chad!

U.S. and British troops out of Lebanon

[The following article appeared under the above headline on the front page of the September 16 issue of *Socialist Action*, a labor weekly published in London and supported by the Socialist League, the British section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The United States, Great Britain, Italy, and France are at war in Lebanon. The decision to send 2,000 extra U.S. troops, the growing casualties among "peacekeeping" forces, and the decision to evacuate British citizens from Beirut all point to the fact that alongside the forces of President Gemayel the armies of the Western powers are at war with the lightly-armed Druze and Shi'ite Islamic militias.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the fighting over the last two weeks. U.S. shore and naval batteries have shelled the militias of the Lebanese left.

British Buccaneer jets, fully armed, have flown over from Cyprus to back up British positions in the city, with the explicit aim of intimidating the militias.

Both Thatcher and Reagan deny that they are involved in a war. For Reagan the reason is obvious. If he admitted that the U.S. forces were engaged in hostilities this would give American Congress the right to recall or endorse the U.S. forces' mission.

But the American people are increasingly alarmed by the involvement of American troops. A recent Gallup poll in *Newsweek* magazine shows that a clear majority of the American people are in favour of withdrawal.

In Britain there has as yet been no such public alarm as to British involvement.

This is partly due to the currently small scale of British involvement but also because there has been no sufficiently vigorous condemnation from the labour movement of the supportive role which the British government is giving the U.S. military adventure.

This weekend sees a demonstration in London to mark the anniversary of the ghastly Sabra-Shatila massacre of Palestinians by right-wing Christian militia. It should be a reminder that imperialism and Zionism hold no answers to the Lebanese crisis.

Only the withdrawal of imperialist and Israeli troops from the country, the release of political prisoners, and the granting of the Palestinian demand for their own democratic secular state can begin to open up the way for peace in the Middle East.

But two further points have to be understood by the British labour movement.

The first is that the state of Israel is a racist state, whose very basis lies in the denial of democratic and social rights to Arab people and that far from playing any progressive role, will bring further Sabra/Shatilas if it is allowed to.

The second is that British imperialism is incapable of playing a peace-keeping role whether in Ireland or West Beirut. For these reasons we say:

Reagan and Thatcher out of Lebanon!

No to Israeli aggression!

Self-determination for the Palestinian people!

French forces in midst of war

Mitterrand government defends imperialist interests

By Christian Picquet

[The following article appeared in the September 16-22 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Has François Mitterrand decided to follow Margaret Thatcher's example in the Malvinas? One fears he has. In fact, never since the war in Algeria have there been more French troops committed outside our borders. Following on the heels of Chad, where 3,000 paratroopers are taking part in Operation "Manta," units are involved in Lebanon in a process that might very well lead them to direct military engagement.

Two thousand troops are participating alongside American and Italian contingents in the international interposition force that was set up in Lebanon following the Sabra and Shatila massacres in September 1982. Today they find themselves in the midst of a civil war pitting the army and reactionary Christian forces against the Lebanese left. And inevita-



French members of imperialist intervention force studying map of Beirut.

bly they are feeling the repercussions. Since last month nine French soldiers have been killed and many others wounded.

Regarding this toll, Foreign Minister Claude

Cheysson barked out: "We did not go to Beirut to make war, but we cannot allow anyone to take potshots at our soldiers, who are defending the peace."

Defense Minister Charles Hernu then reiterated this point with a martial tone: "The French airforce will destroy the batteries that are pounding the French headquarters, unless the firing ceases immediately."

To give credence to these strong words, three Super-Étendard planes from the aircraft carrier *Foch* — one of the biggest in our fleet — made warning flights over the Shuf mountains, which is the fiefdom of the Druse and progressive forces.

Is this verbal saber-rattling? Are these maneuvers whose aim is to prevent Paris from losing face? Indeed. Because, confronted with the same problems, the American marines went into battle against the left, several of whose positions were then reduced to silence by an intensive artillery barrage. Ronald Reagan has just sent an additional amphibious force to the shores of Beirut, carrying two thousand men whose aim is to back the Lebanese reactionaries in their fight.

A 'legitimate government'

By intervening openly in the conflict, in fact Washington is simply carrying out the real mandate of the multinational force. From its inception the official objective of this force was to reestablish peace and allow the Lebanese state to rebuild itself and restore its authority over the country.

At that time François Mitterrand stated on television: "Without wasting any time, the

Israeli soldiers jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon

The Israeli army is now settling in to its second winter in Lebanon. But as the war continues and the troops remain bogged down, opposition to the war is increasing among the Israeli population.

This opposition is being expressed within the Israeli army as well. Many soldiers have refused to go to Lebanon because they feel that "this is not our war."

When the war began, a group of soldiers set up an organization called Yesh Gvoul ("There Is a Limit") to express their refusal to participate in the invasion of Lebanon.

One such soldier is Yigal Vega, a member of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), Israeli section of the Fourth International, which publishes the newspaper *Matzpen* (Compass). Vega, a 31-year-old metalworker and father of two, is the ninetieth Israeli soldier sentenced to jail for refusing to join his unit beyond Israel's 1948 boundaries.

Vega was sentenced to 35 days in Military Prison No. 6. But that sentence can be extended indefinitely. A new decree au-

thorizes the military authorities to call up again any soldier imprisoned for refusing to serve in Lebanon or the occupied territories. If the soldier again refuses, he could be returned immediately to prison for another term.

According to the RCL, a broad movement of local and international solidarity is needed to prevent the Israeli military authorities from sentencing to unlimited prison terms those who refuse to go to Lebanon. In this regard, Yigal Vega's could be a test case. The RCL is asking supporters of democratic rights throughout the world to express solidarity with Yigal Vega and the other members of Yesh Gvoul by organizing picket lines at Israeli embassies and sending telegrams protesting his jailing.

Protest telegrams should be sent to Moshe Arens, Minister of Defense, Hakiriya, Tel Aviv, Israel. Copies should be sent to Yesh Gvoul, Post Office Box 4172, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Lebanese armed forces must be able to effectively assure the security of the civilian population of Beirut and its environs and bring the country back under the exclusive authority of the legitimate government."

Such comments admirably sum up all the ambiguity of this international mission. The legitimacy of Lebanese head of state Amin Gemayel — a man from the fascist-like Phalange party, which was implicated in the slaughter in Sabra and Shatila — was imposed by Israeli bayonets, despite the hostility of part of the population. This was made easier by the weakened state of the left organizations following the setback suffered by the Palestinian resistance in Beirut.

Israeli Premier Menachem Begin and the Western capitals supported and brought to power the Lebanese far right, whose only aspiration was to take revenge on its adversaries. The foreign expeditionary corps was supposed to guarantee the success of this attempt to set up a strong state capable of reestablishing imperialist order in a "hot" region. This attempt has just run aground, leading to a civil war that is sharper than ever.

Now that the fiction of "Lebanese national unity" has blown up, the French government can no longer argue the peaceful aims of the interposition force. Only one choice now remains: either withdraw the troops now committed in Lebanon or intervene directly in the fighting — which would involve helping to crush the Lebanese left. The foreign ministry's declarations as well as the arrangements now being made by the minister of defense lead one to think that the choice has already been made.

Invoking 'Syrian interference'

In order to justify a policy that leads our rulers to back the ultrareactionary forces, a policy that runs against their previous commitments, they once again invoke the existence of some foreign interference in Lebanon. This same argument has already served as a pretext for the Chadian expedition.

This time it is Syria — accused by the media of being in Moscow's service — that is supposed to be manipulating Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). The minister of foreign relations made it known that he had lodged an "energetic protest" with Damascus.

But in terms of interference, the new leaders of this country have nothing to learn from or be envious of their predecessors. Socialist Party first secretary Lionel Jospin just delivered a real tongue-lashing by telephone to Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party. We should recall that the PSP, like the French SP, is affiliated to the Socialist International.

"I told him," Jospin explained on September 11, "that the path of reason was the path of reconciliation, the path of dialogue, particularly with the legal president Mr. Amin Gemayel." Here we have the head of the number one workers party in France trying to dictate the

behavior of the communities in Lebanon. This violates the most elementary internationalist solidarity and the right of peoples to control their own destiny.

With each passing day "socialist" France is resolutely getting more deeply involved in the endless machinery of wars and colonial expeditions. Defense of the interests of the imperialist powers and the big multinational firms is now coming to center stage.

This policy will very quickly turn out to be quite costly. Millions go up in smoke with each naval show of force, with each demon-

stration by our fighter planes. The workers will inevitably be the ones to pay, through some new tax and a deepening of the austerity policy.

The majority [Socialist and Communist parties] as such will get no political benefit from these adventures, as has just been clearly shown by the local election in Dreux [where a rightist slate took control of the municipal government after running an anti-immigrant campaign]. On the contrary, the right will pocket the dividends, finding new excuses for their demagogic speeches. □

A tangled civil war

Imperialist forces threaten direct intervention

By Livio Maitan

[The following article appeared in the September 26 issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The translation from French is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Lebanon is once more convulsed by military conflicts whose roots lie in a tangle of religious and international factors. While Walid Jumblatt's Druse forces in the mountainous Shuf region and the Amal organization's Shi'ite forces confront the rebuilt Lebanese army and the Phalangist Christian militias, the United States is parading its fleet off the Lebanese coast and increasing its military contingent on land.

For its part, the Zionist government is threatening reprisals against the Druse and their Syrian government backers if they go beyond a certain "red line" during these confrontations.

Impossible national consensus

The Zionist aggression in Lebanon in the spring of 1982 had led to the installation in Lebanon of a reactionary regime under the leadership of Amin Gemayel (following the assassination of his brother, Bashir). At the time of Gemayel's installation, there was a climate of national consensus. This was unquestionably a success for the imperialists and, at the same time, was a solution that did not displease the reactionary governments of the Arab countries.

In its majority the Lebanese bourgeoisie arrayed itself around the new president, Amin Gemayel, and sought the reunification of the country after a decade of deep-going break-up, the elimination of all the Palestinian positions in Lebanon, and the withdrawal of all the occupation forces. This plan did not work out.

Already by the beginning of the year, conflicts had broken out in various regions of the country, putting an end to what turned out to be a totally illusory national consensus. One

year after the last Israeli aggression, Amin Gemayel's government controlled only the capital and its environs.

For several weeks, the struggle has been raging in Beirut as well. The international airport, which the Lebanese government wanted to make the symbol of its reconstituted power, is the target of shelling by Druse and Syrian forces and is even the site of direct confrontations.

In the Shuf mountains, the conflicts between religious communities resumed with extreme violence. Northern Lebanon remains a powder keg that is totally outside the central regime's control. In many aspects Lebanon seems to have returned to a situation comparable to that of the 1975-76 civil war.

This is the result, first of all, of the fact that after the departure of the Palestine Liberation Organization's forces from Beirut no progress was made in solving the Palestinian problem and rearranging the regional situation.

In addition, it is a consequence of the fact that the new Lebanese regime has found it impossible to work out an overall accord with the state of Israel, which had played a decisive role in putting it in power.

Nor has Amin Gemayel in fact played the role of an arbiter in the name of "national solidarity." In rebuilding the Lebanese bourgeois state he has basically relied on the Phalangist apparatus and militias, which inevitably led to growing conflicts with the other forces on the scene and to relaunching the war between religious communities.

Finally, in a more immediate sense, the present situation is also the result of the withdrawal of Israeli troops to the Awali River in southern Lebanon.

A number of factors explain this withdrawal, which was carried out in spite of pressures exerted by Washington, which viewed it as premature.

First of all the Zionist government cannot contemplate occupying a large part of Lebanese territory for an indeterminate period of time. Such a situation could embroil the Israeli forces in a bloody struggle against a

growing popular resistance and could have serious repercussions in Israel itself.

Moreover, the Zionist leaders are not at all unhappy to see the present tendency toward a partition of the country, which the withdrawal of Israeli troops has further encouraged.

One ought not forget that the Zionist leaders have never made a secret of their plans for the Balkanization of Lebanon, where they are especially interested in the formation of a minuscule Druse buffer state between Israel and Syria. This, among other reasons, is why on several occasions they have been in connivance with the so-called progressive forces of Walid Jumblatt, which in turn did not fire a single shot during the Israeli invasion last year.

More concretely, at present Israel may favor a partition that would result in maintaining Israeli control over southern Lebanon and accepting Syrian control over the Bekaa Valley and the north. It is true that this plan is not easy to carry out, particularly since the imperialist countries are not inclined to favor anything that strengthens Syria's positions, since Syria remains the sole ally of the Soviet bureaucracy in the region. But this does not prevent the Zionist leadership's policy from containing a tendency toward partition of Lebanon.

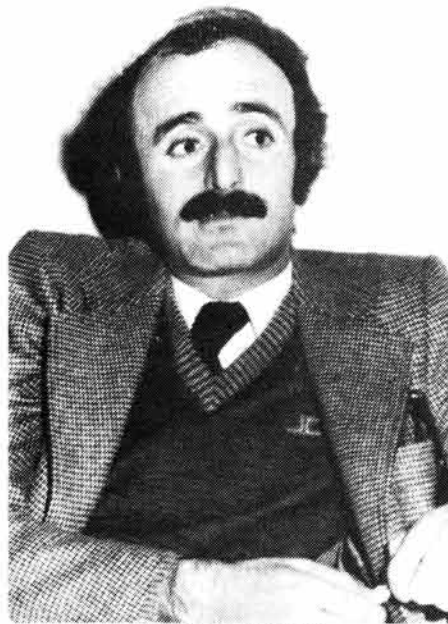
Social stakes and religious cleavages

While it might be pertinent to note the present resemblance to the situation in the 1975-76 civil war, we should not ignore the fact that the situation is not exactly the same. In 1975-76 the Palestinian resistance played a major role, and the general content of the situation was defined by the Israeli-Arab conflict. The national, anti-imperialist, and anti-Zionist factor therefore had an unquestionable weight.

In the present confrontations the Palestinians are only a supplemental force. The former components of the progressive front are divided and are not — for now — mobilized fundamentally around anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist goals.

In other words, in the civil war that is developing today, the social and political stakes are blurred and distorted by the cleavages between religious communities. This is due on the one hand to the PLO's defeat, which was marked by its withdrawal from Lebanon, and the retreat of the Lebanese workers and national movement itself; and on the other hand to the failure of the reactionary plan for reunification within the framework of the Gemayel regime. In such a context, the centrifugal tendencies grow, and the main element around which the different forces coalesce becomes or reverts to the religious element, with the hellish logic that entails (religious communities coalescing around a goal of self-defense and survival and increasingly fierce opposition to the other "religious communities").

Viewed from this angle, Lebanon seems to be in the process of returning to the kind of terrible wrenching apart seen in the last century, leading to situations in which outside forces



WALID JUMBLATT

can intervene while claiming to play the role of pacifiers and arbiters.

Imperialist responsibility

In fact, the outside forces simultaneously exploit and counteract the conflicts between religious communities. Under the pretext of "pacification," the imperialists are increasingly intervening in support of the "legal" Lebanese government, meaning the reactionary forces.

The international so-called interposition force is being used more and more openly

against Jumblatt's Druse and the Shi'ite militias — even though neither of them had the slightest intention of challenging the fundamental framework of the neocolonial regime — and in support of the reactionary government of Amin Gemayel. In a lovely show of unanimity, the British government sends its Jaguars to fly over the Shuf, the French government makes a display with its Super-Etendards, and the Italian contingent threatens the Druse forces, while the U.S. troops, heavily reinforced, are now authorized, in the words of a White House spokesman, to "use the weapons at their disposal, their tanks."

This is the fundamental reality in which the workers and revolutionary movement throughout the world, and especially in the imperialist countries, must determine their attitude and activity.

If the Lebanese masses are ever to be in a position where they can defend their legitimate interests, and if Lebanon is ever to be able to democratically reorganize in a way that is not based on religious communities, imperialism must be prevented from imposing its solution to the conflict. The imperialist solution is to install a reactionary regime throughout the country, to eliminate what remains of the Palestinian forces in Lebanon, and to establish a new regional framework that corresponds to the interests and aspirations of the Zionists.

To oppose these reactionary plans, it is necessary to continue to mobilize for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Zionist troops from all of Lebanon and for the withdrawal of the multinational interposition force. This task is a vital component of the more general battle against all the imperialist war threats throughout the world. □

STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Imperialist hands off Lebanon!

[The following declaration was issued on September 22 by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

For the first time since the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army, the No. 1 imperialist army in the world, is using its fire power to defend another puppet regime.

In the worst tradition of gunboat diplomacy, the U.S. Navy has begun shelling the positions of fighters opposed to the reactionary Phalangist regime of Amin Gemayel in Lebanon, a regime that is obviously remote-controlled from Washington.

What is more, the airplanes carried by the U.S. Sixth Fleet are flying over these positions also threatening to intervene. At the same

time, 2,000 Marines are ready to land to join the 1,200 U.S. soldiers already lined up alongside Gemayel's troops.

In all these moves, the U.S. has had the active collaboration of the other imperialist powers. The French, Italian, and British soldiers of the Multinational Force sent to back up the Gemayel regime are dividing up the job on the ground with the U.S. soldiers. French and British planes are flying sorties through Lebanese skies, alongside the U.S. Air Force.

In this situation, it is an urgent task for anti-imperialist militants throughout the world to mobilize to force the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of imperialist troops from Lebanon.

Imperialist troops out of Lebanon!

The revolution under fire

Mass mobilization against imperialist aggression

By Jean-Claude Bernard

[The following article is taken from the September 19 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly magazine published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The footnotes are from the original.]

* * *

MANAGUA — August-September 1983 marked the start of large-scale military maneuvers given the name "Big Pine II," which are being directed by Ronald Reagan against the peoples of Central America.

Some 12,000 Honduran and U.S. soldiers are to participate in eight-month-long joint training exercises on the territory of Honduras, which borders El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The main targets are the Salvador revolutionary movement and the Nicaraguan revolution. There is direct imperialist intervention in Central America. Nearly 6,000 more U.S. soldiers will be stationed in Honduras at least until January 1984, but it seems likely already that these maneuvers will be prolonged until the spring of 1984.

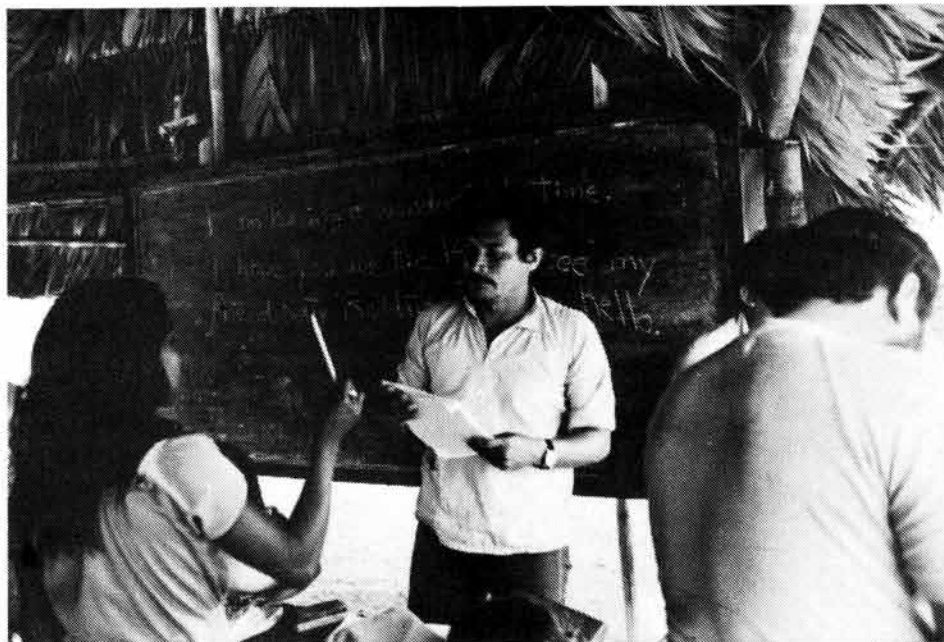
The objective of these operations is not simply to train Honduran soldiers in the use of arms. A sixty-room military hospital has already been set up near the barracks where the newly arrived U.S. military units have been quartered.

This shipment of troops is part of the military deployment designed to encircle the Nicaraguan revolution.

In the wake of the celebration of the fourth anniversary of the overthrow of Somoza on July 19, 1979, Ronald Reagan announced that a part of the U.S. fleet was being sent to the waters off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Nicaragua. Seventeen warships are involved in these maneuvers. Some of them are cruising less than 12 miles off the Nicaraguan coasts.

Provocations and incursions have been staged into Nicaraguan territorial waters themselves. The U.S. ships are equipped for offensive actions, since they include three aircraft carriers carrying 200 planes and a sea-to-land missile carrier.

In all the other Central American countries, the U.S. is reinforcing its political and military involvement. The August 8 coup d'état in Guatemala means the installation of a ruling team more subservient to Washington. In the aftermath of taking power, General Mejía, General Ríos Montt's former minister of defense, declared flatly: "Guatemala supports the policy of the United States toward Nicaragua,



Jane Harris/FP

School for Miskito Indians. Counterrevolutionaries often attack teachers and medical personnel to weaken revolution's impact among people in the border regions.

because it seems to me to be the most appropriate."¹

Up until now, the Ríos Montt regime, absorbed by its war against the guerrillas and the native American population, had refused to get involved openly in the imperialist crusade against Nicaragua. Less than a month before the putsch, the chairperson of the Guatemalan Council of State described the dispatching of the U.S. fleet to Central America as "lamentable."²

The overthrow of General Ríos Montt has, moreover, been the occasion for reviving the Central American Defense Council (CONDECA), a counterrevolutionary alliance that has been in mothballs since the so-called Football War between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. In fact, it was virtually dissolved after the fall of Somoza.

Direct collaboration between the Salvadoran and Honduran armies has been increasing for a year. The U.S. Green Berets are training about 2,400 Salvadoran military in a U.S. base set up near Puerto Castilla in Honduras.

The Honduran government has just proposed the reestablishment of the Central American Military Pact. In his reply to this proposal, the Salvadoran minister of defense said on August 20: "There is an agreement between Hon-

duras and El Salvador for the reactivation of the alliance." He then added that Guatemala "will not raise any problems about accepting this accord."³

While it is based mainly in Honduras, where the mass opposition is weakest, the U.S. military deployment covers the region. What it involves is more than a mere demonstration of force. It represents systematic preparation for a decisive move to crush the peoples of El Salvador and Guatemala and to overthrow the revolutionary government of Nicaragua.

A new tactic by the 'contras'

CIA financing of the activities of the counterrevolutionaries is openly admitted in Washington. The Nicaraguan intelligence services have, moreover, revealed the growing collusion of the Argentine military with the counterrevolutionaries, or "contras," as they are called in Nicaragua.

In fact, they have explained that the contras have "a joint general staff made up of a representative of the CIA, an Argentine military advisor, and a representative of the FDN [Nicaraguan Democratic Force, a Somozaist group based in Honduras.]"⁴

More and more sophisticated logistic support is being provided by the U.S. for the con-

1. *Nuevo Diario*, August 10, 1983.

2. *Idem.*, July 23, 1983.

3. *Idem.*, August 21, 1983.

4. *Idem.*, August 19, 1983.



Sandinista troops at Los Planes border post in north, ready to confront counterrevolutionary attack from Honduras.

tras. They are well equipped and have, notably, 60 and 80 millimeter mortars, as well as high-technology radio equipment enabling them to receive the information picked up by radar installations in Honduras. They have been given airplanes to resupply the former Somoza National Guard groups that have infiltrated into Nicaraguan territory.

The total numbers of the contra mercenaries is estimated today at 8,000. In recent months, their tactic has changed, not as a result of planned progress in preparing their offensive but mainly because of the resistance they have run into on the ground.

In fact, the counterrevolutionary commando groups have finally failed in the attempts they began in the spring of 1983 to occupy a strip of Nicaraguan territory in the north near Jalapa. This is despite the fact that they had mobilized up to 1,200 soldiers in coordinated operations. In contradiction to the statements they issued, they failed to take any impressive initiatives in July 1983 to mark the anniversary of the revolution.

Throughout August 1983, the actions by the contras have been carried out by groups including at most 100 to 150 operatives who have penetrated up to 80 kilometers into the country.

The present tendency is to increase sabotage operations. This reflects a reorganization of the contra forces to destroy targets more widely dispersed throughout the country. It means that relatively large contra groups have managed to penetrate deeply into the country. They have been able to hold positions, however, only in peripheral areas by-passed by the course of history in Nicaragua, around the large expanses of land devoted to growing

crops for the export market.

The fact that the heart of Nicaragua is surrounded by border regions that, for objective conditions, remained largely outside the war of liberation constitutes an additional problem for the revolution.

A part of the area that borders on Honduras, thus, is characterized by a scattered population — mountain villages, a few towns, and isolated farms without even clusters to form hamlets.

Every peasant has to walk hours every day to work the hill-side plots. This is the case, for example, in Totogalpa, a town 25 kilometers from the frontier. On July 12 and for four consecutive nights, this village came under mortar fire from the Honduran side of the border.

In this thinly populated region, it is a six hour walk from one of the five hamlets to the town of a thousand inhabitants. There are no big estates to expropriate nor much unused land to bring under cultivation.

The leader of the local organization of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) confirmed that he was finding it difficult to organize meetings of the cooperative, which still includes only a minority of the peasants. This is an exemplary struggle in very difficult conditions.

Visit to a northern village

The tactic of the contras is clear. It is to attack the two sectors where the revolution has made possible significant advances — health and education — and to do this in the regions where such outrages can be carried out with the greatest impunity.

At the end of July, the jeep carrying a doctor visiting the hamlets around Totogalpa fell into

an ambush and the driver was killed. The result — no more doctor's calls for the peasants living a long way from the town.

A gigantic effort has been made in education — 18 schools have been opened for a population that totals 5,000 persons. But recently a woman primary teacher was kidnapped by the contras. As a result, fearing for their lives, six teachers stopped going to their school and it had to shut down temporarily. One of the teachers is a former peasant who learned to read thanks to the literacy campaign. This is the sort of thing the contras cannot stand.

To carry out their tactic of spreading terror, the contras have a certain basis of support. This poor area was one of those from which Somoza recruited his National Guards. The contras also benefit from violently anti-Communist sermons by the reactionary section of the Catholic clergy.

According to the testimony of a peasant who is an avowed supporter of the revolutionary process and lives twenty kilometers from the town, the line that the contras take for the old peasants is: "We are with Obando y Bravo [the archbishop of Managua]. Anyone who is not with him is against God."

But even in the village of Totogalpa the reactionaries are running up against an active mobilization — city councils, Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS), Sandinista Youth, the militia, and UNAG. All these institutions and mass movements are rallying militant fighters.

Clearly, the section that is most mobilized is the youth, which has been directly affected by the major expansion of education. What the revolution meant first of all for the leader of the Sandinista Youth here was the opening of schools, which made it possible for two young people from this isolated village to go to university, one in Cuba and the other in Nicaragua's second largest city, León.

Also important is the growth of the cooperative movement. It offers technical and economic advice to the peasants. The result is that the banks and wholesale buyers are no longer all-powerful. These gains are defended arms in hand by thirty members of the militia. The contras are a long way from being able to rule the roost.

The resurgence of counterrevolutionary operations in August is evident in a statement to the Council of State on May 4, 1983. The Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega already estimated the damage caused by such actions at 2 percent of the Gross National Product, or one entire week of work by the country. This is the initial result of operations that can only be carried out with the help of the CIA.

Nonetheless, the objectives set by the leaders of the armed counterrevolution have not been achieved. In all the towns they have tried to attack, they have run up against determined resistance. In no town have they been able to carry out the sabotage actions their plans called for.

On Friday, August 19, 1983, an FDN representative acknowledged this failure, saying that they had no hope, in the context of the pres-

ent relationship of forces, of "military victory against the Sandinista army."⁵

Such an admission does not mean, however, that the FDN is giving up the game. What it reflects is the need for more aid from U.S. imperialism. In fact, the poor results the contras have achieved by comparison with the objectives they set themselves point toward increased intervention by U.S. military forces. They do not mean that the dangers that hang over the Nicaraguan revolution are any less acute.

One of the contras' present limitations has to do with their inability for the moment to offer a credible political solution for all the counterrevolutionary sectors that have a potential base in Nicaragua. Any doubts about the existence and activity of this counterrevolutionary social base should be dispelled by a look at the combination mass and mass meeting held in honor of Archbishop Obando y Bravo on August 14, 1983, in Managua, during which the U.S. ambassador was applauded by 15,000 persons.

Organizing such a ceremony to celebrate the continuing pastorate of a prelate who was a faithful friend of Somoza is a whole program in itself. To dare, in the midst of a period of imperialist aggression to call for applause for the U.S. ambassador, as the auxiliary archbishop, Bismark Carballo did, means identifying yourself openly with the counterrevolution.

In fact, the Catholic hierarchy presided over by Obando y Bravo represents the main bourgeois institution in the country, with an organized network of influence that extends from Managua into the remote rural areas. This is far from the case, for example, of the opposition bourgeois parties grouped in the Democratic Coordinating Committee, which includes the Social Christian Party [PSC], the Liberal Constitutional Party [PLC], and the Social Democratic Party [PSD].

As for the contra organizations — the FDN, which operates in the North, and the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (ARDE) led by Edén Pastora, which is active on the southern frontier with Costa Rica — they have not yet managed to draw behind them all the big landowners, big merchants, and industrialists. Some of these are still trying to safeguard their interests within the country.

The existence of this counterrevolution was explained as follows by Jaime Wheelock, one of the nine FSLN commanders, on August 14, 1983, at a ceremony of turning over land to peasants in Masaya in the southern part of the country.

"There is a counterrevolution because there is a revolution. The counterrevolution is going to be more active because the revolution is going to continue to attack the interests of certain people. For every person who suffers loss, a hundred will gain."⁶ Continuing to ad-

dress the peasants, he said: "the lands that the revolution is turning over to you will never be taken back by the bourgeoisie."

Organizing the defense of the revolution

Defending the gains of the revolution comes first in Nicaragua. It is an urgent and immediate task: "They will not get past the border! All arms to the people! A single army!" — these were the main slogans in the summer of 1983.

The political and military defense of a revolution under attack necessarily sets in motion great social processes. All the efforts that are being made now to extend, rationalize, and raise the technical level of the military defense are intertwined with a process of social polarization.

The very gravity of the imperialist aggression is highlighting more and more every day — who is defending the revolution, who is fighting against it, and who is holding back from assuming the tasks that are being taken up by the urban working people, as well as the agricultural laborers and the small peasants in the countryside.

In turn, the FSLN leadership is being led to base itself still more resolutely on the classes that form the social foundations of the revolution.

The defense of the revolution has thus far been organized on four distinct levels — nonarmed revolutionary vigilance; armed militias organized to defend the neighborhoods, villages, or enterprises; reserve battalions ready to be sent to combat zones; and the standing army, the Sandinista People's Army (EPS). One general principle applies to recruiting for these four structures — it is on the basis of volunteering. People are asked first to sign up and then to go off when the time comes.

This systematic appeal for volunteers is coming up today against the limitations posed by its results for production, both from the standpoint of economic efficiency and political motivation in the workplaces.

It is emulation among the most determined activists that leads them to go to the front lines in the defense of the revolution. The withdrawal of such activists from production both in the cities and in the countryside is planned on the basis of criteria that scarcely take account of the needs of production itself. The inevitable result is problems in production.

More serious still is the problem posed by the departure of the best activists for impelling the unions, the mass movement, and the Sandinista Defense Committees. If there is a consistent pattern of the most active leaving for the front, it becomes more difficult to mobilize the bulk of the population.

In most of the big factories in Managua, any visit starts with a listing of those who have left for the front, in the north or the south. A great many of them are activists of the Sandinista Workers Confederation (CST), the Sandinista Defense Committee, or the Sandinista Youth. This problem is made worse by the fact that the number of those who have fallen in the defense

of the revolution is beginning to be significant by comparison with the economically active population and the cruel lack of political and technical cadres.

Daniel Ortega has estimated the total number of Nicaraguans felled by the blows of the counterrevolution at 600.⁷ So, it is important to broaden the base of a defense system that needs skills and military training. This is the objective of the new Patriotic Military Service announced on July 19 by Daniel Ortega in his speech on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the revolution.

He ended by saying: "We have to prepare ourselves to fight and to win, with all the mighty power of the organized people. The National Leadership [of the FSLN] has decided, with the approval of the Government Council, to introduce a law establishing Patriotic Military Service.

"It is the decision of the National Leadership, approved by the Government Council for National Reconstruction, to supply arms in an orderly and organized way to every corner of the country, all the arms to the people. This is so that the people, organized on a territorial basis in the Sandinista people's militias, can have weapons with which to fight. All arms to the people to defend the land, to defend the gains of the revolution, all arms to the people."⁸

When this proposal was submitted for discussion to the Council of State on August 10, 1983, it sparked a very wide-ranging debate. In fact, this was a good indication of the social polarization that is sharpening in the country. The proposed law puts this new military service in the context of defending the revolution.

Notably it says: "In its historic program the FSLN included abolition of the force that was the enemy of the people, the National Guard. It called for creating a revolutionary patriotic people's army in which students, workers and peasants, as the fundamental forces in society, could defend their gains arms in hand against the inevitable counterrevolution by internal and external counterrevolutionary forces."⁹

National service and the territorial militias

The proposed law calls for active service by all men between the ages of 17 and 25, if required. Women between the ages of 18 and 40 will be able to participate in the reserve service, according to the needs determined by the Ministry of Defense. All Nicaraguan citizens may be called up for this active or reserve service.

Registration will begin on October 1. In a country where there is no census, in the immediate future the task of drawing up the lists falls to the administrative or military authorities. Registration is therefore voluntary, that is, at least in the first stage of the new ser-

5. Dispatch from the Nicaraguan Press Agency (ANN), August 19, 1983.

6. Notes taken during Jaime Wheelock's speech. This part was not picked up in the press the following day.

7. Speech by Daniel Ortega, July 19, 1983, government press service.

8. *Idem.*

9. Draft law on military service, from the government press service.

vice. It is this that will make it possible to form the first contingents.

The first units will be organized on January 1, 1984. They will involve 20,000 to 30,000 Nicaraguans. The number is limited primarily by the number of officers the EPS has to organize the new recruits.

All the mass organizations that support the revolutionary process are firmly backing this project. The only reservations have come from the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE). These are because the proposed law makes a distinction between men and women, excluding the latter from active military service.

With respect to this, Glenda Monterrey, a member of the Sandinista Assembly, has written: "We all have limitations, and we run into obstacles. This does not mean that our society can adopt a law that includes discrimination on the basis of sex. . . . Women are demanding the right to take an active part in the service that is being organized."¹⁰

This question is posed all the more forcefully because the militias are mixed. And in separate battalions, women make up 30 percent of the reserves involved directly in fighting the contras on the front.

Barricada, the organ of the FSLN, has given considerable space to this debate among supporters of the revolutionary process.

More fundamentally, this military service law has been seen both by those on the revolutionary side and on the counterrevolutionary side as a calculated challenge to the bourgeoisie. It will be shown concretely who defends the revolution, because in principle the law applies to the entire population.

In Monimbó, in the southern part of the country, this law has evoked a lot of comment as well: "The reactionaries have begun to spew out vilification and falsifications about this process, which means that our role will be to clarify it and make the will of the people felt," said Carlos Salinas, a small shopkeeper.

Paula Rodríguez, another local person said: "We will see now who really defends the revolution. We'll see what they do. This is a goal for the people."

González Méndez, a painter-carpenter in the same neighborhood, said: "It is very important for us workers because if we don't defend the revolution, who can do it? I don't think the sons of the bourgeoisie will do it."¹¹

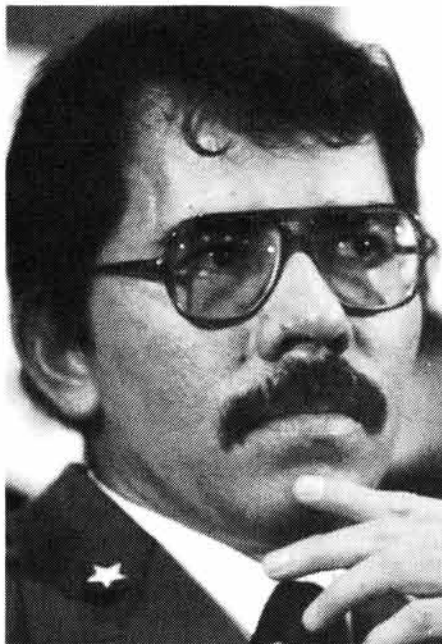
To counter these assessments, which reflect a sound class instinct, the bourgeoisie has launched a rumor campaign around the theme of "They're going to take away your sons." According to consistent reports, students from big and middle-bourgeois backgrounds have already left the country. The demand for U.S. visas has risen. A new process of clarification is under way.

The implementation of the Patriotic Military Service law will make it possible to bring to fruition all the work that has been done for

youth. Through the mass organizations, the young people have remained in most regions the spearhead of the revolution.

This mass enrollment of the youth will make possible a better distribution of the tasks of political and military defense. It fits into the more general policy of rationalizing the defense system to make it more efficient and to adjust it to deal with a possible step-up in external and internal attacks.

The people's militias in the cities have been reorganized on the basis of territorial battal-



Daniel Ortega: "All arms to the people to defend the land, to defend the gains of the revolution, all arms to the people."

ions. It would be wrong to consider this a sort of normalization that would involve the withering away of the factory militia units.

In Managua in particular these units continue to serve as the foundation stones of the militia. However, the system is not very efficient. The main reason for this is the extreme dispersion of the factories. There are only 96 enterprises in the whole of Nicaragua that have more than 100 workers.¹²

The first territorial battalions, which were organized on the basis of geographical zones in Managua, were set up on July 26, 1983. The occasion was a rally of 3,500 militia members, including youth of 16 and people at least as old as 50, as well as both men and women.

The Minister of Defense, Humberto Ortega, stressed the part played by the working class in these first battalions in Managua.

"The CST is taking the lead in mobilizing people for military defense. Obviously, the militia battalions organized on a territorial basis include a large proportion of workers. Among them are both industrial and agricul-

tural workers, as well as other working people."

The task of these militias is to defend the urban areas in the event of a large-scale attack.

"The battalions must guard the cities, the industries, and the schools so that the invaders will not be able to take any street. . . . What the national leadership [of the FSLN] is preparing for is the most massive counterattack against the threat we think we now face — that is, conventional military assaults backed up by the landing of commando forces directed against strategic points such as the airport or the telecommunications building."¹³

It is necessary to realize the gravity of the threats of imperialist aggression as they are seen in Managua. The objectives of the national leadership of the FSLN are to build up the essential defense effort and to do everything possible to stop the closing of the vise that is being clamped on to crush the Nicaraguan revolution.

The peace proposals made by Daniel Ortega in the name of the FSLN and the Council of Government on July 19, 1983, are part of this. They refute the false arguments spread by the proimperialist propaganda agencies that a small country like Nicaragua is deliberately seeking a military confrontation with U.S. imperialism.

However, in view of the U.S. threats, the question of immediate military effectiveness is decisive. This is inseparable from the deepening of the revolutionary process, which is the key factor for stepping up the mobilization of the social base of the revolution.

Revolution's capacity for mobilizing the masses

An indication of the breadth of the present mobilization is the rally organized in the country's second largest city, León, to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the revolution on July 19. It gathered more than 120,000 persons.

This is a considerable figure by comparison with the total Nicaraguan population of 2,900,000, of whom 900,000 are economically active. It is all the more significant because the leaders had to dissuade a lot of workers and peasants from coming to the rally because of problems of transport.

Peasants began to be assembled in columns at 3:00 in the morning and remained in them for nearly nine hours. But this joyful, turbulent throng was far from the image of a militarized population that is being spread by the big international press.

Tens of thousands of peasants and urban working people chanting "All arms to the people!" certainly make a striking impression. But the level of the mobilization can only be fully appreciated when you consider the role of the mass organizations and the relations they maintain with their base.

In a recent book, Jaime Wheelock, one of the nine leaders of the FSLN, wrote: "We are able to mobilize politically 600,000 persons —

10. *Barricada*, August 18, 1983.

11. *Idem.*, August 13, 1983.

12. INEC data, February 1982.

13. *Barricada*, July 27, 1983.

the great majority of them members of the mass organizations the revolution has created. This is quite enough if you consider that the country's economically active population is 900,000."¹⁴

The problem is that the level of mobilization is far from even. This is the result in particular of the newness of most of the mass organizations, which still have to consolidate their base and build up their structure of intermediate cadres.

In an interview granted to us, Lucio Jiménez, the national coordinator of the CST, summed up the history of his confederation in this way: "In 1979, only 6 percent of the economically active population was in unions. There were six badly organized and deeply divided confederations. The CST was founded on July 27, 1979. In the whole first phase, the CST was organized from the top down."

Referring to the last congress of the CST, held in February 1983, he made the point: "This wasn't really a congress but a founding assembly. Now a process of building the union from the bottom up is beginning on a new basis."

This point is not just a semantic one. Most of the mass organizations have operated with appointed leaderships on the various levels, although in the case of the UNAG, the ranks had the right to refuse to accept the leaders appointed from above. The "founding assembly" of the CST has inaugurated a new mode of functioning.

What this means, Jiménez explained, is that "all the leaders elected at any level of the union have to go through the filters of trade-union democracy from the bottom up."

Of course, the transition to a new mode of functioning is not completed overnight, and we encountered many union leaders who expressed some skepticism about generalizing the principle of "from the bottom up."

But it is significant that statutes calling for the election of all leaderships have been adopted by the CST. This confederation's aim is to bring in the industrial and sugar workers. And it was the first mass organization formed after the revolution. Moreover, it is explicitly linked to "Sandinism."

Built up from nothing, but with the benefit of the support and influence of the FSLN, in four years the CST has come to represent 90 percent of organized workers. Its membership is approaching 100,000. The massive expansion of trade-union organization has mainly benefited the CST. But it has also grown through the adherence of unions that have come from other confederations.

In July 1979, the total number of union members was 27,000. Some 40,000 more were enrolled in unions between August 1979 and December 1980. In 1981, 39,000 more workers joined unions. But in 1982, it was only 10,000.¹⁵ The main problem is to give

impetus to union activity, not to extend the unions. The CST today is by far the largest. "It is the backbone of the trade-union movement," explained Lucio Jiménez. But it is not the only union confederation. The others are older than the CST.

On January 31, 1980, the Nicaraguan National Commission for Trade-Union Coordination was formed. It was subsequently, on November 16 of the same year, transformed into the Nicaraguan Trade-Union Coordinating Committee (CSN). This was done at the end of a meeting attended by 300 trade-union leaders from various tendencies.

The CSN includes the CST, the CGT (General Workers Federation, which is directed by the pro-Soviet Nicaraguan Socialist Party), the Action Committee for Trade-Union Unity (CAUS, led by the Nicaraguan Communist Party, another Stalinist faction), and the Workers Front (FO, the mass front of the Movement for People's Action, an organization with Maoist origins).

Besides these various union confederations, which all represent different political currents, the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) and the teachers union (ANDEN) are also part of the CSN. Only the confederations linked to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labor remain outside, by their own choice. These are respectively, the Committee for Trade-Union Unity (CUS) and the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN), which has a Christian Democratic leadership.

Discussion on minimum wages

For three years, the CSN — which is not just a formal umbrella organization — has stood up to the tests that the revolution has gone through.

A notable example is the proposal the CSN made in negotiations with the government this summer over the question of minimum wages in industry and in agriculture.

The CST proposed to the other confederations to set the minimum-wage demand for workers in the cities at 1,900 cordobas a month. The CSN, and all the currents within it, accepted this demand. It negotiated the question with the government and the final result was that the minimum monthly wage was set at 1,700 cordobas.¹⁶

The desire to keep impatience from leading to things getting out of hand anywhere explains to some extent why unions such as the CAUS or the Workers Front were brought into the overall wage agreement. But the recognition among declared supporters of the revolution of the existence of a variety of political currents is a very positive element.

On August 3, Comandante Tirado, one of the leaders of the FSLN, spoke to 250 union delegates who were discussing and voting in common. He said: "The workers movement has to try to achieve unity in a single confeder-

ation. It doesn't matter whether it is called the CSN. What is going on today shows that the working class is taking the leadership in this stage, which is marked by the approach of elections. The working class has to be united to wage the fight against the enemy. The imperialist threats are leading us to deepen this revolution, and the workers movement will have to demonstrate that this revolution is invincible, that it is following the strategic path laid out by Carlos Fonseca [founder of the FSLN] toward the new society."¹⁷

The August 3 assembly adopted a resolution expressing a common stand on the wages question. But it also called for revising fiscal policy and the policy of subsidizing private enterprises. The resolution pointed out that one of the sources of inflation was this flow of money to entrepreneurs who did not invest it in production. It concluded by demanding more involvement of the unions in decision making and the selection of economic options.

Lucio Jiménez commented to us on this resolution: "It is necessary to favor those who live from their labor and not those who live from their capital."

This resolution, which is critical in many respects of the economic policy that has been conducted up to now, reiterated that the first priority of the workers movement is defending the revolution and participation in the militias. It illustrates how, even in the context of a mounting counterrevolutionary offensive internally and externally, there is room for a dynamic that gives impetus to the mass movement and pushes the revolutionary process forward.

This resolution shows, moreover, that overall agreement with the recognized leadership of the revolution, the national leadership of the FSLN, does not lead to transforming the mass organizations into mere transmission belts.

The same sort of thing that happened in the discussion of wages has taken place in the countryside, in the case of the demand raised by UNAG for cancelling the peasants' debts. This organization of peasants and stock raisers has waged a real campaign on this issue. In fact, the problem was crucial for these peasants. The combination of the natural catastrophes in 1982 (floods followed by drought) and the damage suffered before 1979 and the modernization undertaken since resulted in a disastrous level of debt.

A major part of the sales of produce did not bring in new money but only served to reimburse old debts. "We have had good harvests but they have only gone to fill the coffers of the banks," the leader of a cooperative near Rivas, in the southern part of the country, told reporters.¹⁸

On the initiative of the UNAG, street demonstrations took place in Estelí in the north and Granada in the south. In most of the regions, the demand for cancellation of the debts was

14. *El Gran Desafío*, p. 129, Ediciones Nueva Nicaragua.

15. The magazine *Envío*, May 1983; and INEC date, 1982.

16. As a standard for comparison, a bus ticket costs 1 cordoba and a meal in a factory cafeteria, about 25 cordobas.

17. *Nuevo Diario*, August 4, 1983.

18. *Barricada*, July 12, 1983.

presented to the administrative authorities. A real mass movement developed around it.

On July 19, Daniel Ortega was obliged to make a positive response to the peasants' demand. He announced a differentiated scale for cancelling the debts. That is, it involves making distinctions between producers cooperatives, service cooperatives, and individual producers, with producers cooperatives getting the most favorable conditions.

Even though the banks are nationalized, they are trying to make the most restrictive

possible interpretation of these provisions. The UNAG activists have not ended their campaign on behalf of the small peasants.

The two examples given, that of the CST and the UNAG, show the vitality of the mass movement, which finds specific areas for expression. Far from opposing this, the FSLN leadership strives to promote the development of this sort of movement. The objective is to help them create their own dynamic leading toward a deepening of the revolutionary process. This does not proceed without contradictions

or without running into many forms of resistance.

For the moment, the choices made by the national leadership of the FSLN are also dictated by the need to keep the U.S. from closing its vise around the Nicaraguan revolution. The urgent task for the international solidarity movement is thus to leave no stone unturned to stay the armed hand of U.S. imperialism and its Central American agents. This is the precondition for continued advance by the revolution in Nicaragua and Central America. □

Revolution transforms dockers union

Workers boot out reactionary leadership

By Jane Harris

CORINTO — The U.S. big-business press has come up with a new slander to discredit the Nicaraguan revolution in the eyes of working people in the United States. Nicaraguan authorities are charged with jailing the leadership of the longshoremen's union at Corinto, the country's main port, as part of a crackdown on trade union freedoms.

This same charge was repeated by President Reagan in a speech July 18 to the International Longshoremen's Association meeting in Florida. "What kind of freedom have the Sandinistas established?" Reagan asked. "Just ask the 1,300 stevedores at the Nicaraguan port of Corinto. Last month their union assembly was packed with Sandinistas and six union leaders were arrested. Their presumed crime was trying to develop ties with independent trade unions, including some affiliated with the AFL-CIO," the U.S. trade union federation.

The newly elected officials of the dock workers, however, tell quite a different story. In interviews with *Intercontinental Press*, they state that there has been no curtailment of union freedom. What is involved is a step forward in the transformation of this union into an effective instrument of the workers. In this process, several former union officials have been jailed for embezzlement of union funds.

Workers explained that the longshoremen's union, founded in 1936, is one of the oldest in Nicaragua today. Prior to the triumph of the revolution in 1979, it was affiliated to the Council on Trade Union Unification (CUS). This federation closely collaborates with the conservative AFL-CIO bureaucracy in the United States and the U.S. embassy in Managua. Its members were given courses in "free trade unionism" offered by the CIA-financed American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD).

Somoza's crackdown

In 1963, the government cracked down hard against a strike in Corinto of longshoremen belonging to the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN). The workers involved were jailed by



the Somoza dictatorship and blacklisted from working in the port.

Freddy Catin, a member of the union's executive board, explained that in the following years it was not possible for the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to develop a strong base in Corinto.

Corinto, consequently, did not play a major role in the FSLN-led insurrection that toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979. In fact, the central leaders of the longshore workers union were supporters of the dictatorship. In 1978 they even offered to go to the mountains to fight against the "Sandino-communists."

Following the victory of the revolution the union affiliated with the newly-founded Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). But many of the old leaders retained their posts.

Changes began to occur in the union, but the big difference came after 268 workers, nearly a quarter of the port's work force, returned earlier this year from a stint in the reserve battalions.

Several union members told how, after fighting counterrevolutionary Somozaists, they returned far more combative and politically conscious. They were ready to take on the union misleaders.

This changed the relationship of forces considerably. Previously the conservative union leaders would organize thugs to physically in-

timidate and silence the handful of rebellious workers.

At the time these members returned to work at the port a fight was brewing in the union. The year before, the union president and another member of the executive board had fled the country. They took thousands of córdobas in union funds with them and joined counterrevolutionary groups abroad.

After negotiations with the Ministry of Labor, the remaining officials agreed to hold elections for the vacant posts. They were scheduled for mid-May of this year. However, they were canceled when the union officials refused to allow the returning dock workers, who they claimed were not members of the union, to participate.

Following negotiations between two representatives of the rank and file and the union executive board, it was agreed that these workers would be allowed to join and elections held at the end of May.

Walkout staged

But, upon seeing the large turnout for the voting, the executive board reneged on the agreement and led a walkout by about 80 workers who proceeded to hold a rump session at another place. More than 450 workers remained at the official meeting, where elections were held without further incident.

The former leaders justified their actions by claiming that many of those at the meeting weren't technically members of the union. "We have been criticized for being very bureaucratic in the procedure for joining [the union] but those are the rules laid down in our bylaws and we will abide by them," Luis Felipe Duarte, a leader of the rump group told the FSLN daily *Barricada*.

"What the others are trying to do is to take the reins of the union away from us. We know that. That's why we have to see who we're going to allow into membership."

The leaders of the rump meeting also said their intention was to disaffiliate from the CST and join the right-wing Council on Trade Union Unification.

Since a two-thirds vote by the membership

is required before the union can change affiliation, and most revolutionary workers view the CUS as an instrument of their capitalist enemies, such a change is unlikely.

"We are conscious workers" said the new legally-elected union president, "and we will never accept CUS influence."

Following these events, the union authorized an audit of its funds, which has shown that at least 40,000 córdobas have been embezzled. Six people have been charged with the crime and four are in jail awaiting trial.

Fernando Aráuz, a leader of the FSLN in Corinto, told *Barricada* that the real problem was the narrow business unionist outlook of the old leaders.

"The union is politically discredited," *Barricada* said, summarizing Aráuz's comments. "Two leaders stole more than 40,000 córdobas and joined the counterrevolutionaries. Others have threatened to carry out a work stoppage . . . and others within the same leadership had already begun to take steps to affiliate to the CUS."

False rumors

In addition, dock workers told us that the old leaders tried to turn workers against the revolution by spreading false rumors. For example, last year they claimed that Nicaragua's sugar shortage was due to exports to Cuba (even though Cuba is the biggest sugar exporter in the world). After a boat docked in Corinto with 12,000 tons of sugar donated by Cuba to Nicaragua to help alleviate the shortage, the right wingers lost credibility.

Gilberto Siles Sánchez, the new union president, said the incoming leadership will draft a program to better the conditions for the workers. A key point will be to initiate a literacy campaign, "since 40 percent of the workers can't read or write." He said this was important "above all to prepare them to join in carrying out the tasks of the revolution."

Siles said he was concerned about the 14,000 tons of molasses waiting to be unloaded on the docks. The molasses is badly needed for Nicaragua's cattle, he explained.

"Corruption is definitely ended here," he

said. Getting back to the molasses, he explained that cranes are desperately needed to unload shipments like this, but they are very expensive. Most loading and unloading is dependent on sheer muscle power.

Another longshoreman piped in with the problems they were having unloading an important fertilizer shipment.

The new leadership, which includes old-

timers and young workers, like the president, realize the critical role they play in the economy as dock workers.

They are concerned about doing a good job. After four years of seeing the difference the Sandinista revolution has made, a substantial majority has been won over to it and are doing what they can, as longshoremen, to make sure it succeeds. □

Youth sign up for army

In response to law on Patriotic Military Service

By Jane Harris

SAN JACINTO — One hundred and twenty-seven years ago the armies of Central America united here to drive out an American slaveowner named William Walker, who had proclaimed himself president of Nicaragua, aiming to reestablish slavery throughout the region.

A fitting tribute to the heroes of that battle took place here, 30 miles north of Managua, September 14. Some 900 militants of the Sandinista Youth signed up for military service, becoming the first to do so under the new military service legislation.

The young men were sworn in less than 24 hours after the country's parliament approved the law.

Since early August the Patriotic Military Service law has become an excellent barometer of support and opposition to the Sandinista revolution.

The law affects all men between the ages of 18-40 and encourages the voluntary participation of women of the same age. Out of an estimated pool of 200,000, some 15,000 men between 18-25 will be selected for two consecutive years of military training.

Plans for such a law go back to before the July 1979 insurrection. The day after the overthrow of Somoza, the new government decreed that "the National Guard of Nicaragua will be replaced by a new national army of a patriotic character."

In the four years that followed, the country relied entirely on volunteers to create the basic structure and organization of a modern army. Now that that structure is in place it is possible, and indeed necessary, given the U.S. military offensive, to fill it out.

Yet, far from seeing this law as a step forward in professionalizing defense against the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries, several procapitalist sectors of Nicaraguan society openly oppose it. These include the Catholic church hierarchy, the Social-Christian and Conservative parties, and the reactionary Managua daily *La Prensa*.

Publicly they claim there is no difference between the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the government, and the army; that no one can be forced to take up arms in support of a political party; and that, therefore, no one can be forced to join the army.

Privately, however, what they would like to see is a successful imperialist military intervention that would remove workers and farmers from political power and restore to the rich their lost privileges.

The problem is that they cannot say this openly, because of the overwhelming popular support for the new defense measure.

One example of this support was evident in the northern city of Estelí September 9, at the fifth anniversary celebration of the founding of the Sandinista Defense Committees.

Commander Victor Tirado addressed the crowd. "I don't understand if it's a sin to defend this revolution," he said sarcastically, referring to the church hierarchy's position. "I don't understand if they are going to condemn it if we defend this revolution. But," he concluded, "I think we must defend this revolution even though we might be sinning."

Ten to fifteen thousand voices shouted back their agreement with chants of "¡Servicio Militar Patriótico!" and "¡No pasarán!" ("Patriotic Military Service!" and "They will not pass!")

Over the course of a month, the draft law was improved through broad-based discussions in unions, neighborhood committees, church groups, and in meetings organized by the Association of Nicaraguan Women (AMNLAE).

AMNLAE sisters won the right to active military service for women if they so choose. The original projection excluded them from this level of participation.

When the last of the law's 57 articles was approved September 13, no part of the right wing was to be found in the chambers of the Council of State. They had in fact boycotted most sessions discussing the law.

Also notably absent was the representative from the Independent Liberal Party (PLI). The PLI is a small, petty-bourgeois party that forms part of the Patriotic Revolutionary Front. It normally supports measures undertaken by the revolutionary government. On this key question, however, it went in a different direction.

The vast majority of Nicaraguans are grateful that now, besides having arms in hand, a good number of them will receive training in military science. □

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'Pinochet must go!'

Eyewitness report on national day of protest

By Jeff Hollander

SANTIAGO — September 8 marked the beginning of the fifth nationwide protest against the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Although isolated protests by students had been taking place in the center of Santiago every day since September 4 (the anniversary of the People's Unity election victory in 1970), it was on September 8 that everyone took part.

As night fell, the streets were taken over by the working-class youth of Santiago. It began — as had the previous four protests — with people banging pots in their homes. During the previous protests, the regime had declared a 6 p.m. curfew and enforced it with thousands of police and military; thus the pot-banging was the only way people could express their support for the protest without leaving their homes.

This time, however, there was no curfew, and at about 8 p.m. young people began coming out into the streets in the *campamentos* (shantytowns) and working-class *poblaciones* (neighborhoods). Fires were started with burning car tires; soon they were burning at every intersection and at intervals along the main street in the south Santiago barrio of Ñuñoa.

Barricades were thrown up. Cars were permitted to pass as long as they sounded their horns in time to the protest rhythm. But soon all traffic had halted.

As the groups of youths around the fires grew, banners were unfurled with the protest slogans: "Bread, work, justice, freedom" and "Out with Pinochet." Marches started spontaneously, moving from fire to fire. In half an hour I passed five or six such marches, ranging in size from 50 to about 400 participants. The great majority of the marchers were young, from 20 years old down to 7 or 8 years old, although there were a few older people as well.

As we passed the big apartment blocks, people came to the windows and banged pots in time with the slogans, "Somoza's already gone; Pinochet must go!" (*¡Si Somoza ya se fue que se vaya Pinochet!*) and "A people united will never be defeated." The marches converged on a huge roundabout, where the steel barrier fence made a good sounding board. With thousands of youths banging this rail with rocks, the noise was deafening.

Several times a busload of *carabineros* (national police) drove up and fired tear gas bombs. The demonstrators scattered, only to regroup as soon as the tear gas had dispersed. Even while the police were still there, the chants continued: "Murderers! Murderers!" A few stones were also thrown at their bus in self-defense.

Scenes like this were repeated in all the

working-class barrios of Santiago. In some districts, barricades were built against the police and battles of guns against stones took place. In many middle-class suburbs as well, the residents demonstrated their support for the protest by banging pots.

Regime shows its flag

The following day was the main government-organized celebration of the 1973 coup, cynically named the "Tenth Anniversary of National Liberation."

A huge propaganda campaign preceded this event, with hours of television time being devoted to advertising the supposed gains of the last 10 years. One example of this was an advertisement that claimed a reduction in child malnutrition, with statistics. This was actually achieved, it was explained to me, by changing the methods of calculating malnutrition.

But there were indeed many thousands of people at the pro-junta rally on the Avenida O'Higgins, a reminder that Pinochet still retains the support of a certain layer of the population. Present in the crowd were the armed forces, Pinochet's bourgeois supporters, and large contingents of rightist youth organized principally by the National Youth Secretariat, a government-sponsored organization. The regime's women's organization was also represented. Anticommunism was the battlecry of these groups.

In general, however, there was more interest in the counterdemonstration at the other end of the avenida out of sight of the television cameras. The counterdemonstration, while smaller than the government's rally, also attracted several thousand people. They were held back by several lines of *carabineros*. Wherever the *carabineros* were thinly spread, the counterdemonstrators began singing, "He's going to fall, he's going to fall, the fascist Pinochet."

Groups of young rightists paraded among the counterdemonstrators holding portraits of Pinochet and waving the Chilean flag, under the careful guard of the *carabineros*. But whenever they began to chant, their voices were drowned out by the whistles and jeers of the counterdemonstrators.

Further back from the avenida, groups of antigovernment protesters kept up a running battle with the police for the duration of the celebrations. Groups of demonstrators would gather at an intersection and begin chanting. When enough had gathered to fill the street, they would begin moving toward the avenida. Occasionally fires would be lit in the streets. Soon a gang of cops would arrive and break up the group with baton charges and tear gas. The

demonstrators would scatter, shouting, "murderers," and regroup at another location. This pattern was repeated time and again.

Arrests and abductions

The repression continued unabated in the days following the protest of September 8. It is common to see a busload of *carabineros* in the working-class *poblaciones*, conducting house-to-house searches and making arrests.

The unofficial arrests and abductions by the National Information Center (CNI), the hated secret police, also continue. Rodolfo Seguel, leader of Chile's copper miners and a popular opposition figure, was once again imprisoned the day after he attended a protest and publicly expressed his solidarity. Seguel immediately began a hunger strike in prison.

In protest against the continuing repression, the Democratic Alliance, a grouping of bourgeois opposition parties, broke off its dialogue with the government.

Protests of a spontaneous nature continued each night, and to a lesser extent during the day as well, throughout the next several days. Barricades and bonfires were built in some quarters, especially in the south and west districts of Santiago. Busloads of police parked in strategic locations in the concentrations of working-class housing kept an uneasy peace. But pot-banging, gunfire, and tear gas bombs could be heard every night in different quarters.

Protests of a similar kind were held in just about every city, from Arica in the north to Osorno in the south. In some areas, youths began attacking liquor stores and any unguarded buildings associated with the government, such as the headquarters of the regime's women's organization.

Commemoration in San Miguel

A scene I witnessed in San Miguel, a predominantly working-class suburb of South Santiago, was perhaps typical. On the morning of Sunday, September 11 (the anniversary of the coup), in a block of workers' apartments near a local market, a youth climbed a flagpole and hoisted a Chilean flag, to which a portrait of Salvador Allende had been attached. It was flown at half-mast. He placed a sign at the foot of the pole that read, "To all our *compañeros* who fell in 1973."

Within minutes, a crowd of several hundred gathered and began clapping and chanting, "You can feel it, you can feel it, Allende is here," as well as other slogans.

Present in the crowd were a number of women dressed in black, widows of the 1973 coup. Unlike most of the previous protests I had seen, this one drew the active support of people of all generations. It is unusual on such occasions for any individual to make a speech, for fear of arrest and torture afterwards. But on this occasion one person, an old man of 70 years, did speak. He and his wife had been arrested by the CNI following the previous month's protest. Like many others who are abducted by the CNI, he was tortured with elec-

tric shocks. For several weeks after his release, he had appeared dazed and deranged.

Following his speech, the youth who had raised the flag began a chant to which the crowd responded:

"Compañero Salvador Allende!"

"He's here!"

"Now . . ."

". . . and forever!"

"Who killed him?"

"Fascism!"

"Who will win?"

"The people!"

"How?"

"By fighting and creating people's power!"

It was an impressive and moving commemoration of the events of 10 years ago. The protest continued peacefully in this way, with

clapping and slogans, until half an hour later, when a busload of police arrived and began firing tear gas into the crowd. For the next half hour or so a battle raged back and forth, with lines of police making baton charges and firing tear gas, while groups of youths threw stones and shouted epithets. Only when the police began firing their guns did the protesters finally disperse. □

France

Racist danger signal in local election

Bourgeois parties form alliance with neo-fascists

By Will Reissner

Far-right forces in France won an important victory, with national repercussions, in municipal elections on September 11 in Dreux, a small city west of Paris.

Dreux came to national attention after the first round of the municipal elections, held September 4, when Jean-Pierre Stirbois of the neo-fascist National Front won more than 16 percent of the vote. Stirbois' campaign focused on rabid hostility to immigrant workers, who make up one-quarter of Dreux's population. The immigrant workers are concentrated in large housing projects on the outskirts of town.

The National Front's strong showing in Dreux came on the heels of an 11 percent vote for National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen in a March election in one Paris district.

Main bourgeois parties join in

But what made the situation in Dreux especially noteworthy was the decision by the two main bourgeois parties — the Gaullist Assembly for the Republic (RPR) and former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's French Democratic Union (UDF) — to form a joint slate with the National Front in the second round.

Until the September elections, Dreux's local government had been controlled since 1977 by the Socialist Party-Communist Party coalition that governs nationally. In local elections held in March, the SP candidate won a narrow victory, but a court ruling invalidated that result, forcing a new election in September.

This time, the SP-CP coalition was hard hit by abstentions among working-class voters who were angry at the Mitterrand government's austerity programs and its attacks on living standards.

More than 32 percent of Dreux's eligible voters stayed away from the polls in the first round, and the abstention rate reached 50 percent in some working-class neighborhoods. As a result, the rightist parties received nearly 60 percent of the vote in the first round, while the SP candidate got 40.6 percent.

In the week between the two rounds, the left in Dreux went on a campaign to bring out the working-class voters. This campaign was partially successful, with the SP candidate receiving nearly 1,000 more votes in the second round and upping his share of the total to 44.7 percent. It was not, however, enough to turn the tide.

The willingness of the main bourgeois parties to align themselves openly with the racist National Front is an indication of the extent to which French politics are becoming polarized. While a few well-known bourgeois political figures dissociated themselves from the Dreux coalition, most did not.

Policies encourage racism

The National Front's success in winning votes by emphasizing racist attacks on immigrant workers was made easier by the policies carried out by the Mitterrand government and the Socialist and Communist parties.

After its election in 1981, the Mitterrand government backed away from a campaign pledge to allow immigrant workers to vote in local elections. With the votes of immigrant workers in Dreux, the SP-CP coalition would have won a big victory.

In addition, in the face of growing unemployment, the government has responded with its own attacks on immigrant workers, emboldening the ultrarightists.

On August 31, days before the first round voting in Dreux, the Mitterrand government announced measures to round up illegal immigrants, and Mitterrand himself told the council of ministers that "we must send home the illegal immigrants." These round-ups simply played into the hands of racist claims that immigrant workers are responsible for unemployment and take jobs away from French workers.

The French Communist Party's campaign in recent years against imports and to "buy French and produce in France" also lays the blame for unemployment on foreigners and thereby provides ammunition to the right

wing's racist campaigns. Moreover, CP-administered municipalities have themselves led highly publicized attacks on immigrant workers, including the bulldozing of immigrant housing in the Paris suburb of Vitry.

During recent workers struggles in Citroën and Talbot auto plants, high-ranking members of the Mitterrand government attacked the immigrant workers who were leading the struggles. Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, for example, charged that the immigrant workers were being manipulated by foreign political and religious groups. Interior Minister Gaston Defferre claimed the workers were under the sway of Muslim fundamentalists from Iran, even though the bulk of the strikers were Algerians and Moroccans, who follow a different branch of Islam and speak Arabic rather than Persian.

Rehabilitating colonialism

As Jean Lantier noted in the September 9 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International, Mitterrand's decision to carry out a neocolonial military intervention in Chad has also stoked the fires of the rightist parties by "rehabilitating colonialism as a national value."

In the September 16 issue of *Rouge*, Lantier noted that in Dreux "even at the last minute, against the right that was allied with the National Front through racism, the representatives of the majority defended the halt to immigration and justified the repressive measures against the 'clandestine' immigrants. That is, they allowed themselves to fall into the right wing's crude trap, making immigration the central problem."

Many Dreux residents, however, have shown they are anxious to fight the ultraright. On the evening the second round results were announced, hundreds gathered at the city hall to show their opposition to the racist campaign waged by the right-wing parties. French and immigrant workers and members of the Socialist Party, Communist Party, and Revolu-

tionary Communist League staged such a spirited demonstration that Stirbois was unwilling to show his face.

This turn-out, Lantier wrote, shows that "in the face of the mounting perils, there are hundreds in Dreux who are taking or returning to the road of daily struggle against the exactions

of the right and its unions, to show that the city is not on its knees and has no intention of bending to the racist fantasies and the municipal dictatorship" of Stirbois and his allies in the bourgeois parties.

Lantier added that "we must take the antiracist struggle seriously, just as we take the racist

offensive seriously. The battle has not been lost on the first skirmish. It will be long and exacting, a constant task. But it will be necessary to explain and explain again in the neighborhoods and the workplaces that the unity of the working class is the best bulwark against racism." □

South Africa

'Our bases are the ordinary people'

Interview with ANC President Oliver Tambo

[The following are excerpts from an interview with Oliver Tambo, president of the African National Congress (ANC), the foremost liberation movement in South Africa. It was obtained in July by the Mozambique Information Agency and reprinted in the September 16 issue of the Amsterdam fortnightly news service *Facts and Reports*, from which we have taken these excerpts.]

[An editorial in the August 9 Johannesburg *Star*, one of South Africa's major white-run newspapers, characterized the interview as "one of the most important declarations of ANC policy and strategy in recent times." It also noted that the interview had been banned by the South African censors.]

* * *

Question. After the Pretoria car bomb¹ there was much talk of a change in strategy on the part of the ANC. Has there really been any change?

Answer. There has been no change in strategy at all. I think that, perhaps, the idea of a change in strategy arose from the fact that the headquarters of the South African Airforce was an unfamiliar target: unfamiliar because it has been the policy of the regime to conceal the casualties they suffer in the conflicts we have had with them over a period of years now. For example, our rocket attack on the headquarters of the South African Defence Force in 1981 inflicted a great deal of damage, and there must have been so many casualties that steps were taken to suppress all information about it. The result was that the Pretoria bomb comes as something very new and suggests a change in strategy.

But there could be no change in strategy because there has been no change in the factors that constitute the basis of our strategy. That is why the Pretoria bomb attack must be seen

1. On May 20, fighters from the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), detonated a powerful car bomb outside a building in Pretoria that houses the air force command, air force intelligence, and prisons department. According to the regime's figures, 18 people were killed and about 190 wounded, many of them air force and military personnel.



OLIVER TAMBO

simply as an instance of intensifying our action in the light of the continued intransigence of the apartheid system and of the brutality manifested in the methods used to maintain that system.

Q. The ANC was criticised for the Pretoria bomb explosion [because] of the death of "innocent civilians," including Blacks. How would you respond to these criticisms?

A. First, let me make it quite clear that the struggle which the ANC is leading is not a struggle in which we see people as our enemy, least of all civilians. We are not setting out to wipe out civilians. We are setting out to wipe out the enemy forces, the defenders of the system of apartheid, certainly the armed ones, those who maintain the instruments of oppression. So naturally, it must be a matter of regret that civilians were injured, some of them fatally.

But I know of no war, no situation of conflict, which did not result in injuries to the innocent. The innocent were injured by the

apartheid system itself, and as our struggle intensifies more innocent people are going to get hurt.

Having said that, let me add that the criticism you mention is not made by the oppressed sections of our population, the majority. They were jubilant over this action. The exploited masses accepted that those of them who died were simply casualties in a situation in which the enemy forces have been attacked, which happens in most conflicts. We suffer casualties, the enemy takes casualties.

It is important to recognise that this action was hailed by the majority of our people because the regime had created the impression that it is only Blacks, the oppressed, who die even in the attempt to bring about justice in South Africa. So they saw this as a very welcome sign of the fact that all South Africans have got to carry the burden of liberating that country.

But who are the critics? Well, the regime invaded Maseru² and killed a number of civilians there, women and children. We were informed that 86 percent of the white population in South Africa rejoiced over that event, applauded the government's action: yet civilians had been killed. It is from those people that the criticism of the ANC comes.

Equally, when there was an attack in Matola in 1981,³ leaders of the white opposition parties in South Africa heartily congratulated the regime on that massacre.

And it is significant that the criticism that the ANC action resulted in the death of civilians is not addressed also to the killing of civilians in Mozambique by the South African Airforce in its recent raid on Matola.⁴ They killed a child, an unborn child and its mother, they killed workers, they killed civilians. There

2. South African commandos raided ANC refugee houses in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, on Dec. 9, 1982, killing 30 South African refugees and 12 Lesotho citizens.

3. Twelve ANC members were killed during a South African raid against ANC refugee houses in January 1981 in Matola, a suburb of the capital of Mozambique, Maputo.

4. On May 23, three days after the car bomb was set off in Pretoria.

wasn't a word of criticism about that. In fact the South African regime declared that they don't care if civilians were killed in the attack on Matola. So what is this criticism all about? It is part of psychological warfare.

Q. Then, in your view, the criticism itself is laden with racism?

A. It is, because, after all, thousands of Africans have been killed by the South African regime all over southern Africa, in Angola and Namibia, in Zimbabwe, in Mozambique, in Lesotho, in Botswana and in South Africa itself. They were civilians. Soweto children are civilians.⁵ Yet they were shot by soldiers. This is happening in South Africa all the time, but no one ever complains about these civilians.

A lot of crocodile tears are being shed about the Black civilians in Pretoria. One is entitled to ask — when have Africans been considered civilians in the South African context? The clamour about Blacks being killed is merely an attempt to [turn] the oppressed against the ANC, a fruitless attempt because our people understand perfectly what is happening.

Defence Minister [Magnus] Malan says he is going to avenge every drop of blood, whether it is the blood of a black or of a white person. Well, he didn't avenge the death of the Soweto children, or of those killed at Sharpeville [in 1960]. No one had been punished for that, no one has been taken to court for those massacres.

As I have said, the ANC and its struggle are not about civilians — though I must confess that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a civilian in the South African situation, because Malan is calling every white person to

The ANC is encouraging our white compatriots to come into the struggle . . .

arms. This is creating a complicated situation for those who want to distinguish between army, police force, and simple civilians. But the ANC will remain committed to avoiding the impression that civilians are the enemy in our struggle.

Q. Would you then say that the regime, by arming white civilians, is using them, not only as its ideological and social base, but also as a kind of buffer zone between itself and the ANC?

A. Exactly. The regime is fighting with its back to the wall and it is pulling in white civilians as cannon-fodder. And they say so. They say it is the civilians who must tackle the guerrillas first and the army will come later.

It should be the army which protects the

civilians if they are in any danger — but the civilians are being drawn in to be “the first line of defence.” Malan uses that expression.

That is creating problems. What are these civilians defending? They are defending a criminal, inhuman system. Do they really want to?

Anyway, if they take up arms — and the law says they must — then that introduces limitations on our definition of who is a civilian. The ANC hopes that the movement to refuse to serve in the defence of apartheid will grow, and that the bulk of the white population will refuse to take up arms to defend a system which belongs to the past, a system that is going to collapse anyway.

Q. Has the ANC got mechanisms to act upon the contradictions of the white community?

A. Yes. How effective we are is difficult to say, but it is part of our strategy to get the white community to understand what the issues are.

We work under the disability that the ANC is banned. Our statements do not reach the white public, which is suffocated with lies about the South African situation. They are being misled, deliberately, constantly, consistently. They live in something of a false world. The ANC must break through this barricade, this laager⁶ which has been formed around the white population in terms of information, in terms of knowledge about the realities of our time. We are quite convinced that contradictions of a very serious nature are beginning to surface, are beginning to emerge among the ranks of the oppressing class.

Q. Are there already many whites who are becoming patriots, in the sense of believing in one South African nation, free from all racial discrimination?

A. Many whites are becoming patriots in that sense. Many more are refusing to serve the old order, and are therefore leaving the country or otherwise dodging the draft. Many of these subscribe to the principles embodied in our Freedom Charter, and they see in the Freedom Charter the hope of a different kind of South Africa, a peaceful South Africa as distinct from a South Africa of a mounting, worsening conflict.

This is part of our battle area — to isolate the core of reaction and to get the whites to move into positions of support for the struggle to bring about a new order in our country.

Q. Liberation movements, in southern Africa and elsewhere, have made major contributions to wiping out hundreds of years of racial preconceptions inherent in colonisation. Is the ANC, in its internal composition

and way in which it operates, already an example of what a future anti-racist South Africa could look like?

A. Yes, increasingly so. We think that the South Africa of the future is not created after a certain date. We think it has to grow organically. As our struggle develops, it begins to manifest itself in the forces that are participating in that struggle for a new South Africa, a nonracial South Africa. It should be the forces of nonracialism that in fact take over, instead

The struggle for liberation is the struggle of the workers . . .

of creating nonracialism afterwards. And this is the trend in our struggle.

The ANC is encouraging our white compatriots to come into the struggle, to be part of it. Some are very much part of it already.

The struggle itself is the embryo of the new South Africa. It is creating the new South Africa as it advances. It has to be like that.

Q. The apartheid government's military intelligence was undoubtedly aware that there are no ANC bases in Matola, or elsewhere in Mozambique for that matter. Why then do you think they launched their air raid on Matola?

A. The target was the minds of their supporters. This was to divert the attention of the white population in South Africa away from the real cause of the Pretoria explosion, to point to a false cause, Mozambique, the ANC somewhere in Mozambique. And that being the purpose, they did not even have to find the ANC. They simply had to execute an act, and then go to the public and say, “we have killed 64 terrorists.” They knew that they had not done anything of the sort. This was a psychological action for the benefit of the shocked white population.

The correct question was: what caused the Pretoria bomb? And the correct answer was not Maputo or Matola or even the ANC — because why did the ANC do it? The correct answer is in the whole system. One of the journalists did ask that question: What makes people carry out this kind of action? What is the matter with our system? That was the correct question.

It has been part of the regime's defence strategy to suggest that there is perfect peace, calm, stability and contentment within South Africa. Everybody is satisfied with everything: the only trouble comes from the outside, from neighbouring countries, or from the ANC which, for them, is something different from the masses of the people, something external to the people of South Africa. South Africa is all perfect. All the trouble comes from outside, from this “total onslaught” which is being promoted by the Soviet Union. That is their explanation all the time.

Therefore, when an explosion occurs inside,

5. During the massive youth rebellions that began in Soweto in June 1976, police killed at least 600 Blacks, most of them young.

6. An Afrikaans word for a protective wagon encampment used by early white settlers during their wars against the Zulu, Xhosa, and other indigenous peoples of South Africa.

hurting even a lot of innocent people, the regime must react in terms of this legend, that the problem comes from outside. Therefore, attack outside. They have been doing this all the time, and they had to be consistent. I think that this myth about the ANC having bases in neighbouring countries will soon be disproved by reality.

Q. Since the ANC has no bases in Mozambique, where then does it have its bases?

A. In South Africa. A base for the ANC does not mean a place where you have an army and equipment in an independent country, and you go away and you come back there. We don't have that. Any such bases are inside South Africa, secret places to go to, we go in and out of, secret places from which we do our reconnaissance of targets and to which we return.

Our bases are the ordinary people themselves, who are at work every day, who are cadres of our army. And a lot of training is going on in the country, not of the best sort naturally, in those conditions, but there are a lot of cadres around. They carry out these actions.

A bomb explodes in Pretoria. The activists have never even come out of South Africa. They are trained in there, but the regime comes to Mozambique. Our bases are inside South Africa. The regime knows this. But of course they never concede it — except that now and then they find small caches of arms. Well, who are those intended for? The people who use these arms, when the time comes, are in South Africa.

Q. Many observers feel that in South Africa the ANC is opening new forms of military and political struggle without models ready to hand, notably with respect to urban guerrilla warfare. Could you comment on this? Secondly, do you consider workers' struggles and those of community groups to be more important than guerrilla struggle at this stage, or do they all have equal weight in the overall struggle?

A. First of all, I think that although guerrilla struggles have been guided by certain models and have reflected a certain pattern, that did not alter the essential fact about guerrilla warfare — which is that it adapts to the objective and even subjective conditions in which it is being carried out. It must take into account and modify the situation that obtains.

Now it so happens that the other liberation movements have had the benefit of revolutionary rear bases provided by independent countries who were ready to provide camps and so on where the guerrillas could develop themselves, and after a period begin to clear liberated areas.

In our situation, we are governed by the reality that the countries which have borders with South Africa do not have the possibility to provide us with bases, to give us revolutionary support to the extent that other liberation movements, virtually all of them, received.

This affects our strategy. We must develop a strategy and tactics which correspond to our real situation. That is why there would be features in our struggle which have not been observed elsewhere. It is simply because we have had to adjust to our own conditions.

One of these conditions is, of course, that we have had to develop tremendous striking power, because the system is strong and it will take really heavy blows to destroy it.

Also, because we could not rely on bases outside South Africa, we had to place more reliance on the popular masses in the country.



Black gold miners. "It is not enough to have a militant working class: it has to be well organized."

We have had, as part of our struggle, to develop political organisation and mass mobilisation, and do this with concentration and consistency, building this political base to replace a base outside the country.

So I think it is possibly true that the level of political activity inside South Africa, the level of mass mobilisation, is higher than in most countries where liberation wars were fought except, perhaps, towards the end when victory was in sight.

Our country is highly industrialised. The oppressed population is the proletariat, the working people. The struggle for liberation is a struggle of the workers, who constitute the proletariat. They constitute the most powerful contingent in our struggle, and we have had to devote attention to their organisation and mobilisation. It is clear to us, as it is to the enemy, that it is not enough to have a militant working class: it has to be well organised. This process of organisation is developing rapidly. And it is clear to us, as it is to the enemy, that the workers, the Black workers especially, constitute a force that could pose a serious threat to the regime.

But we don't see this as having exclusive

importance. The armed struggle is indispensable, but strategically it would be a terrible mistake to rely on armed struggle alone. In our situation we have to attach equal importance, at this stage, to organising the exploited workers, organising the oppressed masses. Therefore we operate on three fronts: the labour front, the front of mass popular actions, as well as the front of armed actions.

Q. Is there an organic link between these three?

A. There is. Over the years we have developed this organic link and we think they knit together to constitute a force which the enemy will find very difficult to contain.

Q. Would you, then, say that the regime, as well as the more conservative forces around the regime, can no longer make an absolute separation between trade union struggles and the national liberation struggle?

A. That is no longer possible. They have become part of the same broad front of action.

Q. What about guerrilla struggle in the rural areas? Is the ANC also developing armed actions there?

A. Yes, that is developing. Of course, the trouble about that is that there is a policy which bars any disclosures about what is happening in this area of armed struggle. So activities in remote areas would not get known until they reach a certain level of intensity. Then they become public knowledge.

This is developing also because the Bantustans⁷ are a real injustice. People understand that the enemy is not even the administrations set up there. They are obviously brutal agents of the regime, but the people understand that the real enemy is the Pretoria regime.

Q. The ANC's political and military actions in the rural areas include also the Bantustans?

A. Largely so far in elaborating our strategies and tactics. In the Bantustans our action is largely political, because we don't want to conduct a struggle between the oppressed

We have to develop tremendous striking power, because the system is strong . . .

people. The Bantustans are largely populated by the discarded, who are a potential force in the struggle against the regime. They are

7. The ten impoverished and geographically fragmented rural reserves that are set aside for African occupation. They cover a bare 13.7 percent of South Africa's entire land area, and are administered by tribal chiefs and other African officials appointed and paid by the apartheid regime.

squeezed there in a small portion of the country in their millions, starving there.

There is vast territory which is reserved for the whites, where the enemy is exercising direct control. We want to conduct an armed struggle where the enemy is — which is outside the Bantustans.

In the Bantustans you do have these administrations, which may be forced to defend the apartheid system, and to that extent they bring themselves up against the wrath of the masses. But that is not really our starting point, to engage the oppressed among themselves. Even

We have the initiative in broad strategic terms . . .

these Bantustan leaders, who are traitors, have been created by the main enemy.

The Bantustans are ground largely for political organisation and for preparing our armed struggle, for strengthening it. A number of people from the Bantustans are in our armed forces, and they come precisely because they rejected the Bantustans and because of the conditions there. There is a lot of work along these lines, political organisation which leads to participation in our armed actions.

Q. What is your assessment of P.W. Botha's "reforms"?⁸ Are they a sign that Pretoria has lost the initiative?

A. I think so. I think Botha is on the defensive. These reforms do not arise from a change of heart. They are an adjustment to a new reality which consists in the ever-growing effectiveness of the liberation struggle. I am not talking now only about the pressure from the masses in South Africa, but also about the other development in southern Africa, the struggle in Namibia, international pressures, the growing isolation of the regime. Botha himself said that it was necessary to adapt to the new reality. That meant that they were going onto the defensive.

Of course, they are going about it in a very zig-zag kind of way. Why are they called "reforms"? They are reforms maybe in form, in so far as there is the changing of the wording of the constitution and other things, but in substance there is no change. Still, the fact that Botha has to manipulate the constitution, the fact that he has to recruit from the Black community, and try and win over Indians and the so-called Coloureds, means that he is in desperate need of their support.

The situation has changed against him. The Indians and Coloureds are not forthcoming,

8. Botha's plan to change the constitution to provide for the establishment of three separate parliaments, one for whites (as now exists) plus one each for the Coloured (those of mixed ancestry) and Indian sectors of the Black population. Its purpose is to shore up white rule by winning the collaboration of prominent Coloured and Indian figures and by sowing divisions within the Black population as a whole.

because they also understand that Botha has lost the initiative, that he is on the defensive. He is trying to use them to defend the very system they have been fighting against.

Because of these pressures, contradictions have emerged in the ranks of the ruling class, again making Botha's task increasingly difficult.

We have the initiative in broad strategic terms, and what is required is simply that we intensify our offensive. Indeed, the fact that Botha has had to shift his ground is a challenge, an opportunity for the forces for change to step up the offensive and keep them on the run.

That's how we see the so-called reforms. They are not reforms, and precisely because of that they are being rejected, and it is easy for our people to reject them. But they do indicate a feeling on the part of the regime that they can't continue ruling in the old way, they've got to change at least the outer forms of the

way they are ruling. And this change is not being accepted.

Q. Basically, then, apartheid cannot be reformed . . .

A. It is not possible. You either have apartheid or you don't. You can't amend it from the top.

Q. How do you see the contradictions within the regime?

A. Once they reach a position when they can't continue in the old way, then these contradictions arise. Some are feeling that they will be destroyed if they change nothing. Others feel that they will be destroyed if they change anything. So that's a crisis that has overtaken them, and I think it is going to lead to splits and sub-splits.

Objectively, they are being broken apart by the pressure of the revolutionary struggle. □

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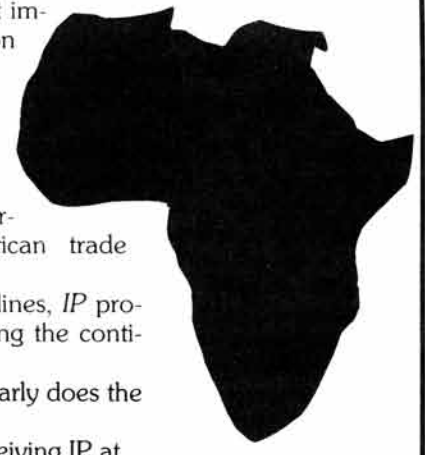
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Washington maintains colonial rule

'Compact' votes keep U.S. military control intact

By Will Reissner

The Pentagon will retain a big military presence in the more than 2,000 Micronesian Islands of the southwest Pacific for at least the next half century under the terms of agreements worked out with three of the four Micronesian island groups this year.

On September 7, residents of the Marshall Islands voted to accept a "Compact of Free Association" with the United States. The vote was 58 percent in favor. This agreement gives the islanders a measure of internal self-rule but gives Washington "full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters."

Under the agreement, Washington will also have a veto over Marshall Islands foreign relations that it judges "to be incompatible with its authority and responsibility for security and defense matters."

Voters in the Federated States of Micronesia approved a similar compact in June, and those in Belau accepted "free association" in February. In 1975 the fourth island group, the Northern Marianas Islands, became a U.S.-ruled "commonwealth," with a status similar to that of Puerto Rico.

Washington spent huge sums of money to convince voters in the three groups to accept colonial status — "free association" — rather than independence.

Nuclear testing site

The Micronesian islands have been under U.S. control since their capture from the Japanese in World War II. Although since 1947 they have officially been United Nations Trust Territories, the islands have nonetheless been ruled directly from Washington by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

After World War II, the Pentagon set up military bases throughout Micronesia and more than 60 nuclear tests were conducted on the islands. Residents of a number of islands in the Marshalls group were forcibly moved from their homes to clear their islands for atomic testing. Six islands were blasted off the face of the earth and others were rendered uninhabitable by radiation contamination.

Although testing of nuclear bombs in Micronesia ended in 1963, the islands remain a key element in the Pentagon's nuclear testing programs. Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands is the target for missile test firings from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, some 4,200 miles away. Kwajalein's lagoon was the target for the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) tests, and on June 17 the first MX missile, bearing a dummy warhead, was fired at Kwajalein.

Nineteen more MX missiles, dubbed the

"Peacemaker" by President Reagan, are scheduled to be aimed at Kwajalein in the next four years.

In order to turn Kwajalein into the receiving end of the missile range, the Pentagon removed the residents, replacing them with more than 2,000 U.S. military personnel and technicians. While the U.S. personnel live on Kwajalein in conditions akin to those in a prosperous mainland suburb, more than 8,000 Marshallese have been herded onto neighboring Ebeye Island, which is smaller than New York's Central Park.

Conditions on Ebeye's 66 acres are an international scandal. The population is totally dependent on U.S.-supplied food for survival, and lives with polluted water supplies and inadequate sewage facilities.

U.S. military bases

In addition to the Kwajalein missile range site, the Pentagon has other major installations in Micronesia. When Washington rushed through the 1975 "commonwealth" agreement with the Northern Marianas Islands, which was rejected by the other three groups, the Pentagon got a 100-year lease on two-thirds of the island of Tinian, the site of a large U.S. naval and air base. During World War II, U.S. bombers took off from Tinian to carry out the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Under the 1975 agreement, the U.S. government pays the North Marianas about \$10

per acre per year to rent the Tinian base.

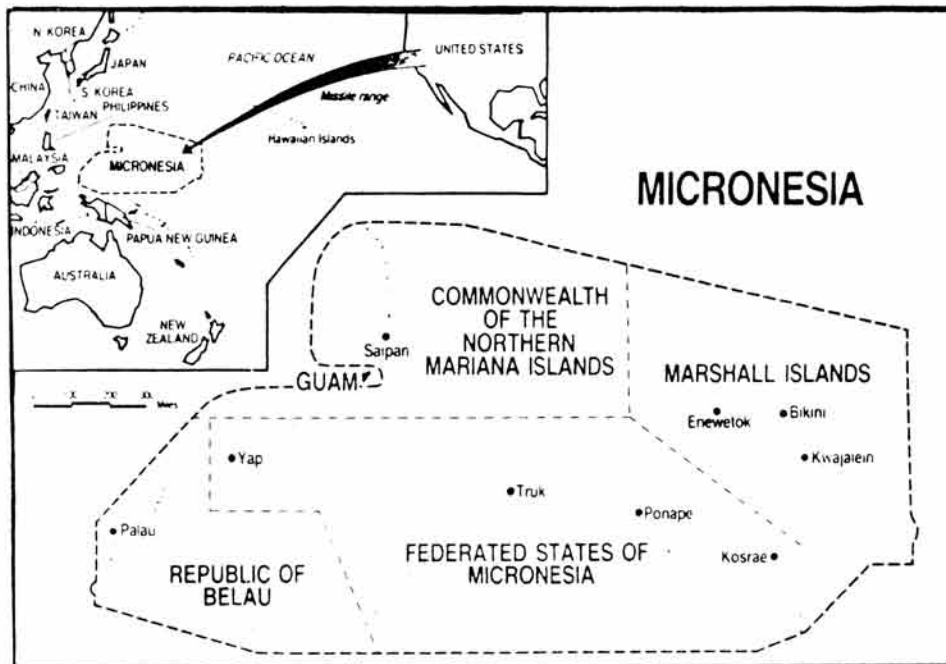
The Pentagon also plans to build a major military base and staging area in Belau, which lies 500 miles east of the Philippines. This facility is viewed as particularly important by Pentagon planners because mounting working-class struggles in the Philippines could imperil continued use of the gigantic U.S. bases there.

In return for about \$20 million annually in economic aid to Belau, the Pentagon plans to construct a Trident submarine base, establish a 30,000-acre jungle warfare training base, expand two airfields for use by military planes, and use a 2,000-acre site for storage of nuclear and conventional weapons.

In all, the Pentagon plans to take over for its own use one-third of Belau's land area.

Some of these plans were called into question by a February 10 vote in Belau. Although residents approved a Compact of Free Association at that time, one section of which specifically allows the United States to maintain nuclear weapons on the islands, the voters also upheld the section of Belau's constitution that bans all testing and storage of such weapons on Belau's territory.

On July 1, Belau and the United States signed a compromise treaty permitting U.S. nuclear warships to use Belauan waters but prohibiting storage of nuclear weapons on Belauan territory. A similar U.S. treaty with Japan has imposed no restrictions on U.S. nuclear weapons in that country because the Pen-



tagon maintains that as a matter of policy it never discloses whether a plane or ship is carrying nuclear weapons.

Washington shuns responsibility

As a result of the vote for "free association" in the Marshall Islands on September 7, Washington has been relieved of legal responsibility for damages to Marshallese caused by the two decades of nuclear testing there.

Four billion dollars in claims had been filed against the U.S. government by Marshallese who suffered personal or property damage as a result of the 66 nuclear explosions on

Eniwetok and Bikini atolls. In 1954, radioactive ash from an explosion showered three islands in the group, affecting 236 Marshallese, 28 Americans, and 22 Japanese crew members of a fishing vessel in the area. One of the Japanese fishermen died of his radiation burns in the incident.

Since then, islanders exposed to the ash have suffered significantly higher rates of miscarriage, thyroid tumors, cancers, and leukemia.

Other Marshall Islanders have also been exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. In 1970, residents of the Bikini Atoll were al-

lowed to return to their home islands, from which they had been moved in 1946 to open the way for 23 nuclear tests. But eight years after their return, they were again evacuated when it was decided that radiation levels were still too high for safety.

As part of the "Free Association" agreement, the U.S. government's responsibility for damages is limited to proceeds from a \$150 million trust fund for victims of the testing. But as Glenn Alcalay of the National Association of Atomic Veterans points out, "we don't know how many generations will suffer genetic damage from the tests." □

DOCUMENTS

Pacific islanders demand independence

Conference condemns nuclear testing, imperialist domination

[The following declaration was adopted by the fourth Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Conference meeting in Vanuatu July 10-20.

[Attending the conference were 160 delegates representing organizations in 33 countries, including most of the Pacific Island nations and territories as well as organizations of indigenous peoples of New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and Canada.

[The delegates participated in a demonstration of 3,000 at the French embassy in Port Vila, demanding unconditional independence for the French colonies of New Caledonia and French Polynesia and an end to French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

[Barak Sope, a member of the Vanuatu parliament, told the conference, "As long as Tahiti, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, East Timor, and West Papua are still colonized, the Pacific cannot become a nuclear-free and independent zone. Our total support must be given to our brothers and sisters who are still in the chains of the colonial powers."

[The text of the declaration is taken from the September 9 issue of *Socialist Action*, a revolutionary socialist fortnightly published in Auckland, New Zealand.]

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As the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Movement, we see the Pacific peoples' struggle for self-determination and independence as inseparable from the struggle to attain a nuclear-free Pacific.

In the conference deliberations we reaffirmed the goals and aims of "The People's Charter for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific" [adopted at the First Nuclear-Free Pacific conference in Suva, Fiji, in 1975].

We commend the newly-independent government of Vanuatu, a member of the Non-Aligned Nations, for its leadership in supporting the rights of indigenous people of the

Pacific in their struggle to end all forms of oppression.

We pledge our solidarity with the courageous peoples of East Timor, and West Papua in their struggle for self-determination and independence from Indonesian colonisation.

We uphold and support the demands of the Kanak Independence Front of New Caledonia and their efforts towards Kanak Socialist Independence in September 1984.

We set as an immediate priority, the placement of East Timor and New Caledonia on the United Nations agenda for decolonisation and commit ourselves to pressure our governments to vote in favour of East Timor and New Caledonia at the United Nations.

We recognise the sovereignty of the people of "French" Polynesia and their inalienable right to determine their future. We demand that the French government immediately cease and unconditionally abandon its nuclear testing in "French" Polynesia.

This conference also recognises the right of self-determination of the Aboriginal, Maori, native Hawaiian, North American Indian and Chamorro people [of Guam] and condemns the racist policies of the Australian, New Zealand, U.S., and Canadian governments toward the native people of those countries.

We firmly oppose the haste in which plebiscites on the Compact of Free Association have been held in Micronesia and object to the long-term military agreements in the Compact as well as attempts by the U.S. to undermine the Palau Constitution's nuclear ban.

We reaffirm our opposition to uranium mining and support the indigenous North Americans and Australian Aborigines in opposing the exploitation of their traditional lands. We call for a global moratorium on uranium mining and the whole nuclear cycle so that an investigation can be conducted by the UN on the devastating effect on the lands and lives of indigenous people throughout the world, and

support the blockade of the Roxby Downs uranium mine site in South Australia.

We demand that the Japanese government abandon its waste dumping plan, and we will expand our opposition to plans by the U.S. and Japan to dump nuclear waste in the Pacific by adopting and circulating an international protest petition to the Japanese Prime Minister protesting nuclear waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean.

We pledge to monitor activities on the deployment of weapons and weapons systems in the Pacific. We strongly condemn the deployment of nuclear weapons systems into the Pacific, especially the Tomahawk Cruise missile. We support the efforts of the Kwajalein landowners of the Marshall Islands to stop the MX and other missile testing on their lands and the restoration of the land to the rightful owners.

We also support the indigenous peoples of Canada in the opposition to the testing of the cruise missile on their alienated lands. We not only fear the potential hazards of such weapons systems and the potential for nuclear attack, we also oppose the displacement of the Pacific peoples for the establishment of such systems.

We are firmly opposed to the increased conventional war preparations by the U.S., Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Canada. To this end we will coordinate international protests against the RIMPAC 1984 military exercises scheduled for March in Hawaii. In particular, we oppose the bombing of the sacred and culturally significant island of Kaho'olawe during these exercises, and will pressure the participating governments to decline U.S. invitations to these exercises.

We will work to develop opposition to the military alliances in the Pacific region which reinforce the neocolonial domination of our people, such as Anzus and the U.S.-Japan Security Pact.

We uphold the Filipino people's demand for

the immediate and unconditional dismantling of all U.S. military installations in the Philippines which could serve as springboards for U.S. intervention in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. We oppose U.S. economic, political, and military domination of the Philippines.

We also recognise the liberation struggles of our Pacific neighbours in Central America and call for an end to all U.S. economic and military aid to the military juntas of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. We condemn U.S. efforts to destabilise Nicaragua.

We have come together in this conference to share our experiences, exchange our views, and learn from one another. We have forged

strong bonds for a united front against the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear and conventional weapons systems in the Pacific. We thank the people and government of Vanuatu for the warm hospitality, generous support, and inspiration that they have given us. They have inspired us with a vision of what can be accomplished through united efforts.

We stand in solidarity with each other in our common struggle for self-determination. We will work to gain the support of the Pacific regional organisations such as the Melanesian Council of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Pacific Trade Union Forum, the University of the South Pacific Students

Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association for our action campaigns through the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (in Hawaii) and the Vanuatu Pacific Community Centre.

We will also seek the support of international organisations and conferences such as the World Conference of Churches, the World conference against A & H Bombs, and the European and North American peace movement. We go forward from this conference firmly united in our commitment to make our Pacific nuclear free and independent — for ours and future generations. □

Canada

Women wage fight for abortion rights

Defense of abortion clinics crucial for entire labor movement

By Joan Newbigging

[The following is based on a report adopted at a July 23–26 meeting of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Workers League, Canadian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

A confrontation of historic proportions is unfolding in Canada today over the right of women to abortion.

It is a struggle that is pitting women and their allies against the state — its reactionary laws, police, and courts.

It is a struggle on a crucial issue for women — the right of women to decide for themselves whether or not to bear a child.

It is a struggle in which we see reflected the profound advances in consciousness on women's rights that have occurred over the past 15 years and the deepgoing changes that have taken place within the labor movement.

It is a struggle that holds out the potential to become a binational fight — to link together abortion rights activists in English Canada and Quebec.

Furthermore, it is around this confrontation that a fighting wing of the women's movement is coming together.

Abortion clinics

In Canada it is illegal to establish an abortion clinic. Within the past two months two clinics have been set up, one in Toronto and one in Winnipeg. They pose a frontal challenge to the antiabortion laws.

Three events sum up the scope of the struggle that is now unfolding around these clinics:

- The demonstration that took place in Toronto on July 6 in response to the police raid on the clinic there. Some 5,000 people — mainly women — participated on one day's notice. It was the largest demonstration ever in English

Canada in support of a woman's right to abortion.

- The debate on abortion rights that took place at the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention last year. An excellent policy on abortion rights was adopted, calling for repeal of the abortion laws and for support for abortion clinics.

- The discussion that took place at the recent federal New Democratic Party (NDP) convention in Regina. (The NDP is Canada's labor party, based on the trade unions. At present it forms the government in Manitoba, but this government has not hesitated to bring the full weight of the police and courts to bear against the Winnipeg clinic.) After a full debate at the recent federal NDP convention 95 percent of the delegates adopted resolutions reaffirming NDP policy in support of the right of women to abortion and condemning the police raids and use of conspiracy charges in Manitoba.

These examples show the widespread support that exists for this struggle. They point to the profound change in consciousness that has taken place in relation to women's rights and to the deepgoing impact the feminist radicalization has had on the labor movement, the NDP, and on society at large.

The coalitions that are leading this struggle — the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) and the Coalition for Reproductive Choice in Winnipeg — enjoy enormous backing. Some 80 organizations have declared their support for the goals of OCAC.

The entire women's movement has come behind this campaign. All the major labor federations — in Quebec and in English Canada — have taken positions in favor of repeal. A Gallup poll taken in June 1982 showed that 72 percent of Canadians support a woman's right to decide on abortion.

In the few short months since the campaign has been under way, a whole series of different activities has been held — demonstrations, rallies, petitions (10,000 names were collected by OCAC), newspaper advertisements, and so on.

All this gives us a taste of the tremendous potential that this campaign offers to take the women's movement forward, to draw in the labor movement as an active participant, and to score an important victory.

Challenge to antiabortion laws

The current campaign is being built in defense of the clinics established in Toronto and Winnipeg by Dr. Henry Morgentaler. These clinics provide women with abortions on request.

Under Canadian law abortions are illegal except under certain highly restricted circumstances. They can only be performed if, in the opinion of a therapeutic abortion committee, continuation of the pregnancy would endanger the woman's life or health. And they must be performed in an accredited hospital.

Only 237 hospitals have abortion committees — and even fewer perform abortions. In 1981, 73 percent of abortions were performed in 15 percent of these hospitals. There are whole areas of the country where it is simply impossible for a woman to obtain an abortion.

And the situation is getting worse, according to a Statistics Canada study published this June. Statistics Canada attributed the decline in legal abortions being performed to a stricter interpretation of the law, lack of facilities, and pressure from antiabortion groups.

So this is what the clinics struggle is all about — the right of women to access to abortion.

For women this is a crucial issue. To lead full and equal lives, women must be able to control their reproductive capacities; they must



Jude Keast/Socialist Voice

Thousands marched in Toronto July 6 to protest police raid on abortion clinic.

be able to decide for themselves whether or not to have children.

Otherwise our ability to exercise all our other rights is in jeopardy. How can women play an equal role in society, how can we achieve equality in the workplace, if we are constantly burdened down with pregnancies we do not want?

Today there is no 100 percent safe and effective birth control. Birth control information in the schools is pitifully inadequate. In this situation women must have access to abortions. This is their only recourse if they become pregnant and do not want to bear a child.

For these reasons the right to abortion is fundamental to the entire struggle for women's liberation. It is, in fact, a precondition for women's liberation.

And it is not some narrow "women's issue." In fact, there are no exclusively women's issues. It is an important question for the working class as a whole. Without access to abortion, working class families — women and men — live with the constant uncertainty and fear of having to cope with children they do not want.

Women's susceptibility to pregnancy is something the ruling class has always exploited to lock women into their oppressed status — to keep women in their place. They use it to trap women within the family, tied down to the role of housewife and mother. They use it to justify discrimination against women in the work force. We have all heard the argument — it's not worth training her for a better job, she'll only go and get pregnant.

The clinics pose a fundamental challenge to all this. They cut across all the roadblocks, delays, bureaucratic hassle, and red tape imposed by the abortion laws. They enable women who want them to have abortions in safety and dig-

nity, free of the humiliation and emotional strain associated with trying to obtain legal abortions today. That is why this struggle is so important.

Women take the offensive

There is something else important we should take note of around this struggle. This is an offensive struggle at a time when the ruling class has forced us onto the defensive. Right now the ruling class is trying to take away our rights. Take Bill 157 to set up the new police spy agency, the vicious moves by the provincial government in British Columbia to simply obliterate human rights, the antilabor legislation imposed in Quebec and now in Saskatchewan, or the federal government's attacks on hard-won legislation protecting French-language rights in Quebec. At a time when the rulers are trying to take away our democratic rights, women are fighting to establish a right currently denied us.

This fight is also taking place in the context of an erosion of the gains women have made over the past 15 or more years. This has been a central part of the ruling class's response to the economic crisis.

Women workers have been hard-hit by unemployment. In 1981 women made up 40.8 percent of the work force and 45.9 percent of the unemployed. Even more devastating are the underemployment figures: women make up 72 percent of part-time workers, a growing sector of the work force and one that is faced with lower wages and fewer benefits.

As the lowest-paid workers, women are hit the hardest by wage controls and high inflation rates. In 1979 women earned 58 percent of what male workers earned. They make up two-thirds of minimum-wage workers.

The gains women have made in breaking

into nontraditional jobs have been set back. Layoffs have virtually wiped out the female workers in a number of big industrial centers.

Furthermore, cutbacks in social services are having a devastating effect on women's lives, considerably increasing the responsibilities they bear within the home. In Saskatchewan the Tories have cut back child care by 30 percent. In Quebec it is estimated the child-care facilities are adequate to meet 10 percent of the need. And the list could go on.

All this underlines how the clinics struggle runs counter to everything the ruling class is trying to do right now.

So the stakes are enormously high in this fight. If the Toronto and Winnipeg clinics are able to function free from state harassment, this will deal a deathblow to the abortion laws. Other abortion clinics will be opened. The present laws will be seen to be unworkable. This will not mark the end of the battle. An adequate network of state-financed abortion facilities will still need to be won; we will still have to establish that abortions be covered by medicare. But a decisive step forward will have been taken.

Victory in Quebec

The situation in Quebec is different from English Canada. In Quebec today it is possible for abortion clinics to function without government harassment. This gain was won as a result of a long and bitter struggle during the 1970s — of which the current struggle in English Canada is in fact a continuation.

Quebec is an oppressed nation within Canada. The health care and educational systems have traditionally been dominated by the Catholic church. Very few abortions were performed in Quebec hospitals, and even fewer in the French-speaking community.

However, in the late 1960s Dr. Morgentaler set up a clinic in Montreal and started performing abortions. Morgentaler has played a key role in the fight for abortion rights in Canada.

It started in 1968 when he presented a paper on behalf of the Humanist Association of Canada to a House of Commons committee in Ottawa. In the paper he argued for the right of women to choose on abortion.

After this, women who needed abortions started contacting Morgentaler and asking for help. At first he turned them away, explaining that the risk was too great. Then he thought about it some more. He considered the alternatives that these desperate women faced — how many of them would be maimed or might even die at the hands of backstreet abortionists. He decided it was his responsibility to act in accordance with his convictions. So he set up his clinic and started performing abortions.

Some years later Morgentaler decided to take another step — to announce publicly that he was performing abortions and to thereby provoke a confrontation with the state. He did this in the conviction that no jury would find him guilty.

And he was right. He was arrested and dragged into court, but the authorities could

not find a jury that was prepared to convict him. He was acquitted by three different juries. Despite this, a superior court overturned the first verdict and threw him in jail for ten months. He suffered a heart attack in jail.

Eventually the widespread support for his cause forced the authorities to pull back. This was the result of a defense campaign that brought the Quebec labor movement in behind this fight.

One of the first actions of the Parti Québécois (PQ) government when it was elected to office on the crest of the nationalist upsurge in 1976 was to drop the charges against Morgentaler. Since then the PQ government has allowed abortion clinics to operate in Quebec.

It is the same Dr. Morgentaler who is at the forefront of the current confrontation over the Toronto and Winnipeg clinics. It was he who took the initiative in setting up these clinics. Once again he is convinced that public opinion is on his side and that no jury will find him guilty.

But the problem is by no means solved in Quebec, and the gains that have been made there are tenuous. A recent editorial in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir* pointed out that the clinics in Quebec are still illegal and all that is needed is for a zealously anti-abortion government to be elected for the police raids and harassment to start anew.

The only way to ensure the gains in Quebec are secure is by getting the federal abortion laws wiped off the books. That is why Quebec women have such a big stake in the struggle now unfolding in Toronto and Winnipeg. If these clinics are shut down, it will open the door to an attack on the clinics now functioning in Quebec.

Because of this the clinics campaign has the potential to become a binational campaign, uniting women in both Quebec and English Canada in a common struggle against these unjust laws.

Ruling class response

The stakes in this fight are well understood by the ruling class, and its response has been vicious. It is bringing down the entire weight of the courts and the police to bear against the clinics.

The police have raided the Winnipeg clinic on two occasions, laying charges against the entire staff and confiscating the equipment. As a result the clinic is not able to continue performing abortions, although it is open for consultations. They have raided the Toronto clinic and seized its equipment so that it too is not able to perform abortions at this time.

They have levelled charges both of performing abortions and of conspiring to perform abortions against the operators of the clinic. All these charges carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The conspiracy charge is a particularly insidious weapon. It can be used against anyone who promotes the clinics — they do not have to be involved in actually performing abor-

tions. It is a weapon the ruling class has used throughout history, against the labor movement in particular. Conspiracy charges can be laid not only against the clinic staff, but also against the movement that stands behind them — to intimidate and silence this movement.

It is clear the ruling class is out to tie up Morgentaler and his associates in lengthy and costly legal proceedings, which will break them financially. Already legal costs are estimated to go over \$500,000.

They are going all out to create an atmosphere that the clinic and its operators are fair game for any reactionary yahoo. Several weeks ago Morgentaler was physically attacked by a man brandishing garden shears. This was outside the Toronto clinic, in full view of television cameras. Last week an arson attack was carried out against the Toronto clinic, causing \$40,000 damage to the women's bookstore below it.

The Supreme Court gave a platform to anti-choice leader Joe Borowski and financed him in his antiabortion crusade. They cloaked this entire charade with legitimacy, so that we were regaled with the spectacle of learned judges, professors, and doctors discussing in court how the fetus is "a human being cavorting in the womb like a baby on a trampoline."

A Saskatchewan judge is now deciding whether or not a fetus is a human being and should therefore be protected under the Charter of Rights. If he so rules, an abortion would thereby be tantamount to murder. And now the Saskatchewan government has given the Right to Life a \$60,000 grant so that they can visit schools to promote the idea that the fetus is a human being from conception and to encourage chastity.

This is all part of the social polarization that is unfolding today. It takes place in the context of the rulers' overall offensive against our rights and living standards. They are out to block the struggle for women's rights and to build popular resistance to it.

They are raising all this rank superstition and religious bigotry around the fetus's right to life, in order to confuse and divide people and weaken the struggle for women's rights.

Manitoba NDP government caves in

This enormous pressure from the ruling class has had its effect on the NDP leadership. The NDP government in Manitoba has led the way in attacking the clinics.

The action of the Manitoba NDP government constitutes one of the darkest chapters in the history of Canadian social democracy. It is the NDP's greatest betrayal since party leader Ed Broadbent supported Trudeau's attack on the rights of the Québécois during the constitution fight.

It is a clear demonstration of the NDP's reverence for the due process of law and order, its commitment to the capitalist state, judiciary, police, and all the trappings of power that go along with it.

But the NDP government's crime is even worse when you consider that they have the

power to declare the clinic legal. So it does not even have to take the step of condoning the violation of an unjust and oppressive law. This is what makes its action so rank. The NDP government is riding roughshod over party policy and the party membership. This is a supreme example of its political gutlessness, of its complete lack of confidence in the labor movement and the women's movement.

The fight that is unfolding within the NDP against the actions of the Manitoba government is a very important one. An echo of that same fight is taking place within the Ontario NDP to get the provincial caucus to support the struggle for the legalization of the Toronto clinic.

The Manitoba provincial council, representing NDPers from across the province, passed a resolution in June reaffirming party policy in support of abortion rights and clinics and "regretting" the raids on the Winnipeg clinic. Organized pressure from labor and NDP activists persuaded Ontario NDP leader Bob Rae to take the platform at the Toronto rally following the raid on the clinic there. At the recent federal convention, the overwhelming majority of delegates voted to condemn the police raids.

The NDP women's committees have played the key role in this fight. This reflects the growing weight of women within the party. Struggles like this which bring the weight of the oppressed to bear, will be a key factor in the fight to build a class struggle current within the NDP.

This fight gets to the heart of what sort of party the NDP should be. Should it accommodate itself to the laws and trappings of the bourgeois state? Should it be the main instrument in enforcing these laws regardless of how unjust they are? Or should it rather lead a fight on behalf of the oppressed and exploited? And seek to mobilize the forces with the clout to actually change society?

The high stakes in the fight over the abortion clinics and the heavy-handed response from the ruling class means that we should be preparing ourselves for a long, hard battle.

What will be decisive in determining the outcome of the struggle will be the extent to which the women's movement drives the campaign forward as a united force; the extent to which the labor movement brings its weight to bear; and the extent to which this becomes a truly united effort, bringing together women's rights supporters from both English Canada and Quebec.

That is the challenge before the women's movement and the labor movement today. It is a challenge we in the Revolutionary Workers League want to do everything in our power to help them meet.

A changing women's movement

The women's movement is the main force behind this struggle.

The initiative in actually precipitating the struggle was taken by Dr. Morgentaler. It was he who set up the clinics and staffed and financed them. He has become the symbol of the

struggle, and he is an extraordinary individual. But the force that drives him forward is the women's movement.

The two main organizations that are leading the struggle are the OCAC in Toronto and the Coalition for Reproductive Choice in Winnipeg.

The women who are leading OCAC are the product of the experience the Toronto women's movement has been through and the struggles it has waged over the past few years. Many of the best fighters have regrouped in OCAC.

These women, ourselves amongst them, played a key role in the International Women's Day Committee in fighting for March 8 actions that would be organized around clear demands on the real issues facing women. They also tried to orient the International Women's Day Committee to the labor movement and working class women.

For example, one important battle was fought out around the March 8 activities this year on the relationship of the women's movement to the solidarity movement. A public meeting was organized on women's liberation and the anti-imperialist struggle. It provoked a major clash within the women's movement which is still reverberating through the pages of the women's press today. Is it anti-semitic to support the Palestine liberation struggle? Are the struggles taking place in Central America male-dominated struggles? Or are these our struggles — ones in which we, as women, have a direct stake, because they are part of the forward march of humanity towards a more just and humane restructuring of society?

The OCAC leaders are not women from the factories, nor are they trade union women. And yet we can catch a glimpse — in what organizations like OCAC are doing and in the forces they are bringing to bear — of how a proletarian women's movement must act, the issues it must fight around, and how it must orient to working-class women.

Important advances are being made around this fight toward building a proletarian women's movement, toward building a movement that is overwhelmingly working class in composition, leadership, and orientation. This is the perspective that guides us in our participation.

We want to build a women's movement that will fight uncompromisingly to meet women's needs, that understands the necessity of linking up with the labor movement both in the struggles it is waging today and in the overall fight to transform society.

Women and the union movement

While there are exceptions, the vast majority of trade union federations stand for a woman's right to choose.

This overwhelming support is a product of the vast changes that have taken place in the labor movement over the past 15 years. They reflect a growing radicalization within our class.

One of the factors that lie behind this is the changing composition of the work force. Women now make up more than 40 percent of the work force. That is a 62 percent increase between the years 1969 and 1979.

They make up 30 percent of the membership of the trade unions. That is a 91 percent increase between the years 1968 and 1978.

These women have been deeply affected by the radicalization of the 1970s, above all by the feminist radicalization. They do not view their



DR. HENRY MORGENTALER

job as something temporary, which they are only doing until they get married or have a family. And they do not view their income as supplementary or as pin money. For them a job is a right and a necessity for economic survival.

These women are more independent, self-confident, and self-assertive than their mothers or grandmothers. They have not hesitated to raise their needs within the unions and to fight for their rights. They have brought an added militancy and power to labor's struggles.

Another factor is that today the justifications put forward for denying women their rights simply make less and less sense to more and more people.

Finally we have to view the support for this struggle as part of a more generalized radicalization that is taking place in response to the growing economic and social crisis.

There is a growing understanding within the labor movement that labor must respond to the attacks of the ruling class — not just the attacks on abortion rights or women's rights, but the entire ruling-class assault on labor's right to organize, on democratic rights, and on our living standards.

Furthermore there is a growing understanding that labor must build alliances with the other sectors of society that are facing this onslaught — with the unemployed, tenants, minorities, farmers, women, and so on.

Common Front struggle in Quebec

It is important for us to try to fully absorb the scope of the changes that have taken place

in the labor movement in relation to women. This process is the most advanced in Quebec. It was an important feature of the recent struggle waged by the Common Front of Quebec's public sector workers.

The rapid expansion of the Quebec public sector during the 1960s and 1970s brought tens of thousands of women into the work force. Their entry into the work force took place not only within the context of the feminist radicalization but also of the growing nationalist movement. Their consciousness was fuelled by both these powerful movements and it made them a potent force within the public sector unions.

In 1972 the public sector unions won the \$100 per week minimum wage — a gain which benefited above all women workers. In 1976 they won maternity leave — a pioneering victory. And in the 1982 negotiations the unions put forward demands for child care, for affirmative action, for parental rights, and protection against sexual harassment.

Women played a weighty role in the heroic fight the public sector unions waged earlier this year. They stood firm on the picket lines, defying brutal antilabor laws, threats of massive fines, imprisonment, and the loss of their jobs.

And they played an important role in the meetings of the different trade-union bodies during this struggle. It is clear that women played a big part in establishing the much more democratic modes of functioning that exist in both the teachers union and the social affairs section of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN).

Now it is the women in the public sector — two-thirds of the 320,000 workers — who are paying the heaviest price for the defeat of their struggle. This harsh blow that the PQ dealt the women of the public sector is an important aspect of the rightward turn of the PQ.

The rise of the PQ was very much tied in with the rise of the feminist movement in Quebec. The rebellion of Québécoises against their doubly oppressed status, against the backward prejudices they encounter in every walk of life, was a key component of the nationalist movement of the late 1960s and the 1970s.

Expectations were high, when the PQ was elected in 1976, that it would take steps to meet the needs of Quebec women.

And the PQ did take some important steps during those early years. It dropped the charges against Morgentaler, set up the Lazure clinics — a network of birth control services. It changed the pension laws, gave public sector women maternity leave provisions, and so on.

Today the hopes and illusions of women in the PQ have been dashed. The attack it carried out against the public sector women this year mirrors other steps it has taken against women: for example, its tax laws that encourage women to stay in the home and its housing subsidies that are tied to the number of children in a family.

All of this is an important element in the period of transition that is unfolding in Quebec

politics today, as Quebec workers reel under the blows dealt them by the PQ and as they start to think out political alternatives.

There's a profound crisis of leadership in Quebec today. An important aspect of this is the crisis of leadership within the women's movement. Many of the women who led the struggles of the 1970s have been lost to the PQ.

On the other hand, we know there are tremendous reserves of militancy among trade-union women. The fight waged by the women of the Common Front was proof of this.

The abortion clinics campaign poses the sort of challenge and offers the sort of perspective that is needed to help resolve this leadership crisis. OCAC is currently making the initial contacts with groups and individuals in Quebec in order to help get the campaign off the ground.

Role in strikes

The big changes I talked about in relation to the role of women within the Quebec public sector are not something that is confined to Quebec. It is part of a far-reaching process of transformation that is evident right across the country.

This is something British Columbia Premier Bill Bennett will have to contend with as he drives through his new antiworker legislation. It means that he can expect to face a rocky road ahead. Already women are starting to mobilize in response to this attack. This component of the fightback in British Columbia is very important. The stakes in it are enormous for every woman in this country.

Women have already played a weighty role in the major strikes labor has fought over the past five years: the Bell strike in Ontario and Quebec in 1980; the Public Service Alliance of Canada strike that same year; the 1981 Ontario hospital workers strike; the BC Tel strike again in 1981, which involved the occupation of BC Tel offices throughout the province; the strike by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) in 1981, which won maternity leave provisions; and the 1982 public sector struggle in British Columbia.

Women also played an important role, even though their numbers were smaller, in big industrial battles such as the Inco and Stelco strikes.

Issues relating to problems women face have come increasingly to the fore over recent years.

Maternity leave, after the pioneering victory by Quebec public sector unions, has now been secured by CUPW, federal government employees, Bell Canada workers, Chrysler workers, and others. There are the issues of equal pay and of sexual harassment.

There is also the affirmative action issue, which, from being a pariah issue in the labor movement, has now become a central concern of the Ontario Federation of Labour. In the coming months the OFL will be holding eight rallies in major centers throughout the province on this issue.

This is what is needed to raise the awareness of trade unionists about the discriminatory treatment women face at work and how the entire labor movement — men and women — have a common interest in fighting against it. This is what is needed to actually make some gains — to bring the united power of the labor movement and women's groups to bear to force companies to hire women.

Labor's necessary course

The trade unions today look very different and act very differently than they did 15 years ago. And they are a much more powerful social and political force.

This is directly in the line of march of labor's struggle for power.

In order to become a force that is capable of taking power, the labor movement has to overcome the deep divisions within its ranks. It has to weaken the hold of sexism, racism, and chauvinism. This can only be done if labor takes up the cause of the oppressed — in this case of women — and demonstrates in action that it will fight resolutely and to the end on their behalf. This is the only way in which the labor movement can win the confidence of women and convince women that the struggle for their liberation is inextricably linked to the overall struggle of all the exploited and oppressed for a workers and farmers government.

The current clinics campaign poses a tremendous opening to deepen this whole process. The opportunities to actively involve the

trade unions in this struggle — to draw working-class women into the coalitions, to organize trade-union contingents in demonstrations, to speak at trade-union meetings — are much greater today. The campaign can play an important role in raising the awareness of the trade-union movement of its social responsibilities and political tasks.

Furthermore, given the enormous stakes in the fight over the clinics, the ruling class is not going to give up easily. It will take a real show of strength to force it to back down.

This means there is a high premium on the women's movement bringing labor's weight to bear. The active and committed participation of labor in this campaign will be crucial to winning a victory.

We in the Revolutionary Workers League want to help lead and to build this campaign in every way we can: through our press, with our youth committees, in our industrial fractions, and as active participants in the coalitions and committees leading the campaign.

Building a binational struggle will not only be key to the overall success of this campaign. It will also provide an example to the entire women's movement and labor movement. It can demonstrate in life the enormous power of a united struggle of the oppressed and exploited in both Quebec and English Canada. It can help overcome the divisions in our class that are fostered by chauvinism and sexism. It can help promote the unity of our class and thereby enormously increase its power. □

Ireland

IRA stages spectacular escape

A daring jailbreak from the supposedly escape-proof Maze prison in British-ruled Northern Ireland has given a boost to the morale of Irish freedom fighters, at a time when hundreds of suspected members and supporters of the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) have been arrested.

Thirty-eight men staged a mass escape from the prison near Belfast on September 25. Maze prison was the site of the 1981 hunger strike in which 10 members of the IRA and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) fasted to death.

News of the escape touched off celebrations throughout the nationalist areas of Northern Ireland. Despite a huge manhunt, 19 escapees remained at large three days after their break for freedom.

All those who escaped had been sentenced to long jail terms by the special juryless courts set up to deal with opponents of British rule.

In recent months the British army and Royal Ulster Constabulary have been able to pressure a number of former IRA and INLA members to become informers in return for reduced jail

terms, money, and relocation to another country.

These informers, called supergrass in Ireland, have been the only witnesses in a series of recent trials. Their unsubstantiated testimony has been the only evidence against those they fingered.

Hundreds of alleged members of the IRA and INLA are in custody because of supergrass testimony. In one recently concluded trial, 35 people were sentenced to over 4,000 years in prison solely on the testimony of informer Christopher Black. Black was granted immunity from prosecution and has reportedly been resettled in Australia with a new name.

A broad-based campaign has been launched to protest the British government's use of informers.

Despite these blows against the armed struggle organizations of Northern Ireland's nationalist movement, the nationalists continue to gain in the political sphere. In recent elections, Sinn Féin, the largest of the political groups struggling against British rule, won the vote of nearly half the Catholic electorate of the six counties. □

Right-wing shift in labor movement

Leads to witch-hunt against revolutionary socialists

By Brian Heron

[The following is taken from the September 19 issue of *International Viewpoint*, a fortnightly journal published in Paris under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The introduction, footnotes, and subheads are from the original.]

* * *

On August 11 the British daily newspapers headlined the sacking of 13 "red moles" by the management of the nationalised British car firm, British Leyland, at its plant in Cowley, Oxford. Allegedly sacked for having given false references, the thirteen were accused in the press of having been part of a "plot" to "takeover" British industry, organised by the

newspaper *Socialist Action*.

Socialist Action is a newspaper that has been recently launched within the Labour Party fighting for revolutionary socialist ideas. It is supported by, among others, the Socialist League, British section of the Fourth International.

In the article below, Brian Heron, an activist in the Labour Party in Scotland and a regular contributor to *Socialist Action*, outlines the political context and reasons for this red-baiting attack, how sections of the CND [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament] and labour movement leadership have followed the lead of the bourgeoisie in trying to brand *Socialist Action* supporters as "infiltrators," and the response through a national campaign against political victimisation that is now getting under way.

This year's annual conference of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC — the single trade-union federation representing 10 million members) has been a dramatic affair.

Frank Chapple, the TUC chairman for this year, and a leading rightwing spokesperson for the most Cold War oriented section of the bureaucracy, spoke out at the beginning of the TUC giving his support to Neil Kinnock in the election for Labour Party leader due to take place at Labour Party conference at the beginning of October. This caused much surprise in the press and in some political quarters, up till now Kinnock had been regarded as the "centre left" candidate against the two candidates of the right, Roy Hattersley and Peter Shore. Chapple's own union, the engineers and plumbers union EETPU, is not participating in the election because it does not agree with the democratic principles on which the election is organized.¹

Against the wishes of the largest union, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU, with 1.25 million members), the TUC elected a new General Council, composed of representatives from the smaller unions as well as the larger traditional industrial unions. For the first time this contains a

large number of representatives from unions that are not affiliated to the Labour Party.² The TUC itself also refused to take the traditional greetings from the Labour Party leadership, and refused to accept or organise or participate in a meeting of the Labour leadership candidates even as a fringe event.

A series of statements were made both before and during the TUC by a number of leading figures, including Len Murray, the general secretary of the TUC, on the necessity for talks with the Tory government about their proposed union legislation. This went against the principle and policy laid down by the TUC, and defended by the left, notably Arthur Scargill, the president of the very left-wing National Union of Mineworkers, who is opposed to these talks and instead is in favour of organising a fight-back against the Tory government based on the industrial and trade-union movement.

At the same time the policy of incomes control, disguised in terms of a "National Economic Assessment," has been re-endorsed by the TUC. There have also been a number of

2. Most trade unions, particularly the traditional and industrial ones, are affiliated to the Labour Party. Members pay a "political levy" which is automatically included in the union dues unless they state they do not wish to pay ("contracting out"). The unions then pay the affiliation fee for the appropriate number of members to the Labour Party and are thus entitled to wield the "block vote" at Labour Party conference. About 6 million trade unionists are affiliated to the Labour Party in this way. One of the aspects of the new legislation proposed by the Tories is to make it obligatory for unions to revote every five years whether or not to remain affiliated and to make the payment of the political levy separate from dues payment.

statements inside and outside the TUC by leaders of the trade-union movement backing off from the policy of opposition to the European Economic Community.

TUC shifts to the right

To summarise these developments we can see an attempt to politically shift the axis of the TUC in quite fundamental ways. First, for the TUC to drop the main radical policies of the labour movement over the last period — opposition to Britain's independent nuclear weapons, as well as to Cruise missiles; opposition to the EEC [European Economic Community]; and opposition to any form of incomes policy.

Removing these radical policies from the TUC's position clears the way for the second major thrust, which is now very apparent: to loosen the TUC's commitment to a straight Labour Party victory, and to open the door to those political discussions and policies necessary to begin the task of constructing a coalition between the Labour Party and the Social Democratic Party (SDP)/Liberal Party Alliance.

In the June General Election the Alliance came within 700,000 votes of the Labour Party. The balance sheet that major sections of the trade-union bureaucracy make of this result is that it is necessary to reconstruct the opposition to the Tories in line with this electoral balance of forces. Thus it is necessary to start removing the political obstacles to the possibility of a coalition. We can see, therefore, that the political relationship of forces within the labour movement has shifted substantially to the right.

This confirms the prediction we made about the effects of the Thatcher victory. We said that it could, would, and must be seen as a major political defeat for the workers movement. And that it would push ahead various trends that were already apparent within the workers movement, give them extra impetus, and create the conditions for a major offensive against the minority that still wishes to fight to defend the independence of the labour movement and the political independence expressed by the existence of the Labour Party. The door is open for a massive offensive against that minority — this establishes the political atmosphere we now face within the labour movement.

These trends were clearly visible before the election. First and foremost we had Tony Benn, the best known leader of the Labour Party left wing, deciding to wrap up his opposition to the Labour left and centre, on the spurious basis of the need for unity in the elec-

1. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party are elected by an electoral college in which the constituency parties (local branches) and parliamentary representatives have 30 percent of the votes each, and the affiliated trades unions 40 percent. Only members of parliament are entitled to stand for election and formerly they were the only ones entitled to vote. The involvement of the whole party in the election is one of the democratic reforms fought for and won by the Bennite left.

tion period. This so-called unity was destroyed by the right wing who had control and the initiative during the election. We saw Frank Chapple endorsing an SDP candidate in Islington, an important central London constituency, traditionally a Labour stronghold where the local Labour Party has left wing policies and candidates.

Thatcher's victory opens door to right wing offensive

Now these trends have been given a tremendous push by the election of Thatcher. The result of this political atmosphere, and the political offensive opened up by the right, has been significant division and demoralisation among the left. We have already seen that Kinnock, considered by the Labour Party and the press as a candidate from the left, is now the candidate considered to be the best candidate to conduct the witch hunt; he has already committed himself to do that. He has also stated his opposition to [British withdrawal from] the EEC, and it is obvious that he intends to go further in this direction having attained the leadership of the Labour Party.

The rot has gone deeper. Michael Meacher, a candidate for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party who is seen as the candidate of the Bennites, has stated that he is against pursuing the witch hunt, but he is not in favour of readmitting the five members of the editorial board of the *Militant* newspaper who have already been expelled. Hardly a coherent, consistent, or fighting stance on the question. He has also explained that he is now for a referendum on the question of unilateralism, rather than carrying through Labour's commitment to this policy, thus allowing it to be decided by the influence of the bourgeois media, etc.

So, this shift to the right, and the political offensive that has opened up, essentially to prepare the conditions for coalitionism, have had a serious impact within the left, what we have dubbed the Bennite left. The witch hunt is more and more necessary, particularly within the Labour Party, to prepare the conditions for coalitionism.

Witch hunting the left

It is possible for the TUC to make its shift on policy questions, on the Labour leadership question, without going in for a full scale purge. It can do it by isolating particular unions, facing up to the left oppositions which undoubtedly exist and are growing to defend the radical policies of the labour movement and union democracy and a left leadership of the Labour Party.

In the Labour Party itself this shift will require much greater tactical flexibility and more careful preparation than took place at TUC. At local branch and constituency level in the Labour Party about 80 percent of the membership could be described as supporting the left, defending the present leftwing policies we have mentioned, and would vote for Bennite candidates for the leadership of the party. This means it cannot be a question of political per-

suation or arguments that the right can use to change the relationship of forces. Right at the centre of its political preparation must be a purge of the party to shift the balance in the direction in which it wishes to go.

Therefore, the witch hunt is not going to go away or become less of a feature of the political situation within the labour movement. On the contrary, it is likely to be one of the main questions, particularly within the Labour Party over the next short-term period.

The second basic point that we have to understand is that all rightwing victories, of the sort that Thatcher's victory represented, always come with a systematic purge, or an attempt at it, of militants in industry. We have witnessed similar things before, after the defeat of the General Strike in 1926 for example, and there are many international examples. From that point of view the attack on *Socialist Action* supporters in the British Leyland car plant at Cowley in Oxford is simply a signal of a broader policy designed to uproot militants and militant leaders in the factories.

Thatcher's victory was very much the result of the split in the anti-Tory vote engineered by the production of a new bourgeois party, the SDP. She failed to win an overall popular majority. This fundamental weakness means that the employers and the state must mobilise all the more directly to resolve the problem of leadership that they face and intervene directly to deal with the question of the relationship of forces on the factory floor and elsewhere. This, if anything, makes a purge of industry more likely over the next period.

The question to answer just now is why this witch hunt started in industry aimed at supporters of the paper *Socialist Action*.

There are two basic reasons for this. First of all a certain measure of understanding that it is necessary to hit at the weakest link. *Socialist Action* is a relatively recent development as a newspaper and as an organised current within the Bennite left in the unions and the Labour Party. It is well understood that to hit the left at a weak link means you are more likely to achieve victory, and to cause confusion within the Bennite left as a whole. The bourgeoisie obviously made a careful balance sheet of the witch hunt against the Militant tendency and understood that such a witch hunt can cause divisions among the left provoking different responses and sought to achieve something similar among leftwing trade unionists.

Socialist Action supporters under attack

We should also note that there is an aspect of the witch hunt directly related to the importance and significance of *Socialist Action* itself. It is a current within the Bennite left which acts on and understands the importance of the relationship between the battle in the unions — the formation of the new Broad Left opposition groupings increasingly focused on the struggle in the Labour Party — and the need to be organised within the Labour Party itself. It is also understood the *Socialist Action* supporters are not a sectarian current like those

around the *Militant*, but are capable of operating in a broad united way, and are therefore more dangerous from the point of view of the potential for organising the left wing in the unions and Labour Party.

For both these reasons *Socialist Action* supporters have been the target of a massive witch hunt over the last month, starting with thirteen and then a further three being sacked from Cowley.

When such a witch hunt takes place, all sorts of scum and reactionary ideas rise to the surface. One of the worst of these reactionary ideas and reactionary moves was that centred around women. Six of the sacked workers were young women, and much play was made of the perfidious role of women in respect to the so-called plot to seize power in British Leyland, and there was an attempt to create a general atmosphere that made the presence of women in industry and in trade-union politics illegitimate.

Naturally the attack by the employers on *Socialist Action* supporters was utilised very rapidly by the leadership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND, the mass movement opposing nuclear missiles) and then by the Labour Party leadership itself.

CND leadership moves to drop unilateralist policy

In a relatively short period following the sacking of the 13 from Cowley there were

Draft statement against political victimization

This draft statement will form the basis for calling a national campaign committee in defence of bourgeois democratic rights, against political victimisation at work.

"We are deeply concerned that the recent dismissal by British Leyland at Cowley of workers for their political views is merely one example of increasing evidence of the victimisation of workers who are considered radical or socialist. In our view an employer is not entitled to censor ideas or penalise normal trade union activity.

"The press treatment of the Cowley story was gravely disturbing in assuming guilt where none was proven. Yet few voices were heard in criticism. This is a new McCarthyite tendency to condemn people by association and, taken with the activity of organisations like the Economic League, it is a tendency which ought to be reversed. We would welcome your support in forming a committee to counter this tendency and to give support to those who are victimised at work for their political convictions."

Statements of support should be sent to: Alex Lyon, 23 Larkhill Rise, London SW 14, Great Britain.

statements in the press by leaders of CND, including the chairperson Joan Ruddock and Bruce Kent the secretary, attacking the role of *Socialist Action* supporters and supporters of the youth paper *Revolution* for their "infiltration" and "takeover" of Labour CND, the branch of the campaign organised in the Labour Party and a sizeable leftwing current of the mass movement within which supporters of *Revolution* have considerable influence because of the work they have done to build it.

This attack arises from the fact that the CND leadership are proposing to retreat considerably from the positions of unambiguous defence of unilateral disarmament. In the context of the election results and the rise of the SDP they are seeking, just as sections of the labour movement leadership are seeking, to establish a set of policies relevant to the prospect of linking up with the Alliance, to the prospect of coalitionism.

Therefore, they are attempting a major political struggle to establish the main policy stand of CND as for the nuclear freeze, that is, no more nuclear weapons over and above those already in Britain. It is no exaggeration to say that the leading forces opposing this move are Labour CND and Youth CND and the *Socialist Action* and *Revolution* supporters within the movement in the local branches. Thus the attack by the employers at Cowley was seen as a golden opportunity to undermine and attack the political role of *Socialist Action* and *Revolution* supporters in the main mass movement in Britain today.

The third aspect of the witch hunt which flowed rapidly from the Cowley events was the discovery by sections of the press of a plot by one thousand moles in the Labour Party. Newspapers came out with headlines like "New Trotsky problem in Labour Party," or "1,000 moles discovered in Labour Party."

Comments in the press were quite interesting. They made a clear distinction between supporters of *Socialist Action* and *Militant* from the point of view of *Socialist Action's* capacity to have a broader and more united front policy than *Militant*, lack of sectarianism, greater intelligence in political tactics, and so on.

New round of witch hunt in Labour Party

Interestingly the general secretary of the Labour Party, Jim Mortimer, squashed these stories by explaining that they were a vast overexaggeration. But we should be clear that the main reason for this was because the Labour bureaucracy has learnt something from its year-long battle with *Militant*. In many circumstances the public battle, the press campaign battle, builds the support and the following of those victimised. So, although they have not retreated on their plans for a witch hunt, they are on the contrary massively stepping them up, they want to do so in silence, without the attention of the press.

For several days *Socialist Action* supporters came under massive media attack, a witch hunt in every corner of the labour movement and

mass movement. A witch hunt that tried to render them a current without any legitimacy in the labour movement, the mass movement or the left wing. In such circumstances it proved almost impossible to win immediate allies to fight back. For several days *Socialist Action* supporters stood alone in their attempt to defend themselves, with the exception of the support from sections of the rank and file leadership at Cowley, the shop stewards.

The prospect of establishing a national campaign in defence of those militants under attack was very, very limited. Therefore it was necessary for *Socialist Action* to work out a defence policy that would allow it to break through this log-jam of complicit silence.

The first breakthrough came with a statement from Eric Heffer, longtime member of parliament, opposing McCarthyism and witch-hunting activities. He is one of the candidates in the Labour Party leadership contest most associated with Bennisism, although with some differences and distinctions with it.

This support from Heffer indicated that sufficient numbers of people now understood that the attack in Cowley was part and parcel of a general attack on *Socialist Action* supporters across the board, and then on the left as a whole, and that it was now possible to move ahead in a defence campaign. *Socialist Action* considered that the campaign had to start from the Cowley victimisations, despite the fact that over the short term the centre of the witch hunt would be of course the attempt to smash the *Socialist Action* current out of the debate and struggle within the Labour Party. The issue posed at Cowley was a basic bourgeois and democratic right — the right of people, regardless of their political convictions, to have a job.

On the basis of this bourgeois democratic right *Socialist Action* began to build a campaign which had the ultimate aim of mobilising within the labour movement in defence of the rights of *Socialist Action* supporters, but which started by assembling those forces prepared to act on a national level in defence of the bourgeois democratic right so rapidly overthrown by the Cowley management.

A national campaign on this basis is being prepared and led by Alex Lyon, a former Labour minister and a candidate for the presidency of the National Council for Civil Liberties, and supported by some bourgeois academics and other figures, for the establishment of a committee against political victimisation, blacklisting, etc., and starts from the fact that Cowley was such an incident.

National campaign for democratic rights

The draft statement which is to form the basis of this campaign is published here. [See box.] Initial signatories include not only Alex Lyon but Professor Steven Rose, Stuart Hall, John Saville, and Antony Arblaster. This statement will form the basis of many resolutions to trade-union branches, Labour Party branches, etc. and for support of bourgeois democratic

rights and against political victimisation at work.

Through this campaign *Socialist Action* supporters hope to catch the sections of the Labour leadership in the crossfire between the struggle of this campaign to defend bourgeois democratic rights and the actions of the employers at Cowley and thus open cracks in the Labour leadership on the question of defence of the rights of *Socialist Action* supporters and thus create the best framework in which it would be possible to resist what will inevitably happen in a witch hunt of the views and activities of *Socialist Action* supporters in the Labour Party.

The campaign has so far produced a dossier on the activities of the Economic League, a shadowy organisation of the British employing class, whose directors and sources of funds read like a Who's Who of British capitalism and whose function is to provide systematic information to employers on the activities of left-wingers and socialists in industry and the trade unions. This dossier also includes the draft statement and other material. So far it has been distributed to every delegation at the TUC conference, where the statement has been supported by a number of union leaders including Ray Buckton, leader of the train drivers union and new chairman of the TUC, Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, and Alan Sapper of the cinema technicians union.

It will also be widely circulated inside and outside the labour movement and will lead to a meeting being prepared shortly to establish a campaign committee whose aim will be to seek interviews with victimised workers and uncover political vetting and blacklisting in British industry.

In this context *Socialist Action* supporters seek the widest possible international support for this campaign that they have initiated, supported and is now under way. This support can come in many forms, but in the first instance should come in the form of statements similar to that published here from leading academics, political and labour movement figures, those who have a record of defending civil liberties and democratic rights. *Socialist Action* believes that this would aid struggles against political victimisation in the countries themselves and also enormously aid the campaign in Britain. □

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Protesters brave police bullets

Hundreds of thousands demand Marcos resign

By Fred Murphy

Hundreds of thousands of Filipinos took to the streets of Manila and other cities in mid-September to demand an end to the U.S.-backed Marcos dictatorship and the identification and punishment of the killers of opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

These protests were among the largest in recent Philippine history, dwarfed only by the gatherings of up to 2 million that paid tribute to Aquino following his assassination on August 21.

Aquino was gunned down at the Manila airport while in the custody of government troops, seconds after he returned to the Philippines from three years in exile. Most Filipinos immediately concluded that the regime was responsible for Aquino's murder. Marcos' utter failure to provide evidence to the contrary has helped to fuel the current protests. A deepening economic crisis, ongoing repression and human-rights violations, and domination of the country by U.S. imperialism are at the root of Filipinos' discontent.

Half a million rally

The high point of the latest anti-Marcos demonstrations was a rally of half a million in downtown Manila, the capital, on September 21. The date marked the 11th anniversary of Marcos' 1972 declaration of martial law, as well as the first month since the murder of Aquino.

According to the September 22 *Washington Post*, "The crowd listened in stifling heat for four hours to their leaders who demanded that the president resign and who called for the memory of Aquino to be kept alive."

The *Post* correspondent noted Filipinos' growing anger at the Reagan administration's support for Marcos' rule:

"A large banner depicting a crowd storming up a hill toward the president and his wife, Imelda, carried the slogan, 'Oust the U.S.-backed Marcos regime.' Other signs read 'Down with the U.S.' and called for an end to the 'U.S.-Marcos dictatorship.' Others said, 'Reagan stay home — go to hell,' a reference to President Reagan's scheduled visit [to the Philippines] in November."

As the rally ended, thousands of students left the plaza in organized contingents and tried to march on Marcos' presidential palace. They were met violently by hundreds of police wielding clubs and fire hoses. When the students fought back with rocks, bottles, and makeshift firebombs, the cops opened fire. Eleven persons were killed and some 200 wounded or injured.

The demonstrators dispersed but regrouped in other parts of the city for impromptu rallies

around bonfires that blazed throughout the night. Street clashes between police and thousands of demonstrators continued in Manila during the next two days.

Pro-Marcos demonstration flops

Other protest actions occurred in the week leading up to the September 21 rally. These centered in the Manila district of Makati, the country's main financial center. Between 10,000 and 20,000 office workers and executives rallied in Makati's main street on September 16. The three-hour protest was organized by Filipino businessmen who support the procapitalist opposition group UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic Organization).

The mayor of Makati tried to hold a pro-Marcos rally in the same place three days later. He hired demonstrators at \$2 a head and bused in schoolchildren and teachers, but the attempt backfired badly. According to the September 21 *Miami Herald*, thousands of office workers again poured into the streets and "hurled cans, rocks, fruits, firecrackers, water balloons and insults at the pro-Marcos demonstrators, ripped signs from their hands and set the placards on fire."

Another anti-Marcos rally by Makati office workers drew 7,000 on September 23. Police broke it up by hurling tear-gas canisters into the crowd from pickup trucks.

On September 24, 30,000 persons marched in Cagayan de Oro, a city on the southern island of Mindanao. The action was led by the city's acting mayor and heard Benigno Aquino's mother, Aurora, call on Filipinos to "topple this government, which is for graft, corruption, oppression, and for killing the people."

Archbishop warns of 'bloody revolution'

The mounting unrest has led some sections of the Philippine ruling class to begin seeking ways to replace the Marcos regime with one that could gain greater popular support. The Catholic archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin, presented a plan to Marcos on September 23 whereby a "national reconciliation" council involving government, church, opposition, and business representatives would organize national elections and conduct a "thorough and impartial" investigation into the murder of Aquino.

Cardinal Sin termed his plan "the last feasible alternative to avoid the violent confrontation and bloody revolution made possible by the temper of the times."

While Marcos responded that he would listen to advice from anyone, "irrespective of how lacking in wisdom they may be," his main

reaction to the growing protests has been to launch a crackdown and make hysterical denunciations of his opponents.

"We have been holding back the use of our military capability," Marcos warned in a televised speech September 25. "The policy of maximum tolerance has been discarded." An additional 1,600 troops plus tanks have been moved into Manila, checkpoints have been set up throughout the city, and unauthorized demonstrations have been banned.

On September 26 the dictator again went on television and assailed protesters as "communist partisans, gangsters, vandals, thugs, and other subversives."

Marcos has also ordered his hand-picked commission for investigating the Aquino killing to complete its work within two weeks. He challenged witnesses with evidence contradicting the official version to come forward. "We offer them protection," Marcos said. "We will give them all the protection that we are giving to our own witnesses."

But those with the facts to refute the regime's story that Aquino was slain by a lone "professional killer" supposedly hired by communists or by Marcos' opponents no doubt recall the way the dictator's men "protected" Aquino and will hence turn down Marcos' offer.

Reagan's dilemma

Meanwhile, in Washington, the Reagan administration is growing increasingly wary of the consequences of the U.S. president's scheduled November 5 visit to Manila. Officials are weighing whether it would be more harmful to U.S. imperialism's interests in the Philippines to cancel the trip and thus further discredit Marcos, or to go ahead with it and risk major protests by Filipinos against Reagan's presence beside the dictator.

According to the September 22 *Washington Post*, administration officials are seriously concerned "that Marcos is losing control of the government and may be unable to keep order during a Reagan visit without an 'excessive' show of force."

Marcos' opponents are gearing up for further protests in the coming weeks. One opposition leader, Jose Diokno, says Reagan will receive a "proper welcome" if he shows up in Manila in November. Says another, Eva Estrada Kalaw: "Let Ronald Reagan come and find out what the Filipino people will do to someone who supports a dictator." □

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